

Minutes of the 922th meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District, held at 3:00pm on September 20, 2022 at the Millstone Shelter, Rocky Fork Metro Park, 7180 East Walnut Street, Westerville, OH 43081.

Present

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

Staff: Mr. Moloney, Mr. McGivern, Ms. Telfer, Mr. Studenmund, Mr. Kaderly Mr. Laughbaum, Mr. Kasnyik, Ms. Boniface, Ms. Ingram, Ms. Morrow, Ms. Williamson, Mr. Boose, Ms. Downing, Ms. Fenstermaker, Mr. Koenig, Mr. Mitchell

Legal Counsel: None.

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 August 16, 2022 Board Meeting

Mr. McCue made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2022 Board Meeting. Mr. Alex seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

Disbursement Resolution #6025

Mr. Alex moved for the approval of the Disbursement Resolution for the August 2022 invoices. Mr. McCue seconded the motion and the Board approved the resolution. A copy of Resolution No. 6025 is attached to these minutes as part hereof.

Public Comment:

None.

Staff Reports

Administration

Mr. Moloney updated the Board on various Administration staff projects. RAPID5 is picking up movement with its activities, including hosting a river cleanup on Alum Creek that removed 11,000 pounds of trash from the river and riverbanks. RAPID5 also acquired \$1.5m in seed money.

Discussions with the City of Columbus and representatives of the Zimmer development team also continued this month, with Metro Parks meeting with representatives to reiterate Metro Parks' concerns regarding the project.

Administrative staff and Board member Mr. Aryeh Alex attended the groundbreaking of the Intel project in Licking County and discussed potential greenspace initiatives to offset the impact of the factory on the local environment, including the possibility of connecting Rocky Fork Metro Park to the Intel site via a greenway trail.

Operations

Ms. Jen Boniface, Manager of Park Operations, updated the Board on the Operations department in Mr. Peck's absence.

Two large summer programs, the Columbus City Schools Internship (CSI) program and the Summer Day Camp program, have closed for 2022 and were both successful. Over 1,000 Central Ohio children participated in the Summer Day Camp program over ten weeks June – August. The SEED program, another large education program that Metro Parks hosts in partnership with the City of Columbus, has begun for the fall, with several field trips to the parks and naturalist visits to local schools scheduled.

In addition to these programs, the Operations department has worked to host several end-of-summer events, including Paddlefest, WAG!Fest and SciotoFest, which is upcoming this weekend. WAG!Fest has one of its largest attendances ever, with over 22,000 guests and 13,000 dogs enjoying Prairie Oaks Metro Park.

Labor Day was a busy day for the park district. Two incidences that occurred during Labor Day are still under investigation.

An exploratory dive occurred at the Darby Bend Lakes area of Prairie Oaks Metro Park to determine if the lakes could be used as scuba diving training sites. It was determined that the water was too cold and visibility too poor for training to be feasible there.

Ms. Boniface also introduced the Blendon Woods staff, which also managed Rocky Fork.

Resource Management

Mr. Kevin Kasnyik, Manager of Park Operations and Resource Manager for Metro Parks, introduced his own staff to the Board and presented information on the Resource Management department, what it does and the value it brings to the park district.

The RM team shifts its focus on various projects throughout the year, but regularly conducts:

- Invasive species removal projects to maintain healthy biodiversity in the parks
- Biotic surveys to assess butterflies, mussels, bats, fish and plant populations in the parks
- Prairie restoration projects, including planting prairies, harvesting seeds, prescribed burns in successional areas and trimming
- Deer management projects
- Issuing research permits for outside agencies, universities and other groups
- Stormwater management projects

The RM team also forms “strike teams” throughout the year to intensively address invasive species at individual parks or sites. Working on land acquisition and restoration projects, maintaining six state nature preserves and providing natural resource information to park staff and the public are also part of the RM team’s duties.

Mr. Alex thanked the Resource Management team for their hard work and asked what the Board could do to continue to support the RM team. He also asked if the RM staff was adjusting any of their practices to keep pace with climate change, and if the RM staff monitored the impact of visitors on sensitive park areas.

Mr. Kasnyik and Ms. Morrow, Assistant Resource Manager, thanked the Board for their support and outlined several ways in which the RM team responds to climate change and seeks to mitigate visitor impacts, including establishing smaller reserves within the parks for sensitive species, leaning on naturalists to inform the public of sensitive areas or climate change issues and employing adaptive management techniques.

