

Minutes of the 907<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District, held at 3:00pm on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at the Mansion Shelter, Highbanks Metro Park, 9466 Columbus Pike, Lewis Center, OH 43035.

**Present**

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

Staff: Mr. Moloney, Mr. Peck, Mr. McGivern, Mr. Kasnyik, Ms. Telfer, Ms. Hanley, Mr. Studenmund, Mr. Rosenbeck, Ms. Ingram, Mr. Bruch, Ms. Watkins, Ms. Moheimani, Ms. Clark

Legal Counsel: Mr. Franzmann, Ms. Martinez

Guests: Ms. McGregor, Mr. Mark Ferenchik, Mr. Bob Litt, Ms. Ann Litt

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.

**Minutes of the June 6, 2021 Board Meeting**

Mr. McGregor made a motion to approve the minutes of June 6, 2021 Board Meeting. Mr. Hadden seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Disbursement Resolution #5923**

Mr. McGregor moved for the approval of the Disbursement Resolution for the June 2021 invoices. Mr. Hadden seconded the motion and the Board approved the resolution. A copy of Resolution No. 5923 is attached to these minutes as part hereof.

**Rapid 5**

Mr. Moloney updated the Board on the Rapid 5 project, which Metro Parks is undertaking in conjunction with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), the Urban Institute, other local park and conservation agencies, business owners and others.

The Rapid 5 project, which aims to build connections along Central Ohio's five major waterways, has completed its preliminary visualization and fundraising steps. Design firms hired to visualize this project will reveal their preliminary plans to the public on Wednesday, July 21, 2021 at the Boathouse as part of a program hosted by the Columbus Metropolitan Club.

These plans and visions will be made available to members of the Board after their release during the July 21, 2021 meeting.

### **Residential and Farm Leases**

Mr. Moloney also provided the Board with an overview of Metro Parks' current residential and farm leases. Metro Parks has acquired many leases over the past seventy years as part of normal acquisition processes, including accepting life estates in exchange for donated land, inheriting existing leases when purchasing land rights and bidding out farm contracts. One property, at the recently-purchased Hoover Y park, is leased to an employee who provides maintenance and security on the property, which sees high vandalism and trespass complaints due to its proximity to neighborhoods.

Metro Parks' goal with its various leases is to minimize operational expenses wherever possible until an end product – parkland – can be delivered to the public. Farm leases have been permitted in areas such as the Burning Lake Area of Pickerington Ponds that were not ready to open during the park's initial design phase, and farm tenants have planted cover crops to reduce invasive species. Some tenants have planted native seeds, such as prairie grasses and flowers, on their plots as well as part of their lease agreements. Farm leases have been bid out through a contract bidding process.

Metro Parks has reduced its number of leases, both residential and farm, over time, with an overall goal of managing zero leases. The lease agreements between Metro Parks and its tenants are non-traditional, with Metro Parks assuming no maintenance or upkeep obligations from the tenant.

Mr. Moloney stated that all rental programs are currently under review and that staff will share results with the Board. Residential leases do not require Board approval under the current bylaws.

Mr. McCue spoke for the Board and underlined that the Board understands the land acquisition process and the obligations that can come with it. He supports the occasional tenant agreement in "the spirit of being a neighbor."

Mr. Hadden added that he believes the taxpayers of Franklin County lucky to have the Metro Parks team it does and that he has full confidence in Metro Parks' staff to review and manage the rental program appropriately.

Mr. McGregor agreed with his fellow Commissioners. He stated that lease agreements can be interesting to manage and added that he believes the Board should be involved in the leasing process, to foster transparency for the public and to make sure all staff input is received during the leasing process.

Mr. Moloney thanked the Board for their input and agreed to bring all leases to the Board moving forward.

### **Other Business**

None.

## **Staff Reports**

### **Administration**

Mr. Moloney updated the Board on administrative operations within the District. A previous partnership between Ricart Automotive Group, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and Metro Parks has developed into a new partnership in which Ricart will help promote Quarry Trails Metro Park as the park approaches its opening date.

Mr. Moloney also shared with the Board that several senior-level staff members are approaching retirement and that Metro Parks is preparing to start the hiring process for several replacements.

### **Operations**

Mr. Peck introduced the Highbanks Metro Park staff in attendance; Mr. Alan Rosenbeck, the Assistant Park Manager, Park Rangers Mr. Stefan Bruch and Ms. Shelby Watkins, and Park Technicians Ms. Elizabeth Riley and Ms. Brittany Clark. Mr. Peck also introduced Ms. Homa Moheimani, the incoming Customer Service Manager, who started with Metro Parks in late June. Ms. Moheimani brings experience from the Ohio Restaurant Association and Disney Parks. She will be working closely with the Operations department over the next several weeks to develop ideas and learn more about the District.

Metro Parks hosted its Outdoor Adventure Day, in conjunction with 10-TV, at Highbanks Metro Park on Saturday, July 17. This was Metro Parks' first large event in over fifteen months. Several thousand visitors came through the park and enjoyed games, programs and the outdoors.

