



CITY OF CHICAGO

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COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL EVENTS, CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND RECREATION  
CITY COUNCIL  
CITY HALL - ROOM 200  
121 NORTH LASALLE STREET  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

ALDERMAN NICHOLAS SPOSATO  
CHAIRMAN

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## COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL EVENTS, CULTURAL AFFAIRS & RECREATION MONTHLY RULE 45 REPORT SEPTEMBER 2021

Pursuant to Rule 45 of the City Council Rules of Order, the Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation submits the following Monthly Rule 45 Report for September 2021.

### **Date, Time & Location of Meeting:**

On September 2, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. the Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation held a virtual video conference meeting, Chicago, Illinois.

### **Attendance:**

The following members were virtually present at the September 2, 2021 Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation Meeting: Chairman Sposato (38), Vice-Chair Vasquez (40), LaSapata (1), Sadlowski-Garza (10), Rodriguez (22), Tabares (23), Taliaferro (20), Cardona (31), Nugent (39), Tunney (44), Gardiner (45), Martin (47), Hadden (49), and Silverstein (50).

The following member(s) were not present at the September 2, 2021 Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation Meeting: King (4), Osterman (48),

The following non-member Alderman were present: Dowell (3), Burnett (27), Waguespack (32)

### **The Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation addressed the following items:**

Approval of the June 2021 Monthly Rule 45 Report for the Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation.

*APPROVED BY COMMITTEE 9/2//2021*

A2021-134 an Appointment of Modesto Tico Valle as Commissioner of Chicago Park District  
*PASSED COMMITTEE 9/2//2021*

A2021-135 an Appointment of Myetie H. Hamilton as Commissioner of Chicago Park District  
*PASSED COMMITTEE 9/2//2021*

O2021-3241 an Expenditure of Open Space Impact Fee funds for new turf fields and running track at Talcott Fine Arts and Museum Academy, 1840 W. Ohio Street.  
*PASSED COMMITTEE 9/2/2021*

September 2, 2021, 3:00 p.m. Meeting of Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation

**Chairman Sposato called the meeting to order (which was held virtually, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.) Chairman Sposato then took roll call, which established a quorum of members present and noted that their “yes” or “present “ response will be determined as a “yes” vote when this quorum roll call is used as a reference vote for later items.**

Chairman Sposato – announces that there are no speakers signed up for public comment.

Chairman Sposato called for the approval of the first item on the agenda, the **June 2021 Monthly Rule 45 Report** for the Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation. Alderman Vasquez moved to approve the Monthly Rule 45 Report. Hearing no objections the item was approved.

The Chairman informs the members that he will hear items two and three together **A2021-134** an appointment of Modesto Tico Valle and **A2021-135**, and Myetie H. Hamilton as Commissioners of the Chicago Park District.

Chairman Sposato states that he will give both of them a little opportunity to tell the committee about themselves, just a brief outline of who they are, what they do and why they’re interested in this. He called on Myetie to speak first.

Myetie Hamilton introduced herself and said that she was born and raised in south shore and attended Chicago Public Schools. Went to Alabama A& M which is an HBCU and came back to Chicago for graduate school. She expressed her love of the parks saying she spent growing years there. For her career, she spent 18 years in education at the Chicago Public Schools in different administrative roles and the last role was in the district as a deputy network chief where she co- led and oversaw 28 schools. She was an executive director for 3 years at City Year Chicago, a nonprofit that provides mentoring and near peer support and tutoring to students in over 32 schools throughout the city. She looks at this opportunity as a way to further her service to our city and deepen the relationship between the schools and the Park District which she believes is so important right now to help us address some of the issues with our young people.

The Chairman thanked Myetie and since no committee members wished to speak yet he recognized Alderwoman Dowell who wished to speak on behalf of Myetie Hamilton.

Alderwoman Dowell expressed that she felt Myetie was a very stellar appointment by the mayor. She said she has known Myetie for a number of years and finds her to be very highly collaborative, in terms of making sure that she is able to bring people together to make good decisions, to make things happen in our communities.

Chairman Sposato then asked Modesto to tell the committee a little bit about himself.

Modesto Tico Valle introduced himself. He stated that he was born in Puerto Rico and grew up in Lincoln Park during the 70’s and 80’s when urban renewal came through and condemned many homes and many blocks. He remained in Lincoln Park and said the parks for him were a lifesaver. He expressed that there was a consistency of knowing that he could go to the parks after school,

and weekends to play little league. He also worked an internship program with the Park District. Modesto said his whole life has been about giving back to the community due to his mother's upbringing. He went to Notre Dame Seminary, and returned to Chicago, to DePaul. He stated that he had been an activist all his life for the LGBTQ especially around the Aides movement. He helped spearhead the work of opening the Center on Halsted with the support of Alderman Tunney and he hopes to bring transparency, respect and integrity to the Chicago Park District position in the spirit of collaboration.

