

Minutes of the 936th meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District, held at 3:00 pm on October 17, 2023, at the Lakeside Pavilion, Homestead Metro Park, 4675 Cosgray Road, Hilliard, OH 43026.

Present

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

Staff: Ms. Babcock, Ms. Bunner, Mr. Domiano, Mr. Eutsey, Ms. Ingram, Mr. Kaderly, Mr. Kasnyik, Mr. Laughbaum, Mr. McGivern, Mr. Moloney, Mr. Ramsey, Ms. Sheridan, Mr. Strosnider, Mr. Studenmund

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 September 19, 2023 Board Meeting

Mr. McCue made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2023 Board Meeting. Mr. Hadden seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

Public Comment: None.

Disbursement Resolution #6114

Mr. Hadden moved for the approval of the Disbursement Resolution for the September 2023 invoices. Mr. Alex seconded the motion and the Board approved the resolution. Mr. McCue abstained. A copy of Resolution No. 6114 is attached to these minutes as part hereof.

Staff Reports

Administration

Mr. Moloney stated that he and his team have been busy with several projects. A legal issue has arisen regarding the City of Obetz' Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds. As an agency that also receives TIF funds, Metro Parks has been identified as a concerned party in mandamus litigation (*State ex rel. City of Obetz v. Michael Stinziano, et al.*) and will be represented in court by the Franklin County Prosecutor's Office pending approval from the Board. A resolution regarding this matter will be brought before the Board later in the meeting.

Mr. Moloney spoke to representatives of the Westland Area Commission this month, where he and the Commission discussed growth corridors in the area and opportunities for green space as Central Ohio grows. Metro Parks has identified lands in this area that may serve as future park development. More information on these opportunities is expected later in the year.

Year-end procedures are underway across the district. Staff has also continued to work with the City of Columbus and the City Attorney's Office regarding permitting issues, including Metro

Parks' Ohio Revised Code (ORC) designation as a political subdivision. Mr. Alex said that he appreciated the continuation of this work.

Operations

Mr. Peck introduced the Board to Mr. Jerry Strosnider, the manager for both Homestead and Glacier Ridge Metro Parks. Glacier Ridge celebrated its twenty-first birthday this month and over 1,000 guests attended celebrations. A water line project at the Honda Wetland Area of Glacier Ridge is nearing completion, with water service restored to most facilities after years of struggling with the old well water system. At Homestead, a busy summer season is winding to a close and reservations are slowing down at both reservable shelter areas, but the park is still busy and in particular is a popular destination for homecoming pictures. The annual holiday lights display will be installed after Halloween.

Mr. Peck added that several parks are still very busy despite cooler weather. Several construction initiatives are underway at the newly-named Bank Run Metro Park, including culvert work, the installation of parking lots, roadways and trails, and renovation projects at various buildings on the site. Great Southern Metro Park is also seeing some development; a road is being cut in and a restroom installed within the next few weeks.

The Canopy Walk at Blacklick Woods Metro Park is still being worked on; the elevator unit will be delivered later this week and all poles are up, with the remaining work being the installation of the elevator and more netting and framing. Mr. Moloney added that staff plans to have a grand opening ceremony for the Canopy Walk when it's completed.

A H2Ohio wetland restoration project at Battelle Darby Creek is nearly finished. Another H2Ohio project in the Darby watershed is planned for Prairie Oaks Metro Park.

Trail repair work on the Olentangy River Greenway Trail north of Antrim Park has been completed. Metro Parks does not typically operate this area of the trail, but stepped in to repair the trail and preserve service for trail visitors.

