

LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 20, 2026

Special Meeting / Public Hearing to hear Benton Engineering's prospective design for Memorial Park to be included in the 2026 Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Grant from Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) for the 2027 grant cycle.

The Lincoln Park District Board of Commissioners present were Dave Perring and Gary Nodine, among staff including Becky Strait, Vern Haseley, William Hutchison, and Angela Coombs. No quorum was present for this meeting.

PRESENTATION OF POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS TO MEMORIAL PARK:

Becky greeted the public with a brief introduction, where she explained that the meeting was part of the criteria to apply for the IDNR OSLAD grant. She assured attendees that improvements would be made without grant funds, but the process may be extended without matching funds. Some of the planned upgrades include a disc golf course, new pavilion with an ADA path and parking, along with either upgrading or adding on to the playground. There are plans to update the drive, but that would need to be separate from the grant.

Becky introduced Greg Hollis, of Benton Engineering, a firm in Jacksonville with a successful history of assisting local government entities of applying for such grants.

Greg greeted the group and explained that a million design possibilities exist for grant applications. He emphasized that what will be included in the presentation are simply schematics. For example, the picture of the playground shown does not mean that exact model/set up would be installed, and that it simply shows a representation of the type of ADA playground LPD anticipates adding to or replacing the existing unit. The visual aids are to help give a general idea of what is in mind when applying for the grant. Once the grant is awarded, then LPD and the engineering firm can work together to decide on the details.

One visual aid displayed the aerial view of Memorial Park. Greg pointed out where the Farm Bureau pavilion is currently and explained that it needs replacement. Greg explained what OSLAD stands for and elaborated how the State's purpose for this grant is to help design spaces to incentivize the public in getting outdoors in open spaces. DNR is also very supportive of measures taken to protect and replenish trees and other natural aspects. Therefore, this plan does not include the removal of any trees.

Greg continued to explain that the idea to install an 18-hole disc golf course was in part due to the combined open spaces, clusters of trees, and the overall canopy of the park; all of which would appeal to those that play. The course would be a mid-level difficulty at around 6,000 feet.

The blown-up photos on display showed a concept for the new pavilion, which would include an ADA path leading to ADA parking. The plan is to install this upgraded pavilion adjacent to the playground, with another path connecting the two features. He mentioned that the existing pavilion is nearing the end of its life and will need to be replaced.

Greg detailed that the Board's budget for the project was \$500,000.00, which is eligible to apply for OSLAD's 50/50 match option, and would result in \$250,000.00 of state grant funds. The

LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 20, 2026

engineers tried to design a concept that would get the public “the most bang for their buck”. He continued to state that these elements were all part of the Park District’s 2021 Comprehensive Plan, which was reviewed prior to their work started.

Becky thanked Greg for his presentation and explained that she wanted to share some of the comments received via Facebook, since some individuals were unable to attend the meeting. Regarding tree removal, Becky explained that the Board of Commissioners have had a long-standing commitment to maintain and improve the park’s canopy. In fact, there is a plan to continue planting after the installation of improvements are completed. Becky verified that disc golf was a very popular topic and will proceed even without the OSLAD grant. Questions about wildflowers, dog stations, and including youth in the planning were all posted, and LPD will be reviewing them all as part of the planning and design aspects continue. A Skate park was listed, which likely will not fit in with this plan, but may be included in future plans, as well as redeveloping one of the diamonds. For example, Becky stated that the Board has gone back and forth about the possibility of reconnecting the road, which would impact one of the diamonds in question.

Becky stated that Jake Haseley had commented on Facebook, and Becky asked if he was present, which he was. Jake explained that he used to live in Florida and had been a member of a disc golf club. One had a walking/running path throughout the course, which Becky stated that it was something to consider for Memorial Park. Clifford Scott inquired about events such as the Shady Car Show, and if they would still be held in the park if a disc golf course would be added. Dave Perring, one of the organizers of the Car Show, stated that the cars can still be out in the Park, as they would be in only part of the park. Greg stated that he would send someone this weekend, which is the date of this year’s event, to see which parts of the park are used. Shelly Miller stated that often she and her spouse travel to a course, and it is closed for the day due to an event, and they just go to another course. Dave explained that the patrons of the Car Show are very respectful of the park and the number is usually 200-225 cars each year. Sam Downs expressed concern about if people are playing and others are trying to walk within the park. Jake and others stated that most disc golfers will politely wait for the course/hole to clear before throwing in that direction.

