

Minutes of the 914<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District, held at 3:00pm on January 19, 2021 at the Grange Audubon Insurance Center, Scioto Audubon Metro Park, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

**Present**

Commissioners: Mr. Hadden, Mr. Alex, Mr. McCue

Staff: Mr. Moloney, Mr. McGivern, Mr. Peck, Ms. Telfer, Mr. Studenmund, Ms. Ingram, Mr. White, Mr. Brewer, Mr. Schantz, Ms. Boniface. Ms. Beam, Ms. Moheimani, Mr. Huels

Legal Counsel: Mr. Franzmann

Guests: Honorable Jeff Mackey, Franklin County Probate Judge

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.

**Other Business**

The Honorable Judge Mackey introduced himself to Metro Parks' assembled staff and welcomed Mr. Aryeh Alex to the Board of Park Commissioners.

**Election of Officers**

Mr. McCue opened the meeting for the election of officers for 2022 and nominated Mr. Hadden as Chair of the Board. Mr. Alex seconded his nomination and Mr. Hadden was named Chair of the Board for 2022.

**Minutes of the December 21, 2021 Board Meeting**

Mr. Alex made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 21, 2021 Board Meeting. Mr. McCue seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Disbursement Resolution #5966**

Mr. Alex moved for the approval of the Disbursement Resolution for the December 2021 invoices. Mr. McCue seconded the motion and the Board approved the resolution. A copy of Resolution No. 5966 is attached to these minutes as part hereof.

**Staff Reports**

**Administration**

Mr. Moloney opened his report by welcoming Mr. Aryeh Alex, Metro Parks' newest Commissioner, and provided a report on 2021. Metro Parks had an overall good year, with high attendance, several successful programs and the opening of Quarry Trails

Metro Park. Presently, Metro Parks has made adjustments to park operations as challenges presented by the Omicron variant of COVID-19 have become apparent.

Representatives of the RAPID5 project met with representatives of the Atlanta Beltline project to gain insight into that project. Metro Parks continues to be involved with the RAPID5 initiative, which will soon be selecting an Executive Director and further developing its steering committee.

Metro Parks' staff has also been involved, with several other municipalities and agencies, in preparing a request for funding through the State Capital Improvements program. Metro Parks submitted an application for the current cycle to receive funding for an expansion of the Heritage Rail Trail on the west side of Columbus.

Lastly, Mr. Moloney updated the Board on a new division within Metro Parks' structure: the existing Public Information and Customer Service departments within Metro Parks have been combined into a new Marketing, Communications and Guest Experiences section. Ms. Homa Moheimani, formerly the Customer Service Manager, has been named Interim Marketing, Communications & Public Engagement Manager.

### **Operations**

Mr. Peck introduced Scioto Audubon's manager, DJ White, who in turn introduced the Board to other members of his staff and Grange Insurance Audubon Center Director Leighann Miller.

Mr. White updated the Board on Scioto Audubon's current and future projects. Work continues on relocating the dog park to a new area by the park office to make room for an Ohio Department of Transportation project scheduled to begin later this year. Scioto Audubon's staff also manages the Greenways trail system, logging over 600,000 miles of bike patrol on these trails annually, and has also assisted in the patrol and maintenance of the Scioto South/Heer Park property acquired in 2019, helped open Quarry Trails Metro Park and hosted several successful programs in recent months, including SciotoFest and a winter hike.

Mr. Peck provided further updates on the proposed Zimmer development adjacent to Scioto Audubon; the developer's plan continues to make its way through city zoning offices, though Metro Parks and the developer have not had much conversation in the past month despite Metro Parks' concerns regarding the development, including increased traffic and disruptions to park operations.

Quarry Trails Metro Park opened at the end of November 2021 and continues to be very busy and very popular with Central Ohio residents. Metro Parks is also a month into its

annual Winter Hikes Series, with January parks hosting several soup and hot chocolate stations on the weekends.

Mr. Peck updated the Board on a part-time park ranger, based out of Pickerington Ponds, who passed away during an off-duty boating accident. The Board expressed their condolences.

Mr. Peck also outlined several initiatives currently underway as Metro Parks prepares for 2022; park staff is responding well to winter weather and winter activities, with sledding hills and skating rinks opening over the past weekend in response to cold temperatures and significant snowfall. Metro Parks is also participating, with fifteen other law enforcement agencies, in a "College to Law Enforcement" program run by Cedarville University, designed to transition college students enrolled in the program into full-time careers in law enforcement upon graduation. The annual internship program with Columbus City Schools (CSI program), of which several full-time employees at Metro Parks are alumni of, is also preparing for the 2022 season.

