Call to Order
President Taylor called the Special Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call of Commissioners
Upon roll call those answering present were Commissioners Dallman, Schoen, Minogue, Jourdan and President Taylor. Absent: Commissioners Aubrey and Hess

Staff members present were Executive Director Atwell, Superintendent of Parks Scarmardo, Superintendent of Finance & Personnel Woods, Superintendent of Recreation Esposito, Marketing & Communications Supervisor Talenco and Executive Assistant Sesto. Attorney Adams was also present.

Regional Stormwater Project
Commissioner Dallman apologized for not making the past two meetings saying he had personal conflicts, business travel and family engagements, which prevented him from attending. He assured everyone it was not lack of courage on his part.

Commissioner Dallman stated that he was in favor of preserving worthwhile vegetation at Ackerman Park, as well as other Park District properties, but has not appreciated the personal attacks on the character of the Park District staff, his fellow Commissioners or himself. He felt that did a disservice to the time, energy and professionalism spent on maintaining this nationally recognized Park District.

Commissioner Dallman moved, seconded by Commissioner Schoen, to pursue formal modifications to the previously approved Regional Stormwater Agreement with the Village of Glen Ellyn, to eliminate the construction of the soccer fields in order to prevent tree removal in the field location.

Commissioner Jourdan commented that he looks at the Park District’s Mission Statement for parks and recreation and was not sure how you could get recreation out of the piece of property at issue.

Roll Call: Aye: Commissioners Dallman, Schoen, Minogue and President Taylor
Nay: Jourdan
Motion Carried

President Taylor read the following statement:

With this action, the Glen Ellyn Park District will be asking the Village of Glen Ellyn to modify the agreement to abandoned construction of the large soccer field at Ackerman Park. We have begun negotiations with the Village of Glen Ellyn for a suitable alternative to their construction of the large soccer field as a part of the overall construction of the stormwater facility. The Park District’s decision not to construct this field comes after many hours of discussion and deliberation amongst staff and board members as to the merits of this field and public opinion about the trees.

Please keep in mind that the mission of the Park District is “to foster diverse, community based leisure opportunities through a harmonious blend of quality recreation programs, facilities and open space”.

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The quality of our recreation programs and facilities is above reproach and as far as being good stewards of open space is concerned, you need to look no further than Churchill Park, the Ellynwood Nature Preserve, Gault Sanctuary, Perry Nature Preserve and of course Lake Ellyn Park as excellent examples of the commitment this board and staff have continuously made to the preservation of natural open space.

To those of you who have taken time out to attend these meetings, attend and speak at Village board meetings, to send us letters, e-mails and phone calls, thank you for your participation and passion. Special thanks to those students from Glenbard West who have joined in the discussion. It is your voices which rang with the most resonance.

However, I would be remiss if I didn’t address some of the misguided and erroneous information which, intentionally or unintentionally, has made its way in to the mainstream of this debate. When assertions are made that the intergovernmental agreement was made behind closed doors, it is misguided. When the design of the proposed field is declared inferior, it is misguided. When accusations are made that the park district is engaged in an illegal activity or stands to make a financial gain, it is misguided. When this project is connected to the November 2006 referendum, it is misguided, when possible wetland issues at other portions of the park are connected to this project, when those possible wetlands have yet to be delineated as such, it is misguided and finally, when the character of members of the park district staff are attacked, it is not only misguided, but shameful. Thomas Jefferson did say that “Delay is preferable to error”. Jefferson also said “He who knows best, knows how little he knows”.

The Glen Ellyn Park District has done nothing in this matter which was not well within its right to do and will reserve that right to do with its property that which best serves its mission and the overwhelming majority of the residents of this village. Our decision to abandon the large soccer field will not, however, preclude the Village from the construction of the regional stormwater facility. That decision rests solely with them. Thank you.

Jim Killham, 377 N. Park Boulevard, asked if that meant the trees would not be cut down.

Attorney Adams commented that the Park District has an enforceable existing agreement that the Board has to negotiate a modification to with the Village of Glen Ellyn. It is the Board’s intention to modify that agreement and to eliminate the soccer fields which were the cause of the trees being cut down.

Melissa Creech, 697 St. Charles Road, thanked all the members of the Board for their courageous decision to decide not to place the soccer fields in Ackerman woods. Ms. Creech said not constructing the soccer fields will result in much fewer tree loss. She presented a petition that had been signed by 1,487 people who are concerned about Ackerman woods. Ms. Creech suggested that many people would like to volunteer their time to clean up Ackerman woods, perhaps when the growing season is over in the fall.