Becky stated that the Board is open to public discussion and suggestions on the plan. She reiterated that the Board plans to update the park’s features with or without the OSLAD grant, but without will extend the process. Brenda Scott inquired as to the timeline for the grant. Greg explained that community support is an important aspect of the application, and that letters of support are included in the application, which help smaller entities like Lincoln compete against bigger project applications out of Chicago and its suburbs. Becky stated that she would be willing to compose a basic template for those that would like a little assistance on how to get started on a letter of support. Greg continued to verify that the application deadline is August 31st, 2026 and that the award announcement usually is in January-February, but has been moved up to November, likely due to it being an election year. If the State does keep the November deadline, it will be the fastest turnaround to date. However, even if the award is announced, the Board would not get the agreement until January, which is the pivotal date. This may delay the process until possibly even 2028, depending on the State.

LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 20, 2026

Sam Downs stated that he loves Memorial Park and asked if there were any plans to highlight the historical significance of the park in the upcoming plans. He also mentioned that he likes the fact that the road currently does not loop through the park, and inquired about fixing the road. Dave pointed out that previous installations honoring and bringing attention to the history have been damaged or destroyed in the past, but new ideas and suggestions are welcome for consideration. Becky explained that there are plans to fix the road, but, unfortunately, the road is considered infrastructure and cannot be part of the grant application; that improvement will have to be funded 100% by LPD. Currently, Becky has been speaking with Bret Aukamp, of Logan County's Highway Department, on this topic.

Jake Haseley asked about the possibility of applying for other State grants, not just DNR's OSLAD, but such as ITEP (Illinois Transport Enhancement Program), which assists with walking paths, trails and bike paths. Greg stated that he is open to looking into those possibilities and will contact Becky if any become available.

Angela Stoltzenburg inquired about the remaining concrete pad from an older, fallen pavilion, and if it was part of the plan. Becky stated that it was not currently part of the grant's design, but assured her that the Board would be looking at that and other features when planning improvements beyond the grant specifications. Angela agreed with Sam when he said that the history should be highlighted, and Becky agreed saying that she hopes to install a historical walking path where there are plaques along the way telling the history of the park. Angela commended the Park Board for their interest in improving the park and seeking grant funding to extend the improvement.

Becky explained that the past few years, Lincoln was listed as a "distressed community" by OSLAD's standards, but that the State reworked those parameters and Lincoln is no longer listed as "distressed". The distressed distinction would have made Lincoln eligible for 90% of the grant funding from OSLAD, and LPD would have been required to pay the remaining 10%, which would have allowed for more improvements as part of the grant. Greg verified that the State keeps restructuring their calculations and factors, most recently with the intent of implementing a new facet of the grant award process, which would share and spread out the awards throughout the State. Shelly Miller stated that some disc golf courses have fundraised and each hole has its own sponsor.

Greg stated that Nokomis recently publicized that their pool had a leak and they intended to apply for a grant to help fund the project but received \$300,000+ in donations from the community to cover the repairs, which shows community support. Shelly Miller asked if a committee could be organized to add public opinion to the design discussion. Becky stated that she will look into that when the time came, as Greg had mentioned, that would be a little later in the process. Greg added that the length of the possible course would help make it unique, and yet the park is spacious enough to leave options for future additions. Becky did explain that the presented course may need to be adjusted, for example, there is a large gully in one area that may need to be avoided. Nikki Chapman stated that she used to walk her dogs in that exact area, and it might actually add to the course difficulty.

LINCOLN PARK DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 20, 2026

Angela Stoltzenburg pointed out that the park is also used for Cross Country Meets.

Becky thanked everyone for coming and expressed her appreciation for everyone's input on the matter. She looks forward to future discussions on improving Memorial Park. Before adjourning the meeting, she reminded everyone to email her a letter of support if they wish to contribute to the application process; listing the importance of the park to the community and its recreational value, as well as the uniqueness of the plans to improve the park and how it will impact the community.

The Public Hearing adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Seeing no further project details to discuss, Laura Duffer made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 p.m. Dave Perring moved to second the motion, motion carried.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.