THE GROVE MASTER PLAN
2018-2023

The Path Forward for an Iconic Glenview Park District Facility
Acknowledgements

Glenview Park District

Michael McCarty..........................................................Executive Director
Todd Price.......................................................... Superintendent of Leisure Services

THE GROVE

Lorin Ottlinger......................................................... Facility Director
Carol DiLorenzo............................................................Rental Coordinator
Judy Picicco.......................................................... Education Program Supervisor
Diane Michalski.........................................................Recreation Program Supervisor
Phil Munro.......................................................... Supervisor of Building and Grounds
Ashley DeAngeles....................................................Supervisor of Customer Service and Operations
Patricia Kuntzmann.............................................Animal Care Supervisor
Tony Jasso.......................................................... Maintenance
Ernesto Sancen.......................................................... Maintenance

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The Grove Master Plan

Plan Overview

The Process
The Master Plan for The Grove is a document that will guide the future direction of this iconic facility. The Plan covers a period of time from 2018-2023. The outcomes of the process included the following goals:

- Provide an opportunity for support groups, stakeholders and staff to provide input into the future operations of the facility
- Review of marketing for the facility
- Understand how The Grove currently operates and project operations into the future
- Analyze existing programming and identify direction for future programming
- Assess financial results
- Identify ways to strengthen the management of The Grove
- Provide direction for the future

The Plan was developed through a series of meetings with leadership staff, three focus groups of employees, stakeholders and support groups, and a review of the website and program guide information. In addition, this process was closely aligned with the Glenview Park District’s Strategic Master Plan to ensure elements of that plan would inform this management plan. Financial and programming results were also reviewed. Additionally, there was a complete review of supporting documents for each facility.

The Master Plan include the following elements:

- Facility Description
- Staffing and Volunteers
- Summary of Engagement Focus Groups
- Program Inventory and Review
- Marketing Approaches
- Financial Summary
- Similar Providers
- Trends
- Visioning
- Vision and Mission
- Strategic Recommendations

The following section provides information about some of the key elements of the Plan.

Engagement Sessions
An important element of the process included the facilitation of a series of focus groups and meetings. These included: The Grove Heritage Association; a stakeholder focus groups, a staff focus groups, two individual leadership meetings, and a conference call meeting with the leadership group. A summary of the major themes and issues were developed for each of the groups and is presented within the body of the report. The full comments from the groups are included in the Appendix B.

Operational Analysis
This section included a review of the following information:
- Staffing
- The Grove Heritage Association
- Program Inventory and Review
- Program Guide Review
- Website Review
- Financial Summary
- Trends

Program Inventory and Review
Four Glenview Park District seasonal program guides were reviewed from Spring 2016 to Winter 2017. Content was analyzed for: the type of programing by season, age segmentation, fee per hour, and general observations. Programming reviews were completed for both facilities, located in each section of the report. A full listing of offered programs can be found in Appendix A.

Marketing Approaches
A review of marketing approaches included a review of the program guide, website, and information about search engine optimization. Marketing approaches were also included as a topic area for the focus groups which resulted in many comments about the need to develop additional marketing approaches.

Financial Analysis
The financial analysis section included a review of revenues and expenses for the last five years, including analysis of labor costs during this time period, which have remained stable. In addition, earned revenue, defined as non-tax revenue was also reviewed during the last five years.

Museum Standards and Benchmarking
The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) has established core standards by which museums can strive to align operations and performance, and to hold themselves and each other accountable. The standards have been broken down into the following categories: Standards on Public Trust and Accountability, Standards on Mission and Planning, Standards on Leadership and Organizational Structure, Standards on Collections Stewardship, Standards on Education and Interpretation, Standards on Financial Stability, and Standards on Facilities and Risk Management. Each of the hyperlinks here will connect to a specific page on the AAM’s website that is specifically dedicated to that standard category and will supply best practice support and further information.

In addition to reviewing the core standards set by the Alliance, another way to benchmark the Glenview Park District facilities is to review the criteria listed in the American Alliance of Museum’s accreditation self-study worksheet. Even if the district does not want to maintain a formal accreditation with the Alliance, answering the questions can comprehensively review operations and subsequently identify strengths and gaps. Beyond basic questions like, “Do you have X?”, the checklist challenges the museum to think more holistically about the operation with open-ended questions that ask about measurable outcomes and sharing stories about a time where the museum took a risk or did something innovative. The tool can also help the museum determine which indicators help define success in the operation. Self-Study Checklist: [https://aam-us.org/docs/default-source/accreditation/accreditation-self-study.pdf?sfvrsn=2](https://aam-us.org/docs/default-source/accreditation/accreditation-self-study.pdf?sfvrsn=2)

Best practice benchmarking through a comparison of similar providers can give an organization a sense of where they fit in the industry, ideas for implementation at their site, and help establish goals for future development. For the purpose of this assessment, a sampling of similar providers was identified based on mission, types of services provided, and in some cases governing structure. The listing of providers reviewed can be found in Appendix C.
The Grove Operational Review

Description of The Grove

The Grove includes 145 acres of ecologically diverse prairie grove land preserved and maintained by the Glenview Park District. The Grove was the home of a visionary horticulturist and educator, Dr. John Kennicott, who brought his family from New Orleans to settle on this land in 1836. It was here that Dr. John’s son, Robert Kennicott, developed his love of nature that led to such accomplishments as exhibiting his plant and animal specimen collections at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., founding the Chicago Academy of Sciences, and exploring Russian America that led to the purchase of Alaska.

Because of its history, The Grove was designated as a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1976. It is on the National Registry of Historic Places. The Grove is a partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Chicago Wilderness.

The property includes a variety of facilities including an Interpretive Center, Redfield Estate, Kennicott Archives Building, Native American Village and Log Cabin, The Kennicott House, The Grove Schoolhouse, Blacksmith Shop, and outbuildings. Programs and services include areas such as Redfield Estate rentals and a natural science classroom to hands-on pioneer skills and trail walks. The Grove attracts over 100,000 visitors annually.

Staffing

The Grove operation also includes staffing for Air Station Prairie. There are currently 9 full-time staff positions, including:

- Facility Director
- Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds
- Maintenance I position
- Maintenance II position
- Rental Coordinator
- Recreation Program Supervisor
- Customer Service and Operations Supervisor
- Animal Care Supervisor
- Education Program Supervisor

The positions are supplemented by close to 80 part-time and seasonal positions including maintenance staff, natural resource manager, rental coordinators, program coordinators and program staff for both school programs and general Grove recreation programs, rental caretakers, animal care/naturalists, volunteer coordinator and archivist.

Volunteers

The Grove utilizes over 100 volunteers to fulfill various roles for The Grove’s operation. The volunteer positions include areas such as animal care, maintenance, natural area restoration, program interpreter docent, special events, gardening, and the store. From March 2016 to March 2017, there were 7,059 volunteer hours recorded. According to the Independent Sector, the 2016 estimated value of volunteer
hours was $24.14 per hour. Therefore, the volunteer labor contribution for The Grove was approximately $170,404 that year.

Grove Heritage Association
In 1973, when it appeared that a large development of high-density residential units was slated for construction on Grove land, a group of individuals created the Save the Grove Committee. This group played a vital role in preserving this important historic site. Through their efforts, The Grove was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. Their next step was to approach the Glenview Park Board about purchasing land in The Grove. The Park Board put the decision to a referendum in October of 1974 to determine community support and 88% voted in favor of taking this action.

Land acquisition had already begun in July 1974 when the Zenith Corporation donated six acres, including the Kennicott House to the park district. By February 1975, acquisition of the eastern 30 acres was complete and in the fall of 1979, the planned land acquisition was finished. Nine different ownership parcels of land totaling 82 acres were acquired and Federal and State matching funds exceeded $1,000,000.

