

Dear Residents,

May 7, 2018

Over the last 2 plus years, a concept plan was created for improving White Oaks Park. This plan was adopted by the Park Board in 2017. Staff was directed to develop specific development plans and to apply for a Special Use Permit from the City to exercise the plan in three phases over 6 years. Plans included the expansion and improvement of the parking lot; creation of a welcoming entry meadow; restoration of the wetlands; resurfacing and other enhancements to the dog area; the addition of an arboreal challenge and spartan course; pathway enhancements; and the construction of a new building with a picnic area. Architectural and support consulting firms were retained to prepare specifications and drawings for the project to commence later this summer. Additionally, funding was secured to afford the first two phases of the project without imposing any tax increase on the community. While the park plan is on hold because of some community concern and the pending outcome of a vote by the City Council, some maintenance work is scheduled to take place.

White Oaks Park includes a few structures including our maintenance facility, a small classroom, shed and of course, the Cabin. The Cabin was acquired in the 1970s and for a few years housed the Park District administrative offices, then was the home of the North-East DuPage Special Recreation Association (NEDS-RA) and was also an environmental museum/center at one time. For more than the past decade, the facility has only served as a storage structure for the district due to structural deficiencies and American with Disabilities issues preventing us from allowing any public assembly and access.

Knowing that the Cabin posed these and other issues, the board commissioned a study to fully evaluate its condition. This study was performed in the summer of 2017 by professional architects and engineers specializing in structure, mechanics and environmental conditions. The study reported that the structure requires extensive repairs and modifications to bring the building into compliance with current building, accessibility and life safety codes to make it inhabitable by the public.

The cost estimate for these needed repairs is estimated between 1.2 and 1.4 million dollars. The Park Board discussed the viability of funding needed repairs and the potential gains of such a large investment and concurred that the tax payers would be better served to replace the facility with a new structure. As a result, the district went out to bid to have the Cabin remediated and razed.

The bids for remediation and removal of the 3 structures (Cabin, classroom and shed) were obtained and the lowest responsible bid was approved by the Park District board at its meeting on April 17th. Additionally, the Park District has engaged a state-licensed asbestos removal contractor to remove all asbestos-containing materials from the Cabin prior to demolition activities. The removal of the asbestos-containing material shall be completed on the interior of the structure within a sealed enclosure to ensure that contaminated air does not exit the building. Removal activities shall also be removed from the exterior of the structure within a regulated area and by wetting the material to control dust generation. During and at the completion of removal of asbestos-containing materials, a state-licensed asbestos professional shall collect air samples to verify that air quality on the interior and exterior of the structure does not exceed permissible levels within ambient air.

These activities will take place over the course of the next few weeks. Questions regarding these activities and the work being performed can be addressed to myself. My e-mail is mellmann@wdparks.org.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director
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