



Incredibly Close  Amazingly Open

Morton Grove Special Events Commission

Agenda and Meeting Notice

Monday, April 20, 2026 - 6:00 PM

Morton Grove Public Works, 7840 Nagle Avenue, Morton Grove, IL

1. Call to Order/Pledge Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Introduction of Guests
4. Commission Chair Comments
5. Approval of Minutes (February 16, 2026) / Secretary's Report
6. Morton Grove Days 2026 Schedule
 - **Carnival:** Thursday, July 2 – Sunday, July 5, 2026
 - **Beer Garden:** Thursday, July 2 – Saturday, July 4, 2026

7. **Morton Grove Days Subcommittee Reports**

Beer Garden – Rita Minx / Jenny Lovejoy

Carnival – Paul Minx

Children's Activities – Jeff Wait

Entertainment/Opening Ceremonies – Dan DiMaria / Katy Shimanski / Lisa

Rathunde

Festival Operations – Bill Burns

Fireworks – Zoe Heidorn

Fundraising & Sponsors – Boyle Wong / Nancy Leong

Parade – Zoe Heidorn / Bill Burns

Public Relations – Boyle Wong

Restaurants – Paul Minx

Security & FPDCC Notice – Cmdr. Eric Ficht

Volunteers – Georgianne Brunner / Terri Cousar

Budget – Zoe Heidorn

General Discussion & Needs

8. **Santa Comes to Town** – Saturday, December 6, 2025

9. **Old Business**

10. **Comments**

11. **Next Meeting Date:** Monday, June 15, 2026, at 6:00 PM

12. **Adjournment**

Special Events Commission

Third Monday of Even Months

6:00 PM - MG Public Works

7840 Nagle Avenue

Unless Otherwise Advised

Upcoming 2026 Meetings:

Monday, June 15, 2026

Monday, August 17, 2026

Monday, October 19, 2026

Monday, December 21, 2026

| Special Events Commission (Chapter 12-6) | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Members | Designation | Term | Appt. |
| Cmdr. Eric Ficht | Police Chief Designee | N/A | N/A |
| Bill Burns | Public Works Director Designee | N/A | N/A |
| Jeff Wait | Morton Grove Park District Official | N/A | N/A |
| Rita Minx | Village Trustee | Two Years | 12-12-22 |
| Paul Minx | MG Days Commission Member | Two Years | 06-27-16 |
| Lisa Rathunde | MG Days Commission Member | Two Years | 08-10-20 |
| Terri Cousar | MG Days Commission Member | Two Years | 06-27-16 |
| Georgianne Brunner | At Large Member | Two Years | 06-27-16 |
| Wanda Robles | At Large Member | Two Years | 10-14-25 |
| Boyle Wong | At Large Member | One Year | 12-12-22 |
| Zoe Heidorn | | Staff Liaison | |

MORTON GROVE SPECIAL EVENTS COMMISSION & MORTON GROVE DAYS OPERATIONS GROUP

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, 2026, MEETING

Commission Chairperson Paul Minx called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance. Attendees (Special Events Commissioners in **bold**):

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Paul Minx (Chairperson) | Boyle Wong | Amy Raffel |
| Trustee Rita Minx | Cmdr. Tony Anderson | |
| Georgianne Brunner | Zoe Heidorn (Staff Liaison) | |
| Deputy Chief Eric Ficht | Charles Meyer | |

Absent: **Bill Burns, Terri Cousar, Lisa Rathunde, Wanda Robles, Katy Shimanski, Jeff Wait**, Dan DiMaria, Nancy Leong, John Pietron, Marty O'Brien

A quorum was not present, so no official business, votes, or binding actions occurred.

Introduction of Guests

Deputy Chief Eric Ficht introduced Cmdr. Tony Anderson, who will be sharing Morton Grove Days responsibilities with Deputy Chief Eric Ficht as he takes on new responsibilities at the Police Department as part of his recent promotion to Deputy Chief.

Chairperson's Comments

Chairperson Minx said that the Commission was preparing for Morton Grove Days 2026, which will be held on July 2 through July 5, 2026.