With the initial goal achieved, the Save the Grove Committee became the Grove Heritage Association in 1976, the same year The Grove was designated a National Historic Landmark. This citizen support group has donated thousands of volunteer hours and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to benefit The Grove.

Community and Staff Engagement Sessions
As part of the Master Plan process, three focus groups were facilitated. A summary of the focus groups is listed here. The full results of the comments from the participants are included in Appendix B. The summaries include major theme areas and issues for each of the groups: The Grove staff, The Grove Heritage Association, and a stakeholder group. In addition, there were multiple meetings with park district leadership staff. The summaries are followed by a listing of general ideas provided by focus group participants.

Major Themes and Issues from Staff
- Strength of our brand
- The facility itself, iconic, historic, grand
- Our strong legacy and the history of the Kennicott family
- Experienced staff and long tenure
- Weekend staffing and part-time staffing in general is difficult
- Part-time lack of benefits is an issue
- Lunch room would be nice
- Diversification of programming to make up for lost school groups
- Marketing and creating awareness is needed
- Internal wayfinding is needed
- Customer satisfaction system should be implemented
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- Entrance off Milwaukee is a problem
- Strengthening the volunteer program
- The need to create new programs/exhibits/venue to keep things fresh and keep customers coming back

**Major Themes and Issues from GHA**
- Staff tenure and experience
- GHA’s tenure and commitment
- Iconic facility
- Entrance to the facility is a concern off Milwaukee
- Lack of age diversity of GHA members
- There is a need to create more of an adult audience
- Opportunities for cross marketing between The Grove and Wagner Farm
- How will the change in staff leadership impact us?
- Internal wayfinding is an issue
- More marketing support is needed
- Should we re-think our spaces?
- Parking issues

**Major Themes and Issues from Stakeholders**
- True to mission
- Iconic and nostalgic facility
- Great appreciation for land acquisition
- Take advantage of partnership opportunities such as Kohl Museum
- Wayfinding and directional signage is an issue
- Entrance to the facility is a problem; easy to drive right past it
- Diversify program offerings to include areas such as meditation and yoga
- Change elements of the facility and the programs to retain visitors, Wi-Fi and walking tour apps
- Concern about financial sustainability

**General Ideas for Consideration**
- Learning Resource Center
- Interactive exhibits
- Senior workshops
- Natural play area
- Yoga and pilates classes
- American Girl Doll during the Kennicott era
- Kohl partnership; museum passport
- Spring plan fairs
- Multi-generational programs
- Multi-lingual programs
- Outdoor classroom
- Special exhibits with a short time frame that can be advertised
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- Emphasize more of the environmental aspect
- More enticing field trips
- Better story telling
- More hands on and interactive activities
- Theater
- Nature Walks

Programming
The fall season offers the most programming opportunities at the Grove, at a little over one third of total offerings, followed by summer, just under one third. Approximately one third split between spring and winter. The majority of the programming (59%) falls into the programs category, while events, camps, and volunteer days comprise the remaining 41%. The following chart shows the distribution of programs by season. The category of programming not assessed here are the school groups served by educational visits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Breakdown</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Total Sections</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>59.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camps</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer days</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Grove program offerings are generally offered for children. The chart below depicts the age groupings and the respective percentages of programs that serve those groups. Over half (52%) of programs were geared towards children 6-12 years old, or otherwise advertised as an elementary age “and up” in the program guide. There were no programs specifically offered for teens ages 13-18 years or specifically for adults over 50 years. All ages programming, including volunteer days and events, comprised 21% of the programming total.
Price per program-hour averaged $7.74 for youth programs and $14.10 for adult programs. The chart below depicts the average price per hour as well as lowest and highest price per hour. For further detail, Appendix B lists each program and its corresponding hourly price point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Grove Program Pricing</th>
<th>Avg</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avg price per hour - Youth Prog</td>
<td>$7.74</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg price per hour - Adult Prog</td>
<td>$14.10</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>$18.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the Annual Registration and Attendance Report May 1, 2015 to April 30, 2016, there were 25 programs offered. Total registration and attendance figures are listed below for a three-year fiscal year comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY13-14</th>
<th>FY14-15</th>
<th>FY15-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Registrants</td>
<td>2,779</td>
<td>2,459</td>
<td>2,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>29,795</td>
<td>30,282</td>
<td>33,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Scheduled Groups</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>986</td>
<td>1,027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program registrations have dropped by 23% from FY13-14 to FY15-16, yet attendance has increased by 11%. Programs that have decreased registrations between FY13-14 and FY15-16 include the following:

- Night Life at the Grove dropped by 55%
- Dinner with the Kennicotts dropped by 72%
- Hayrides dropped by 48%
- Trails and Tails dropped by 37%

Conversely, there were increases in a few key programs, including:

- Birthdays increased by 19%
- Dessert with Santa increased by 17%

And, a few new programs with significant registration numbers included Ladies Night and GHA Fundraiser Event.
Further observations:

- The Grove programming is focused on young children and adults. There are no programs specifically designed for middle school age, teens, or high school age demographic. These age groups could participate in restoration work days; however, consider adding age group specific activities like bonfires, geocaching, or volunteers-in-training to gain work experience for future employment.

- The annual adult programming offering was limited to one blacksmithing class and the wellness in nature series. Consider adding structured opportunities for like-interest groups to gather, e.g. hikes, jogs. The visitor’s guide describes special workshops occurring throughout the season at the blacksmith shop; consider offering more than one opportunity per year for adults to learn about/engage in blacksmithing.

- Beyond corporate rentals, no weekday daytime programs were observed for the Redfield Estate. Consider creating special social opportunities for older adults, like mid-morning teas or special seasonal luncheons.

- Nature-based preschool is a trend in the early childhood industry. The Grove is located in an environment ideal for this type of themed preschool setting. As the park district considers its role as a provider of preschool, this may be an area to explore.

The Grove provides other services and/or involvement opportunities beyond traditional recreation programming, which are listed here:

- Be A Buddy
- Birthday Parties
- Grove Heritage Association
- Group Programs
- Historical Archives
- Interpretive Center
- Natural Science Classroom
- Redfield Estate Rentals
- School Programs
- The Grove Store
- The Traveling Trunk
- Volunteer Opportunities

The variety of amenities provides multiple opportunities to engage a wide variety of guests to The Grove.

Marketing Approaches

Program Guide

Four seasonal program guides, from Spring 2016 to Winter 2017 were reviewed for The Grove, including attributes of: presence and presentation, content, and format.

- Consistent through the four seasons reviewed, The Grove has its own distinct pages of the program guide that are dedicated solely to the facility’s offerings.
• The Grove program guide pages are located in the same part of the guide from season to season, towards the back with the rest of the special facilities. This consistency makes it easier to find.

• The consistency of initial page structure, where the facility logo/branded name is at the top of the vertical box located on the outside edges of the page, and the hours are located directly under the facility name, creates a recognizable path to basic information.
  - The Fall and Winter guides both use photos in this vertical banner, which was a change that created powerful impact. The images portray what the participant may experience at the site and makes the facility seem more inviting and interesting.

• There is a brief overview statement about what the facility is, and then what the experience at the site entails. Although it may seem redundant to print every season, this basic information is essential to the new readers’ understanding of the unique facility features and missions.

• The program titles, descriptions, and course information are presented clearly and neatly, in a manner corresponding to the rest of the guide.

• Overall, the visual appeal of the entire program guide would be enhanced by the use of full color.

Website Review
As part of the programming review, the Grove website was assessed. Included in the website is The Grove video, which is a nice depiction of a visit to The Grove, with connectivity between the past and present through “shared” life experiences of two girls from different eras. Making that connection is a critical part to staying relevant.

