

Village of Antioch Park Advisory Board

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

6:30 p.m. Village Senior Center, 817 Holbeck Drive, Antioch, IL

1. Call to Order

Chairman Weber called the September 17, 2025 regular meeting of the Park Commission to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. Roll Call

	Present	Absent
Deichsel	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Hartman	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Nolan	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Olufs	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Weber	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
<u>Staff</u>		
Kotloski	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Ford	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Antioch Park Commission led the Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approval of Minutes

Hartman/Nolan motion and second to approve the September 17, 2025 Park Advisory Board minutes with changes.

Vote –

Yes = 5

No = 0

5. Communications

Chairman Weber asked if any public wanted to provide any comments.

Public Comment – Tiffany Green:

Tiffany Green addressed the advisory board and began by expressing appreciation for the efforts made in maintaining the community's parks and waterways. She stated that both are in great condition overall.

Green then shared a letter she had previously submitted to Kotloski and Mayor Gardner and noted that she had also contacted Hansen and Robbie regarding growing concerns about litter in the community. She emphasized that during her regular walks, she consistently encounters and picks up trash along local trails, parks and roadsides.

She cited examples from neighboring communities such as Grayslake and Libertyville, which have implemented community cleanup programs and established public drop-off sites for trash. She expressed a desire to see similar initiatives in Antioch and mentioned that local groups, such as the Women's Club, are often seen voluntarily picking up litter. However, she voiced concern that the responsibility should not fall primarily on older volunteers and advocated for greater youth involvement in environmental stewardship. She stressed the importance of educating children early on about their role in keeping public spaces clean.

Green also mentioned the lack of visible signage encouraging proper trash disposal and noted that former practices, such as the use of supervised community service crews (prisoners) for cleanup, are no longer in place. She briefly shared her background, having moved to Antioch from Vernon Hills, and described how she and her eight siblings were raised to take pride in maintaining a clean environment. She expressed concern that this mindset is not as prevalent among today's youth.

Additionally, she referenced a former Environmental Committee that was active until approximately 2010 and suggested that renewed efforts could be beneficial to address current issues.

Board Member Olufs expressed agreement with Green's concerns. He noted that he too sees an increase in trash accumulation when riding his bike through town. He pointed out that litter tends to be worse after garbage collection days, often due to unsecured waste blowing out of overfilled bins. While he acknowledged this is not an excuse for the concern, he noted it as a contributing factor to the problem.

The group briefly discussed litter left behind after community events and birthday parties, along with a general lack of sufficient trash receptacles in parks. Green reiterated that various residents and organizations, including the Women's Club, continue to help with cleanup efforts. She also suggested that large corporations, such as Walmart, should be held more accountable for waste on or around their properties and proposed that fines could be redirected toward funding environmental cleanup efforts or educational programs.

Board Member Weber responded by stating that some issues, such as placing signs in parks or involving youth in cleanup efforts, would fall under the jurisdiction of the village administrator or may involve legal considerations. He suggested that Green consider drafting a public letter recognizing community members who actively participate in cleanup efforts. This letter, once reviewed, could be published on the village website to encourage others through positive reinforcement.

Director Kotloski added that fines could be in place through a code enforcement that needs to be passed by the village board. She also stated that the village currently partners with SWALCO for excess waste management and noted that drop-off sites are available through that partnership. He acknowledged Green's concerns and indicated that similar issues had been raised in recent parks related meetings.

In response to the concerns raised, the advisory board will be reaching out to the Village to request the placement of additional garbage cans in parks to help alleviate litter and support ongoing cleanup efforts.

6. Chairperson's Report – Chairman Weber:

Chairman Weber began his report by complimenting the design and content of the Spring and Summer Parks and Recreation brochure, noting that it looks excellent.

He then inquired with Director Kotloski about any updates regarding the new park property located off Route 59. Kotloski confirmed that there are currently no new developments or updates on that property at this time.

Chairman Weber also shared a copy of the inventory list from the 1978 time capsule, which is planned to be opened in two years. The group reviewed the contents and reflected on the historical significance and curiosity surrounding what people from that time envisioned for the future. There was shared enthusiasm among the board members about the upcoming opening and potential community engagement around the event.

Additionally, Chairman Weber expressed his satisfaction with the availability of handicapped parking at the recent Small-Town Smoke out event, noting that it was well accommodated.

To conclude his report, Chairman Weber requested a digital copy of the Five-Year Parks Master Plan for Centennial Park, which Kotloski agreed to distribute virtually. Following that, the group briefly discussed some of the known financial details related to the plan and anticipated further review in future meetings.

7. Director's Report

Centennial Park Master Plan Update:

Director Kotloski provided an update on the Centennial Park Master Plan. She reported that the Village recently met with Hitchcock Design Group to finalize 50% of the design documents. The project team has completed both the geotechnical investigation, assessing the soil conditions, and survey work. The process is now moving into the layout phase.

The general site layout, including the locations for amenities such as tennis courts and the playground, was finalized prior to Director Kotloski's tenure and is not open for changes. However, the board and community still have input on specific features, such as the theme and equipment for the playground, electrical needs for the pavilion, and the final placement of the memorial bricks. While the bricks have a placeholder location in the current plan, the advisory board will have input their permanent placement.

Vendors are being finalized, and once selections are made, the project will move quickly toward the bidding phase. Public input will be a key part of the process, residents will be provided with options and a community vote will determine the most popular features. Kotloski emphasized the importance of community involvement in final design decisions.

