Work Study Session: Discussion Topics for Parks Board Oversight Structure

1. Purpose & Intent of Expanded Oversight

- What are the desired goals of shifting from an advisory board to an oversight board?
- What challenges or inefficiencies are we aiming to resolve?
- How will this change support long-term planning, budgeting, program monitoring and accountability?

2. Defining the Parks Board's Role & Responsibilities

- What decisions or functions should fall within the Parks Board's purview? (e.g., budget recommendation, capital project prioritization, program review, policy feedback)
- What authority should they have vs. what remains under the purview of staff or the Board of Aldermen?
- Should parks board meeting frequency change, and what standing items should be on their agenda to reflect the additional oversight role?

3. Comparison to Planning & Zoning Model

- How does the Planning & Zoning (P&Z) committee operate effectively?
    - Staff liaison (Planning Director) speaks on behalf of the committee and with the support and agreement of the committee
    - Board includes an Alderman to provide two-way communication
    - Clear authority in reviewing and recommending on land use items
- Should the Parks Board adopt a similar model, with:
    - One Alderman seated on the board?
    - Parks Director continuing to serve as formal liaison/communicator to the Board of Aldermen?
    - How are disagreements between the parks director and parks board to be resolved?

4. Communication Expectations & Accountability

- How should information flow between the Parks Director and the Parks Board?
    - What should be shared regularly (e.g., project updates, staff concerns, budget status)?
    - Should there be a required pre-brief with the Chair before major initiatives?
- How can the Parks Board Chair be supported to stay fully informed and engaged?
- How will/will/should the Parks Board Chair distribute updates to the Parks Board ad hoc?
- How will input from the Parks Board be documented and shared with Aldermen?

5. Transparency & Public Engagement

- How can a more active Parks Board improve public confidence and community engagement in parks planning?
- Should the Parks Board be tasked with hosting public forums or gathering community input?

6. Alignment with City Ordinance and State Law

- What specific updates would need to be made to the current ordinance to reflect new responsibilities being considered?
- What bylaws or board policies would need to be adopted or updated?

7. Transition Planning

- What kind of training or support will the Parks Board need to take on a more active role?
- Should we phase in new responsibilities over a period (e.g., advisory on next budget, full oversight the year after, somewhere in between)?
- How will success of the new structure be evaluated?