Presentation/Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes

There were no draft minutes to approve from the previous meeting of the Special Events Commission.

Morton Grove Days Event: 2026

Chairperson Minx discussed the 2026 event dates and times. He noted that there will be no beer garden or live entertainment on Sunday, July 5.

Sub-Committee Reports

Beer Garden: Trustee Minx said that there was no update to provide on the beer garden. She said that there would be more information to provide at the next meeting in April.

Carnival: Zoe Heidorn said that the Village entered into a contract for the 2026 carnival services with North American Midway, which was authorized by resolution. She noted several changes to the 2026

contract, including more clarity on the carnival's exclusive right to sell a traditional corn dog, and other vendors' authority to sell similar products. She said that the megaband would be sold on the carnival grounds the first two days of the event. Ms. Heidorn added that they included language the better protects the Park District and its flexibility to provide children's activities.

Children's Activities: Chairperson Minx said that the Park District's children's activities would be held on Friday, July 3. They felt that this day would be best for staffing and overall fit with the event schedule.

Commissioner Brunner asked Ms. Heidorn to connect her with representatives of Groot and WasteNot Compost to discuss providing recycling and compost services at the event. She said that as a member of the Environment and Natural Resources Commission, she is trying to improve the environmental footprint of the event.

Entertainment/Opening Ceremonies: Ms. Heidorn reviewed the entertainment schedule, which was complete. A couple of contracts still need to be signed, but Dan DiMaria confirmed the bands' ability to perform. Ms. Heidorn noted that they requested the Navy Band to participate in the July 4 parade, but they indicated they would be better able to participate on an alternative day. The Navy Band will not provide confirmation of participation until 60 days before the event, so staff tentatively scheduled them to perform at the opening ceremony and first time slot on July 2. If the Navy Band is unable to perform, Ms. Heidorn said that they have a local band that can play as back-up.

Festival Operations: Bill Burns was absent from the meeting, but Ms. Heidorn said that he would be working to execute contracts for all operational services and needs in the coming months.

Fireworks: Ms. Heidorn provided an update confirming that Johnnie Rockets would be the vendor. She said that staff insisted on keeping the 2025 budget of \$32,500, but that they agreed to an additional \$500 to provide a slightly increased number of shells in honor of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Ms. Heidorn said that he had not responded regarding a request to have a community member push a button lighting off the fireworks, but that he had agreed to put the show to music if the Village would provide the music in advance of the event.

Fundraising & Sponsors: Boyle Wong reported that the sponsorship levels have been adjusted and that a new "Promo Sponsorship" will be offered for T-shirts to be distributed during the July 4 parade. He presented the draft sponsorship brochure prepared by Ms. Heidorn, noting that a few additional revisions will be made.

Trustee Minx inquired whether Commissioner Wong had spoken with Marty O'Brien regarding the Stripe account to ensure that all donations are directed to the 501(c)(3) organization. Commissioner Wong stated that he is awaiting confirmation from Mr. O'Brien and anticipates receiving it soon. The Commissioners discussed the new set-up allowing for any transactions conducted at Village Hall, the Park District, or other locations to be processed on behalf of the nonprofit organization.

Trustee Minx encouraged the Commission to reach out to GMS, Fairway Independent Mortgage, the Township, and other annual donors sooner than later.

Commissioner Brunner said that she would like Ms. Heidorn to tweak the proposed logo to make it clearer that the "250" is in reference to the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and not Morton Grove Days. Ms. Heidorn said that she would revise the logo.

Parade: Ms. Heidorn provided an update to the Commission noting that the planning effort had shifted from Public Works to Administration and that the Village's new Management Analyst, Amy Raffel, was helping reach out to and confirm parade participants.

Chairperson Minx said that Jeff Wait submitted notes indicating that 2026 marks the Chamber of Commerce's 100th anniversary. It was also noted that the Park District will be celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2026. The Commissioners discussed who would be appropriate to serve as the Parade Marshal and the Parade Emcee. The Commission has received complaints that the past Parade Emcee has gone off-script and that some parade participants were disappointed their submitted material was not announced as written. The Commissioners discussed potential candidates for Parade Marshal and reflected on individuals who have served in that role in previous years. It was noted that there is still ample time to make a selection. Charles Meyer said that Village staff would reach out to the potential candidates at the Chamber and Park District in honor of their respective anniversaries to determine their interest and availability.

