

Minutes of the 903<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District, held on March 16, 2021 at the Grove Lodge, Scioto Grove Metro Park, 5172 Jackson Pike, Grove City, OH 43123.

**Present**

Commissioners: Mr. Hadden, Mr. McCue, Mr. McGregor

Staff: Mr. Moloney, Mr. Peck, Ms. Telfer, Mr. Fortman, Mr. Moshier, Mr. Courtwright, Mr. Kasnyick, Mr. Dudley, Ms. Boniface, Mr. Domiano, Mr. Studenmund, Ms. Ingram

Legal Counsel: Mr. Franzmann

Guests: Ms. McGregor, Ms. Kristin Studebaker, Chief Don Schwind, Honorable Judge Jeffrey Mackey, Mr. Greg Hartz, Mr. Rod Pritchard

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**

Metro Parks staff and the Board honored Sharon Township Chief of Police Don Schwind for his many contributions and support of the district over twenty-five years of service.

**Minutes of the February 16, 2021 Board Meeting**

Mr. Hadden made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2021 Board Meeting. Mr. McGregor seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

**Public Comment:** Mr. Greg Hartz, a landowner and neighbor near Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park, spoke to the Board regarding his concerns over the Invenergy solar energy project currently under consideration near Battelle Darby Creek. Mr. Hartz expressed concern over several aspects of the project and asked the Board to clarify their stance on the project.

Mr. Moloney and the Board assured Mr. Hartz that no decision or resolution on the Invenergy solar project has been brought before the Board. Metro Parks is in communication with both Invenergy and representatives of other stakeholder groups as the project develops. The Board advised Mr. Hartz to stay apprised of the situation.

Mr. Rod Pritchard, a farmer in the area, also spoke regarding resident concerns over the project, including a lack of bond, potential limits to park expansion, the long term of the project, noise and sightlines concerns.

Mr. Moloney also introduced the Board and the public to Honorable Judge Jeffery D. Mackey, the new Probate Judge in Franklin County.

### **Disbursement Resolution #5890**

Mr. McGregor moved for the approval of the Disbursement Resolution for the February 2021 invoices after clarification of two items. Mr. Hadden seconded the motion and the Board approved the resolution. A copy of Resolution No. 5890 is attached to these minutes as part hereof.

### **Staff Reports**

#### **Administration**

Mr. Moloney provided an update on the status of Ohio House Bill #63, which is in its third iteration before lawmakers. This bill was created in response to an eminent domain dispute in relation to a trail project and in its current iteration would limit the ability of 1545 park districts to acquire property via eminent domain without the approval of an unrelated board of trustees. While Metro Parks has not used eminent domain to acquire property in over thirty years, eminent domain is a valuable tool for property acquisition in can be used to determine the price of a disputed property fairly. Metro Parks is in opposition to HB 63 as it currently stands and is working with other park districts and representatives to modify the bill to limit its effects to Mahoning County, where the initial dispute occurred.

Mr. Moloney also updated the Board on the Rapid5 project, now well underway. Metro Parks is working with several other local park districts, municipalities and agencies on this project, which has entered its fundraising phase and raised over \$400,000. Public comment and initial planning stages are underway for this project, which would connect green space along Central Ohio's five major waterways.

#### **Operations**

Mr. Peck introduced Mr. Kurt Fortman, Manager of Scioto Grove, who introduced his staff in attendance (Mr. Moshier, Mr. Courtwright) and updated the Board on several projects underway at Scioto Grove for 2021, including the installation of a natural gas compressor to support vehicle use, improvements to the South Canoe Access site and modifications to the playground.

Mr. Peck provided more details on Scioto Grove; it is Metro Parks' newest park, is completely dog-friendly and has many unique features for the area, including a static archery range, a 3-D archery range, a disc golf course and an overnight backpacking trail.

Several Operations Department projects are underway. Resource Management has held several controlled burns on successional prairies and hopes to get in a few more before burn conditions lapse. Contractors at Quarry Trails Metro Park are continuing work. A Fall 2021 opening date is anticipated.

