



chicago park district
541 N. Fairbanks Chicago, IL. 60611

FORMATION OF A PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL **DRAFT**

Thank you for your interest in becoming more involved with your neighborhood park and community through the formation of a Park Advisory Council (PAC). The Chicago Park District (CPD) is committed to the improvement of its parks by enhancing their maintenance, beauty and recreational programs. A successful partnership between a PAC and the CPD can help enhance our parks as important centers of community activity.

These guidelines were developed as a result of requests from citizen groups seeking assistance in forming active councils so their community's needs can be organized and expressed accurately to the CPD. They outline the process for the formation and recognition of a PAC by the CPD and provide recommendations and requirements for the purpose and structure of a PAC and its members.

It is important to note that PACs are separate and independent entities apart from the CPD. Their role is to provide recommendations and suggestions to the CPD regarding their respective parks and have no authority or power related to the Chicago Park District, City of Chicago or State of Illinois. The CPD cannot provide any funding for a PAC and may not hold funds for a PAC. Membership on a PAC is voluntary and the CPD accepts no responsibility for the actions of PAC officers and members. The CPD reserves all authority to make policy and administrative decisions. PACs may not mandate activities, programs or policies. The CPD retains all authority to set fee structures and establish operating procedures for its facilities.

Within This Packet You Should Find the Following:

- 1) "Formation of a Park Advisory Council" Guidelines (7 pages)
- 2) "Intent to Form Park Advisory Council" Application Form
- 3) "Volunteer Application"
- 4) "Registration Agreement" (2 pages)
- 5) "Chicago Park District Park Advisory Council Code of Conduct"
- 6) "Chicago Park District Advisory Council By-laws" (4 pages minimum)
- 7) "Park Advisory Council Capital Partnership Pledge"
- 8) Condensed Parliamentary Procedure
- 9) Parkways Foundation information
- 10) Friends of the Parks information



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PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL GUIDELINES

PART I: STARTING THE PROCESS

Any park or playlot within the Chicago Park District (CPD) may be represented by a Park Advisory Council (PAC). **The CPD recognizes only one (1) registered PAC per park and an official PAC can represent the interest of only one park.**

Prior to beginning the PAC formation process, the CPD encourages you to contact the Park Supervisor or Area Manager to determine if a PAC exists or if others are interested in forming a PAC. Any resident of the City of Chicago can be a member of a PAC.

1. For parks or playlots **without** an existing PAC:
 - i. Any resident of the City of Chicago may convene the initial meeting of a PAC by filing an Intent to Form a Park Advisory Council application with the Park Supervisor or Area Manager.
 - ii. The Intent to Form a Park Advisory Council must include the date and time of the initial meeting of the PAC. This meeting should take place no sooner than 21 days and no later than 60 days from the date filed.
 - iii. The Park Supervisor or Area Manager must sign the Intent to Form a Park Advisory Council to ensure its proper filing and completion.
 - iv. The Park Supervisor or Area Manager will post notice of the initial meeting at the park no later than 14 days prior to the meeting date.
 - v. This meeting must be held at the park or, if no park space is available, at the nearest public facility.
 - vi. Interested residents should work closely with park staff to notify the community and local elected officials of the intent to form a new PAC.
2. If there is an **existing** PAC:
 - i. Park staff can provide you the PAC contact information or meetings.
 - ii. If a PAC has been formed you can become a member by attending the next PAC meeting and abiding by the PAC By-laws.
 - iii. If you are unable to obtain PAC information please contact the CPD Department of Legislative and Community Affairs at 312-742-5236.



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PART II: Initial Meeting and Election of Officers

If a PAC does not exist, the next step is to hold the initial meeting of the PAC. The purpose of the initial meeting is to determine interest in the PAC, complete the Volunteer Application, receive nominations for PAC officers and set the date for the next meeting.

At the initial meeting, Park District staff will be in attendance to assist with the coordination and order of the meeting. The CPD encourages the use of Robert's Rules of Order (condensed version included in this packet) to govern all PAC meetings.

At the initial meeting a sign-in sheet is to be circulated and each prospective member is to complete a Volunteer Application. The sign-in sheet and Volunteer Applications are to be attached to the Registration Agreement (see below).