Public Relations: Commissioner Wong said that this year, the Commission has set up new email addresses for mortongrovedays.org. He would like to promote use of these new email addresses by the Commission. Their use increases professionalism and provides business continuity if people move in and out of roles.

Restaurants: Ms. Heidorn provided an update on the new food vendors seeking to participate in the 2026 event. She said that staff would determine if additional vendors could be incorporated into the site plan, and that this would be based on space constraints. She said that she encouraged the group to consider changing vendors slightly, as the lack of change in food options was a common complaint from guests.

Chairperson Minx said that the new concession provider at Harrer Pool wants to be open even if the pool is not open during the event. The group agreed that because this will be a local business in operation at an existing location, this should not be considered unfair competition. Ms. Heidorn confirmed that the new business is Koala's Kitchen. Commissioner Wong said that the site plan could possibly accommodate more vendors on the 5th because there will be no beer garden or live entertainment.

Security: Deputy Chief Ficht said that they need to prepare a contract for security services. Mr. Meyer said that he was comfortable with reducing or eliminating security staff on July 5 as deemed appropriate by the Police Department. Deputy Chief Ficht confirmed that they had provided notice to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County for the 2026 event.

Volunteers: The Commissioners discussed the requirement for BASSET training for anyone involved in the sale and service of liquor. Deputy Chief Ficht said that the Police Department would be able to provide BASSET training for volunteers and that he would coordinate with their community liaisons officers to set up two trainings, one in the spring and another closer to the date. Ms. Heidorn said that they were trying to understand and limit, where possible, the scope of requiring BASSET training. Commissioner Brunner said that she is concerned about asking volunteers for BASSET certification. Trustee Minx said that the Commission should get as many people trained as possible and build on that for the next year. Ms. Heidorn said that they would offer pizza and try to make the training as convenient as possible. Mr. Meyer said that there is no exception for special events. He said he is more comfortable trying and doing the best we can.

Budget: Ms. Heidorn discussed the budget figures and said that a lot of costs were still coming in, but that the goal was to stay on track with a reduced budget this year.

Ms. Brunner said that the ENRC asked about the environmental impact of the beer garden operations, and noted that they produced dough boy mugs several years ago. She asked if it would be possible to produce a commemorative pitcher that people would re-use and get a discount. The Commissioners discussed the details of the dough boy merchandise. Commissioner Brunner said that she wondered what it would cost to do a 14-ounce reusable mug. Ms. Heidorn said that adding recycling to the venue would be an improvement as well. The Commissioners discussed options for the pitchers.

Trustee Minx said that some community members were trying to move the Commission away from pitchers and toward single-serve packaged drinks. The event has been offering 48-ounce pitchers in recent years. Currently, the beer vendor provides the pitchers and passes along the cost to us. Commissioner Wong said that we could add a pitcher sponsor. Mr. Meyer said that we should expect to add \$3.50 to \$4.00 per pitcher for branded pitchers. Trustee Minx said that she would not spend that additional money on the pitcher. The Commissioners discussed the benefits of the commemorative mug versus the commemorative pitcher.

Mr. Meyer said that the Commission should increase drink pricing in 2026. Commissioner Brunner said that she has received comments that Morton Grove Days is one of the cheapest venues in the area. The Commissioners continued to discuss how to serve beer at the event, and whether commemorative pitchers or mugs and refill perks would be beneficial. Commissioner Wong said that they could sell the mugs at the merchandise table outside the beer garden. Commander Anderson said that he suspected people would sneak alcohol in and around more if there were opaque mugs being sold. Ms. Heidorn also said that she was worried about the cleanliness of refilling used glasses.

Santa Comes to Town

Chairperson Minx said that the 2025 event turned out very well. The event date next year will be December 5, 2026.

Old Business

None

Public Comments

None

Next Meeting Date: Monday, April 20, 2026

Adjournment

Trustee Minx moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:07 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Brunner.

Motion passed unanimously via voice vote.