

METROPARKS OF BUTLER COUNTY
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, November 17, 2022

The MetroParks of Butler County Board of Park Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, November 17, 2022, at the Ronald Reagan Lodge at Voice of America MetroPark, 7850 VOA Park Drive, West Chester Township, Ohio 45069-2938.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m. by Ms. Trokhan

I. Roll Call and Agenda

Members present: Ms. Cynamon Trokhan, Mr. Larry Gersbach, Mr. Nelson arrived at 8:45 am

Staff present: Lisa Batchelder, Joe Bruns, Katie Ely-Wood, Jaime Kimbrough, Jackie O'Connell, Chris Otto, Amy Pellman, Scott Reeve, Chad Smith

II. Public Comment Regarding Agenda Items –

Susan Antenen and Jane Jacobs attended to speak to the Board. They would like for MetroParks to save the house at the Four Mile Creek MetroPark – Antenen Nature Preserve. Ms. Antenen's stated her father and uncle donated the farm on Treiber Road to the MetroParks in 1996. The family has been very happy with how the property has been maintained and managed, but Ms. Antenen and Ms. Jacobs would like to restore and save the farmhouse. Ms. Antenen stated that the majority of her career was in land management and she does understand that this is a large ask. But she also feels there can be some paths forward to fulfill our needs and change the purpose of the house to an asset. Ms. Antenen feels that there is the possibility the home could be a desirable rentable property with the creation of a separate driveway. Ms. Jacobs commented that she has 12 years in historic preservation. After viewing the exterior of the property, she feels it could be restored for approximately \$200,000. Ms. Jacobs commented that it would be environmentally and socially irresponsible to send materials from the demolition of the home to a landfill. She also feels the property could be used as an owner-occupied or commercial-use facility. She stated that the home is on the Ohio historic inventory and could be added to the National Registry.

Ms. Trokhan commented that the property has been a topic of discussion for the past 3-6 months. She referred to the ORC and the requirements regarding the use of property donated to the parks. Any sale or RFP would have to go out to public bid which would result in MetroParks having no control over who would win in that process. As for restoration, there are a lot of considerations on who would own the building and its future use and maintenance.

Ms. Antenen asked if there was a way to not put it out to bid and she would assist in fundraising. Ms. Trokhan stated that non-profit organizations that operate in municipalities have different requirements but MetroParks, as a political subdivision of the State of Ohio, has different rules to adhere to and that would not be an option.

Ms. Jacobs asked if funds were raised to restore the house would the MetroParks be able to use it. Ms. Trokhan commented on the other historic buildings owned and maintained by MetroParks. She commented on the proximity of the Antenen property and other historic buildings. Besides restoration, MetroParks would need to consider utilities and upkeep.

Ms. Jacobs asked about moving the house. Ms. Trokhan stated that would take a legal opinion.

Ms. Jacobs asked if an RFP would stipulate end use, and the minimum amount spent on a remodel. She would like MetroParks to explore our options and that the structure is in good shape and intact.

Ms. Antenen suggested a clear list of requirements/restraints so they would have some direction on the next steps. She asked if a non-profit would be able to partner to take over use/management after an update.

Mr. Gersbach stated that Chrisholm has a Friends group that fundraised for rehab and use of the property, but there is nothing like that for the Antenen property.

Ms. Trokhan thanked Ms. Antenen and Ms. Jacobs for attending. Mr. Nelson commented that we have explored options and that we have to follow ORC.

III. Approval of Minutes

Approval of the October 19, 2022 Regular Meeting minutes.

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

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

IV. Consent Agenda

a. Donations – October

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

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

V. Special Presentations - none

VI. Finance

a. Schedule of Payables

Mr. Nelson moved for approval. Mr. Gersbach seconded.

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

Resolution No. 33.22

b. Updated Quarterly Stander Report

There was a short discussion on the revised report.

c. Monthly GL cash Summary Report

d. Monthly Revenue & Expense Report

Discussion on grant dollars are they actual or anticipated. Some dollars go directly to vendors other dollars may not be spent.

e. Budget Appropriation

Mr. Nelson moved for approval. Mr. Gersbach seconded.

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

VII. Administrative Reports

Community & Park Relations – Ms. Ely-Wood discussed the recent stakeholder surveys. The in-person events had very few attendees than the virtual meeting. Anticipate receiving the report after the Thanksgiving holiday.

Planning – Mr. Joe Bruns reviewed the current capital projects. The Governor Bebb bridge install RFPs are currently under review and should be presented at the December Board meeting. The bridge abutment work has been completed. Trail construction is slated to begin in the spring. The bridge is anticipated to be delivered in February and installed in March.

