

Minutes of the 935th meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District, held at 3:12 pm on September 19, 2023, at the Millstone Shelter, Rocky Fork Metro Park, 7180 Walnut Street, Westerville, OH 43081.

Present

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

Staff: Ms. Ballard, Ms. Boniface, Ms. Edwards, Mr. Eutsey, Ms. Ingram, Mr. Kaderly, Mr. Laughbaum, Mr. McGivern, Mr. Moloney, Mr. Studenmund, Ms. Telfer

Legal Counsel: Mr. Franzmann.

Guests: None.

Mr. Alex 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 8, 2023 Board Meeting

Mr. McCue made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2023 Board Meeting. Mr. Hadden seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

Public Comment: None.

Disbursement Resolution #6105

Mr. Hadden moved for the approval of the Disbursement Resolution for the August 2023 invoices. Mr. Alex seconded the motion and the Board approved the resolution. A copy of Resolution No. 6105 is attached to these minutes as part hereof.

Staff Reports

Administration

Mr. Moloney updated the Board on several projects. Metro Parks is still looking to acquire new spaces as parkland, and despite the population growth in Central Ohio as different industries continue to move into the area, there are several potential acquisitions in the region. Opportunities exist in the Little Darby corridor, the west side of Franklin County, near Walnut Woods and in other areas. Metro Parks considers several factors when pursuing an acquisition, including whether or not new land would add to existing parks, serve as an adjacent green space or could potentially be grown into a new park. Mr. Moloney thanked park managers for forming local connections with their neighbors, as these local connections often lead to acquisition opportunities.

Mr. Moloney updated the Board on the Zimmer development adjacent to Scioto Audubon. Metro Parks' last communication with the Zimmer team was in late August. Metro Parks has reached out to determine what Zimmer's current plans are and is also coordinating with the City to share information.

Mr. Chris Franzmann, Metro Parks' attorney through Squire Patton Boggs, and his team is still working on clarifying several permitting issues that Metro Parks has run into with the City of Columbus. Mr. Alex remarked that he was hopeful that changes to City zoning codes would

make navigating the permitting process as a political subdivision, which is what Metro Parks is classified as, easier in the future. Mr. McCue agreed with Mr. Alex.

Operations

Mr. Peck introduced the Board to Ms. Heather Edwards, the Park Manager for Rocky Fork Metro Park. Rocky Fork is managed by Blendon Woods' staff and is expecting to see over 400,000 visitors in 2023. Rocky Fork has a very popular dog park, a bridle trail and several other amenities that are popular with visitors. Ms. Edwards stated that Rocky Fork has not seen any major projects this year, but that they have seen plenty of development in the area surrounding the park. Over 100 acres of land were added to Rocky Fork this year through a Clean Ohio grant.

Mr. Peck added that Metro Parks was busy with late summer and fall special events. SciotoFest, an annual celebration of Scioto Audubon Metro Park, saw over 6,400 visitors. Slate Run's annual Fall Fest is coming up in October.

The Fire Tower at Scioto Grove Metro Park has been completed and an opening ceremony held, but the tower is currently closed while structural engineers perform final safety inspections at the request of Grove City. The security camera project, authorized by the Board earlier this year, continues, with cameras installed at Battelle Darby Creek, Scioto Audubon and Sharon Woods. The Canopy Walk at Blacklick is also continuing.

Finally, Mr. Peck announced that Metro Parks had officially named the former Hoover Y property; this site will be called Bank Run Metro Park. Several projects at Bank Run have been awarded to contractors, a new manager for the park has been selected and Metro Parks' Roving Crew is on-site to work on several projects.

Finance

Mr. McGivern stated that Metro Parks is now two-thirds of the way through the year and is in good financial standing, with expenditures coming in slightly below budget and revenues in slightly above. The Information Technology team installed WiFi at Metro Parks' Headquarters to support the needs of staff and visitors. Security upgrades have been made to Metro Parks' Virtual Private Network (VPN).

Mr. Alex said that he was impressed that Metro Parks has managed to keep its expenses down in the inflated economy.

Mr. Moloney agreed, and also reported that the Blacklick Woods Golf Course is operating in the black, which helps improve Metro Parks' financial position. The Golf Course has been recognized by the Columbus Dispatch as an exceptional course. Staff is considering a change in course fees, as Metro Parks' current fees are at or below the bottom of the market.

Human Resources

Ms. Telfer stated that the summer season has closed, with most seasonal employees either finished for the year or transitioning into part- or full-time positions. HR's focus has likewise shifted towards filling several full-time positions, including park technician positions, ranger

positions and several management openings. HR staff is planning to host a job fair at the end of the month, with the focus being the recruitment of park technicians.

Breakfast with Santa, a popular employee program held in December for the children of park staff, is scheduled to continue as normal this year.

Resolutions

- #6106** 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' Finance Director to accept the 2024 tax amounts and rates from Franklin County.
- #6107** AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A PASS-THROUGH AGREEMENT WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into an agreement with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, which will allow Metro Parks to receive reimbursement for trail improvements at Sharon Woods as part of a State Capital Improvements grant.
- #6108** AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE CENTRAL OHIO COLLABORATIVE FOR CONSERVATION AMERICORPS SERVICE PROGRAM
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, which is hosting the Central Ohio Collaborative for Conservation AmeriCorps Service Program. This program will sponsor several AmeriCorps service members in Central Ohio.
- #6109** DECLARATION AND AUTHORIZING TO DISPOSE OF SURPLUS EQUIPMENT
The Board declared several items, including vehicles, maintenance equipment and other materials, as surplus, and further authorized Metro Parks to dispose of these items through auction on GovDeals.
- #6110** AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO CONTRACTS FOR AGRICULTURAL SERVICES
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into three contracts for agricultural services at several parks for the 2024-25 Farm Program. Metro Parks will contract with McCarley Farms, Mike Hummel Farms and Murry Farms for this contract period.
- #6111** AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO CHANGE ORDERS WITH DECKER CONSTRUCTION COMPANY FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK
The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into change orders with Decker Construction Company relating to paving work at Quarry Trails Metro Park. These change orders will allow for grading improvements, more aggregate stone base and an additional 285' of trail work at Quarry Trails.
- #6112** AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR PAVING IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE OLENTANGY TRAIL

The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract with Breck's Paving, utilizing a 101G state contract, for paving work at the Olentangy River Trail north of Antrim Park.

#6113 AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR ROADWAY, PARKING AND TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS AT BANK RUN METRO PARK

The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into a contract with Axis Civil Construction, LLC, utilizing a 101G state contract, for roadway, parking lot and trail development at Bank Run Metro Park.

Other Business

None.

Adjournment:

Mr. Alex asked if there was a motion to end the meeting. Mr. McCue made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hadden, and the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 3:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved by the Board of Park
Commissioners:



Tim Moloney, Executive Director



Chair