Mr. Peck also updated the Board on progress at Quarry Trails Metro Park. Quarry Trails is still slated to open in Fall 2021 and development continues, though product shortages, weather and other complications have slowed progress. Metro Parks has several contractors, its Roving Crew and its CSI interns on site to assist with development. Mr. Peck asked the Board if they had any questions relating to his internal memorandum sent prior to the meeting, which provided clarification on current projects and processes at Quarry Trails. The Board concurred with Mr. Peck's direction. Several projects have been through a contract bidding process and will come before the Board as resolutions.

### **Finance**

Mr. McGivern provided updates to the Board on the Finance Department. Revenue continues to exceed estimations, placing Metro Parks in a strong place financially as the District approaches the second half of 2021.

The budgeting process for 2022 has begun, with preliminary estimates sent to the Franklin County Treasurer's Office for review and staff preparing maintenance and acquisition requests for 2022.

The Finance department has also consolidated several business accounts, including Amazon accounts and DocuWare accounts, to further save money and streamline Metro Parks' spending.

### **Human Resources**

Ms. Telfer stated that Metro Parks has begun the process of estimating benefits costs for 2022 with Franklin County. She hopes to have further information for the Board in the coming months.

The CSI program, designed to recruit students from Columbus City Schools as seasonal interns, is nearly complete, with less than three weeks remaining in the program. CSIs have logged hundreds of hours working on various projects, including invasive species removal, planting, construction and repair projects throughout the District.

### **Resolutions**

- #5924 AMENDING BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS RESOLUTION NO. 5912  
A previous resolution was amended to grant an easement to Ohio Power Company, not the City of Columbus.
  
- #5925 AUTHORIZING PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT FOR QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK AND ADDITIONAL PATROL AND MAINTENANCE VEHICLES  
The Board authorized staff to purchase equipment, including ranger and maintenance vehicles, for Quarry Trails Metro Park ahead of its opening to the public.
  
- #5926 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS AT QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK UTILIZING THE STATE OF OHIO COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
The Board authorized entering into a contract with Kokosing Construction Company, Inc. through the ODOT Cooperative Purchasing Program to pave a parking lot at Quarry Trails Metro Park ahead of its opening.
  
- #5927 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT WITH KOKOSING CONSTRUCTION COMPANY INC. FOR ASPHALT PAVING IMPROVEMENTS AT QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK  
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract with Kokosing Construction Company, Inc. for additional paving services at Quarry Trails Metro Park.
  
- #5928 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT WITH STRAWSER PAVING COMPANY FOR ASPHALT PAVING IMPROVEMENTS AT QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK

- The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract with Strawser Paving Company for paving services at Quarry Trails Metro Park.
- #5929 AUTHORIZING TRANSFER OF PROPERTY FOR HIGHWAY PURPOSES TO THE FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR PROPERTY ASSOCIATED WITH ROCK FORK METRO PARK  
The Board authorized the transference of property at Rocky Fork Metro Park to the Franklin County Commissioners for the purposes of building a culvert to support highway functions along Schleppe Road.
- #5930 AUTHORIZING THE GRANT OF SANITARY SEWER EASEMENTS TO THE CITY OF HILLIARD FOR PROPERTY AT HOMESTEAD METRO PARK  
The Board authorized the granting of an easement to the City of Hilliard to build a new sanitary sewer system underneath the edge of the park. As part of the easement, Metro Parks will be able to tap into the sewer line through Homestead Metro Park.
- #5931 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO AN AGREEMENT TO SELL GROUNDWATER MITIGATION CREDITS AT PRAIRIE OAKS METRO PARKS  
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into an agreement to sell groundwater mitigation credits at Prairie Oaks Metro Park as part of a program developed with the Ohio EPA. Proceeds from this sale will go back into the program and support further groundwater improvements and mitigation efforts in the Darby Creek watershed.
- #5932 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR THE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF A PRE-CAST RESTROOM FOR THE SHADY GROVE PICNIC AREA OF SLATE RUN METRO PARK  
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract to build a new restroom at Slate Run Metro Park. A portion of this project was funded through a generous donation from a park visitor.

### **Executive Session**

Mr. McCue moved to enter into Executive Session at 3:51 pm to discuss personnel matters. Mr. McGregor seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, resulting as follows:

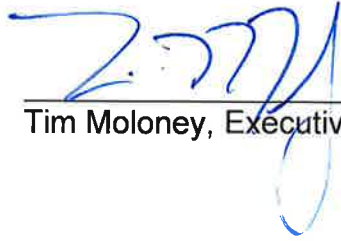
Mr. McCue: Yes  
Mr. McGregor: Yes  
Mr. Hadden: Yes

Mr. Hadden left the meeting at 4:30 pm and the Board returned from Executive Session at 4:45 pm.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Tim Moloney, Executive Director

Approved by the Board of Park  
Commissioners



Chair