Overall, The Grove web pages are organized and clearly worded. The presentation is clean. The design is not necessarily the most sophisticated or visually appealing, but does fulfill the primary purpose of being an information source. Observations from the website include:

• There is a clear depiction of hours on the front page, top and center content. Perhaps a sidebar on the right would keep the message clear, but make the main focus the content about the facility itself.

• The sub-page organization of the facility-related web content is nicely off-set on the side with a filled box.

• The “programs” tab links directly to WebTrac; this is an easy way for staff to connect the user to program information that’s already been entered into the registration software. However, there is no notification that the user is being brought to a different website. The top of the new page fills the screen with “activity search criteria” boxes, so it is unclear to the user that they should scroll down to the bottom of the page for the facility-related programming information. The programs tab should first link to a sub-page with a short paragraph about programs (and at times, more pertinent programmatic information – like summer camp details) and then let the user know to ‘click here’ for more program and registration information.

• Comparing The Grove to Wagner Farm, it seems the “friends groups” financial missions have been different; based on website content, The Grove Heritage Association seems to have focused on largely structural contributions, while the Friends of Wagner Farm support low-income students to either come on-site or receive an off-site visit. Perhaps describing the
missions of the two groups online would help the reader to know more about the organizations and offer more transparency to the community.

- The school programs brochure is a well-designed, organized, visually pleasing brochure that should be highlighted even more as a downloadable option. A thumbnail image of the cover that is hyperlinked to the download is recommended.
- The school program video was well-worth the investment. It is a short but sweet compilation of the student experience.
- The school program listing is long. To help the reader quickly find information, consider ‘links’ at the top of the information that will quick-scroll the user down the list to the section they are interested in.
- The Illinois state educational standards are listed by the school programs, which is a helpful touch for teachers in their assessment of each program opportunity.
- The Scout brochure is an effective, simple document describing the different types of programs offered specific to scouting needs.
- The Grove Heritage Association page encourages participation and donations in the form of time and/or money. The page should be updated; the list of accomplishments is from 2015, and the listed event dates from May 2016. Also consider adding more content about the leadership of the group.
- The Redfield Estate page opens with contact information. This is good for quick-reference; however, the primary goal of this page should be the sale of time in the facility. An image at the top of the page should portray the beauty of the house and/or what an event at the facility would look like. It should also have key words as to what the reader could host at the site: Weddings, Corporate Events, and Private Parties.
  - The four-page brochure is a high-quality sales piece that should also be more prominent on the page.
  - The photo albums and information accessibility (i.e. floor plan, rate sheet, etc.) are user-friendly features.
  - The redfieldestate.org website links directly to the park district page. Creating this alias address was a good business decision, making the initial website search with a shorter address easier for the user.
  - The video of weddings at The Grove was fantastic – the inspirational music and beautiful images are sure to entice brides-to-be.
- Newsletter: *A Leaf From The Grove*
  - The Winter issue content was informative, though the design was not visually appealing.
  - The homeschool webpage link from newsletter did not work in March 2017.
  - Six thumbnails of the color brochures that depict various services and advertisements lined the bottom of the electronic newsletter. This should be done on the website as well.
- The marketing pieces for The Grove do not have a standardized font and font size. In addition, there are times The Grove logo is included in promotional material and other times it is missing. All of this should be standardized.
- Benchmarking: The American Alliance of Museums accreditation self-study checklist’s Public Service Role section lists 34 website component items; The Grove has about half of those components on its website (e.g. Membership information, Visitor guides, etc.)
Online Presence

- The Grove needs to have a regional draw to drive visitation rates and attract new users. The Grove must have an online presence that is front-and-center when searched through internet search engines. A key way to do this is to engage Search Engine Optimization (SEO). By definition, SEO is “the process of maximizing the number of visitors to a particular website by ensuring that the site appears high on the list of results returned by a search engine,” according to Google. The PEW Research Center has been tracking Internet use systematically since 2000. In 2016, roughly nine in ten adults used the Internet, regardless of device (mobile devices, tablets, and laptop/desktop computers), with 96% of adults 18-49 years reported as users.

![% of U.S. adults who use the internet, by age](image)

Source: Surveys conducted 2000-2016. Data for each year based on a pooled analysis of all surveys conducted during that year.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

- As part of the process, the consulting team conducted several keyword searches via the Google search engine in March 2017. Keyword phrases for several essential regional-draw services from each facility were tested. The results indicated that the Glenview Park District needs to dedicate specific resources to enhancing its internet presence for The Grove. The detailed results are described below.
- “Free outdoor family activities Glenview” and “Free outdoor family activities Chicago North Shore”: Specific results for The Grove, or the Glenview Park District were not found (search ended at page 8).
- “Outdoor museum Glenview”: Kohl Children’s Museum was first on the list. The Grove was listed on page two as a result of the link via chicagoparent.com.
“School field trips Glenview”: The GPD YouTube video for The Grove and Air Station Prairie landed towards the top of page two out of 227,000 results.

“School field trips northern Illinois”: The top three results out of 405,000 were homeschool websites - [www.thehomeschoolmom.com](http://www.thehomeschoolmom.com), [www.chicagolandhomeschoolnetwork.com](http://www.chicagolandhomeschoolnetwork.com), and [www.homeschoolbuyersco-op.org](http://www.homeschoolbuyersco-op.org). Within these websites are extensive listings of locations throughout Illinois that offer educational field trips. Not only should GPD optimize these key words within its own website, staff should also consider exploring how to become a part of the homeschool groups’ listings. The Glenview Park District website did not appear in at least the first five pages of results.

“Estate wedding venues Chicago area” result for Redfield Estate landed on the first page, as part of a weddingwire.com listing.

The district needs to initiate more search engine optimization throughout its website, especially for key regional draw service lines. And, adding the Park District website to key listings within these service areas will be essential if the district desires to broaden its reach and scope of interest.

**Additional Marketing Approaches**

- The Grove has a downloadable Visitor’s Guide on the Website that offers extensive information about the facility. However, there is quite a bit of text. The website listed was [www.thegroveglenview.org](http://www.thegroveglenview.org). There is a logo on the top right of the Guide.
- There is also a downloadable brochure of the Redfield Estate and includes a virtual tour. *The Leaf* is a supplemental information brochure that is produced weekly.
- There is also a school program guide, volunteer guide, and Be a Buddy animal sponsorship program.
- The website has a professionally produced video of The Grove that provides a good historical background. It’s well done. The staff is currently in the process of creating a shorter version of the video.
- The Grove Heritage Association has its own page with good information and not heavy on text. It may be helpful to list some of the financial contributions the Association has made. Another possible idea is developing a gift catalog for specific areas to contribute.
- There is no consistent theme for the marketing materials, with varying fonts and colors. The logo is represented differently on various publications. The home page for The Grove, on the Park District’s website does not have the logo.

**Financial Summary**

A specific museum tax is levied annually to financially support The Grove; user fees and charges and donations account for other sources of revenue. The Grove’s total revenue is made up of roughly two-thirds tax funding and one-third user fees and charges, interest, and a miscellaneous category. Of the non-tax revenue in the past three fiscal years, facility rentals account for about half of that revenue, followed by about 25% group fees, and roughly 10% program fees. An outlier of almost $2.8 million posted to miscellaneous in 2016, which was a result of proceeds from land acquisition.
The following chart shows revenues and expenses for The Grove for FY12 through FY16.