Angst barn stabilization is complete. Architectural Reclamation used recycled wood from the Fitton barn and the Angst Barn hayloft for the repairs. It will now need to be treated for termites.

Forest Run Timberman Ridge playground installation is planned to begin before the end of the year.

GMRT extension at Rentschler is complete.

The majority of the Miami to Miami work is complete. Signs and fencing are scheduled to be installed after Thanksgiving with the grand opening to occur in the spring. The path is paved, and the parking lot at Bilstein was enlarged.

The construction of the accessible ramp at Rentschler is complete. A handicapped spot in the gravel lot was paved and is ADA-compliant. Still waiting on the guy wire to be moved.

VOA fields have been seeded and are good to go. The contractor will return in the spring and overseed.

Question on the Elk Creek clubhouse demolition. Ms. O'Connell commented we aren't sure of its location on the project list for 2023. There was a suggestion to pay homage to those who were married there.

There was a short discussion on the condition of the Antenen house and the work involved to restore it.

Workplace Talent Management – Ms. Kimbrough gave a short update on time and attendance.

December 17 – first pay period for 2023. Some management training has begun with staff training to come soon. The new system will free up a lot of time. Ms. Trokhan commented that this will also improve the accuracy of payroll.

The manager of Volunteer Resources is working on partnerships with other organizations. Recently started monthly service days at VOA.

Administration – Mr. Smith shared that the hours of the Welcome Centers at VOA and the River Center will have limited winter hours. At the RiverCenter, due to low public traffic, the front desk will now only be staffed during rentals. There is an expiring agreement with the Middletown Arts Council to display art at the River Center; they have been contacted and may be interested in keeping the artwork up even though the facility won't be open daily. The Board discussed hosting a few Board meetings at the River Center, FRWC, or Chrisholm in 2023.

Ms. O'Connell mentioned that RFPs for irrigation installation came in at least 20% higher than anticipated. Mr. Carpenter will meet with contractors to discuss options.

The USS Cincinnati project at VOA MetroPark is progressing, and Navy League is continuing to look for funding. Working with MSP for layout and design. MetroParks has had discussions with West Chester Township and the Butler County Engineer's office to add a traffic light and entrance at Pepper Pike.

There was a short discussion about the Voices of America Country Music Festival. The stage and concert will be on the lawn of the VOA Museum. The organizer is asking to use the Athletic Complex for parking and the Fieldhouse as a command center.

Some damage has been discovered at the Covered Bridge at Governor Bebb. Staff found cracks in the support beams. To protect the public and the bridge, it has been closed to pedestrian traffic. The Planning Division is working on repair plans.

Police Department – Acting Chief Scott Reeve stated that everything is good.

VIII. Old Business - None

IX. New Business

a. Revision to Rules & Regulations changing Ranger Title to Police Officer

Mr. Nelson moved for approval. Mr. Gersbach seconded.
Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Gersbach

b. Motion to Approve Lodge Concessionaire agreement

Mr. Smith reviewed the contract with the concessionaire, Abner Property Management, LLC. The agreement is for one year with the option to renew for two years. The organization is the proprietor of the Fantasy Diner on Route 4.

Mr. Nelson moved for approval. Mr. Gersbach seconded.
Motion Passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Gersbach

c. Permission to Negotiate VOA Country Music Festival Contract

Ms. O’Connell stated MetroParks will need a contract with the organizers for parking on MetroParks’ property and using the Fieldhouse for a command center. Organizers already had a safety plan. The concert will be on the lawn at the VOA Museum, with an expected daily attendance of up to 30,000. Ms. O’Connell is asking to negotiate with the organizers for the use of the property for parking at the event and use of the Fieldhouse. Ms. O’Connell stated that provisions will be added to the contract for trash, port o lets, and to address any damage. Due to the size and scope of the event, more insurance coverage than what is expected for soccer tournaments will be required.

X. Commissioner Reports

Mr. Nelson mentioned that there is a group of Jr. High/H.S. students that would be interested in the use of fields for 4-6 weeks in the fall for football. Mr. Smith will see if they can be accommodated.

XI. Executive Session

Mr. Nelson moved for a roll call vote to enter Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Gersbach.
Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Gersbach. The Board entered into Executive Session at 9:45 a.m. The Board returned to Regular Session at 10:07 a.m.

XII. – Adjournment

Mr. Nelson moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:07 a.m., Mr. Gersbach seconded.
Motion passed. Vote: Aye: Ms. Trokhan, Mr. Nelson, 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:

Cynamon Trokhan,
Presiding Officer of the Board

Jacqueline O’Connell,
Executive Director/Secretary

Date