Blacklick Woods Golf Course was revenue-positive in 2021, in part due to several initiatives and programs undertaken by the Golf Course staff to increase attendance and offer a variety of programs and services. Rentals at the Golf Course's two facilities have also resumed.

Mr. Peck also commented on Metro Parks' attendance, responding to questions from Mr. Alex; overall park attendance for 2021 was down compared to 2020, but 2020 was an unusual year. Metro Parks experienced an unprecedented surge in attendance in 2020 – up 30% over 2019 – due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as the parks remained open in March and April of 2020 while most other activities were closed. Metro Parks' 2021 attendance 19% was higher than its 2019 attendance, reflecting an upward general trend overall. Mr. Peck finished his report by stating that Metro Parks and its staff are continuing to react and adjust to the COVID-19 pandemic, and thanked staff for their flexibility in covering shifts and meeting operational needs.

## **Finance**

Mr. McGivern reported that the approved 2022 Annual Budget has been submitted to the Franklin County Treasurer, allowing Metro Parks to begin its new fiscal year.

Finance staff is currently busy with the tri-annual insurance renewal process, aided by Operations staff.

A new Payroll Specialist, Ms. Amy Klamut has been hired, as the current Payroll Specialist, Ms. Lynn Krueger, who has over forty years of service with Metro Parks, will soon be retiring.

Mr. McGivern also notified the Board that Metro Parks will be undergoing a full audit in 2022. Audits occur every three years. The Finance Department is preparing all requisite documents for the State Auditor's Office.

### **Human Resources**

Ms. Telfer updated the Board on Human Resources. Franklin County has allowed non-Board of Commissioner agencies to opt-in to several programs, including a vaccine incentive program, the deadline for which has now passed, and a bonus program rewarding staff who worked a requisite number of hours on-site. Over two hundred of Metro Parks' employees met this requirement and will be receiving a \$500 bonus in their second January paycheck.

HR staff is also attending several college career and job fairs in preparation for 2022 seasonal hiring, has completed a pay scale adjustment and is working to fill part- and full-time vacancies within the district.

### **Resolutions**

- #5967** AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF GOODS AND SERVICES FROM SPECIFIC VENDORS IN AN AMOUNT EXCEEDING \$50,000 FOR 2021  
The Board authorized Metro Parks' Finance Department to complete any remaining purchase orders from 2021 to specific vendors totaling \$50,000 or more.
- #5968** AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF OVER \$50,000 IN GOODS AND SERVICES FROM SPECIFIC VENDORS DURING 2022  
The Board authorized Metro Parks' Finance Department to open purchase orders with specific vendors totaling \$50,000 or more, allowing park staff to begin to purchase equipment, contract services and start on other business.
- #5969** AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR HEALTH BENEFITS  
The Board authorized Metro Parks' Human Resources Department to amend the intergovernmental agreement with the Franklin County Board of Commissioners regarding employee health benefits. Metro Parks' employees

receive their health benefits through this county plan and executing this amendment allows Metro Parks to remain part of this plan.

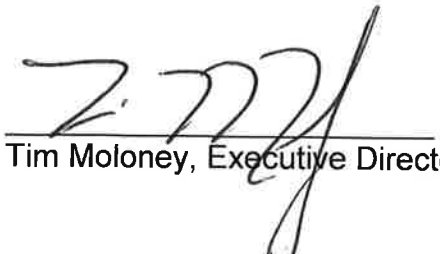
- #5970 HONORING MICHAEL J. HUELS  
The Board recognized Michael J. Huels' many dedicated years of service at Slate Run Historical Farm.
- #5971 AUTHORIZING THE DESIGNATION OF SQUIRE PATTON BOGGS (US) LLC AS METRO PARKS' ATTORNEYS  
The Board authorized Metro Parks to designate Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLC as Metro Parks' attorneys for 2022.
- #5972 SPECIAL EVENT PERMITTING FEES  
The Board authorized Metro Parks' Operations department to update the fee structure for external Special Events, such as 5Ks, community festivals and other events, to better serve Franklin County taxpayers and streamline the permitting process.
- #5973 AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF TRACTOR  
The Board authorized Metro Parks' Operations department to purchase four tractors for various parks using the State of Ohio Cooperative Program, a purchasing consortium, to meet operational needs at those parks.

**Adjournment:**

Mr. Hadden asked if there was a motion to end the meeting. Mr. Alex made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCue, and the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 3:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by the Board of Park  
Commissioners:

  
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Tim Moloney, Executive Director

  
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Chair