### Total Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY12</th>
<th>FY13</th>
<th>FY14</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1,841,586</td>
<td>$2,292,105</td>
<td>$1,668,629</td>
<td>$1,787,667</td>
<td>$4,568,156</td>
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</table>

### Total Expense by Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>FY12</th>
<th>FY13</th>
<th>FY14</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Service</td>
<td>$816,315</td>
<td>$826,914</td>
<td>$848,086</td>
<td>$891,805</td>
<td>$929,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractual</td>
<td>$1,350,844</td>
<td>$1,378,747</td>
<td>$1,424,036</td>
<td>$1,432,313</td>
<td>$1,510,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Transfers</td>
<td>($187,237)</td>
<td>($204,737)</td>
<td>($164,404)</td>
<td>($161,475)</td>
<td>($190,362)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund + or (-)</td>
<td>$303,505</td>
<td>$708,621</td>
<td>$80,189</td>
<td>$193,879</td>
<td>$2,867,347</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Grove has 10 full-time staff and 78 Part Time staff members listed in the 2016 financial audit. Full-time personnel expenses increased modestly, just under 2% between both fiscal years 2013-2015, and 0.1% between FYs 2015-2016. Overall, personnel services expenses increased the past three years, 2.6%, 5.2%, and 4.2% respectively. In reviewing the percentage of personnel services as a percent of total expenses, the percentage amount is remarkably consistent, as follows. Tracking the percentage of dollars to total expenses is an important financial metric, as a result of it being such a significant portion of expenses.

Expenditures for personal services as a percentage of total expenses have been remarkably consistent, varying from 60-62%.

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<td>62%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Contractual services have decreased from $176,344 in 2014 to $155,274 in 2016. Fixed expenses have gone up steadily, an average of $8,300 per year for the past three years. Overall, The Grove has been netting a surplus at the end of each fiscal year since at least 2009; the amount has varied greatly from year to year, usually with a correlation to a larger posting in the miscellaneous revenue line item.

The following chart shows earned revenue amounts from FY12 to FY16 and total personal services expenses to determine the ratio of earned revenue to labor costs. This is a key financial performance metric that measures revenue generation productivity.
Earned revenues have grown by almost 25% from FY12 to FY16, which is a healthy growth percentage. Rental income has increased by almost 60% from FY12 to FY16. Merchandise has increased by 29.2%. On the other hand, both program fee and group fee revenues have decreased by 12% and 7.9%, respectively. The group fee decrease is a result of fewer school groups having the ability to visit The Grove.

Rental income is the most important revenue source for The Grove as it represents 57% of total earned revenue. Group fee revenue is the second most important revenue source at 25% of total earned revenue. Together, these two revenue sources represent 81% of total earned revenue. Therefore, it’s important to augment group offerings, possibly adding senior center groups from the Glenview region. Also, an investment of marketing dollars should focus on these two key areas.

Full-time labor expenses have increased only slightly from FY12 to FY16. However, part-time maintenance and operations expenses have significantly increased by 48.5% for maintenance support and 72% for program labor expenses. In reviewing the ratio of personal services to earned revenue, it takes an average of $1.83 to produce $1.00 of earned revenue.
A future goal should be to have financial information detailed that shows expenses correlating with revenues. This will provide truer cost-of-service information. For example, program revenue should be measured against all other program expenses. In the current summary format, program expenses are combined with contractual services, commodities, et cetera. All major service categories could be broken down: programs, school visits, group visits, events, rentals, et cetera. Another goal should be to establish cost recovery goals for the operation.

Similar Providers
As part of the Master Plan, five other providers of similar services were reviewed. The Schiele Museum in Gastonia, North Carolina is operated by the City of Gastonia’s Parks/Recreation and Cultural Services Department. Of the five providers examined, it was the one most closely related from a governing perspective; the other four were overseen by a nonprofit organization.

The Schiele Museum’s website experience was aimed at advertising the facility’s upcoming exhibits and events, with large graphics inviting the viewer to click to learn more. The use of social media was prevalent with event advertising. With one event, the click to learn more opened up a Facebook page of information; another event click led to a meetup.com page with event information. This illustration exemplifies that further benchmarking and expanded programmatic and operational ideas could be gleaned by Glenview Park District staff studying the site.

The Fernbank Museum of Natural History is connected to Atlanta, Georgia’s entire museum structure, where admission is available at a variety of levels of service, including passes that expand visitor access to other museums or attractions throughout Atlanta. This provider was included in the review partially due to its similarity in mission, but also because of how it exemplifies using an “attraction” to encourage a regional draw and repeat visits. The museum features Atlanta’s largest IMAX screen; film viewings can be bundled into the rest of the natural history museum’s experiences.

Two of the five similar providers examined were located in close proximity to each other within the Adirondack Mountains, the Adirondack Museum and the Wild Center. Both showcase the Adirondacks as an educational location to be preserved; however, the two museums accomplish it in two very different ways. A comparison of the facilities demonstrates a traditional methodology of operating a natural museum at the Adirondack Museum, whereas The Wild Center exhibits a more modern approach. The Adirondack Museum focuses on the preservation and availability of artifacts, while The Wild Center highlights the visitor experience and engaging people with their natural environment.

While both websites are informative about the museums’ history, services, and visitor information, the crisp, fresh design and high-quality photos make The Wild Center a more attractive website. Between the two facilities, The Wild Center is the site to give particular study from a benchmarking perspective. The Wild Center’s focus is forward-thinking, with specific intention on tackling larger societal initiatives like attracting the next generation of visitors to the Adirondacks, being welcoming to the LGBT residents and visitors, supporting a vibrant local economy, and climate disruption. When considering “trends” in nature museums, look to The Wild Center as one of the industry leaders.
Elevated trails as an immersion experience were highlighted at three of the five providers examined. Four of the five providers offered wedding and private rental services. Admission fees were charged at all five similar providers, through either daily charges or membership opportunities.

Trends

Wedding Venues

- According to Anne Chertoff in her weddingwire.com article, “8 Wedding Venue Trends for 2017,” are blank slate spaces, natural light, movable accent walls, lounge areas, industrial spaces, less is more, outdoor space and rustic formal. These key concept areas can be applied to all of Glenview’s wedding sites, but the natural light, less is more, outdoor space, and rustic formal all especially speak to The Grove venue. [https://www.weddingwire.com/wedding-ideas/etiquette-advice/wedding-venue-trends](https://www.weddingwire.com/wedding-ideas/etiquette-advice/wedding-venue-trends)

- The Huffington Post reports that “surprise settings” are a way to make their wedding fresh, new, and memorable. “Any place with a large plot of land or a distinct building — or both — will allow couples to really personalize their wedding and help them tell their unique story,” says Amy Cagginello, founder of Amy Champagne Events in Connecticut. The Grove venue has the “surprise setting” factor going for them. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-17-hottest-wedding-trends-for-2017_us_5841b6bae4b0cf3f64558955](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-17-hottest-wedding-trends-for-2017_us_5841b6bae4b0cf3f64558955)

Museums

The Center for the Future of Museums (CFM) produces an annual forecasting report that includes five or six topics that the staff and advisors believe are critical to the future of museums. According to the American Alliance for Museums website, each report:

- explores how each trend is playing out in the world
- investigates what this means for society and for museums
- shares examples of how museums are engaging with this trend
- suggests how museums might respond

2017 topics include: Empathy, Criminal Justice Reform, Artificial Intelligence, Migration and Refugees, and Agile Design. The CFM annual trends reports are posted as free PDF’s on the American Alliance for Museums website, in exchange for your agency information: [http://www.aam-us.org/resources/center-for-the-future-of-museums/projects-and-reports/trendswatch](http://www.aam-us.org/resources/center-for-the-future-of-museums/projects-and-reports/trendswatch)

Visioning

The Grove staff members participated in a visioning session to discuss the future direction of the facility. The group discussed the summary of information from the community/staff/stakeholder input. The group was divided into two and asked to identify key takeaways from the focus group summaries. Comments from the two groups included:

- Focus on marketing and creating awareness, which both groups thought was important
- Internal wayfinding
- Front entrance improvements
• Need to create new programs/exhibits/venue fresh
• Technology; Wi-Fi and walking tour apps (optimize use of technology)
• Build on the iconic history of the facility
• Continue land acquisition

Next, all of the ideas generated from the focus groups were listed for review. The two groups were then asked to identify the top five ideas worth pursuing. The ideas bolded represent those ideas that were mentioned by both sub-groups.

