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Morton Grove Special Events Commission

Agenda and Meeting Notice

Monday, June 15, 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 New Staff Liaison:** Alise Coulter, Assistant to the Village Administrator / Communications Manager
4. **Commission Chair Comments**
5. **Approval of Minutes (April 20, 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 5, 2026
9. **Old Business**
10. **Comments**
11. **Next Meeting Date:** Monday, August 17, 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, 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
Alise Coulter		Staff Liaison	

MORTON GROVE SPECIAL EVENTS COMMISSION & MORTON GROVE DAYS OPERATIONS GROUP

MINUTES OF APRIL 20, 2026, MEETING

Commission Chairperson Paul Minx called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance. Attendees (Special Events Commissioners in **bold**):

Paul Minx (Chairperson)	Bill Burns	Jeff Wait
Trustee Rita Minx	Nancy Leong	Marty O'Brien
Georgianne Brunner	Lisa Rathunde	Cmdr. Tony Anderson
Deputy Chief Eric Ficht	Wanda Robles	Zoe Heidorn (Staff Liaison)

Absent: **Boyle Wong, Terri Cousar, Katy Shimanski, Dan DiMaria, Nancy Leong, John Pietron**

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

Commissioner Georgianne Brunner made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2026, meeting as presented. Trustee Rita Minx seconded the motion. All in attendance at the February 16, 2026, meeting voted to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed.

Morton Groe Days Event: 2026

Chairperson Minx reviewed the schedule for the 2026 event with the Commission.

Sub-Committee Reports

Beer Garden: Trustee Minx said that she sent an email to Mullarkey Distributing asking for pricing information and options for the 2026 event. She discussed the beer and other alcoholic beverages offered at the 2025 event. She said that Cooper's Hawk's annual donation of wine has not been discussed.

Trustee Minx said that she would need to figure out from the volunteer list who needs to be BASSET trained. Ms. Heidorn said that the individuals who are part of the purchase transaction need to be BASSET trained. Commissioner Brunner said that the volunteers who break up ticket rolls would not be BASSET trained. The Commissioners agreed that this was appropriate, but that they could not sell the tickets or be part of the transaction.

Commissioner Wanda Robles asked how long the BASSET training would be and when it would occur. Deputy Chief Ficht said the Police Department can offer trainings ahead of the event, typically run by

their Community Liaisons. Trustee Minx said that the Commission typically sends out an invitation to volunteers. Trustee Minx said that she would need names of volunteers from Commissioner Brunner

Commissioner Minx said that Cooper's Hawk donated wine the past couple of years. She would coordinate with staff on the request for a donation for the 2026 event.

Ms. Heidorn asked for confirmation that the Police Department's Community Liaisons would be coordinating dates for the BASSET training for the Commission. Deputy Chief Ficht said that this was correct.

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 the changes to the 2026 contract, including more clarity on the carnival's exclusive right to sell a traditional corn dog and protection of the Park District's children's activities.

Children's Activities: Commissioner Wait said that the website lists the children's activities as occurring from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM but it should be 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Ms. Heidorn said that she would ask Commissioner Boyle Wong to adjust this on the event website.

Entertainment/Opening Ceremonies: Commissioner Rathunde provided an update on the schedule for entertainment. Ms. Heidorn said that all contracts were executed. She said that staff 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 will have a local band play as back-up.

Festival Operations: Commissioner Burns said that most of the contracts were completed for operations.

Commissioner Brunner asked about the credit card machine at the front entrance and whether it would be wired. Marty O'Brien said he planned to follow up with Commissioner Wong about purchasing the credit card machine. Commissioner Brunner said that we should think about two lines, one for credit cards and one for cash, to avoid delays. Ms. Heidorn said that the group had agreed to provide a credit card machine at the entrance and that she believed it was wired. She said that she would follow up with Mr. Wong.

Fireworks: Ms. Heidorn provided an update confirming that Johnnie Rockets would be the vendor and that they would be increasing the budget to \$36,000 for a few additional shells. She said that the fireworks show would be synchronized to music provided by the Village in advance of the performance. Commissioner Burns asked how the music would be amplified and Ms. Heidorn said that she believed it would be amplified through the existing sound system.

Fundraising & Sponsors: Commissioner Leong said the donation letter went out in mid-April. Over \$7,000 has been donated by various businesses, individuals, and entities, and over \$7,000 has been committed for donations. She said that she and Commissioner Wong continue to work together toward sponsorships. She said that they are still seeking a T-Shirt Sponsor to provide t-shirt hand-outs during the July 4 parade. The Commissioners discussed the t-shirt giveaway and the costs of production.

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. She reviewed the list of parade participants. She said that she agreed with Commissioner Burns that it is very difficult to get groups committed to

participate. She said that the time of day on a holiday seems to be a limiting factor. The Commissioners discussed potential parade participants and the parade emcees.

Commissioner Wait said that the Park District has rented a 14-foot balloon for the Fourth of July parade in honor of the 250th anniversary. The Park District has coordinated with the Village to use a Village-owned parking lot to set up the balloon ahead of the parade.

Commissioner Wait asked if the Village would need use of the Prairie View Community Center for the bands or other parade participants. Ms. Heidorn said that she would let him know.

Public Relations: Ms. Heidorn said that she was working on the merchandise website through Redbubble. The items were selected but she was having an issue with the payment connection. She said that she would continue to work diligently, and with Marty O'Brien if needed, to get the merchandise platform up and running for the event.

The Commissioners discussed donations and the new T-shirt sponsorship level. Commissioner Minx said that the T-shirt sponsor would get about 500 T-shirts distributed at that level. He said that the fireworks and stage sponsorship slots are already taken. The Commissioners discussed the T-shirt sponsorship and how desirable it might be to prospective sponsors.

Restaurants: Ms. Heidorn said that they have three confirmed restaurant vendors this year. She said that they are working with limited space.

Trustee Minx said that they need to figure out when the beer truck will be picked up. She expressed concern that the beer truck would be picked up on Sunday because it's no longer in need, and that this would be an issue because the truck is connected to the beer tent.

Commissioner Robles asked if the food vendors could enter the event grounds through Harrer Park. The group discussed the proposal and agreed that Dempster Street was the preferred route of entry.

Security: Deputy Eric Ficht said that he's working the security contract and accepting proposals. He discussed working with the Forest Preserves and his request for a helicopter to visit during the parade. Commissioner Minx asked about having security on Sunday. Deputy Eric Ficht said that they would have limited security on Sunday, but that it was still needed to provide coverage of the event. He said that security would also be provided by the contractor at the event entrance, which would allow for better coverage of the event grounds by the Police Department.

Volunteers: Commissioner Brunner said that she would work to get volunteers scheduled as needed. They discussed the need to BASSET train volunteers who would be directly handling any alcohol-related transaction.

Budget: Ms. Heidorn discussed the budget and how current costs were tracking with the budget line items proposed. She said that she would provide an updated estimate closer to the date of the event.

General Discussion: Commissioner Wait said that the Morton Grove Chamber would serve as the emcee for the parade this year. Trustee Minx asked if the emcee would be reading from a script. Commissioner Wait said that they would be reading blurbs provided by the parade participants in their application. Ms. Heidorn said that the script would be provided by Village staff.

Commissioner Robles asked about possibly having a DJ on the fourth day. The Commissioners discussed the idea and the issue that having just a DJ would require significant staffing and volunteer hours.

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.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Adjournment: Commissioner Brunner motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Wait seconded the motion. All in favor. The meeting ended at 6:41 p.m.

Minutes by: Zoe Heidorn