

METROPARKS OF BUTLER COUNTY
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, April 20, 2023

The MetroParks of Butler County Board of Park Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, April 20, 2023, at the West Chester Township Administration Building, Trustee Chambers 9113 Cincinnati-Dayton Road, West Chester, Ohio 45069

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m. by Mr. Nelson

I. Roll Call and Agenda

Members present: Daryl Nelson, Cynamon Trokhan, Larry Gersbach

Staff present: Joe Bruns, Tony Carpenter, Katie Ely-Wood, Scott Gaviglia, Katie Hawkinson, Jackie O'Connell, Chris Otto, Amy Pellman, Suzanne Roth, Chad Smith

II. Public Comment Regarding Agenda Items –

Ms. Susan Antenen addressed the Board regarding the house at the Antenen Nature Preserve. Ms. Antenen stated that she is delighted that the land is a park and is being used; the issue for her is the farmhouse, the prospect of demolishing the house hit her harder than expected. Ms. Antenen said she's done some work looking into moving the house but hasn't had any luck in finding anyone to do so or restore it. She would love to see it become a field study site. She would also like MetroParks to consider the option to publicly auction the house. Ms. Antenen met with the Treiber's who live next door. They commented that there is still some illegal activity going on at the old house. Ms. Antenen feels that if a family lives there some of those activities might get better or go away.

Ms. Jane Jacobs addressed the Board. Ms. Jacobs stated that she agreed with Ms. Antenen and would like to help develop restrictions and easements to restore the house. Ms. Jacobs stated that she has found some people interested in restoring and living in the house. She feels that having people living in the home would help deter some of the negative activities.

Former MetroParks Executive Director Jon Granville was in attendance. The Board asked him to speak of the original donation of the property. Mr. Granville commented that he and former Supervisor of Community and Park Relations, Kelly Barkley met with Ms. Ann Antenen in approximately 2018. They toured the property and discussed the area. At that time, Ms. Ann Antenen was happy that there would be access to the creek and wanted the use of the property to be a natural area. Mr. Granville stated that she did not show any interest in preserving the house. Mr. Granville commented at the time of the tour that the house had been repeatedly broken into and was not in good condition. He also stated that if there isn't a purpose for a house, the best option is to get rid of it.

Chief Scott Gaviglia was asked to comment on drug activity at the property. Chief stated that staff walk the property daily and they've neither witnessed nor received reports of illegal activity on the property.

Board member Cynamon Trokhan commented that the Board isn't ready to make a decision on the house. She stated the house had been on the agenda for demolition, but that had been postponed to explore other options. She also commented that as an organization the Board needs to determine the best use of funds that meet MetroParks' mission. MetroParks will continue to explore the legal options for the property.

Board member Larry Gersbach stated that he visited the property yesterday (April 19). While touring the house, he witnessed significant termite damage in the floor joists.

Board member Daryl Nelson commented that with the age of the home, there is a very good chance that lead paint will be present and will need to be remediated. He also mentioned the option to hire a structural engineer to inspect the home.

Ms. Antenen asked about the cost of an engineer study. Project Manager Joe Bruns commented that it could range between \$5,000-\$10,000. Ms. Jacobs stated that she has renovated houses in worse condition and knows someone who is interested in renovating the house and would then live there.

Mr. Nelson commented on the proximity of the Augspurger House at Chrisholm MetroPark. He stated that there is a friend's group that funded the house restoration and currently supports ongoing maintenance through private donations. The same is true regarding the Pioneer Church at Indian Creek MetroPark.

III. Approval of Minutes

Approval of the March 16, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

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

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

IV. Consent Agenda - none

V. Special Presentations –

a. Submarine Cincinnati Memorial Association – USS Cincinnati Memorial

Mr. Joe Jaap and Mr. Bob Viney introduced themselves and discussed their involvement in the project. They then showed a slideshow with design concepts for the Memorial planned to be erected at VOA MetroPark near the entrance to the VOA Museum.

Mr. Nelson asked about the placement, with the concern that the site will be constantly under construction if it is built in phases. Mr. Jaap stated that they won't turn dirt until they have the funds for the project.

West Chester Township Administrator, Larry Burks spoke regarding the Pepper Pike intersection. West Chester Township will be working with the county to put in that entrance. The Voice of America Museum would be excited to have a safer entrance. A short discussion on the parking area followed. The current plan does not include the new entrance or parking in the first phase.

Ms. Trokhan commented on the need for ongoing maintenance, patrolling, etc. Discussed the creation of an endowment fund for the ongoing maintenance and day-to-day operations. There is a lot of opportunity for visitors with the close proximity of the Athletic Complex.

Mr. Jaap stated the Submarine Cincinnati Memorial Association and the Navy League's goal is to not use taxpayer funds and to make the facility self-sufficient.

Mr. Burks stated he has a lot of confidence in the Navy League and their ability to maintain the memorial. He stated the need to determine who's going to do what so that the memorial remains an amenity to the area.