1. **Interactive exhibits**
2. **Multi-generational programming**
3. **Nature play area**
4. Partnership with museums such as (Kohl’s)
5. Special exhibits with short timeframe that can be advertised
6. Teacher trainings

The group also discussed changing community demographics and the increased ethnic population and aging population. Some ideas discussed:

• Korean volunteers could make it more welcoming
• How to reach underserved populations
  o Could already be reaching through passive use of parks
  o Signage in multiple languages
  o Translation services
  o Bi-lingual staff
• App that could translate

The group then discussed what The Grove Heritage Association does well:

• Supportive financially
• Partnership is effective
• Work together on events
• They purchase a lot of land; have $500K now
• Raised $10 million so far
• Behind the scenes work to reduce the cost of property is never reflected; vast network
• Find an appropriate tracking of value/worth/actual payment for land
• Passionate about the site
• Need to attract younger members; but new and younger members won’t have the same historical perspective

Heritage Association Needs strengthening:

• Succession for the group
• Definition of roles/responsibilities between staff and GHA; who is responsible for what?
• Board is divided on what type of board they want to be: businesslike or social [three workshops done so far to try to focus themselves]
Goals, Vision and Mission
The existing Program and Management Plan includes three goals areas. These goals will remain as a guide for future operations:

- To provide a meaningful leisure experience to people who visit The Grove. Further, that the experience be related to the unique environment afforded by The Grove. It is considered that many worthy leisure activities have a degree of learning concluded in that experience.
- To restore and preserve the physical aspects of the Grove including the grounds and the historic structures with the constant recognition of National Landmark status and Illinois Nature Preserve status.
- To continue and interpret the lifestyle and attitudes of the Kennicott family in such areas as horticulture, literature, education, natural science studies and so forth.

It is recognized that these three goals may be in conflict under certain circumstances and that there will need to be a constant effort to achieve balance in obtaining these goals.

The groups discussed mission and vision statements and developed these statements:

Vision

To inspire a greater connection among heritage, nature and people.

Mission

To protect and preserve the environmental, historical and cultural aspects of The Grove and provide related educational and leisure experiences to our visitors.

The group was then asked to brainstorm Strategic Themes for the next 5-10 years. Strategic Themes are macro elements of strategy, or broad-brushed strategic direction. The list below shows the total of eight possible theme areas. The group then voted on their top five. There were three Themes that all received seven votes, so as a result, six Themes were selected. The Themes and the number of votes received are below:

- Enhancing and Embracing Technology 12
  - Ensure a good balance between use and non-use of technology
- Exposing Children to Nature 12
- Marketing 10
- Infrastructure Improvements 7
- Protecting the Legacy 7
- Collaboration with other Museums 7
- Innovative programming 6
- Reorganization of responsibilities/business workflow 5

The following lists the six Theme areas and provides a definition for each, to ensure common understanding.
Enhancing and Embracing Technology: The use of technology refers to continuously strengthening the customer experience. Yet, at the same time the use of technology should be balanced...not using technology solely for the sake of using technology. Technology could simply be used in the form of a Grove app, which would be beneficial in assisting customers with wayfinding within the site as well as providing Wi-Fi capability. Technology could also be beneficial in creating more interactive exhibits.

Exposing Children to Nature: The Grove provides a unique experience for children to experience nature. The No Child Left Inside movement in the United States seeks to encourage and provide funding for environmental education. Its stated goals include the enhancement of environmental literacy between kindergarten and 12th grade youth and fostering understanding and solutions to environmental challenges. The 2005 Richard Louv book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder* created an increased interest in children's environmental awareness.

In 2010, the Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK) came together to address the national crisis among America’s children and youth by breaking down the barriers that have left an entire generation indoors.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has been involved since the beginning as a founding partner organization. Alliance members believe that the wellness of current and future generations, the health of our planet and communities, and the economy of the future depend on humans having a personal, direct and life-long relationship with nature and the outdoors.

OAK supports efforts to integrate environmental and outdoor education into the formal pre and K-12 school curricula, to establish or improve high-quality and safe outdoor learning environments, and to strengthen and expand, outside of the public school system, educational programs that are related to our public lands, waters and shores. All of the OAK initiatives can be incorporated into The Grove’s operation.

Marketing Improvements: A common refrain from all of the engagement sessions was a call to improve marketing approaches and awareness of The Grove. As evidenced by search engine optimization results, there are opportunities to reach a broader audience through enhanced capabilities from the website. There is a need to create a strategic approach to marketing. This includes promotional information, social media techniques, updated website information, and finding ways to provide outreach to an increasingly ethnically diverse audience.

Infrastructure Improvements: The Grove has several facilities within the site, including the Kennicott House, Redfield Estate, Program Barn, Interpretive Center, and Maintenance Garage. The structures are not necessarily tied together with any type of theme that provides an overall sense of what The Grove is trying to accomplish from the perspective of a customer experience. The Interpretive Center, in particular, is in need of improvement. Signage and wayfinding was frequently mentioned as a concern and an area needed for improvement to the facility. Any infrastructure efforts should include attention to ensuring there is an ability to constantly refresh exhibits as well as programs.

Protecting the Legacy: The Grove has a well-established legacy that will continue in the future. The mission and vision statements describe the timeless nature of the operation. The facility will always focus on the history of the facility, including interpretation of the Kennicott history. In addition to the
Kennicott legacy, the facility will also be known for its commitment to nature and environmental education. The legacy also includes the ability of the facility to generate earned revenues and to achieve future cost recovery goals.

**Collaboration with Other Museums:** There are opportunities to develop and strengthen partnerships with other museum operations, both within the Park District as well as throughout the region. A passport approach to museum visitation could generate greater visitation for all museums.
Strategic Recommendations
The following section lists a series of recommendations, listed in three timeframes:

- Short term (2018-2019)
- Mid term (2020-2022)
- Long term (2023 and longer)

Enhancing and Embracing Technology:
- Research appropriate use of technology including an app, site directional map, virtual tour, and self-guided walking tour, as possibilities. Short term

Exposing People to Nature
- Identify best practice agencies in the development of nature based programs and services. Long term

Marketing Improvements
- Develop a strategic marketing plan that provides a short term and longer term list of initiatives. Short term
- Develop ideas to cross market Wagner Farm with The Grove. Mid term
- Develop outreach strategies that attract a more ethnically diverse audience such as providing promotional materials in multiple languages or translation software, having bi-lingual staff, developing programs specific to ethnic audiences, and internal site signage in multiple languages or app technology. Mid term
- Develop sales training for staff. Mid term
- Improve the website; add virtual tours; analyze ways to improve search engine optimization. Short term

Infrastructure Improvements
- According to the Master Plan facility assessment process, the Interpretive Center was evaluated as needing improvement. As a result, develop a facility assessment study for improved use of the facility, particularly emphasizing environmental education and sustainable practices. Possible areas for investment include developing lunch space for school groups, storage space, and HVAC improvements. Also provide a more welcoming and open service reception area. Identify ways to tie the facility elements together in a more unified theme. Short term for planning; Mid term for implementation
- Develop a plan to improve wayfinding to the site as well as interior signage to assist customers with the ability to navigate the site. This can be accomplished in a cost effective manner by facilitating focus groups with repeat customers to find out from a customer experience what works be. Mid term