Chairman Sposato thanked Modesto and recognized Alderman Tunney to speak. Alderman Tunney thanked the Chairman and commended the Mayor on this great appointment. He said that they worked together for probably 40 years in around Lakeview Park. He said that he thinks Modesto (Tico) understates his work at the Center. That Modesto (Tico) was all about programming and engaging youth. Tunney added that he believes that is a really important aspect to bring to the Park District Board and how to work on expanding opportunities for everyone to make use of the Parks and programming.

Chairman Sposato thanked Alderman Tunney and recognized Vice Chair Vasquez who stated that we are in times where there are a lot of questions about the Park District in general. There have been scandal on top of scandal and his questions are largely based around that and his vote will be based on the responses. At that point Chairman Sposato interjected and said he wanted to clarify one thing. There aren't people who are here with the recent Park District. These are new people being appointed to the board. Vice Chair Vasquez responded that their opinions on the matter is pertinent and that is why he is asking. Chairman pointed out they are "proposed" to be.

Vice Chair Vasquez continued saying that in light of the sexual assault allegations and the firing of the investigator in those allegations he would like to know the perspective of both candidates. Looking at the fact that they may be appointed to the board and in some regard responsible for the future of how people view the park district.

Chairman Sposato asked if either one of the candidate wants to answer the question or take a pass he's fine with it. Saying it didn't happen under their watch and invited her to make any comment she would like.

Myetie Hamilton replied that she looked at this from a multitude of perspectives, being a woman, and as a mother of teenage daughters. She believes that the parks are a public trust and so we should lead through this with transparency, integrity and urgency around resolving it. Myetie said that she understands that there is an external party that did an investigation and a report will be made available. She added that she would be happy to join this board and work to bring a resolve with the proper mitigations that are necessary so this will never happen again.

Chairman Sposato thanked Myetie and recognized Modesto (Tico). Modesto acknowledged that he too supported the things that have been said. He thinks we have an obligation to create a safe environment too. Not only for employees and there is no reason for sexual harassment and he takes that very seriously in his work place as well. He said that he doesn't know the details except what he heard on TV but will take responsibility as a public servant to insure the parks and workplace is a safe place for all.

Chairman Sposato thanked Modesto and returned to Vice Chair Vasquez for another question.

Vice Chair Vasquez questioned why Amazon lockers were placed in parks without knowledge of most of the Council. He felt the Park District sometimes asks for funding for repairs etc., yet there was an agreement to be made where Amazon is paying somewhere between \$50 - \$125 a locker to take up public space and Aldermen were not aware.. He feels other local businesses are not able to take advantage of this opportunity and asked "how do you view large corporations seeking to take over an area of the public parks and how should that process go forward when it comes to such agreements?"

The Chairman recognized Myetie to respond and she stated that she did not have a lot of knowledge about this and does not want to be critical of it because she doesn't know why the decision was made. She did express that in general there's an opportunity here for collaboration between the Park District, Communities and the Alderman.

Chairman then recognized Modesto who said he believes that these types of decisions need to be made with community and staff collaboration and money doesn't solve everything. We must be careful to protect our programs.

Vice Chair Vasquez said he appreciated that the Chairman pointed out they were not currently part of the District but it is important to know the mindset of the people who want to be appointed to the board.

Chairman Sposato noted that Alderwoman Sadlowski-Garza reached out to him about the lockers and that he is in no way an expert on it. But will reach out to Mike Kelly about it. It's my understanding that it's a convenience for people in the neighborhood to have a safe lit easy way to get packages and we got a couple of bucks on top of it. I did see some pictures posted where they were in terrible spots.

Chairman Sposato next recognized Alderwoman Hadden who thanked both candidates for accepting the Mayor's offer. She wanted to point out that with the organization of the Chicago Park District, if they are appointed their role on the Board of Commissioners they're not only in charge of the superintendent but you're also parallel with the office of the Inspector General. Alderwoman Hadden wanted to express her concerns, saying she was glad to hear that there's an independent report coming out and asked that if they are appointed to these positions she would like to hear from them in their role as commissioners to the public. The Alderwoman also said her residents have a lot of concerns about what they are reading in the news and expressed that she hopes to hear from them to get more understanding on the issue of the sexual harassment allegations and what's been happening with the inspector general's office. She said her second question was important to the residents of the 49<sup>th</sup> Ward right now. There are many parks along the beach and we are in the aftermath of losing another life to drowning. The Alderwoman said they are working with the Park District to try and evaluate how we can have more lifesaving equipment and signage. She's asked for a simple yes or no, to answer if it was a concern of theirs. They both responded yes.

Chairman recognized Alderman LaSpata who said he wanted to educate folks by letting them know that the Chicago Park district was created by the state. He said the only formal role of accountability as council, is vetting the approval of nominees to the board. The Alderman said the Amazon contract may be a source of revenue for the parks for which have a relatively narrow budget. He would like to let the new appointees going into the Park District Board know that he would want to see it be fiscally solvent. He asked as persons who have successfully grown nonprofit organizations in the city how do they bring that mindset to an organization the size of the Park District?

