

METROPARKS OF BUTLER COUNTY
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, April 17, 2025

The MetroParks of Butler County Board of Park Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at Timberman Ridge MetroPark, 1976 Timberman Road, Hamilton, Ohio 45013

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by Ms. Trokhan

I. Roll Call and Agenda

Members present: Cynamon Trokhan, Daryl Nelson. Larry Gersbach arrived at 8:40 am.

Staff present: Zeb Acuff, Rhiana Barrero, Tony Carpenter, Jamie Meyers-Eaton, Jackie O'Connell, Amy Pellman, Scott Reeve, Suzanne Roth, Shelly Schultz, Chad Smith

II. Public Comment

Mr. David House attended the meeting and distributed a document outlining his concerns with the fence project and the Controlled Bowhunting Program on the Day Farm, which borders his property. He questioned why members of the public who provide comment aren't permitted to review draft meeting minutes prior to approval at the following meeting. Ms. Trokhan explained that he is welcome to reach out between meetings with any questions or concerns.

Mr. Carpenter reported that the fence company had been onsite this week to continue work. He noted that an email had been sent to Mr. House the previous day, requesting the removal of storage containers that are currently in the fence line. Mr. House stated he would take care of this task by the end of the day. Mr. House asked about a tree located close to the property line. Mr. Carpenter confirmed that the tree is not situated on the line and will not impact the fence.

III. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the March 27, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

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

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

IV. Consent Agenda

a. Donations – March

Short discussion on the valuation of land donation.

Motion to approve items on the Consent Agenda

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

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

VI. Finance

Ms. Schultz stated that by the next Board meeting MetroParks will be operating as its own fiscal agent. She noted that Board financial reports will appear different going forward due to the transition. The new software will also allow staff to generate their own reports, which is expected to significantly improve overall efficiency across the organization.

a. Schedule of Payables – March 2025

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

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

Resolution 12.25

b. March YTD Revenue & Expense Report

Mr. Nelson would like to have cash balances added to this report.

c. Quarterly Stander Report

The balance in the funds is temporarily earmarked for the Indian Creek Bridge provided a grant can be obtained for the balance.

VII. Administrative Reports

Development: Mr. Smith took the opportunity to thank the Board for the past 5 ½ years. He shared that the decision to leave was difficult, but the opportunity to serve the Oxford community – where he lives – was something he felt called to pursue. Ms. O'Connell remarked that Mr. Smith played an integral role in the leadership transition from previous administration and expressed appreciation for his contributions.

Human Resources: Ms. Kimbrough shared the upcoming *Music in the Meadow* concert is part of a capstone project in partnership with Miami University music seniors. The long-term vision for the program is to host concerts in various MetroParks locations.

Operations: Mr. Carpenter provided an update on the goose control project at Voice of America MetroPark Athletic Complex. Ohio Geese Control is using trained dogs and handlers to deter geese from settling in the Park. A handler visits the Athletic Complex three times daily on a randomized schedule. This method offers a lower-impact, more humane approach to managing the goose population. Since implementation, staff has observed a noticeable reduction in geese, with the initial count exceeding 650 prior to the intervention.

Mr. Gersbach inquired about efforts to control lesser celandine at Green Heron MetroPark. Mr. Carpenter explained that management efforts are focused along trails and path edges. The strategy aims to limit the spread by minimizing the chances of seeds being tracked out on visitors' footwear.

Programming & Education: Ms. Roth distributed a flyer promoting National Bike to Work Day, scheduled for May 16, a collaboration with the City of Hamilton, the Fitton Center and Spoken Bicycles. A community ride will kick off the day's events followed by a light breakfast around 7:00 am at the same location.

Ms. Trokhan recommended sharing the flyer and event details with local YMCA branches and Mr. Gersbach suggested reaching out to Spooky Nook.

Visitor & Event Services: Ms. Barrero provided a brief update on MetroParks 70th anniversary plans. An internal committee is coordinating efforts to commemorate the milestone including sharing historic photos. Programming and Education is developing a special "ID 70" program using the iNaturalist platform.

MetroParks is producing a video highlighting its accomplishments over the past seven decades and will feature testimonials to emphasize MetroParks' Mission of conservation, education and recreation.

Administration: Ms. O'Connell commented that the VOACMF site map that was recently shared, but there were concerns with the proposed layout, particularly with the plan to place a stage near the MetroParks maintenance building restricting access to the building for multiple days. Ms. O'Connell anticipated that a contract would be ready for presentation to the Board in June.

Ms. O'Connell shared that goats would begin at Miami Woods in early May. Ms. O'Connell expressed MetroParks is poised to help with the project, but there have been difficulties in communication with Parks Conservancy staff to establish scope of assistance and expectations.

Ms. O'Connell shared that the County engineer is considering the Tylersville entrance project as a new development, which puts the burden of a new traffic light on the parks and West Chester Township. The estimated cost of the project is between \$800,000 and \$1 million. West Chester is proposing a funding split where they would contribute \$400,000 and MetroParks would contribute \$100,000, and they would ask the County to contribute the balance from a county-managed TIF. A future meeting may require a MetroParks board representative to attend.

Ms. O'Connell reported that the Butler County Mental Health and Addiction Services Recovery Board has approached MetroParks about adding signage in key areas with the local crisis services hotline. MetroParks would have control over the size, artwork and placement of the signs. The Board members agreed on a sign size of approximately 8.5" x 11".

Ms. O'Connell sought the Board's input on a name for the MetroParks Foundation. The Board expressed a preference for including "MetroParks" in the name but also liked the idea of incorporating "1955", the year MetroParks was founded.

IX. New Business

a. Authorization to submit Application for Congressionally Directed Spending – Resolution

Mr. Zeb Acuff is requesting authorization to submit an application to Senator Husted's office seeking Federal funding to help address the shortfall in funding for the Gilmore boardwalk project.

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

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

Resolution 13.25

b. Memorandum of Understanding with Travel Butler County

Ms. O'Connell commented that MetroParks has not revised a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Travel Butler County in nearly ten years. The updated MOU reflects a shift toward a more collaborative partnership model. She noted Travel Butler County will no longer hold contracts for tournaments; the hosting agencies will manage those directly. While Travel Butler County remains willing to support facility improvements, their contributions will no longer be tied to a specific dollar amount as in past agreements.

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

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

X. Commissioner Reports

The Board emphasized that the fence project should be completed as quickly as possible.

XI. Executive Session

Mr. Nelson moved for a roll call vote to enter Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Gersbach for the purpose of discussions involving Personnel Matters

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

The Board entered into Executive Session at 9:35 a.m.

The Board returned to Regular Session at 10:13 a.m.

XII. Adjournment

Mr. Nelson moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:13 a.m., Mr. Gersbach seconded.

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

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