

Minutes of the 902nd meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District, held on February 16, 2021 at the Blendon Woods Nature Center, Blendon Woods Metro Park, 4265 E Dublin Granville Rd, Columbus, OH

Present

Commissioners: Mr. Hadden, Mr. McCue

Staff: Mr. Moloney, Mr. McGivern, Mr. Peck, Ms. Telfer, Mr. Studenmund, Ms. Ingram, Mr. Dudley, Mr. Kasnyick, Ms. Ricker, Mr. Bruch, Mr. Berisford

Legal Counsel: Mr. Franzmann

Guests: None

Mr. McCue asked if all of the notice requirements of Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code and the rules of the Board regarding open meetings had been met. Mr. Moloney confirmed that all of those requirements and rules had been met.

Special Recognition

A special recognition ceremony planned for this meeting has been moved to March 16, 2021.

Minutes of the January 19, 2021 Board Meeting

Mr. McCue made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2021 Board Meeting. Mr. Hadden seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

Public Comment: None

Disbursement Resolution #5884

Mr. McCue moved for the approval of the Disbursement Resolution for the January 2021 invoices. Mr. Hadden seconded the motion and the Board approved the resolution. A copy of Resolution No. 5884 is attached to these minutes as part hereof.

Staff Reports

Administration

Mr. Moloney updated the Board on January's park attendance: January continued to be very busy for the district with many visitors participating in winter activities. Attendance was up 43% over last January and staff expects this level of visitation to continue.

Mr. Moloney and Operations staff are beginning to plan how to phase the district out of its COVID-19 operations. Some elements of Metro Parks' pandemic response are likely to remain for some time.

Mr. Moloney also updated the Board on Metro Parks' participation in the Rapid5 project, a collaboration between several local governments, park agencies, MORPC and private

entities aimed at connecting Central Ohio's five major waterways and providing resident access to Central Ohio's rivers and Greenway trails. Metro Parks manages significant landholdings on all five rivers named in the project. This project is in Phase II of its development. Metro Parks has committed to help fund this project and anticipates a contribution of \$500,000. Metro Parks is also working to bring other local leaders into the project.

Mr. Moloney shared with the Board updates on the progress of Ohio House Bill 63, a bill introduced to revise Ohio's current eminent domain law. This bill was introduced in response to disputes over park districts' use of eminent domain in trail construction in Mahoning and Stark counties and, if passed, would revise current eminent domain law and place all eminent domain cases under the review of a township Board of Trustees. As an autonomous agency, Metro Parks is in opposition to this bill and is working both with the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association and State officials to express its concern to lawmakers.

Operations

Mr. Peck introduced Mr. Brett Berisford, Assistant Manager at Blendon Woods, who then introduced Blendon Woods staff in attendance (Mr. Stefan Bruch, Ms. Karen Ricker) and updated the Board on Blendon Woods' current winter operations. Mr. Peck also introduced the other staff members in attendance.

Mr. Peck updated the Board on several projects, including the Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP) project at Clear Creek Metro Park. To receive full funding from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA), WRRSP projects must be sponsored by a municipality. The WRRSP project at Clear Creek, which will stabilize the creek's bank, protect Clear Creek Road and provide habitat improvements to the creek, has been sponsored by the City of Akron and will receive full funding from OEPA.

Mr. Peck also shared with the Board the details of a renovation taking place at the Blacklick Woods Golf Course Pro Shop, a needed renovation that will improve the Golf Course staff's ability to serve Central Ohio golfers. Mr. Bruce Dudley, Manager of Park Operations, has been working with a contractor on this project.

Winter activities, including cross-country skiing, ice skating, sledding and more have been driving high attendance throughout the district in January and February. Mr. Peck commended park staff for managing this increase in visitation and adverse weather.

Lastly Mr. Peck updated the Board on a letter received from Mr. Castle, a local bass fisherman. Mr. Castle expressed his concerns that increased visitation and use of the Big and Little Darby Creeks was harmful to wildlife and Big and Little Darby Creeks' unique ecosystem. Metro Parks staff appreciated Mr. Castle's letter and provided Mr. Castle with a response detailing Metro Parks' management strategies in the watershed,

its work with local kayak and canoe liveries to reduce impacts to the creeks and other management concerns.

Finance

Mr. McGivern reported that the Finance department has been busy opening purchase orders and preparing for the 2021 fiscal year, which is now underway. The first tax advances have been received from the Franklin County Treasurer's Office and were more than expected, which promotes the health of Metro Parks' 2021 budget.

Mr. McGivern updated the Board on two major land acquisitions that occurred in January. Metro Parks has also received reimbursements for the Scioto Greenway Trail project.

The Information Technology staff continues work on its conduit project and is also in the process of relocating the servers at the Headquarters office into a more ventilated space to prevent overheating.

Human Resources

Ms. Telfer updated on Human Resources' current project; due to Covid-19, many Metro Parks employees were unable to use accrued vacation time in 2020 and are nearing the maximum accrual point, after which they will not be able to accrue more time regardless of hours worked.

To prevent employees from losing time earned and to make sure the use of vacation time is spread out to minimize impact to park operations, HR is considering a one-time vacation conversion policy, in which eligible employees will be able to convert forty hours of vacation time to cash pay. Only full-time employees with more than 120 hours in their vacation bank would be eligible. HR is working on the details of this policy.

Other Business

None.

Resolutions

#5885 HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHIEF DONALD E. SCHWIND TO METRO PARKS DURING HIS TENURE WITH THE SHARON TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Board approved the honoring of Sharon Township Police Chief Donald. E. Schwind, who has provided invaluable assistance and partnership to Metro Parks during his tenure.

- #5886 AUTHORIZING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE OMNIA PARTNERS COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM
The Board approved the authorization of participation in the Omnia Partners Cooperative Purchasing Program, one of several programs Metro Parks participates in.
- #5887 AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF TWO APPLICATIONS TO THE CLEAN OHIO GREEN SPACE CONSERVATION FUND FOR PROPERTIES IN FRANKLIN COUNTY
The Board approved the submission of two applications for Clean Ohio Conservation Space funds in Franklin County, one in Groveport and one in Lockbourne.
- #5888 AUTHORIZING THE GRANT OF A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE PICKAWAY COUNTY PARK DISTRICT FOR PROPERTY LOCATED IN FRANKLIN COUNTY
The Board approved the granting of a lease agreement to the Pickaway County Park District for a parcel adjacent to Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park in Pickaway County. The Pickaway County Park District is building a kayak access at this site.
- #5889 AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION TO THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF PARKS AND WATERCRAFT FOR A PADDLING ENHANCEMENT GRANT FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT SCIOTO GROVE METRO PARK
The Board approved the submission of a grant application to ODNR's Division of Parks and Watercraft to improve the South Kayak Access at Scioto Grove Metro Park.

Other Comments:

None

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by the Board of Park
Commissioners:



Tim Moloney, Executive Director



Chair