Board Member Olufs reflected on the original planning stages, noting there were initially three design options under consideration. He expressed a desire for increased advisory board involvement moving forward. Director Kotloski agreed and clarified that **Phase One** of the plan includes the walking path, playground, pavilion, and primary parking lot. **Phase Two** will include the south parking lot, restrooms, and baseball fields. She noted that while the baseball fields were originally thought to be part of Phase One, they were unexpectedly placed into Phase Two and cannot be moved back due to grant restrictions. Any changes to the original approved plan must be of "equal value". For example, relocating adult fitness stations is acceptable, but substituting them with baseball fields is not permitted.

Further discussion followed regarding details such as the layout of the pickleball courts and appropriate buffer zones. Kotloski explained that the current site plan intermixes elements from both phases, making it confusing for presentation. She has requested a standalone document outlining only Phase One for clarity and will share it with the advisory board upon receipt.

Board Member Hartman expressed concern about the advisory board's limited involvement, referencing the previous Sequoit Creek Park project. Kotloski acknowledged the concern and reiterated her commitment to keeping the advisory board actively involved

in the Centennial Park project moving forward. She noted that while she was not involved at the start, she intends to update and involve the board throughout the remainder of the process.

Board Member Deichsel inquired about plans to honor families who contributed to building the original park, particularly regarding the commemorative bricks. Kotloski agreed that this is an important element and welcomed suggestions from the board for how best to preserve/display the bricks or acknowledge the families.

Commission Applications:

There are currently no updates on commission applications. The application has only been posted internally but will soon be available on the village website. Once received, applications will be submitted to Village Clerk Lori Romine and reviewed by the board.

Director Kotloski also clarified a naming update: the board is officially referred to as the **Parks Advisory Board**, not the **Parks Commission Board**. All future documentation will reflect this correction.

Department Updates & Upcoming Events:

Director Kotloski shared several exciting updates from the Parks and Recreation Department, including highlights from the Fall and Winter Guide:

- **Antioch Investigates:** A paranormal research event that will take place tomorrow at the Parks and Recreation building.
- **Fall Wine Walk:** A few tickets are still available. Kotloski will send the event link to board members to help promote attendance.
- **House Decorating Contest:** Open for registration from October 1–15. Judging begins on October 16, with winners announced around October 24. Prizes will be awarded.
- **Santa Home Visits:** This popular program returned with strong early registration numbers.
- **Breakfast with Santa:** Hosted at the Community Center in collaboration with Dockers Restaurant, which has helped make pricing more affordable for families.
- **Hot Chocolate Walk:** Open for registration, with early signups already in place.
- **Harvest Fest – October 25:** No registration required. The event will feature an artisan market, DJ, stilt walker, bounce house, costume contest, and pumpkin roll. Treat the Streets will take place the same day from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., overlapping with Harvest Fest (12:00 – 4:00 p.m.) to ease downtown congestion and provide families with alternative activities.

Planning has already begun for the **Summer Concert Series, Shamrock Jam**, and the **Shamrock Shuffle 5K** on March 7. Based on feedback from last year, the Shamrock Shuffle will feature an actual 5K route, timing clock, and post-race festivities.

Cannabis Tax Inquiry:

Kotloski addressed a previous question from the board regarding whether cannabis tax revenue was designated for the Parks and Recreation Department. She confirmed that while the topic was discussed at the Village Board level, the proposal did not move forward. All local sales tax revenue is directed to the general fund and not earmarked for specific departments. Board Member Hartman requested voting records and documentation from the relevant meetings. Kotloski will research this further and noted that related materials are also available on the Village's website. She suspects the discussion took place during a Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting and may have not gone to voting but will verify.

Park Ordinance Update:

Following discussions at the last advisory board meeting, Kotloski presented the idea of creating a formal **Park Ordinance** to the Village Board. The proposal was well-received but has since generated questions due to the nature of the ordinance and village history. She has a meeting scheduled to discuss this further.

At a recent Village Board meeting, a proposed ordinance to restrict minors under 18 from being in Sequoit Park after dusk was brought forward but ultimately **rejected**.

Miss Antioch Pageant:

Director Kotloski reported that responsibilities for the Miss Antioch Pageant have now been fully transitioned to the pageant organizers. The Village will continue to provide storage space and logistical support, but all finances, applications, and management will be handled independently moving forward. No financial records from past years were available, but this year's program was successful, and a reimbursement check has been issued to the organizers.

Christmas Tree Lighting & Parade:

Preparations are underway for the annual **Christmas Tree Lighting and Holiday Parade**. Parade registration is currently open and will close in November to allow time for organizing the lineup.

Board Member Deichsel asked about progress on creating a **volunteer sign-up list** for events. Kotloski noted that a list is not yet finalized but will be developed soon. She

thanked the board for their patience as the department continues to manage a high volume of programs and activities.

8. Financial Reports for Period Ending August 31, 2025

The Commission reviewed the Financial Reports for the period ending August 31, 2025.

9. Next Meeting

The next Park Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 15, 2025 at 7:00 pm at the Antioch Village Hall.

10. Other Business

Prayer Vigil at Sequoit Creek Park

Board Member Hartman wanted to make Kotloski aware that there was a vigil scheduled for sequoit creek park this upcoming Sunday. Director Kotloski was made aware and stated that Aaron Petty from the Township had contacted the Village to inquire about organizing the event.

As there is currently no park ordinance in place governing the use of public spaces for gatherings, the Village does not have grounds to deny such events. However, Mr. Petty was asked to complete a Special Event Permit Application to ensure coordination and communication with relevant departments.

Once the application was submitted, Director Kotloski distributed it to all appropriate Village departments for review, including the Police Department, to allow them the opportunity to provide feedback or request further details. For example, departments may inquire about parking arrangements or public safety plans.

According to the submitted application, the organizers anticipate fewer than 200 attendees for the event.

11. Adjournment

Olufs/Hartman motion and second to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Vote –

Yes = 5

No = 0