Chris Hlinak, 1 N 145 Glenrise Court, commented that she has asthma and many more children have asthma today than when she was growing up. Every leaf takes pollution out of the atmosphere and puts oxygen in so thanked the Board on behalf with asthma. Ms. Hlinak said she had voted yes for every Park District referendum because her children have been served so well. Because of the Board’s decision she will continue to vote yes for those she feels serve them well.

Alan Lanning, 625 Midway Park, thanked the Board and thanked the Creech’s for all their work.
cleanup at Ackerman will present plenty of opportunities to expand nature education programs.

Pat Moran, 620 N. Park, commented that the Board should be very proud of themselves because they made a decision but had the nerve to actually review it. They should way with their heads high. The kids playing at Ackerman, with the trees present, will be in a healthier environment.

Amy Thompson, 773 Western Avenue, said she was very thankful for the Board’s reconsideration of their decision. As far as creating recreation space, she recommended a nature trail and program for children, students and camps. She also suggested a team building ropes course. It can dwell within the trees but also serve as recreation.

Cathryn Wilkinson, 583 Hickory Road, as for President Taylor’s comment about the behavior and performance of Park District staff, she wanted to compliment them on their responsiveness to citizens who literally bombarded them with phone calls and emails. Board member’s recent decision to have their email addresses listed on the Park District’s website was an excellent means for residents to communicate to the Board without burdening the staff. Staff has been very supportive. Every time she called her calls had been returned, and not impatiently. She commended staff for standing by their roles as impartial as they can be while fielding negative comments from the citizens. She was delighted that her next comment of them would be positive.

President Taylor commented that no one knows better than the Board how hard the staff works and thanked Ms. Wilkinson for her comments. Everything sent to staff was forwarded to all members of the Board.

David Creech, 697 St. Charles Road, thanked the Board for the decision they made and said he felt everyone respected the job the Park District staff and Board are doing. He understood it was a lot of work with very little benefit to the Board. It was obviously a difficult decision and struggle but they have always felt it was about the issue and had absolutely no personal qualms about the Board and staff. He thanked the Commissioners for the job they have been doing on the Board and thanked them for their decision.

Don Pellico, 56 Grove Avenue, commented that he appreciated the hard work that went into the Board reversing the decision and was equally proud of the citizens who attended Park District and Village meetings. Citizens will now bring their fight to the Village.

Chris Wilson, 537 Phillips, the Board for listening to the people and changing their minds and not cutting down the trees.

Kathleen Gaiden, 1 N 144 Forest, thanked the Board and said President Taylor said earlier in the evening that no voice moved him as much as the high school students. After the last meeting she saw the young people, particularly high school and college age, and felt they were flabbergasted because the Board was so adamant. At that time she thought it had been a very educational experience for them to see how government works but was afraid that the only thing they had learned was you can’t fight city hall. She was happy for them, to know that they can fight city hall the right way, and get a result. She thanked the Board for them and for the future of Glen Ellyn.

Riley Cook, 20 Maryland Drive, said she is one of the high school students and wanted to thank the Board on behalf of all the students. She felt everyone will feel like their voices have been heard. She
didn’t think anyone was going to care or listen to them because they are teenagers.

In response to recreational ideas suggested, Commissioner Minogue commented that first of all, it has never been Ackerman woods. In response to trees that are in Ackerman Park, someone mentioned the ropes course and nature center. She wanted everyone to know that in the forward thinking that the Park District has, they have already put that into their plans. It will be at Churchill Park and has been a part of the plan for a long time. People may recall that in the past school children were able to go to Morton Arboretum for an overnight stay. Children loved it and the program was taken away. That is a program the Park District hopes to put together at the nature center for the children. The Board and staff have also looked into a high ropes course, also in Churchill Park. All these things are in the plans however, it all takes money. As money comes the programs will be put together. She did not want people to get their hopes up thinking that those types of programs would be in the trees at Ackerman. People can look forward to having the programs in Churchill Park.

President Taylor thanked everyone for their comments saying the Board appreciated them more than they know. The Board has a job to do and they hope to continue to do the best job for the community.

**Adjournment**
There being no further business Commissioner Dallman moved, seconded by Commissioner Jourdan, to adjourn to a Workshop meeting at 7:25 p.m. **Motion Carried**

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanine Sesto
Board Secretary