Mr. Peck also updated the Board on Covid-19. The district remains in Incident Command Management, but parks have shifted out of the pod schedule. The Golf Course is once again charging fees for its Championship course. Parks are preparing their shelters and lodges in anticipation of being able to open soon. A new backpacking

trail is also slated to open at Battelle Darby Creek, giving visitors access to up to thirty miles of trail.

### **Finance**

Mr. McGivern reported that spring revenue streams have come in, including advances on Franklin County revenue taxes and real estate. His team continues to operate with new software that has allowed them to work from home.

The IT department is working on several projects, including relocating Metro Parks' central servers and contracting out the installation of conduit at Blacklick Woods Metro Park and Blacklick Woods Golf Course.

Unemployment fraud has flared up in the district, as it has all over the country this year, and is being managed by the Metro Parks Payroll Specialist and by Human Resources.

### **Human Resources**

Ms. Telfer updated the Board on Metro Parks' seasonal hiring initiative, which is well underway and introduced Mr. JJ Domiano, the HR Manager. The vacation conversion program was successful, with sixty-five of 118 eligible employees participating. Metro Parks may consider offering this program again.

Mr. Joshua Simon, Metro Parks' Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator, is building connections with the Columbus community and is preparing to launch an apprenticeship program.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Moloney provided the Board with an update on Metro Parks' levy commitments: during the 2018 levy cycle, Metro Parks pledged to open three new Metro Parks in ten years, the first of which is Quarry Trails, Metro Parks' twenty-first park.

Metro Parks acquired the former Hoover Y park in Lockbourne, Ohio last year and is in the process of acquiring land around that site with the intention of opening a twenty-second Metro Park. The Planning & Design department is looking for potential acquisitions for a twenty-third park to fulfill that levy commitment.

### **Resolutions**

#5891 DECLARATION AND AUTHORIZING TO DISPOSE OF SURPLUS EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS IN 2021

The Board approved the authorization to sell surplus equipment and materials on GovDeals.

- #5892 AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF DISCRETIONARY FUNDING FROM THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION- METRO PARKS ROAD IMPROVEMENT ALLOCATION FOR THE 2022-2023 BIENNIUM  
The Board authorized Metro Parks to accept discretionary funds from the Ohio Department of Transportation, which helps the district improve roadways and trails.
- #5893 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR FIBER OPTIC CONDUIT INSTALLATION AT BLACKLICK WOODS METRO PARK AND BLACKLICK WOODS GOLF COURSE  
The Board authorized entering a contract for fiber optic conduit installation at Blacklick Woods in the amount of \$183,025.96 to support visitor and staff usage of the Internet.
- #5894 AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES OF MORE THAN \$50,000 FOR THE REMODELING OF THE BLACKLICK WOODS GOLF COURSE SNACK BAR LOUNGE AND PRO SHOP  
The Board approved the authorization of expenditures to improve and remodel the Pro Shop at the Blacklick Woods Golf Course. Renovations were solely needed to support increased visitor use.
- #5895 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT TO MANUFACTURE THREE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES FOR QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK  
The Board authorized the district to enter into a contract to build three bridges for Quarry Trails Metro Park in the amount of \$268,739.
- #5896 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT TO SITE GRADING IMPROVEMENTS AT QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK  
The Board authorized the district to enter into a contract for site grading improvements at Quarry Trails Metro Park in the amount of \$364,880.05.
- #5897 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A DESIGN/BUILD CONTRACT FOR A MAINTENANCE BUILDING AT CLEAR CREEK METRO PARK  
The Board authorized the district to enter into a contract for the design/build of a new maintenance building at Clear Creek Metro Park in the amount of \$473,000.

**Executive Session:**

The Board entered Executive Session at 3:49 p.m. to discuss land acquisition. The Board returned from Executive Session at 4:44 p.m.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by the Board of Park  
Commissioners

  
Tim Moloney, Executive Director

  
Chair