Protecting the Legacy
- When the District’s Strategic Plan is completed, develop The Grove Strategy Map, aligned with the District’s Plan. Short term
- Establish a cost recovery goal for the overall facility operation. Mid term
The Grove Master Plan 2018-2023

- Educate the public about The Grove’s commitment to sustainable practices. *Short term*
- Change the financial chart of accounts to be able to determine revenues and expenses for core service areas. *Mid term*
- Operationalize the vision, mission and strategic recommendations. This includes reinforcing the vision and mission during new employee orientation, and making the statements come to life through providing employees with a copy of the statements, having them visible in offices, on letterhead, etc. The Grove Strategic Plan recommendations should be reviewed and reported on a regular basis to staff and Park District leadership. *Mid term*

**Collaboration with other Museums**
- Identify possible partner museums in the region to develop a collaborative relationship. Develop and host an annual meeting to develop partnership ideas as well as discuss future plans for programs and services. *Long term*
- Identify other park district partners to promote a regional approach to increasing museum attendance. *Mid term*
- Continue to develop the creation of a passport or “trail” approach to museum visitation in the region. *Short term*
- Develop a cross marketing approach or bundling approach to Wagner and The Grove. *Mid term*
- Collaborate between The Grove and Wagner Farm for volunteers. *Mid term*

**Customer Experience**
In addition to the Strategic Themes listed above, there is also a need to continue to strengthen the customer experience. Strategic initiatives for this area include items such as:
- Develop additional outreach efforts to existing customers to ensure repeat visitation. *Mid term*
- Develop key performance indicators. *Long term*
- Develop a standardized customer satisfaction measurement system for all program and service areas. *Mid term*
- Develop an importance performance survey to find out what’s most important to the customer. This should contribute toward improving repeat visitation. *Long term*
- When creating a facility assessment study for the Interpretive Center, ensure the ability for exhibits and interactions to be continuously changed. *Mid term*
- Diversify program offerings by age segment and identify ways to engage tweens and teens as well as seniors. *Mid term*
- Identify targeted outreach efforts to special populations and ethnic minority audiences. *Mid term*
- Track year to year changes in individual revenue centers; identify root cause reasons for drop in programming and events revenue. *Mid term*
## APPENDIX A

### The Grove Recreation Programming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th># of sections</th>
<th>Fee per hour</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Animal Rehab Presentation</td>
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<td>Event</td>
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<td>Camp</td>
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<td>Program</td>
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<td>Tales &amp; Trails</td>
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<td>Walking Meditation</td>
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<td>Winter Nature Camp</td>
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<td>Elem School +</td>
<td>Camp</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Scavenger Hung</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Elem School +</td>
<td>Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wonderful World of Bears</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Elem School +</td>
<td>Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wonderful World of Chickens</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fall</td>
<td>18+</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$18.00</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX B

This appendix lists all of the comments from the three focus groups for The Grove, a support groups, a stakeholder group, and a staff group.

Focus Group Comments

The Grove Support Group

What are the strengths of the operation that we need to build upon to ensure success in the future?

- GHA over 40 years of experience. We have evolved. We continue to change. We have a good base
- Strong partnership with the District, great financial success
- We have people who are really welcoming at the Grove and the store
- Staff have been there a long time
- Once the Grove was saved, but we realized that things could be destroyed. We had a relationship with the Village to see how it can be protected as an environmentally protected
- Contiguous properties partnerships have been good
- Ordinance protection was in play
- Many staff started as volunteers

Can you think of any improvements that can be made to the MUSEUM, in either buildings, land, operations, staffing structure or programming?

- Website
- The concept of the museums is losing its place, it’s harder to find on the site
- How do you put an estimate of the value of the Grove? You can calculate the value of the asset of an athletic field vs the Grove
- Communication is lacking; we seem to work in a vacuum; this makes it more difficult for us to do our work
- We do not have access to manage the website
- Marketing role is unclear; we would like to access the site
- GHA website is outdated as we can’t change it
- Cannot join GHA online
- We should have flyers in the library for awareness
- Bathrooms when kids are there
- Would be good to put in a sewer system
- We assume that everyone knows where the Grove is, but that isn’t the case
- We need to create better awareness; the directional signage is tough to see
- Signage on the property as well
- The trail maps are not good maps
- It is not geared toward millennials...no apps or other social media are not being used
• I was in Howard County MD and there were so many things for kids to do...we could use more programming
• Self-guided tours
• Offering more programs
• Natural play would be nice
• Offering services in other languages
• Nannies and caregivers who are not English speaking

What would you consider the greatest challenges/issues facing the MUSEUM in the next 5-10 years?
• Demographic changes will create an older audience
• Money and generate income
• GHA membership is small...200 and some
• Our goals are to purchase land contiguous
• We have been able to provide a match with the state..that money may not be there in the future
• Bond issue?
• Maintaining the infrastructure
• Climate change will impact the Grove

• What are the challenges/issues facing the support group?
  We are aging; we want younger individuals involved
  Our membership is aging
  How do we reach our younger residents?
  What does membership get you?
  They need more staff

What do you see as the role of the support organization in partnering with the GPD?
• It is most significant financially
• How will we be able to partner? I don’t know how it will evolve?
• We thought the communication piece was getting better, but it is not now
• We have new staff; they are learning their jobs
• We are the step children of the District
• We need direct communication with the District
• We need to do more care and feeding of the volunteers
• There may be an opportunity for all volunteers; should be a volunteer fair

How would you assess the brand and image of the MUSEUM?
• How do you bring adults back to the Grove? Adult activities are missing in Glenview
• Wayfinding signage is missing as compared to Park Center

Do you have any ideas about how to create more awareness of the MUSEUM?
• Movie nights
• Concerts at the Grove
• Redfield House weddings impacts our ability to program
• Parking is an issue

How would you characterize your relationship with the GPD? With MUSEUM staff?
• I would like to know what is the role of the park district director in regard to The Grove
• We are dependent on them
• For craft fair, if we had to pay for staff, we wouldn’t make money
• We couldn’t do what we do without the Grove staff
• We haven’t had a good conversation about dynamics
• How do we re-think our spaces
• Are we keeping our historic integrity?

Who do you recognize as your chief partners? Where might additional partnerships be added?
• Kennicott family
• Open Lands
• IAPD
• DNR
• Fish and Wildlife
• Training for not for profits
• Training for volunteers

Give examples of museum or other public facilities that “do it right” in your mind. Places that have something that should be looked at as a new idea or direction?
• Sipping at the Shedd with alcohol
• Catigny (privately owned)
• Smithsonian
• Glenview History Center is an opportunity
• Schram Memorial
• We could market all of the museums together
• Brookfield Zoo does a great job with volunteers; the District could do a better job
• We need to re-program the volunteers

Any other general comments or issues you would like for us to be aware of?
• There should be someone living on the property
• A little fresh blood will be good (staff)
• Best management practices of the relationship between The Grove and the District
• Are there banners for The Grove?
• How about sending someone from GHA to Wagner Friends Meetings?
The Grove Stakeholder Group

In what capacity do you use the Grove? How often?

- Village of Glenview Natural Resources Manager – a sort of liaison between the village and park district, collaboration; we don’t use the grove much; do some joint programming
- Community member now; started using it 38 years ago. Family contributed financially because we feel it’s a jewel for the area. Hosted a dinner at Kennicott house to try to get more charitable resources. Son did eagle scout project there. Exceptional spot. Son flies in from NY to still cook at Grove Fest. He volunteered to work in the classroom.
  - I have friends who teach in Glenview – they have it on their calendars to reserve their spot on the revolving one-year calendar to ensure their classes can come and visit. Great programs; they’re at capacity and do have to turn away groups.
- My kids went to camps & summer programs. Walk there with friends and husband; member of the grove association; huge fan of what has been accomplished... staff is so responsive. On natural resource commission for the village. I use the grove to brag about Glenview. Took some classes there.

