

Minutes of the 909<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District, held at 3:05pm on September 21, 2021 at the Shelter, Buckeye Area, Walnut Woods Metro Park, 6723 Lithopolis Rd, Groveport, OH 43125.

### **Present**

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

Staff: Mr. Moloney, Mr. McGivern, Ms. Telfer, Mr. Studenmund, Mr. Laughbaum, Mr. Kaderly, Mr. Dudley, Ms. McConnell, Ms. Moheimani, Ms. Boniface

Legal Counsel: Mr. Franzmann

Guests: Mr. 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.

### **Public Comment**

None.

### **Minutes of the August Board Meeting**

Mr. McGregor made a motion to approve the minutes of August 17, 2021 Board Meeting. Mr. Hadden seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

### **Disbursement Resolution #5938**

Mr. McGregor asked a clarifying question about some of the refunds noted on the disbursement resolution. Staff provided information about prices, rates and refunds for rental packages at Metro Parks facilities. Mr. McGregor also asked about the cost of repairs to the rescue boat located at Scioto Audubon Metro Park. Park staff clarified that the repairs were necessary for the boat to continue to function. The rescue boat is used by park staff to patrol the Scioto River and to assist in incidences on the water in the Scioto Mile area.

Mr. McGregor then moved to pass the resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Hadden.

### **Staff Reports**

#### **Administration**

Mr. Moloney updated the Board on several ongoing administrative projects. Two new Managers of Park Operations – Dan Kaderly, Manager at Quarry Trails Metro Park, and Josh Laughbaum, Manager at Blacklick Woods Metro Park – have been hired to replace Metro Parks' outgoing Park Managers, Don Yablonski and Bruce Dudley. Training of new MPOs is underway. Current park operations are under review and some reorganization of duties is expected as the new MPOs transition into their roles. The

current plan is to divide the District into four quadrants for ease of management, each under a separate MPO.

Metro Parks staff have met with Senator Shaffer regarding a bill he is introducing to the State of Ohio Senate, which aims to regulate how metropolitan park districts are managed and developed, including how park districts acquire land.

Metro Parks' social media team had a viral video this month of an Ohio Wildlife Center hawk release at Highbanks Metro Park, which has garnered millions of views on Facebook. SciotoFest was held at Scioto Audubon Metro Park and attracted hundreds of visitors.

The Ohio Power Siting Board is reviewing the Pleasant Solar Project. Several stakeholders, including Metro Parks, have stepped in as intervening parties in order to receive more information about potential impacts the project may have on the Big Darby Creek watershed and adjacent ecosystems.

Mr. McCue has received phone calls regarding the solar project and agrees that Metro Parks should seek to stay apprised of the project's development. The Board expressed an interest in meeting with counsel to be updated on the solar project's progress.

### **Operations**

Mr. Moloney also updated the Board on Metro Parks' Operations Department. Mr. Moloney introduced Ms. Mindi McConnell, Park Manager of Walnut Woods, who then shared with the Board Walnut Woods' current projects and focuses for the year.

The Walnut Woods Dog Swimming Pond has been permanently closed and filled in due to persistent issues with harmful algal blooms (HABs). Walnut Woods staff had a successful summer season, with several Resource Management projects completed. Staff also recently completed a new swinging bench and overlook area. The park is preparing for the end of the year, including preparing to winterize restrooms, prepare facilities and complete any ongoing projects that cannot be completed over the winter months.

Mr. Moloney continued to update the Board on park operations. The parks are still in a COVID-19 response, with emphasis placed on sanitizing the parks and ensuring visitor and staff safety. The parks continue to be busy as staff prepares to transition into winter operations. Attendance is down approximately 20% from where it was in 2020, but 2020 was an unusual year, with attendance recording above normal. 2021 attendance shows an increase over the 2019, which was a "normal" year with normal park operations. Park hours will change on October 1, 2021. Several parks that have previously closed thirty minutes after sunset will now be designated "dark parks" and will close at dark.

The WRRSP Stream Restoration Project at Clear Creek Metro Park is well underway and is expected to be completed by the end of the year. Another baby bison was born at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park, bringing this year's count to four.

### **Finance**

Mr. McGivern provided information about the 2022 budgeting process, which is well underway within the District. Budget meetings with park managers will begin in October.

The Finance Department is working on year-end tasks and Metro Parks continues to be in good shape financially, with revenues coming in higher than projected and expenditures coming in lower than projected. Large expenditures will be completed by early December in order to close out the fiscal year.

