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March 2021

Dear Fellow Residents,

It has been a pleasure to serve as President of the Park District with such a wonderful board and staff. We are proud of our recent accomplishments and are excited about future opportunities we have under consideration. At the end of this letter you will see how to access a survey – please complete it so we can direct our efforts to areas you feel will be most valuable.

Here are the highlights from last year and ideas for the future:

Kenilworth Assembly Hall

Kenilworth Assembly Hall is a treasured building in our community. For those of us who have lived here for a while, we have many fond memories of community gatherings, award ceremonies, and fun parties.

- In February of 2020, we completed and celebrated the installation of a new lighting system inspired by the original lighting and new technology capabilities. What you see is the original 1907 lighting design, but we can now bring those lights up from dim candlelight, to dancing spotlights, and all the way to daylight. Hidden LED lighting reveals many of the building's unique architectural features that were previously obscured by poor lighting.
- In March of 2020, new COVID guidelines restricted indoor and outdoor gatherings. While many park districts focused on what they could not do, our team focused on what we could do. We learned that we could do a lot of things and that our west lawn was a gem hiding right in front of our eyes. Many of you enjoyed the picnic tables, new Adirondack chairs (Eagle Scout project), and fire pits while gathering at outdoor concerts and enjoying meals from rotating food trucks. The turnout and community support for these new socially-distanced programs and gatherings were wonderful. Thank you!
- In 2019, with help from the Village, we installed two large French drains and sump pumps to mitigate drainage problems on the southeast and west lawns. By eliminating standing water and minimizing mosquito breeding concerns, we could hold the community events described above.
- It's now 2021, and the Assembly Hall can host events with masks and limited numbers based on current local and CDC guidelines. Please reserve this beautiful, historic space for your next event.
- To further enhance this treasured building and grounds, we have two significant projects under consideration.
 - o The first is constructing a patio with landscaping on the building's west side to accommodate outdoor gatherings, making the Assembly Hall more attractive for private events, such as resident parties, not-for-profit events, and wedding receptions. This project also includes repairing the foundation and adding a new accessible entrance and accessible parking spaces. And courtesy of a Troop 13 Eagle Scout project, we anticipate a bocce ball court by early summer.

- o The second project under consideration is constructing a temporary coiled skating rink on the west lawn, allowing for community skating (no hockey) in the winters from December through March. The lights are already in place; all we need is to install the ice and for the weather to stay below 40 degrees.

Summer Camps

Last summer, we watched our neighboring communities cancel most of their summer camp offerings. Our team, committed to offering something for our residents and children, developed three different camp options. Ultimately, their hard work paid off and we offered a successful outdoor summer program with appropriate safety precautions. We appreciated the trust and support from all the families that participated. This summer, we hope to return to our traditional programs, but we have also developed options if COVID restrictions remain. We are more committed than ever to offering our residents fun, energetic, and safe programming, so sign your children up soon!

Kenilworth Parks

Last fall, we worked with the Village to celebrate Kenilworth's parks with fun special events throughout October. Over the last year, we all have learned just how vital parks and public spaces are to us. By highlighting Kenilworth's parks, we aimed to understand better how residents use the parks and how we might improve them. While the Park District maintains most of the parks within the Village, many of you may not know which entity owns which property. The Park District owns Townley Field and the playground at the south end of Townley, Charles Ware Memorial Garden, Centennial Park, Pee-Wee Baseball Field and playground to the north east, and the two parks just west of Green Bay Road -- Maggi Park and North Park. The Village owns Mahoney Park, Water Tower Park, and the Kenilworth Beach. With the guidance and assistance of our amazing garden clubs, the Park District maintenance group installs and maintains the beautiful flowers and plantings that surround the water fountain, adorn the urns on Kenilworth Avenue and Sheridan Road, and enhance our parkways.

Townley Field

Townley Field is an absolute Kenilworth treasure. For decades it has been the site of school athletic events and gym classes, community recreational activities, and countless sporting events, including football, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, baseball, and rugby. Given the heavy use and almost two decades without significant improvements, I am sure you will agree that Townley Field needs our attention. We are considering plans to:

- o relocate the Green Bay Trail along the railroad tracks (if we can purchase or lease land from Union Pacific),
- o reorient the field to best accommodate the many sports and activities,
- o replace the ancient lighting and aging residential sprinkler systems,
- o install a temporary coiled hockey rink (December -March),
- o plant new landscaping,
- o add and enhance playgrounds and playground equipment, and
- o seek public opinion on replacing the Village House with an indoor sports facility (Field House) that would complement the School's new masterplan.

As mentioned at the beginning of this letter, our survey can be found by visiting our website at www.kpdistrict.org. A link is posted on our front page. We are a small park district, but we are incredibly proud of our recent accomplishments and are excited to work with you to improve our offerings to the Kenilworth community.

Thank you again for your past and continued support.

John W. Hart
Kenilworth Park District Board President