What are the strengths of the operation that we need to build upon to ensure success in the future?

- We forget it’s a museum
- Act like a museum sometimes
- A regional gem
- Mission statement... a strength has been the execution of the mission; preserving the history of the Kennicott family. Important piece of IL and Glenview history. Fact that Smithsonian is involved gives it more credence.
- Growth in the footprint is great. The fact that the boundaries have been pushed is magnificent. Land acquisition is great – continue that as opportunities arrive down the road.
- I get the sense that the relationships have helped – i.e. berm built with IDOT, and are incredibly important.
- Educational programs
- Revenue perspective – the weddings element is great; introduces more people into the facility
- Relationship with high school is very important; provides a strong volunteer basis. There are not that many opportunities for kids to be outdoors, to learn about habitats.
- Events: Brings community together – craft fair. Spring Plant sales

What are areas of needed improvements?

- Museum comment above. Play it up. Nature center and exhibits – everyone goes there first. Add to top of line in online searches for museums.
- It’s sometimes confusing... If you don’t know about the facility, where do you go when you first arrive? It can be intimidating and unclear.
- Need a Visitor center; a central area to orient yourselves. Not user friendly.
The Grove Master Plan 2018-2023

- Trail signage sucks. Wayfinding needs much improvement. You get really lost.
- You can miss parts of the whole.
- Sometimes you feel you’re intruding on staff when you come in because of the layout of the space.
- Signage
- Same thing with Kennicott house – have a person to staff it.
- Sign on Milwaukee Ave is easy to miss. Wood has bleached out on the sign, so carving contrast isn’t there.
- Village wayfinding signage is needed – at nearest intersections (like “this way to the Grove”).
- More volunteer driven programs.
- You don’t know it’s a place that’s open to public.
- It’s easy to pass by because you’re going by quickly
- Wetland is being reclaimed, so now doesn’t seem as accessible

How well is the facility connected to the community, residents and greater regional area?

- Well-displayed on village website.
- The GHA Rustlings mailing is great – perhaps needs a bigger reach? Email newsletter? Could touch community in a broad way
- Languages – 40 spoken in our elementary school. Expand that reach with technology
- Used to be a part of the curriculum; now it’s just ‘suggested’ (D34).
- Within the community if you say The Grove, people know what you mean.

How would you assess the brand and image of the Grove? Positives and negatives

- People love it; a special place in your heart for the grove
- I wonder if people don’t have kids, how do they know about it?
- Meditation classes are great and Sunday morning walk in nature for a different market segment.
- You want people to return to the Grove, value it, get involved/donate
- Treekeepers; but an opinion that the Botanical Gardens has the niche. But, it’s too expensive there. Grove is more of a laid-back opportunity.
- Explore those classes, add more broad ranging topics.
- It’s casual on the “right side” of road; fancy/lovely on the left – like you’re entering another world. Magical place.
- Where else do you go in Glenview to hear frogs?!

What do you hear your friends and neighbors say about the Grove?

- Everyone knows what it is, where it is.
- A special spot
- People love it
- Adults who went there when they were kids. But, doesn’t mean that they use it now.

Where do you see the Grove in 10 years?
The Grove Master Plan 2018-2023

- Land acquisition
- Stewardship opportunity and responsibility.
- Need to emphasize the habitat of that area. Remarkable woodland system.
- Continue to preserve, control invasive species, add interpretation piece.
- It’s already so rare, so it will likely be rarer.
- A real leader, Frog and Fern ladies well ahead of their time. Trend for valuing woodlands and wetlands. Therefore, The Grove will be more valuable in the future. More restoration; millennials will be more involved. Positive for appreciation of the grove.
- Outdoor classroom.
- Continue volunteer driven programs and services.
- Funding issues in future?
- It’s such an important resource. Managed by GPD, funded by revenue receipts. At some juncture, if receipts decline – if there was a risk of funding, we need to ensure the interest of the jewel needs to be set up in perpetuity. Does that mean we need a foundation? Ask for donations/sponsorships? Community is corporate-rich enough and individually rich enough, but it goes well beyond the Glenview Community.
- Such activism in environmental responsibility; let’s make sure we’re doing the right thing with our resources.
- Economic value, capitalize on the movement. Let corporate stewardship step up and preserve our environment. Corporate work days – volunteerism with employee.

Give examples of museums or other public facilities that “do it right” in your mind. Places that have something that should be looked at as a new idea or direction?

- Kohl’s black tie event will bring in a ton of money. They have a corporate board. But, Kohl’s is not Glenview-centric.
- Lincoln Park Zoo just started a youth in the farm program.

How well has the Grove been updated over time and kept “fresh”?

- 36 years ago it was a funky building. Glenview women would come and watch the deer. Now... a nature center, schoolhouse, archive house, pavilion, the teepee, pioneer house, Redford center restored... unbelievable
- The amount of work that went into what were the real wallpapers, décor, etc. Effort and energy has been great. From a timeline perspective – incredible what has happened. There has constantly been a project underway, example: old maintenance facility moves to front of property by the noise was smart.
- I would like it less if new shiny stuff was added. I like the character. It’s in great shape. Keep the character. (that is part of the brand).
- Wi-Fi throughout the grounds would be great. Walking tour on phones.

Any other general comments or issues you would like for us to be aware of?
The Grove Master Plan 2018-2023

- There are permanent and special exhibits at museums – promote the special exhibits (like at the Field Museum). Strategic promotion - Opportunistic (like a theme around cicadas). Long term plan for next few years of upcoming special exhibits...? You have a limited opportunity to see this great exhibit.
- Banners on major roads – outside what we normally do. Celebratory.

How do you feel about the possibility of a nature-based preschool?

- Like Northpark Village – a good comparison. They have a training now how to teach preschool appropriately.
- Gets people signing up.
- Either the trend will get huge, or not really happen - but a great thing if it happens
- Ok, to the extent the p/s doesn’t inhibit future opportunities or development. Can offer a huge menu for huge constituents. Just don’t put too much of the resources/focus on it.
- Regulatory requirements on facility would be huge. But, a good revenue producer and high demand in the community?
- Little kid’s noises would be great.

The Grove Staff Group

What are the strengths of the operation that we need to build upon to ensure success in the future?

- Very unique and all of the elements that are involved
- Variety of programs
- Good people working for us, bringing in good talent
- Very welcoming and family friendly
- We have great customer service
- We are very good to each other
- Willingness to help with any questions or problems the public brings to us
- Interpretive center cleanliness

What are the weaknesses?

- Maintenance staffing...We have 2 full time employees a 35 hours a week person and pt staff
- PDRMA recommended we have a land manager
- Marketing: our website needs a lot of work, there are other marketing avenues we are missing out on, marketing staff are spread too thin
- It’s frustrating dealing with marketing and inconsistent response
- We should have repeat customer benefits
- School and bus transportation has been a problem
- People in Glenview; we are not on people’s radar
- We have a lot of open space; we don’t make land management a priority
- Staffing study would be a good idea
- We have a hard time finding part-time staff to work
- We hire people that move to full time jobs
• We hire retired teachers
• We need more space in the maintenance shop
• Communication: Sometimes I am not able to answer questions from the public on weekends.

Can you think of any improvements that can be made to the MUSEUM, in either buildings, land, staffing, operations or programming?

