

Minutes of the 913th meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District, held at 3:01pm on December 21, 2021 at Innis House, Inniswood Metro Gardens,

Present

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

Staff: Mr. Moloney, Mr. Peck, Mr. McGivern, Ms. Telfer, Ms. Hanley, Ms. Fronk, Mr. Studenmund, Mr. Laughbaum, Ms. Boniface, Mr. Kaderly, Mr. Knowles, Mr. Dudley, Mr. Kasnyik, Inniswood staff

Legal Counsel: Mr. Franzmann

Guests: Ms. Kristin Studabaker, Mr. Jeff Brown, Mr. John Watts, Mr. Aryeh Alex, 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.

Public Comment

None.

Minutes of the November 16, 2021 Board Meeting

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

Minutes of the November 29, 2021 Budget Meeting

Mr. McGregor made a motion to approve the minutes of November 29, 2021 Budget Meeting. Mr. Hadden seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

Disbursement Resolution #5956

Mr. McGregor asked clarifying questions about two items on the November Disbursement Resolution, one regarding legal fees for counsel regarding the Pleasant Township Solar Project and another regarding the purchase of onboarding software for Human Resources. After his questions had been answered, Mr. McGregor made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Mr. Hadden, and the resolution was approved.

Staff Reports

Administration

Mr. Moloney began his report by announcing the retirement of three longtime Metro Parks employees; Mr. Bruce Dudley, Ms. Peg Hanley and Mr. Mike Schurman. Together these employees had over 100 years of service, for which Mr. Moloney

thanked them for. Mr. Moloney expressed his appreciation for their efforts towards the park district and stated that they will be missed. Mr. Moloney also thanked outgoing Board member Mr. Jim McGregor for his years of service. A new Board member, Mr. Aryeh Alex, will take Mr. McGregor's seat in the new year.

Mr. Moloney also updated the Board on progress at "Commissioner's Grove," a grove of memorial trees at Blacklick Woods Metro Park dedicated to all of the individuals who have served on Metro Parks' Board of Park Commissioners over the years. Mr. Moloney then stated that he would provide further updates to the Board as other business later in the meeting.

Operations

Mr. Peck introduced the Inniswood Metro Gardens staff to the Board and Mr. Bryan Knowles, Park Manager, further updated the Board on Inniswood's projects and accomplishments over 2021. Inniswood is a small but intensely managed park with a very active staff and volunteer base. In 2021, staff put in new pathways, new walkways and new irrigation systems, paid for in part by the Inniswood Garden Society.

Mr. Peck provided updates on the 2021/22 Winter Hikes Series, which takes place across the district and is well-underway in a hybrid model. All December parks featured in the Series have put up seasonal light displays.

Planning on the Blacklick Woods Canopy Walk is ongoing, with staff working together to draft plans for how to connect the walkway, which was successfully bid and awarded earlier in the year, to existing park amenities.

Finally, Mr. Peck was pleased to report that Quarry Trails Metro Park, the twentieth Metro Park, opened on November 30 and is now open to the public. While development of Quarry Trails will continue into 2022 and beyond, the public's response to the park has been enthusiastic and positive.

Finance

Mr. McGivern updated the Board on the Finance department, which is in the middle of closing out the 2021 Fiscal Year and preparing for 2022. Activities include closing out purchase orders, checking balances and preparing for 2022's anticipated expenditures.

Human Resources

Metro Parks' Human Resources department is actively recruiting for 2022, including seasonal, part-time and full-time positions. HR staff also continues to respond to changing health orders and COVID-19 policies as those policies are adjusted at the State and Federal level. Work on a pay study and any adjustments to pay scales as a result of that study continues.

Resolutions

- #5957 REQUESTING TAX ADVANCES FOR 2022
- #5958 AUTHORIZING A REDUCTION IN APPROPRIATION AUTHORITY FOR THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FUND (FUND 29)
- #5959 AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS FROM THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES FOR WETLAND RESTORATION UNDER THE H2OHIO GRANT PROGRAM
- #5960 HONORING BRUCE A. DUDLEY
- #5961 HONORING MICHAEL J. SCHURMAN
- #5962 AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF DIGITAL SERVICES FROM THE MARKETING BARN, LLC
- #5963 AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF VARIOUS REPLACEMENT AND NEW PIECES OF EQUIPMENT UTILIZING THE 2022 OPERATIONS BUDGET
- #5964 DECLARATION AND AUTHORIZING TO DISPOSE OF SURPLUS MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT IN 2022
- #5965 AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF ONE APPLICATION TO THE CENTRAL OHIO RURAL PLANNING COMMISSION FOR CORPO DEDICATED FUNDS

Other Business:

Mr. Moloney introduced the Board to Mr. Joe Brown, a zoning lawyer working with Zimmer Development, a project in the Brewery District that may have impacts on Scioto Audubon Metro Park.

The proposed development would occur on the old CSX property immediately east of Scioto Audubon's boundary. Metro Parks has been aware of this project for some time and has been in touch with the developer regarding it. A more solid development plan from Zimmer is currently being reviewed by the City of Columbus.

Metro Parks has several concerns about the project and has identified several potential impacts the development might have on the park, including increased traffic flow beyond what the current park entrance was designed to manage, stormwater concerns, wildlife impacts, access concerns and road safety concerns.

Mr. Brown provided some information about Zimmer's development. The Brewery District has approved Zimmer's zoning and site plans. The City commissioners will be meeting regarding the project soon. Zimmer does want to be "good partners" and work with the park district. To that end, discussion between Zimmer, the Board of Park Commissioners and the Operations and Administration departments of Metro Parks will be ongoing.

The Board weighed in with their initial opinions. They reiterated that Metro Parks does not grant easements from public lands – any easement the development would need to acquire (i.e. stormwater, drainage or right-of-way easements) would be purchased from Metro Parks to compensate the taxpayer.

Mr. Brown thanked the Board for their time.

Executive Session

Mr. Hadden made a motion to enter Executive Session for the purposes of discussing negotiations with the rangers' union and real estate matters. Mr. McGregor seconded the motion, the motion was put to vote, adopted and the Board entered Executive Session at 4:06 pm.

The Board voted to return from Executive Session at 4:20 pm. Mr. McGregor made a motion to accept the rangers' union's proposal, which was seconded by Mr. Hadden and passed, and then the Board voted to adjourn the meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by the Board of Park
Commissioners


Tim Moloney, Executive Director


Chair