

METROPARKS OF BUTLER COUNTY
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, April 18, 2024

The MetroParks of Butler County Board of Park Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, April 18, 2024, at the Forest Run MetroPark, 1976 Timberman Road, Hamilton, Ohio 45013

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:38 a.m. by Ms. Trokhan

I. Roll Call and Agenda

Members present: Cynamon Trokhan, Larry Gersbach

Staff present: Zeb Acuff, Rhiana Barrero, Scott Gaviglia, Jaime Kimbrough, Jackie O’Connell, Amy Pellman, Suzanne Roth, Shelly Schultz, Chad Smith

III. Approval of Minutes

Approval of the March 21, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes
Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.
Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

IV. Consent Agenda

a. Donations – March
Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.
Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

VI. Finance

a. Schedule of Payables – March 2024

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.
Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach
Resolution No. 08.24

b. Budget Amendment

Ms. Shelly Schultz explained that this budget amendment is being done to amend revenue and appropriations for the recycling grant that we received.
Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.
Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach
Resolution No. 09.24

c. March YTD Revenue & Expense Report

d. Quarterly Stander Report

VII. Administrative Reports

Police: Chief Scott Gaviglia briefly reviewed eclipse attendance numbers from the different MetroParks locations that were open on April 8, 2024. He estimated that there were approximately 1,000 vehicles at the open park locations and that several hundred vehicles across the county were turned away due to the parking areas being full. Chief thanked Operations and West Chester Township for their assistance during the once-in-a-lifetime event.

Programming & Education: Ms. Suzanne Roth distributed a few pictures and gave a review of the eclipse program that was hosted at Forest Run Timberman Ridge area on April 8. The event sold out at

250 parking spots. Those that showed up the day of the eclipse that didn't have reservations were diverted to the Forest Run Wildlife Preserve. The program included self-guided and instructor-led educational stations. Ms. Roth commented that it was a great crowd, from all over the country with a fair number of families that had never seen the park before. A family came up from South Carolina and spent the whole day at the park. Ms. Roth said the feedback received so far has been positive and that the day went very smoothly. She thanked all of the departments and staff who helped at the event.

There was a brief discussion on traffic in the area. The consensus was that some of the roads were more crowded than usual, but overall, not too bad.

Visitor & Event Services: Ms. Rhiana Barrero updated on recent upgrades to the guest/organizer experiences at VOA MetroParks Athletic Complex. MetroParks recently switched to a cashless, online box office for parking passes; added a hospitality area to the press box for event organizers that included a mini fridge, microwave and coffee maker; replaced locks on the press box and training room for better access to organizers; and removed public Wi-Fi to increase the bandwidth for event organizers.

Operations is making changes to the cross-country course at VOA to make the course route better for participants and attendees, as well as compliant with NCAA guidelines. The plan is to be complete for the 2025 season. Bushhogging has begun and the trail has been rerouted slightly.

The MASC tournament was scheduled to be held at the fields at Rentschler and Line Hill. However, due to the field conditions, the tournament was moved to the synthetic fields at VOA.

Recently, the Senior Leadership Team took a tour of the Spooky Nook Sports facility in Hamilton. They learned that Spooky Nook charges for parking as attendees are leaving the complex versus at the beginning of the day/tournament. Ms. Barrero stated that we will utilize this method at the Kings Hammer Blue Chip tournament this coming weekend. The current method of charging on the way in causes traffic to back up on Cox Road and can cause athletes to be late. Parking can be purchased in advance online or through QR codes available throughout the Athletic Complex; parking will be cashless.

Administration: Mr. Chad Smith gave an update on a request for fencing at the Day Farm property. The area is not open to the public but has been part of hunting program in the past. The property is farmed as part of a life estate. MetroParks was approached by the adjacent landowner, Mr. House. He would like us to share in the replacement cost of 2,200' of fence line that borders his property. He has cattle and the current condition of the fencing could allow some of the livestock to get out. Ohio Fence Law makes MetroParks liable for 50% of the cost. MetroParks had the property surveyed. Since part of the area is wooded, we asked if just replacing the pasture section would be sufficient. Mr. House would like the full 2,200' replaced. As part of the survey, staff identified approximately 80 dead trees encroaching upon the fence line that will need to be removed. There are 3 or 4 trees on Mr. House's property that will also need to come down. Due to the cattle on Mr. House's property, it was agreed that MetroParks will revise hunting at the Day Farm property next season. The rough estimate to replace the fencing with basic farm fencing is \$20,000 for 2,200' of fencing.

Ms. Jackie O'Connell passed out the USS Cincinnati vision document for the Memorial. She said that there have been two meetings for the Memorial since MetroParks' last Board meeting. She recently attended a stakeholder meeting which made it clear that all the entities are not on the same page. She also stated that staff have recently attended a construction meeting that we previously hadn't been included in. The group has decided not to move forward with a water feature but would like to add a playground feature instead. There is not yet a construction agreement in place. It is anticipated that there will be a groundbreaking in May/June with the project completed and open late summer 2025.

There was a brief discussion on funding for the project. They have a benefactor that has agreed to build the submarine part of the memorial, but the other items or the endowment aren't included. Right now the endowment need is estimated to be \$1,000,000.

The restrooms at Timberman Ridge are in the process of being installed and should be open for use within the next month.

Copies of the 2023 Annual Report were distributed.

There was a question on the Indian Creek bridge project. MetroParks did not qualify for the ODNR grant that we had applied for, as it does not connect with a regional trail system. The Planning department will continue to investigate other grant opportunities.

IX. New Business

a. West Chester Township Fireworks Agreement

The initial agreement encompassed the Taps, Tastes and Tunes event and the Fourth of July Fireworks in one agreement. The two have been separated into an agreement with West Chester Township for the fireworks and an agreement with Cold Iron Concessions for event parking. The draft agreement has MetroParks needing to list West Chester Township as an additionally insured, but that will not need to be done. West Chester will need to list MetroParks as an additionally insured.

Currently working on the agreement with Cold Iron for Taps, Tastes, and Tunes.

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.

Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

b. West Chester Township/USS Cincinnati Land Use Agreement – Resolution

For the USS Cincinnati Memorial, MetroParks will lease the land to West Chester Township who will then enter into agreements with the non-profit. There was a question on whether anything needed to go back to NPS for approval. Ms. O’Connell stated that NPS gave permission for the memorial. Anything ancillary or incidental to the memorial would be included.

Designs for the driveway, parking lot and incoming road are being designed now. West Chester Township will pay to construct the drive and parking lot from Crosley Blvd to the Memorial prior to the opening of the Memorial. Installation of the entry road will be contingent on grant funds.

West Chester Township is planned to approve the lease agreement at their next meeting.

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.

Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

Resolution No. 10.24

XII. – Adjournment

Mr. Gersbach moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 a.m., Ms. Trokan seconded.

Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Gersbach

Adoption: The above minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting as adopted by the Board of Park Commissioners, MetroParks of Butler County.

Approved:

Attest:

Presiding Officer of the Board

Jacqueline O’Connell,
Executive Director/Secretary

Date