Mr. McCue commended the RM team on their ability to adapt to change and applauded them for their creativity.

Finance

Mr. McGivern provided Finance department updates. The Finance team has begun the annual process with the County to accept tax rates. To expedite the annual budgeting process, the Finance and Operations departments have begun meeting with park managers in August. Park managers will then submit their budgets later this year, with a draft budget expected for the Board in October.

The biannual audit report for Metro Parks came back from the State with no issues reported. Mr. Alex thanked the Finance department for their work with the State Auditor’s office.

Human Resources

The Human Resources team is finishing up its full-time ranger recruitment effort, with several rangers hired to fill critical vacancies. To increase ranger performance and prepare rangers for the Peace Officer’s Academy, staff is hosting a “mini academy” to prepare rangers. Human Resources is also in the process of updating policies and procedures for employees. Hiring is being conducted with a focus on community engagement.

Resolutions

#6026 ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND RATES DETERMINED BY THE BUDGET COMMISSION AND AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVY AND CERTIFYING AS SUCH TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR

The Board authorized Metro Parks' Finance department to accept the amounts and rates for 2023 as determined by the Franklin County Budget Commission, and to send a certification of acceptance to the County Auditor's office.

- #6027 AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF TWO APPLICATIONS TO THE MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION ATTRIBUTABLE FUNDS PROGRAM FOR TRAIL PROJECTS IN FRANKLIN COUNTY
The Board authorized Metro Parks to submit two applications to the MORPC Attributable Funds program for trail projects; one project to connect the Big Meadows and River Bluff Areas of Highbanks Metro Park with a multi-use trail and the other to build a pedestrian bridge over S.R. 104 for a Scioto Greenway Trail extension.
- #6028 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A DESIGN/BUILD CONTRACT FOR WETLAND RESTORATION SERVICES AT BATTELLE DARBY CREEK METRO PARK
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract with the design/build team of MAD Scientists, LLC/G6 Infrastructure for an H2Ohio wetland restoration project on Big Darby Creek.
- #6029 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS AT SHARON WOODS METRO PARK
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract with Strawser Paving Company for culvert replacements, drainage and surface repairs along the multi-use trail at Sharon Woods Metro Park.
- #6030 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR FENCING IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE DOG PARK AT QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract with Performance Tree & Fence to construct a fence at Quarry Trails Metro Park for the new dog park.
- #6031 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR ROADWAY AND PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS AT QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK UTILIZING THE STATE OF OHIO COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
The Board authorized Metro Parks to utilize the State of Ohio Cooperative Purchasing Program, 101G State contract for roadway and parking lot improvements at Quarry Trails Metro Park.
- #6032 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CHANGE ORDER WITH VIA FERRATA WORKS FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK
The Board authorized Metro Parks to execute a change order with Via Ferrata

Works for completion of the via ferrata and sport climbing routes at Quarry Trails Metro Park.

#6021 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A SHELTER PAVILION AT PICKERINGTON PONDS METRO PARK
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract with Ferguson Construction Company to build a shelter pavilion at the newly-opened Burning Lake Area of Pickerington Ponds Metro Park. This resolution was tabled at the August Board meeting and executed today.

#6024 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF AN OFFICE COMPLEX AT QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract with Miles McClelland Construction to build an office complex at Quarry Trails Metro Park. This resolution was tabled at the August Board meeting and executed today.

Other Business:

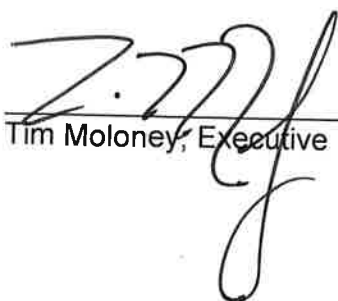
None.

Adjournment:

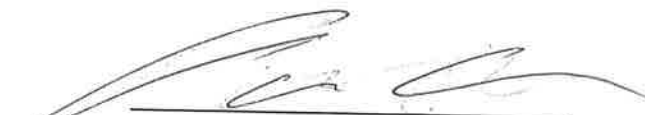
The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by the Board of Park Commissioners:



Tim Moloney, Executive Director



Chair