Mr. Peck also notified the Board of a potential easement violation that occurred on an easement at Camp Wyandot, which is adjacent to Clear Creek Metro Park. Metro Parks was granted this easement by the Camp Fire USA Central Ohio Council several years ago. Earlier this month, Clear Creek staff received reports of chainsawing on this easement and, when staff investigated, discovered that Camp Wyandot's staff had removed several mature trees without consulting park staff. While the terms of the original easement permit the removal of hazardous trees, other types of removal are prohibited without mutual agreement between the Camp Fire USA Central Ohio Council and Metro Parks. Metro Parks has issued a Cease-and-Desist letter to halt further tree removal and has notified Squire Patton Boggs LLC. Mr. Peck and Mr. Moloney stated that they had concerns about restitution; mature trees are difficult to replace and the loss of so many mature trees will have adverse impacts on the ecosystem. Metro Parks will keep the Board updated as this situation develops.

Finally, Mr. Peck reminded the Board of the upcoming 2024 budget process and said that Homestead Metro Park had requested funds for updates to roadways, parking lots and other

visitor facilities. Mr. Moloney added that there may be an opportunity to acquire an additional twenty-seven acres of land from the City of Hilliard to add to Homestead as well.

Finance

The Finance Team has begun annual year-end procedures in preparation of closing the 2023 fiscal year and opening 2024. Several projects that were open in the purchasing order system have begun to close as staff completes projects and contractors submit invoices. Two pay periods were processed in September.

Mr. McGivern also updated the Board on a security issue that the Information Technology team countered in September; several employees were the targets of a phishing attack through email. The IT department was able to subvert this attack. To prevent future phishing scams, all staff will be required to complete an IT security training prior to the end of the year.

Human Resources

Mr. Domiano, filling in for Ms. Telfer, stated that thirteen employees in Metro Parks were promoted in September and early October, many of them to Assistant Manager positions as Metro Parks prepares to open two new parks.

HR also hosted a career fair at the end of September to fill vacant park technician positions and received twenty-four applications through this fair. Several new part-time rangers have been hired as well.

A date for Breakfast with Santa has been chosen and the annual program, hosted for employees and their families, is scheduled for December 2, 2023.

Resolutions

- #6115 AUTHORIZING THE GRANT OF EASEMENTS FOR HIGHWAY AND DRAINAGE PURPOSES TO THE CITY OF COLUMBUS FOR PROPERTY ALONG BRICE ROAD
The Board authorized Metro Parks to grant two easements to the City of Columbus for highway and drainage purposes in exchange for fair market value. One easement (highway) is for 1.107 acres and the other (drainage) is for 0.143 acres.
- #6116 AUTHORIZING THE GRANT OF AN EASEMENT TO OHIO POWER COMPANY FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT BLACKLICK WOODS METRO PARK
The Board authorized Metro Parks to grant an easement of approximately 0.108 acres to the Ohio Power Company for fair market value in order to upgrade the existing utility at that location. Mr. Hadden abstained from the vote.
- #6117 AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FEES AT THE BLACKLICK WOODS GOLF COURSE
The Board authorized Metro Parks to update its fee structure for all courses and fees at the Blacklick Woods Golf Course, in order for Metro Parks to remain competitive with other golf courses in the area and to support the Golf Course's operations.
- #6118 AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR PAVING IMPROVEMENTS AT BANK RUN METRO PARK

The Board authorized Metro Parks to enter into various contracts in an amount of up to \$400,000 for paving improvements, including parking lots and roadway paving, at Bank Run Metro Park.

- #6119 AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH THE FRANKLIN COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE, THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND THE METRO PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS FOR LEGAL SERVICES
The Board authorized Metro Parks to contract with the Franklin County Prosecutor's Office for legal services and representation in the *State ex rel. City of Obetz v. Michael Stinziano, et al.* mandamus litigation.

Other Business

Mr. Moloney recognized Mr. Aryeh Alex as the recipient of a MORPC sustainability award and thanked Mr. Alex for all the work he does for Central Ohio.

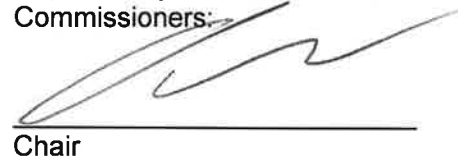
Adjournment:

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,


Tim Moloney, Executive Director

Approved by the Board of Park
Commissioners:


Chair