At a minimum, each PAC must adhere to the following election principals:

- 1) Elections are to be held for the offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.
- 2) All officers of the PAC must be elected by the general membership.
- 3) Each member must be given an opportunity to vote for officers.
- 4) Each member is allowed one vote.
- 5) There is a two (2) year term of office for all officers.
- 6) PAC elections will occur once per year as determined by the CPD.
- 7) All elected officers of the PAC must read and sign a Registration Agreement.

All PACs must maintain a binder at their local park which contains meeting minutes, by-laws, attendance, financial statements, and member contact information.

Each PAC is free to include additional officers or sub-committees as it feels necessary. Once the initial officers have been elected the PAC is free to amend its by-laws to address its purposes, goals and membership needs. The CPD has provided some policy guidelines that a PAC shall keep in mind while further developing these needs.



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**PART III:
POLICY**

A. MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

The Chicago Park District recognizes the invaluable contribution of citizens' input as provided by a broad-based, representative advisory body. By completing the Registration Agreement it provides the CPD with the assurance that a PAC and its members will conform to commonly shared values. At a minimum these include:

1. **Every PAC member** must complete a Volunteer Application and consent to a background check.
2. All PAC's must include at least four (4) members including officers.
3. Members should be properly notified of all PAC meetings and activities. At a minimum, notice of any PAC meetings must be posted 14 days in advance at its respective park. Emergency meetings or meeting cancellations must be properly posted immediately by the PAC and the PAC must inform the Park Supervisor or Area Manager of such notices.
4. Park District employees may be members of PACs; however, they may not hold office in any PAC, and can only be a non-voting member at the park where they are employed. Employees must disclose their CPD employment.
5. Individuals may be members of more than one PAC, but can only hold office in one PAC. In addition, if an individual serves as an officer or staff of another non-profit or community organization serving the same park he must disclose this to the general membership immediately or risk being removed.
6. PACs should schedule regular meetings according to the needs of the park, and should attempt to meet quarterly. In order to maintain recognition as an official PAC, every PAC must meet once annually in order to accept nominations for election of officers.
7. PAC matters must be presented by officers and committee members to the PAC membership for full discussion and decision making.
8. A copy of the Park Advisory Council Code of Conduct must be provided to each member or posted in an open area for all to read.
9. Membership dues or fees of any type are not permitted.



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B. PURPOSE/GOALS

If possible the PAC's purposes/goals should be determined as soon as its officers are elected. Changes to existing purposes/goals can be made at subsequent meetings in accordance with the PAC by-laws. The following are items each PAC should consider when determining its purposes/goals:

1. The purpose/goals should have a positive impact on the park and the surrounding community.
2. The purpose of a PAC is to provide the CPD's appropriate local, regional and administrative staff an advisory voice on matters related to its specific park. These include, but are not necessarily limited to, facilities and equipment improvements, programming, landscaping, budgeting, safety/security and overall evaluation of service.
3. The CPD supports the idea of PACs conducting fund-raising events in cooperation with the local Park Supervisor and/or Area Manager, for the purpose of generating revenue to fund the purchase of equipment, additional programming or other improvements in partnership with CPD. (See Section D below for more information.)
4. PACs may establish committees if desired. Examples of such committees are: Program Committee, Fund-Raising and Promotions Committee, Garden Committee, Playlot Committee and Landscape Committee.

C. BY-LAWS

1. The CPD has developed a standard set of by-laws that contain the minimum requirements for all PACs. However, each PAC is encouraged to further develop its own by-laws to reflect its goals and purposes, but these should not conflict with CPD policies.
2. PACs must not discriminate because of disability, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, and marital status, unfavorable discharge from military service, parental status, or sexual orientation.
3. Any attendance requirements for voting must be established in the by-laws.



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D. DONATIONS, FUNDRAISING & FINANCIAL REPORTS

The CPD does not provide funding for PACs; however, they are encouraged to seek financial support for park programs, equipment or capital projects. Whenever a PAC solicits or obtains funds it must hold these funds in a separate account in the name of the PAC by either becoming a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization or working with a third-party fiscal agent, such as the Parkways Foundation or Friends of the Park. Examples of financial contributions include:

1. Capital Fundraisers and Donations. Capital improvements are generally repairs or improvements that are more permanent in nature and typically do not involve programs, equipment or operations. These require:

A. Notification to CPD: The PAC must notify the CPD of its intention to fund raise for capital improvements by filing a Capital Partnership Pledge form.

