



**THE VILLAGE OF HAWTHORN WOODS  
HAWTHORN WOODS IN BLOOM COMMITTEE MEETING  
2 LAGOON DRIVE, HAWTHORN WOODS, ILLINOIS  
Wednesday, April 24, 2024  
6:00 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Ms. Vondrasek called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. Roll call indicated the following members were present: Lauren Vondrasek, Appaji Valavala, Farah Laman, DiAnn Meagher, Sally Folkes, and newest member Rosey Madulara. Members absent: Karen Johansen, Bob Riddle, Pam Scaletta, Beryl Ibbotson, and Samina Imtiaz. A quorum being present, the meeting proceeded.

Trustee Liaison Present: James W. Kaiser

Also present, Chief Operating Officer Pamela O. Newton, Parks and Recreation Director, Brian J. Sullivan.

**II. OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE**

Member Laman made a motion to open the floor to the Public and Member Valavala seconded. No one from the public appeared before the committee.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES DATED FEBRUARY 28, 2024**

Motion by member Laman to approve the minutes of February 28, 2024 seconded by member Valavala.

Roll call vote.

Ayes: Laman, Valavala, Vondrasek, Madulara, Meagher, Folkes

Nays: None

Absent: Johanson, Riddle, Scaletta, Ibbotson, Imtiaz

Motion carried.

**IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES**

**A. Chief Operating Officer- Pamela O. Newton**

1. Introduction of Jen Sprow. Pam indicated that due to a miscommunication in inviting Jen we would need to postpone her introduction until the next HWIB scheduled meeting.
2. Pam announced America in Bloom Advisors. Carrie Sears hales from Somers, New York. After retiring from a career as a science teacher, Carolynn (Carrie) Sears became a Master Gardener (2008), an Advanced Master Gardener, and a member of the Pound Ridge Conservation Board (2010- 2020). She founded The Invasives Project-Pound Ridge in the winter of 2012. Understanding, protecting, and enjoying the environment is a long-standing passion for her, reinforced with time in the garden. From 2021-2022,

Carrie guided the town's participation in America in Bloom, culminating in recognition for outstanding achievement in community involvement and special recognition for celebrating its heritage. Carrie has a BA from Marietta College, a MS from Bank Street College, and a PhD from The Union Institute.

Connie Baggett comes to us via Brewton, Alabama, where she has spent 11 years working to improve her hometown. Under her leadership focusing on design, quality of life improvement and enhanced marketing and online communications, the city has made great strides in economic development. Baggett worked for more than 20 years for the Mobile Register as an award-winning regional journalist, columnist and photographer. Currently, all the experience comes into play as she works on the Brewton Council of the Arts, Tree and Beautification Board and various other civic boards. Connie has earned recognition for her leadership in the local America in Bloom program, Leadership Alabama and was named Alabama Communities of Excellence STAR Local Coordinator for 2018. In her spare time, Connie enjoys singing, songwriting, and regional theater. She graduated from the University of South Alabama with a BA in Communication. We will be hosting these two with help from the HWIB Committee. On Thursday June 6, 2024 we will gather at a reception once again hosted by Mayor DiMaggio, at his home. HWIB will also be asked to join us at the first Concert in the Park on June 7, 2024 to picnic and show a warm Hawthorn Wood welcome to our advisors. Pam stated that Connie is an accomplished guitar player and performer. Maybe we will entice her to play and sing a song or two for our community.

Pam went on to discuss the possibility of a new beautifully designed community entrance sign that will garner more points for public art in the AIB competition. Chris Heinen, Community Development Director, working with Pam has designed these signs with a metal Hawthorn Tree. They have secured Village Board approval for these one-of-a-kind welcome to Hawthorn Woods artistic creations.

Pam discussed the success of the village to end the lawsuit centering on a failed proposal to erect a massive solar farm in Hawthorn woods to the west of Heritage Oaks Park and Fairfield Road. The successful initiative to fight the solar farm on ecological and environmental grounds, centered on acquiring several home owners in unincorporated Lochanora subdivision to voluntarily seek to be annexed into the village.

Pam concluded her report, by alerting the committee that she procured a donation of 100 Rose plants and had park personnel install them in areas she designated throughout the community.

## **B. Parks and Recreation Update- Brian Sullivan**

1. Brian announced that he has the Garden of the Month Yard signs in his office for the committee to utilize to designate six Excellence in Gardening award winners.
2. Brian announced the annual Tree Give Away event will be held on Saturday, May 4, 2024 from 9 am until noon at the Aquatic Center. He solicited volunteers to help.

Lauren Vondrasek offered to have seed packets available with HWIB stamped to be available as additional give away items.

3. Brian asked the committee to secure volunteers to assist in the preparation for the AIB Advisors visit, by weeding the Phoebe Snetsinger and Leo and Naomi Bernett Gardens at Community Park.

## **V. Committee Chair Updates/Ideas**

- A. Flowers and Landscaping- Byrl Ibbotson- No report.
- B. Celebrating Heritage - No report.
- C. Monarch Butterflies / Pollinators Lauren Vondrasek - No Report but will have more to discuss under New Business.
- D. Urban Forestry – Lauren Vondrasek will ask the committee to realign priorities in the future and leave this topic area to the Sustainability Committee.
- E. Fundraising and Special Events – Bob Riddle - No report.
- F. Garden of the Month- Karen Johanson and DiAnn Meagher – No Report.
- G. Public Relations – Sally Folkes - Discussed past efforts with trifold brochure design and working relationship that was excellent with village staff namely Amy Mason and Kim Stewart. Pam added that soon Jen Sprow would be assisting public engagement activities internally at the village. Both Pam Newton and Lauren Vondrasek thanked Sally for the great job she did and look forward to more efforts in the future.

## **VI. New Business**

- A. Lauren Vondrasek led a discussion with the committee that generated several ideas and changes proposed for the evolution of the HWIB group in 2024 and beyond. The key points were as follows;
  - 1 - add Trustee Kaiser to agenda
  - 2 - add Rosie to agenda
  - 3 - change PR to Marketing with Sally
  - 4 - invite Jen/Kim/Amy to next meeting and put on agenda
  - 5 - change meeting to May 22, 2024 to cover advance of AIB Advisors and a review of the proposed agenda.
  - 6 - bring committee chairs together?
  - 7 - Farah to connect Sustainability and HWIB
  - 8 - Garden of Month - start getting tips from homeowners
  - 9 - call for volunteers with Sally guiding content
  - 10 - Advisor prep from Pam within 1 week

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Laman with a second by Meagher to adjourn the meeting.

All present voted aye with no one voting naye the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Sullivan  
Director of Parks and Recreation

The next meeting will be held on May 22, 2024.