Ms. Trokhan asked about permissions from the National Park Service. Ms. O'Connell stated NPS has already given permissions.

b. Parksperiences, LLC. – Christmas Lights Journey at Voice of America MetroPark

Rick Seitz of Parksperiences introduced himself and his plan to create a Christmas Lights display at Voice of America. The Christmas Lights Journey would be a drivable mile-long loop in the park around Christmas. Parksperiences, LLC. would provide all amenities and generators.

Ms. Trokhan asked about how they would make money. Mr. Seitz stated the anticipated fee would be \$20 per carload.

Mr. Gersbach asked what percentage MetroParks would receive of the gate fee. Mr. Seitz said he was initially thinking 10%, which could result in a \$40-\$50,000 annual net profit.

Mr. Seitz said the set-up time would begin the end of October and go through November. Teardown would be much quicker, anticipating just a few weeks. He stated that they would most likely use portable generators and that the display would be located off of the athletic fields.

There was a short discussion on traffic flow. Parksperiences, LLC stated they will work with MetroParks staff and West Chester Township. There is some concern regarding backups on Tylersville or Cox Road. Mr. Seitz commented that they would likely require the pre-purchasing of tickets within arrival windows. This would help with flow and backup.

Mr. Burks commented that West Chester Twp. is excited about this opportunity. He feels this is a great use of the park at a time of the year when visitorship is down.

Ms. Trokhan asked about partnerships with local community businesses. Mr. Seitz said that would be part of his proposal.

Mr. Seitz feels the display would be profitable by year 3.5 - 4. The expectation is 20,000 vehicles per year. He hopes to have the event this year but isn't sure he'll be able to with supply chain issues. He stated that he knows we only have one chance to make a good first impression.

The Board gave staff the go ahead to begin drafting an agreement to host the event.

VI. Finance

a. Schedule of Payables

Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Mr. Nelson seconded.

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

Resolution No. 09.23

b. Monthly Revenue & Expense Report

MetroParks should start receiving income from parking passes at the athletic complex by next month's meeting. There was a question and short discussion on anticipated/projected expenditures, staffing levels, and other expenditures. Mr. Otto will add more comments to next month's report for clarity.

c. Quarterly Stander Report

There was a short discussion on the bridge work at Governor Bebb.

VII. Administrative Reports

Human Resources: Ms. Kimbrough discussed openings and introduced the new Director of Programming and Education, Suzanne Roth. She also stated that we have started the search for a new Park Planner. Interviews have been completed for the Volunteer Resources Manager position and hope to fill it soon. The North Zone Sr. Park Manager position has been filled. The new Manager is scheduled to start May 1.

Police: Chief Gaviglia noted that the division has a new patrol schedule. He also brought up an incident that happened at the end of March where Officer Shaffner was patrolling at the Athletic Complex and found a lost child wandering. After a short walk through the complex with the child, he was able to locate the parents. Ms. Trokhan asked how many officers are on staff now. There are 10 officers plus Chief.

Planning: Mr. Joe Bruns reported the Miami 2 Miami connector is complete. The Grand Opening will be on May 19, 2023. The bridge at Governor Bebb has been installed. The new playground at Forest Run MetroPark – Timberman Ridge is now open. Still need to complete some cosmetic items, but we have received lots of positive feedback.

The VOA Trail expansion and Elk Creek to Sebald connector work should be starting soon.

There was a question about the replacement of the bridge at Indian Creek. Received word this past week that we did not receive the grant for the bridge. We will work to pursue other funding options.

Development: Mr. Chad Smith said that discussions with the Reilly Good Neighbors group have moved into conversations with the Reilly Twp. Trustees. Mr. Smith will attend the May 3 Trustee meeting where he will open up the conversation on the Indian Creek bridge and funding.

Recently signed a 1-year partnership agreement with FC Cincinnati. FC Cincinnati will be using VOA Athletic Complex for a day camp but will also provide two free clinics within our service area. They will also have a presence at tournaments with information tables.

A short discussion followed on the proposed light show and what type of long-term agreement would be in place. Mr. Smith stated there is a difference between these types of agreements and what the soccer clubs are asking for at the Athletic Complex.

Administration: Ms. Jackie O'Connell commented that we received a national award for the Miami 2 Miami Connector trail from NACPRO. She also attended the Riverway Summit and presented the Great Miami Award to Butler County Commissioner, TC Rogers (who accepted on behalf of the entire board).

VIII. Old Business – none

IX. New Business

a. New Credit Card Program

Mr. Otto discussed the proposal for a new credit card provider. US Bank was the only response, but they will be able to provide reporting and allow for online access to manage cards. MetroParks plans to minimize use of house accounts and store-specific cards once these cards are active. This move will improve efficiency and ease reconciliation. Rebates are included if usage exceeds a certain threshold. Mr. Gersbach moved to approve; Ms. Trokhan seconded.

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

b. ODOT/OPRA Park District Roadwork Fund Resolution

This is the Bi-annual renewal to receive paving funds. It was noted that Operations has started a pavement evaluation program within the parks to prioritize repairs.

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

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

Resolution No. 10.23

X. Commissioner Reports – none

XI. Executive Session - none

XII. – Adjournment

Mr. Nelson moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:22 a.m., Ms. Trokhan seconded.

Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Mr. Nelson, 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