

Minutes of the 908th meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District, held at 3:20pm on August 17th, 2021 at the Beech Maple Lodge, Blacklick Woods Metro Park, 6975 E Livingston Avenue, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068.

Present

Commissioners: Mr. McCue, Mr. McGregor

Staff: Mr. Moloney, Mr. Peck, Mr. McGivern, Ms. Telfer, Mr. Studenmund, Ms. McClintok, Mr. Laughbaum, Mr. Ramsey, Ms. Bergman, Mr. Storey, Ms. Ingram, Ms. Moheimani

Legal Counsel: Mr. Franzmann, Ms. Martinez

Guests: Mr. Mark Ferenchik

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 July 20, 2021 Board Meeting

Mr. McGregor made a motion to approve the minutes of July 20, 2021 Board Meeting. Mr. McCue seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

Public Comment

None.

Disbursement Resolution #5933

Mr. McGregor asked a clarifying question about processes for Metro Parks purchasing cards. Mr. McGivern, Metro Parks' Finance Director, explained how purchasing cards work, including price caps, user restrictions and daily reporting. Mr. McGregor then moved for the approval of the Disbursement Resolution for the June 2021 invoices. Mr. McCue seconded the motion and Resolution #5933 was approved.

Staff Reports

Administration

Mr. Moloney updated the Board on the Rapid 5 project, which was unveiled to the public in July at an event hosted by the Columbus Metropolitan Club. This presentation walked the public through several high-level plans for the five river corridors included in the Rapid 5 project.

Metro Parks has been approached by the Nature Conservancy regarding current and future partnerships. The Nature Conservancy is wrapping up restoration and conservation work at the Memory Lane property, part of Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park, that was funded through bat mitigation programs.

A public hearing was held at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park regarding the Pleasant Prairie Solar Project (Invenergy) in July. The hearing was hosted by the Ohio Power Siting Board and took place at the Nature Center. Several hundred residents, stakeholders, conservation groups and other interested members of the public participated in the hearing.

Finally, Mr. Moloney updated the Board on the partnership between Metro Parks' Media Group and Ricart Automotive Group. Filming was conducted at Quarry Trails Metro Park and promotional material will be released to the public ahead of Quarry Trails' anticipated Fall 2021 opening.

Operations

Mr. Peck introduced the Blacklick Woods Metro Park staff in attendance; Josh Laughbaum, Park Manager, and his staff. Mr. Laughbaum and Assistant Park Manager Jess McClintok updated the Board on several projects underway at Blacklick Woods and the adjacent Blacklick Woods Golf Course.

Mr. Peck also provided updates on summer operations. The 2021 Summer Camp program has concluded. Over 1,700 campers participated in camps across several parks. The 2021 Columbus City Schools Internship (CSI) program has also concluded. Seasonal employees are reaching the end of their seasonal terms. Several seasonal employees have been promoted to part-time or intermittent status, with more promotional opportunities expected to become available in the coming months.

Mr. Peck stated that park staff across the District has managed several unusual incidents in the past month, as the parks continue to experience high visitation.

Quarry Trails Metro Park continues development and operational staff are aiming for a fall opening of completed areas. Three pedestrian bridges were put in during the month of August, a resolution regarding a new restroom and overlook area will be brought before the Board during this meeting and paving is expected to begin soon for several parking lot and roadway areas.

The Canopy Walk/Nature Center project at Blacklick Woods is being reconfigured, as the Nature Center component of the project did not receive viable bids. Current plans include a Canopy Walk up into the trees near the existing Nature Center.

Finally, Operations staff and the Resource Management team are preparing an application to the H2Ohio (H2O) Grant Program for next year. This program focuses on reducing loads of agricultural runoff and other non-point source pollutions in Ohio waterways and if received will fund restoration work in former agricultural field on Little Walnut Creek, including wetland restoration and riparian improvements. The WRRSP Stream Restoration Project at Clear Creek is also well underway, though Metro Parks is still searching for sponsors.

Finance

Mr. McGivern provided updates to the Board on the Finance Department. The Finance Department has been working with Operations staff and Park Managers to prepare preliminary 2022 budgets with the goal of having the budget prepared for the Board within the next few months, ahead of its usual November-December review schedule.

The Finance Department has reviewed several Capital Improvement Project requests from park staff and has taken requests and estimates for all "big ticket" items, such as patrol vehicles and maintenance equipment.

Human Resources

Ms. Telfer outlined several active recruitment initiatives; Metro Parks is actively hiring two Managers of Park Operations, as two current MPOs are retiring before the end of the year. Promotions to these positions will create further openings among management, ranger and maintenance staff. Additional promotions and transfers are being evaluated in several other departments as well.

Metro Parks employees will not see any insurance increases with the county in 2022. Flu shot clinics have been arranged with the county.

Other Business:

Mr. McCue commended the efforts of all park staff during this year, and 2020, and thanked the retiring Managers of Park Operations for their service.

Mr. Moloney notified the Board that they would soon be receiving invitations to visit Headquarters one on one for 2022 budget and operations discussions, and to build familiarity with the day-to-day operations of the District.

Resolutions

- #5934 AMENDING BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS RESOLUTION No. 5905
A previous resolution was amended to add additional acreage to an easement.

- #5935 AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN THE HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL (HGAC) PURCHASING PROGRAM AND THE ACQUISITION OF SYNTHETIC TURF FOR THE SCIOTO AUDUBON DOG PARK THROUGH SAID PROGRAM
The Board authorized staff to participate in the HGAC Purchasing Program and purchase synthetic turf for the new dog park at Scioto Audubon Metro Park.

- #5936 AUTHORIZING DONATION/TRANSFER OF A HEAVILY USED 2013 UTILITY VEHICLE TO THE PLEASANT TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Board authorized Operations staff to transfer ownership of a vehicle to the Pleasant Township Fire Department for use during rescue and response operations.

#5937 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A RESTROOM AND PLAZA AREA AT QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK

The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract with Setterlin Building Company to build a restroom area at Quarry Trails Metro Park.

Executive Session

Mr. McCue moved to enter into Executive Session at 3:55 pm to land acquisition negotiations. Mr. McGregor seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, resulting as follows:

Mr. McCue: Yes

Mr. McGregor: Yes


The Board returned from Executive Session at 4:20 pm.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by the Board of Park
Commissioners


Tim Moloney, Executive Director


Chair