

**Director's Report | October 19, 2023**

Having tested positive for COVID and now taking appropriate time off to recover, I was unable to complete this report in time to include in the Park Board packet. I unfortunately will be unable to attend the Park Board meeting. While I will return to my standard report format for our next meeting, I am providing an abbreviated report to highlight the two items I believe are most pressing or noteworthy for the Park Board. As always, please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

**Park and Recreation Impact Fees**

As reported last month, the Board of Public Works (BPW) approved four impact fee credits on September 6<sup>th</sup> for CRC projects in the collective amount of \$3,573,624. CRC is now considering an impact fee credit of up to \$4,706,248 for the proposed mixed-use development at Pennsylvania Street and 111<sup>th</sup> Street. If approved this year, this would represent over \$8.5 million in impact fee credits issued in 2023 benefiting CRC projects. As a point of reference, it took almost seven years for CCPR to receive a similar amount of impact fees for the benefit of new capital projects within the park system.

With the pending retirement of the Central Park Bond and subsequent loss in Local Income Tax dollars currently dedicated to capital development, we are faced with new challenges to secure capital funding for the park system. Options to replace the funding are limited, making every existing funding source like park impact fees critical to serving the growing park and recreation needs of an expanding community. In the end, how the impact fees are used and where credits are issued is tied to the priorities of community leaders.

As we finalize our new comprehensive master plan, it is appropriate for the Park Board to weigh in and advocate for the necessary capital funding needed to sustain the park system. Through conversations with current and future elected officials, Park Board members can help explain why the Park Board and CCPR are best positioned to decide how impact fees (or fee credits) should be used to construct new parks and recreation infrastructure to best serve the new residents.

The Park Board's decisions on how and where to invest public funds are grounded on robust citizen input, something that is a driving factor in CCPR's success. Impact fee credits may be appropriate from time to time, but they should always be balanced against the identified needs and priorities established in the master plan. The Park Board is best positioned to ensure this is the case and should consider lobbying for approving authority over the use of all park and recreation impact fees and credits.

**NRPA Annual Conference**

CCPR sent a contingency of 13 employees to the National Recreation and Park Association's 2023 Annual Conference hosted in Dallas on October 10-12. In addition to Kurtis Baumgartner and me, staff attending included representatives from Administration and Planning, Marketing and Communications, and Recreation and Facilities.

In my role as Commission Review Team Leader, I attended and participated in the accreditation hearing on October 9<sup>th</sup> for the City of Brownsville (TX) Parks and Recreation Department. I led the CAPRA review for Brownsville, which was awarded its initial accreditation based on the review team's findings. Brownsville began its accreditation journey with my review team in 2022 but deferred its on-site visitation to this year to allow them more time to work on their self-assessment report in preparation for what ended up being a successful visit.

Prior to the conference, I was notified by CAPRA that I have been selected to lead the Commission Review Team for USAG Rheinland Pfalz, located in Kaiserslautern, Rheinland-Palatinage, Germany. In addition to municipalities and states, CAPRA also accredits Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) departments on U.S. military bases. This represents the first ever international U.S. base accreditation visit for CAPRA.

CCPR was featured in three education sessions during this year's conference. I was invited to join colleagues from South Suburban Park and Recreation District (CO), Pflugerville Parks and Recreation (TX), and Dallas Park and Recreation (TX) for a session titled "Exceeding Expectations with Effective Community Engagement." This session highlighted some of the many techniques our respective agencies have used to increase public participation in our planning efforts.

Michael Allen (Parks and Natural Resources Director) and I joined Gregg Calpino with SmithGroup in a session titled "Immerse. Listen. Learn. The Songs and Stories of Carmel Clay's Bear Creek Park Master Plan" featuring the innovative strategies used to develop the master plan, including creating a trail network and inviting the public to the undeveloped park, implementation of in-person and remote participation exercises during the early days of COVID, and extensive outreach to the local community, including youth of all ages. This was Michael's first presentation at the national level, and he did an excellent job!

Kurtis Baumgartner and I presented a session on "Reimagining Parks: More than a Post-Pandemic Slogan" which highlighted CCPR's efforts at talent acquisition and retention, community engagement, and management strategies with a focus on cost recovery. Despite being the last session listed during the last timeslot on the last day of conference, we had remarkably good attendance with excellent engagement with the attendees. Kurtis also did an exceptional job and represented CCPR extremely well!