The Chairman recognized Modesto Tico Valle who stated that we will have to be innovative. That for the Center on Halsted he used innovative designs off fund raising. Not seeing the complicated budget and understanding the gaps for Park District he said he would bring all his understanding to look at how we can be innovative trying to secure more funding to close the gap.

Myetie spoke up and added that the financial solvency is incredibly important. She actually ended their year as a nonprofit with \$600 K surplus in the midst of a virtual environment and the challenges of the pandemic. She said they will currently be identifying opportunities we can leverage over our parks and communities, the landscape of some of our museums and host events to bring in more revenue.

Alderman LaSpata asked “what do we think about TV in engaging regional town halls and community engagement sessions for things we do in our wards?” He does not feel that the public is brought in, in a meaningful way for the Park District planning process.

Chairman recognized Modesto who said he appreciated Town Hall Meetings and the hearing on budget. He believes there should be more social media via in person, accessible to people who don't understand finances or who can't read or write or who have disabilities. He would like to engage all walks of life and thinks we should find out why the community is not using the parks and try to engage them to do so.

Chairman recognized Myetie who said that she is in agreement. Starting the process earlier is better so that people are aware and that the community members can have access like Tico said. She feels it's very important to engage the community members in multiple ways.

Chairman Sposato recognizes non committee member, Alderman Waguespack.

Alderman Waguespack said that he wants to make a couple of comments about sexual assault and harassment allegations that we've seen at the Park District. He would like for the two appointees, as they come on as Chicago Park District Board members to go in and take a look at how they're going to tackle this issue. He said in his review of the Chicago Park District harassment policy it is not very robust and needs to be improved. He went on to say these are problems that have been going on for decades and cannot be resolved overnight by making a few changes or putting in a third party report. The City Council does not have any power to remove anybody. Only the Park District officials do. This has to be done internally and people need to be held accountable. He said we have to take this on for the victims and we have to make sure we have a strong system in place to stop retaliation and sexual harassment of any kind in the city. He stated that he and his colleagues will be watching and hoping the appointees take on this task as a priority.

Chairman Sposato thanked Alderman Waguespack and said he would like to put in his two cents. He said that he will be 63 years old next month and has been active in parks his whole life. Parks did not have as many activities as they do now. Kids had to entertain themselves. Some of his proudest moments were building two new parks in his ward. He says “build” because when you ask the Park District to build one they ask how much are you going to contribute. He now has five awesome parks that he is very proud of. Chairman Sposato also wanted to recognize that these are two awesome appointments to the board.

The Chairman asked for a motion to pass these appointments (**A2021-134 and A2021-135**) by the same roll call vote used to determine quorum. Alderwoman Hadden so moved. Hearing no

objections, the item passed and was reported out at the September 14, 2021, City Council meeting.

Chairman Sposato introduced Item number four on the agenda; **O2021-3241** an Expenditure of open space impact fee funds for a new turf field and running track at Talcott Fine Arts and Museum Academy, 1840 W. Ohio Street in the first ward.

The Chairman introduced Meg Gustafson from the Department of Planning and Development to give the presentation on this new multipurpose field.

Meg Gustafson states that the proposal in the presentation before you is for Talcott School. They plan to do a new turf field and running track. The total project cost of this phase is 950K dollars. The plan is to expend 650K dollars in Open Space Impact Fees and the remainder of the fees will come from the state and capital funds. The project will put in an artificial turf field on the eastern half and there will be a phase II coming down the road which will be programming and install playground equipment later down the road as well. Megan has Danny Park from the schools here if there are specific questions about how CPS does these things and the first ward Alderman Daniel LaSpata who is a proponent of this project.

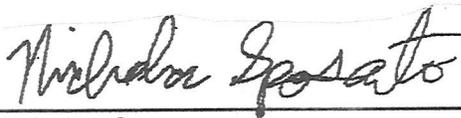
Chairman Sposato thanked Meg for the presentation. He congratulated Alderman LaSpata, noted there were no questions from the members and asked him to tell the committee a little about the project.

Alderman LaSpata said these are our projects because we have Alderman at the start of our names, but this would not be here if it wasn't for leaders in the community like Mr. Park. Miss Judith Geitner and Sabbir, one of our parents in the community who helped with the initial design. Dell Ramirez was leading the charge on this with official funds that came in around state capital budget. It's a team effort including of course, Meg Gustafson whom we've been so fortunate to work with. He asked for the committees' favorable consideration on the project.

The Chairman asked for a motion to pass this item (**O2021-3241**) by the same roll call vote used to determine quorum. Alderman LaSpata so moved. Hearing no objections, the item passed and was reported out at the September 14, 2021 City Council meeting.

Chairman Sposato – "There being no further business before the Committee, do I hear a motion to adjourn? So moved by Alderman Cardona. Hearing no objections. So ordered." The Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation is now adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Nicholas Sposato,  
Chairman, Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation