

Minutes of the 919<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District, held at 3:15pm at Spring Hollow Lodge, Sharon Woods Metro Park, 1069 West Main Street, Westerville, OH 43081.

**Present**

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

Staff: Mr. Moloney, Mr. Peck, Mr. McGivern, Ms. Telfer, Mr. Studenmund, Mr. Kaderly, Ms. Boniface, Ms. Snyder, Mr. Laughbaum, Mr. Kasnyik, Ms. Shaw, Ms. Strosnider, Sharon Woods staff, Mr. Eutsey, Mr. Saul, Ms. Ballard, Ms. Flannery

Legal Counsel: Mr. Franzmann

Guests: Mr. Bobb Litt, Mr. Brian McDaniel, Guests of Rangers

Mr. Hadden 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 May 17, 2022 Board Meeting**

Mr. Alex made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2022 Board Meeting. Mr. McCue seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

**Public Comment:**

Mr. Brian McDaniel, a Grove City resident, introduced himself and addressed the Board. Mr. McDaniel is a frequent visitor to Scioto Grove Metro Park in Grove City and wished to express his concerns regarding the suspension bridge over Grant Run, a stream that divides Scioto Grove Metro Park into its northern and southern sections.

Mr. McDaniel is concerned about the accessibility of the current suspension bridge. This portion of Grant Run floods and becomes impassable to pedestrians three to four times a year, and Mr. McDaniel has observed some park visitors, including those with strollers, pets or who are running or jogging, avoiding the Grant Run bridge. Mr. McDaniel believes that a fixed bridge over Grant Run may provide more accessibility between the two halves of the park, particularly in periods of flood or rain. He requested that the Board consider commissioning a new bridge at this location.

The Board thanked Mr. McDaniel for his time.

**Disbursement Resolution #6010**

Mr. Alex moved for the approval of the Disbursement Resolution for the May 2022 invoices. Mr. McCue seconded the motion and the Board approved the resolution. A copy of Resolution No. 6010 is attached to these minutes as part hereof.

## **Staff Reports**

### **Administration**

Metro Parks' Administrative staff had a busy month. Mr. Moloney updated the Board on several projects, including the ongoing Zimmer development project adjacent to Scioto Audubon Metro Park, which is scheduled to go before the City of Columbus Zoning Commission on Monday, June 27. Mr. Moloney plans to attend this meeting and express Metro Parks' concerns with the project, including concerns about the impact of development on Scioto Audubon's normal park operations, impacts on park visitors and increased roadway usage within the park. Mr. Moloney invited the Board's feedback at this time.

Mr. Hadden said that he was not sure that Zimmer's application was ready to go before the Zoning Commission.

Mr. McCue expressed his opinion regarding the City of Columbus's desire to see new residents in the Brewery District area, but also their interest in supporting Metro Parks and seeking to avoid placing an undue burden on Metro Parks through this development.

Mr. Moloney thanked the Board and provided additional updates. Metro Parks and American Electric Power (AEP) continue to face challenges at the Scioto South/Heer Park property as a result of spring flooding. With input from the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC), Metro Parks is developing a Memorandum of Understanding with AEP.

Several homeless encampments have been cleared from Heer Park, City of Columbus' property adjacent to Scioto South. Metro Parks continues to work on plans for this property.

Finally, Mr. Moloney notified the Board of a Sheriff's Sale scheduled for July 15. Metro Parks will be bidding on a property at the sale with the aim of purchasing it for addition to the River Bluff area of Highbanks Metro Park.

### **Operations**

Mr. Peck introduced Ally Shaw, Senior Naturalist of Sharon Woods, who introduced the members of Sharon Woods' staff in attendance.

Mr. Peck provided more information on work with AEP at Scioto South. Metro Parks aims to obtain an easement from AEP to build a Greenway trail connecting this property to Scioto Audubon Metro Park in the north.

Other projects are also underway, including the installation of several playgrounds purchased earlier in the year. More playgrounds are scheduled for purchase and installation. The new playgrounds have been popular with park visitors.

The Invenergy solar project is also ongoing. Metro Parks has fulfilled its obligations regarding the agreement struck earlier this year. The next steps for this project are Invenergy's.

Mr. Peck and some of his staff will be meeting with the Reynoldsburg Fire Department and engineers regarding the canopy walk at Blacklick Woods Metro Park in the coming weeks to move that project forward.

The Via Ferrata project at Quarry Trails is coming along well, with crews working to clear loose rocks, install hardware and test routes. This project, when completed, will offer Franklin County residents a unique climbing feature for the State of Ohio. Sport climbing routes are also being considered for Quarry Trails.

The park office and maintenance building at Quarry Trails will be put out to bid. Further work on the Quarry Trails sled hill and dog park areas is also forthcoming. Finally, Metro Parks is preparing to host its annual Outdoor Adventure Day event at Highbanks Metro Park on Saturday, June 25, and the return of Red, White and Boom at Scioto Audubon Metro Park on July 1.

### **Finance**

Mr. McGivern updated the Board on the Finance team's current projects. Property tax revenues are up and expenditures are down over projections for this year. The Finance Department has initiated the Fiscal Year 2023 budgeting process.

### **Human Resources**

Ms. Telfer state that, with seasonal hiring complete and the summer season well underway, HR's focus has shifted towards filling vacant part-time and full-time positions, pulling from the pool of seasonal candidates. Metro Parks is also still following COVID protocols to limit the impact of any exposures on wider park staff.

### **Resolutions**

**#6011 ADOPTING THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 PRELIMINARY BUDGET AND DIRECTING ITS SUBMISSION TO THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BUDGET COMMISSION**

The Board authorized Metro Parks' Finance Department to adopt the preliminary budget for FY2023 and to submit the preliminary budget to the Franklin County Budget Commission.

**#6012 APPOINTMENT OF PARK RANGERS**

The Board recognized the achievements of Daniel Saul, Erin Flannery and Rebecca Ballard, all three of whom attended and completed the Ohio Peace Officer's Academy to join Metro Parks as fully-commissioned Park Rangers. All three Rangers completed their oath of service and were appointed as Park

Rangers of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District. The Board thanked all three Rangers for their service.

**Other Business:**

Jen Boniface, Manager of Park Operations, presented plans for the former Hoover YMCA property, which was purchased by Metro Parks in 2020. Metro Parks staff is hard at work transforming the property, with plans to open the site as a Metro Park dedicated towards special and community events.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 3:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by the Board of Park  
Commissioners:

  
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Tim Moloney, Executive Director

  
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Chair