

Letter to the Editor  
April 20, 2004

Ms. Terry Pastika  
Executive Director/ community lawyer  
630.833.4080

### **Minutes Matter**

Public body meeting minutes are a vital part of government accountability and must accurately reflect discussions, the substance of discussions and what action, if any, was taken. Minutes are legislative history and as such, need to be carefully scrutinized to ensure they accurately reflect the breadth and details of public body discussions. The Citizen Advocacy Center fields dozens of calls a year from members of the public and public officials with concerns about how meeting minutes are written or how detailed meeting minutes are because they are the official record documenting public decisions and the divergent view points behind those decisions.

When the current Park Board commissioners are long gone, and when a new TIF issue resurfaces, new commissioners might want to research how previous Park Boards dealt with TIF. A discussion detailing the intent of a letter sent on behalf of the Park Board endorsing the TIF extension is important. How else will it be explained why, despite clearly having an impact on Park District funding, the Park Board never took a vote to back the TIF extension? To give breadth regarding the TIF discussion, it is also important to accurately note that Commissioner Ubriaco was inappropriately reprimanded for discussing an issue clearly related to Park District public business. What may seem like innocuous details are, in fact, important to ensuring that the history behind the setting of policy is accurately documented.