### **Human Resources**

Ms. Telfer updated the Board on Human Resources; several leadership positions have been filled, including the two MPO positions, several Park Manager positions and several Assistant Park Manager positions. These moves have opened several full-time Park Ranger and Park Technician positions, which HR is working to fill.

Franklin County notified its partners of insurance premium increases. Employees who receive their health insurance through Metro Parks will see a seven percent increase to their premiums in 2022. Insurance premium rates are determined through the county, not through Metro Parks.

Ms. Telfer also provided details to the Board about a pay study Human Resources will be undertaking. Metro Parks, like many other employers, has experienced difficulty in retaining employees over the last several months as the pandemic continues to impact the labor market. A preliminary examination has also shown that some of Metro Parks' pay scales are below market. This has particularly affected Park Technicians and Park Rangers. HR will be reviewing pay scales and adjusting as necessary to remain a competitive employer and to retain employees.

### **Other Business:**

None.

### **Resolutions**

**#5939** ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND RATES AS DETERMINED BY THE BUDGET COMMISSION AND AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVY AND CERTIFYING AS SUCH TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR

The Board authorized Metro Parks to accept tax levy rates and amounts, determined by the Franklin County Budget Commission, for 2022. Paperwork will be submitted to the Franklin County Auditor's Office and amounts and rates accounted for in the 2022 budgeting process.

- #5940** AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR REFORESTATION PLANTINGS AT SCIOTO GROVE AND PICKERINGTON PONDS METRO PARKS  
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract with Facemyer Company to reforest two sites at Scioto Grove and Pickerington Ponds Metro Park with native trees and shrubs.
- #5941** AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR THE PLANTING OF TREES AT QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK  
The Board authorized park staff to enter into a contract with Facemyer Company for the planting of 200 trees in the Middle Tier of Quarry Trails Metro Park.
- #5942** AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A CHANGE ORDER WITH KOKOSING CONSTRUCTION COMPANY AT QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK  
The Board authorized the Executive Director to complete a change order with Kokosing Construction Company to pave an additional 2,000 linear feet of roadway at Quarry Trails Metro Park in anticipation of a Fall 2021 opening.
- #5943** AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR PAVING IMPROVEMENTS AT SLATE RUN METRO PARK UTILIZING THE STATE OF OHIO COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract with The Shelly Company for paving improvements at Slate Run Metro Park. Ninety-five percent of Slate Run's paved surfaces will be repaved under this contract.
- #5944** AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF REAL ESTATE OWNED BY DALTONNA, H. CRAIG CRAWFORD, TRUSTEE OF THE DONNA J. MILLER TRUST FOR PARK LAND AT WALNUT WOODS METRO PARK  
The Board authorized the Director to purchase approximately 280 acres of land in southeastern Franklin County near the Tall Pines area of Walnut Woods Metro Park. Seventy-five of this purchase will be done with Clean Ohio Green Space conservation funds.
- #5945** AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF ONE GRANT APPLICATION TO THE OHIO RIVER BASIN H2OHIO WETLAND GRANT PROGRAM  
The Board authorized Kevin Kasnyik, Resource Manager, to submit an application to the statewide H2Ohio Wetland Grant Program, which if received will provide funding for stream restoration, wetland creation and other habitat improvements to eighty acres of parkland in the Walnut Creek watershed.
- #5946** AUTHORIZING DEMOLITION OF SEVERAL RENTAL RESIDENCES AND PROVIDING DIRECTION ON FUTURE LEASES OF RESIDENCES ON METRO PARKS PROPERTY  
The Board authorized Metro Parks to terminate the leases of four rental properties currently managed by the District, and further authorized Metro

Parks to demolish said rental properties. All future residential leases will be brought to the Board for consideration after their acquisition.

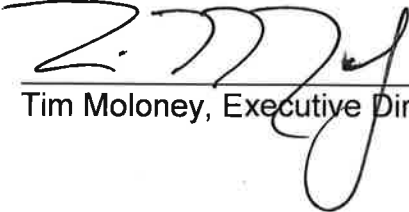
#5947 AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF REAL ESTATE OWNED BY DAVID VEACH FOR PARK LAND AT BATTELLE DARBY CREEK METRO PARK  
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract with David Veach to purchase approximately six acres of land at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by the Board of Park  
Commissioners

  
Tim Moloney, Executive Director

  
Chair