B. Executed Agreement: Before a project can be bid for construction the PAC must submit a copy of a bank statement indicating the total funds raised, as well as the specific purpose of the funds for execution of a final agreement.

a) A final agreement will be drafted between CPD and the PAC and must be signed by the PAC and the General Superintendent of the CPD or designee.

b) The CPD must receive the executed agreement and copy of bank statement prior to the CPD issuing spending authority.

C. Invoice: The PAC will be invoiced for the agreed donation amount by the CPD when the Purchase Order for a construction project has been issued.

2. Monetary and in-kind Donations. All monetary or in-kind donations (such as temporary equipment, refrigerators, computers or other similar assets) for a park **must** be reported to the CPD via a Donation Acceptance Form that is completed by the Park Supervisor/Area Manager. Monetary donations also must include a letter identifying the donation amount and purpose of the donation and a copy of the payment. The donor letter and check must be accepted and approved by the CPD before spending is permitted.

3. PACs are encouraged to establish themselves as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization for fundraising purposes or tax benefits. Additionally, a PAC may choose to appoint a third-party organization to act as its fiscal agent when receiving funds. CPD encourages you to contact the Parkways Foundation or Friends of the Parks to assist with this process.

4. All equipment and in-kind donations will be the property of the CPD and the CPD has the right to use these as they deem necessary. Additionally, the CPD has the right to refuse to accept any in-kind donation or capital improvement project at its sole discretion.

5. Financial records must be kept and made available upon request. Additionally, quarterly financial reports detailing the fund raising efforts toward the specific project should be submitted to the CPD. Funds raised by the PAC may not be used to pay the salary of a member, officer, CPD staff or other organization for their efforts.



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E. COMPLAINT REVIEW PROCESS

This review process is designed solely for the purpose of reviewing complaints from PACs regarding actions of members acting on behalf of their PAC.

1. The officers of the PAC have the responsibility of monitoring the actions and activities of their PAC as a whole. The objectives set by the individual PACs must be lawful, good for the community and not conflict with CPD policies.
2. The PAC has the right to review the actions of an individual member, officer, or group of members or officers acting on behalf of the PAC. The PAC may consider separation of a member, officer, or group of members or officers should they deem it appropriate based on just cause.
3. PACs should respond to any complaints in writing and file a copy of the response in the file kept at its respective park. Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the response, they have the right to appear before the PAC's general membership to voice their concern.
4. If the above procedures fail to reach an amicable conclusion the complainant has a right to file a written appeal with the PAC Oversight Panel, which details the complaint, the steps taken and the result. The Oversight Panel will provide the final opinion on the matter. For more information on the PAC Oversight Panel or how to become a member please contact the Department of Legislative and Community Affairs.

F. REGISTRATION AGREEMENT

In order to complete the PAC formation process each PAC must complete a Registration Agreement after its members are elected. This agreement constitutes the basic partnership between the CPD and the PAC. Each member of the PAC is expected to respect the terms of the agreement in order to retain the PAC's official designation. Once complete, the fully executed Registration Agreement must be mailed to the **Department of Legislative & Community Affairs, 541 N. Fairbanks Ct., Chicago, Illinois 60611**. The CPD will return a copy of the fully executed Registration Agreement when it has determined the PAC has complied with all requirements.

Only when all documents are in order and the PAC and its applicants are in compliance with any and all CPD policies and guidelines can a PAC become recognized as an official Park Advisory Council by the Chicago Park District.

The above Chicago Park District guidelines are required of every PAC.



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CONCLUSION

We hope that you find these guidelines and additional information helpful to your formation of a Park Advisory Council. By being a recognized Park Advisory Council with the Chicago Park District you are entitled to several benefits.

Including:

- Training workshops and seminars sponsored by the CPD
- Appropriate space (where/when available) for meetings of PAC's at local parks
- A mailbox at the local park
- A link to your Park Advisory Council web page included on the CPD web-site
- Invitation to the annual "Advisory Council Appreciation Day" picnic
- Updates on various park projects and programs
- Recognized as an organization that can effectively relate your community's goals and visions for its park to the Chicago Park District

In addition to these benefits, you will surely find that being a member of a Park Advisory Council is a very rewarding and fulfilling experience. If you have any questions about the formation process, please contact your local Park Supervisor, Area Manager or the Department of Legislative and Community Affairs at 312-742-5236.

Thank you and we look forward to working with you to continue to enhance your park.