• We get inquiries about our archives. We would like digital archives. That would generate a ton of marketing
• Lunch space for school groups; we could use another room
• Lack of sufficient staffing for programming; issues with weekends and birthday party staff. Could we require staff to be available a minimum number of weekends a year?
• Improved training for programming, possibly having two senior trainers so we avoid having new people training new people
• What if we added for new employees that they be required to work X weekends a year?
• We need to improve HVAC
• Space study is really needed of the interpretive building, more user-friendly
• Need to keep land acquisition and protection at the forefront
• We need a sewer line as we run on septic
• A lot of infrastructure concerns
• Alarms and security issues need to be taken care of, fire suppression system is lacking
• Filter system for the fish tanks is failing
• Signage and maps
• Maps that people carry around
• Yearly checklist is good; preventive maintenance

What would you consider the greatest challenges/issues facing the MUSEUM in the next 5 -10 years?

• We need to improve what we have, rather than building new
• There needs to be signs and play areas
• We need to refresh exhibits; you are not seeing new things
• More interactive exhibits
• Birders
• Wetlands education for visitors
• Learning resource center
• Keeping up with technological advancements
• Land availability
• Changing demographics..more seniors, fewer kids, different ethnicities
• Maybe an app?
• Marketing is using newspapers, but young people are not using newspapers
• For the wedding reservation, we do not have a good mobile rental app
• Schools are changing the way they are booking; they are not booking like they used to
• Some of our programs need to be modified according to student ability
• We need to incorporate music to help bridge the language gap
• We need to make it as accessible as possible
How would you assess the brand and image of the MUSEUM?

- When I talk about The Grove, people say they love the Grove, I hear this all the time
- Very good reputation in the field
- We could improve our image...staff uniforms, cleanliness standards
- Cleanliness is done by everyone; checklist for cleaning
- As people drive by on Milwaukee, there is not much visible frontage; we need a friendlier sign
- Make more of an entrance
- Sign study...it is hard to figure how to navigate the site

How well is the facility connected to the community, residents and greater regional area?

- We are more well-known regionally than locally
- People know it’s there but don’t come because the exhibits don’t change
- Those that do know us feel very positive about our facility. This includes what I have seen on yelp, Facebook, etc. and comments from visitors
- The Vintage Market was successful
- Our festivals grow a new audience
- Maybe smaller events too
- Or open up for a one-day event for cross country skiing

Who are your customers? How has it changed and how will it change in the next 5 years?

- School children, grandparents, older adults, summer camps, wedding customers that will come back and visit, scout groups, photographers, Pokémon, geocachers, birders, special needs groups, seniors
- More boomers in the future
- There is a new development behind the Grove we need to be aware of
- More senior workshop skills
- People want adult programming; but we offer them and no one signs up

How do you evaluate the customer’s experience at your site?

- For our programs we give them an evaluation; same for parties
- We need consistency in the evaluation process
- I would love to do a secret shopper program

Give examples of museum or other public facilities that “do it right” in your mind. Places that have something that should be looked at as a new idea or direction?

- Mexican
- Lincoln Museum in Springfield
- Civil Rights Museum
The Grove Master Plan 2018-2023

- Field Museum...we need to do more interactive in the archive building
- Independence Grove in Libertyville
- Lake County Forest Preserve
- Restoration management of Lake County habitat restoration
- Severson Nature Center
- Bird viewing station
- The nature center in St. Charles Hickory Knolls
- 10 years ago The Grove was THE place. We are still the same, and nothing new. All these places have come up around us

What is the role of volunteers in the MUSEUM? How does this change as we look ahead 10 years?

- We just hired a new volunteer coordinator; we could use them more
- Understand for the definitive roles for volunteers; we need direction
- They should be treated just like staff

What are customers saying about the MUSEUM? What is it you think they are looking for from a visit? What are schools looking for from a visit? What are event attendees looking for from a visit?

- Maybe we are losing customers because we have the same thing
- Sometimes we can’t accommodate the larger groups
- They appreciate the Grove that it is free
- Both history and nature is appreciated by visitors
- People do not recognize that the Grove is a nature preserve

Any other general comments or issues you would like for us to be aware of?

- It would be great to have a nature playground
- Sensory gardens for special populations
- It would be nice to emphasize staff development more
- GHA needs a jump start and clear direction and financial reporting and who does what
- New blood in the GHA, and how to work with them
- Opportunity for the two museums to collaborate; marketing and training opportunities
## APPENDIX C

### The Grove Similar Provider Listing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Operated By</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Gift Shop</th>
<th>Fees</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Unique Features</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland Museum of</td>
<td>Cleveland, OH</td>
<td>board of trustees</td>
<td>6400</td>
<td>museum building, planetarium, exhibits, research, Perkins Wildlife Center, educational events, kids hands-on learning center, rentals/weddings</td>
<td></td>
<td>members free; adult $18, youth/Senior $10,</td>
<td>M-Sat 10-5, Wed 10-10, Sun 12-5</td>
<td>5 recreations of Ohio ecological communities; walk below the water line and above the tree line</td>
<td><a href="https://www.cmnh.org/perkins">https://www.cmnh.org/perkins</a></td>
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<td>Natural History</td>
<td></td>
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<td>acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wild Center</td>
<td>Tupper Lake, NY</td>
<td>the assistance of its Advisory Board</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Woodland trails, canoe or paddleboard the river with a guide, Wild Walk, Pines Play Area - a wild playground in the forest where children can connect to their inner Huck Finn. Indoor exhibits, café, store</td>
<td></td>
<td>membership-based</td>
<td>Fri, Sat, Sun</td>
<td>Wild Walk - elevated trail along treetops, weddings; youth summits; hotel partners</td>
<td><a href="https://www.wildcenter.org/">https://www.wildcenter.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>acres</td>
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<td>Facility Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Adirondack Museum</td>
<td>Blue Mountain</td>
<td>The Adirondack Historical Association</td>
<td>121 acres</td>
<td>school visits, group tours, exhibits, events, collections, research, youth programs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Members-free, adults $20, kids $6-12, seniors $18, under 5 and active military free</td>
<td>May 26 to October 9, 2017: 7 days/week, 10am-5pm incl. holidays</td>
<td>30,000 objects, more than 70,000 photographs, 9,511 books, and 800 pages of original manuscript materials housed and exhibited at the Adirondack Museum</td>
<td><a href="http://www.adkmuseum.org">http://www.adkmuseum.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernbank Museum of Natural History</td>
<td>Atlanta, GA</td>
<td>501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization</td>
<td>65 acres</td>
<td>immersive programming, hands-on permanent exhibitions, Atlanta’s largest IMAX® screen, a selection of traveling exhibits, immersive trails, educational programming, self-guided forest tours, elevated walkway with two tree pods, small parties to galas for 2,500 guests</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>varies based on level of service and bundle options; member rates; can buy a CityPASS and get access to other Atlanta attractions</td>
<td>daily 10am-5pm</td>
<td>Home to the world’s largest dinosaurs, Atlanta’s biggest movie screen and one of the largest assemblages of and oldest urban Piedmont forest in the United States</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fernbankmuseum.org">www.fernbankmuseum.org</a></td>
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<td>Facility Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Schiele Museum of Natural History</td>
<td>Gastonia, NC</td>
<td>City of Gastonia Parks/Recreation and Cultural Services</td>
<td>60,000 square feet inside the museum</td>
<td>a nearly three-quarters of a mile nature trail, Planetarium, nature trail, back-country farm, Catawba Indian Village, rentals, educational programs, summer camps, exhibits, field trips, outreach</td>
<td>Adults $7, Children (4-18) $6, Students w/ ID (18+) $6, Seniors (65+) $6; members free, city reduced price</td>
<td>Monday - Saturday: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm; Sunday: 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Planetarium; conducts research in: Archaeology Entomology Mycology Malacology</td>
<td><a href="http://www.schielemuseum.org">www.schielemuseum.org</a></td>
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