

Cincinnati Parks  
Board of Park Commissioners  
Minutes July 19, 2018

Meeting began 9:01 am

President Lindner, Vice President Goetz, Commissioner Linda Lee Thomas, Commissioner Castellini, Commissioner Flynn were in attendance.

**Approval of Minutes**

President Lindner provides a correction for the June 28, 2018 minutes.

Commissioner Thomas mentions another corrections that was previously noted and asks for clarification from the other Commissioners in regard to the Burnet Woods plan.

Commissioner Goetz states that his vision was to put together a plan with the help of the community.

Commissioner Thomas would like to have a process mapped out in order to stay on track and effectively carry out the plan.

Commissioner Castellini would like to move forward by having an established list of needs for Burnet Woods.

Wade Walcutt provides background of Burnet Woods and its plan. Burnet Woods was included in the 2007 Master Plan, however many things have changed since 2007 such as funding and goals. We started this process by looking at the Master Plan and identified what we could accomplish. Then recognized the two organizations proposals and explored these options. We at that time began the community conversations to help gain feedback and explore all opportunities.

Wade Walcutt states that there are items that need to be completed before a plan can be created such as another community conversation, and an environmental impact study.

After discussion of the scope of the proposed environmental study and the estimated cost for completion. The Board requested the scope and the proposed timeline for the Burnet Woods visioning process to be prepared for the September meeting.

Wade Walcutt cautiously agrees to have the information ready for the September meeting. He states that they are some unknown factors that may not be available prior to that date.

Vice President Goetz moves to approve the June 28, 2018 minutes with noted corrections and Commissioner Castellini seconds the motion. Motion passes by unanimous vote.

**Police Report – No Report**

**Volunteer Recognition**

Ms. Deborah Grayson should be recognized for all the incredible work she has accomplished at Valley Park. She mostly works by herself but occasionally enlists community friends to help in the Valley Park gardens to improve the Camp Washington neighborhood.

In addition to Deb's work in Valley Park, she has also been involved in volunteer projects at Burnet Woods and Rawson Woods.

President Lindner thanks Ms. Grayson for volunteering and dedication.

Commissioner Flynn recommends that staff tells Ms. Grayson's volunteer story on the website and encourages other volunteers to sign up.

### **Staff Appointment**

Parks has a vacant Tree Maintenance Crew Leader position for the tree crew. The City Human Relations Department posted the position and referred 1 applicant that met the qualifications for the position as a promotional opportunity.

Mr. Jump holds a commercial divers license, Public Pesticide Operators License, and has worked on the tree crew since 2012. Mr. Jump receives excellent annual reviews and meets all qualifications for the position.

Staff recommends the Board of Park Commissioners approve the promotion of Mr. Joshua Jump to Tree Maintenance Crew Leader.

President Lindner presents a moves to approve the appointment of Josh Jump to Tree Maintenance Crew Leader. Commissioner Flynn motions for approval. Commissioner Castellini seconds the motion. Motion passes by unanimous vote.

### **Investment Committee**

President Lindner states that Vice President Goetz volunteered to chair the Investment Committee and Commissioner Flynn has volunteered to co-chair.

Commissioner Goetz states that he will speak with the current two committee members and invite them to continue to be members on the committee. This leaves one more spot open to be filled. He would like to recognize the remaining three committee members at the next meeting.

President Lindner presents a motion to accept Vice President Goetz and Commissioner Flynn as chair and co-chair of the Investment Committee. Commissioner Castellini moves for approval. Commissioner Thomas seconds the motion. The motion passes by unanimous vote.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Cincinnati Zoo**

The new master plan is intended to provide expanded and enhanced viewing and wildlife habitat areas, while upgrading visitor experiences. A \$150 million capital campaign was recently announced. Major areas of focus in the new plan include improved visitor access with a new garage and expanded ticketing facilities,

expanding the Black Rhino habitat with new visitor amenities and viewing areas, and renovation of the Wild Life Canyon area into multiple experiences including a ropes adventure course and new habitat for kangaroos and little blue penguins.

The largest project is a new and expanded habitat to support a multi-generational herd of Asian Elephants. This will be a four acre area including outdoor yards, indoor communal space for the herd and many viewing opportunities.

President Lindner presents a motion to approve the Cincinnati Zoo's Master Plan. Vice President Goetz moves for approval. Commissioner Thomas seconds the motion. The motion passes by unanimous vote.

### **California Woods Improvements**

California Woods has an extensive trail system that includes a number of steep sections of trail. One of the steepest and in need of renovation is the Council Ring Trail. The Advisory Council has developed a design for replacement of the long flight of wood timber steps with stone steps, a stone entrance court with a low seat-wall, and a stone-paved council ring which is an outdoor classroom with a fire pit at its center, at the top of the bluff. The Council has designed the project and is in a position to fund it. The total cost is \$82,000 and funding is coming from the California Woods Advisory Council which contributed \$20,500 and the Knowlton Foundation which contributed over \$63,000. Construction is scheduled to start in August and be completed in September.

President Lindner presents a motion to accept a gift from the California Woods Advisory Council. Commissioner Flynn moves for approval. Commissioner Castellini seconds the motion. The motion passes by unanimous vote.

### **Grant Application**

NRPA's grant program will award 10 to 12 grants nationally with awards ranging from \$150,000 to \$300,000. No matching funds are required. The purpose of the grant is to improve environmental quality and habitats, increase access to greenspace within underserved communities and to devise green solutions to storm water management issues. Funds are meant to empower residents to be actively engaged in projects that address community needs and meet local storm water management goals.

Two projects are being considered for this program as follows:

**Glenway Woods Nature Preserve** – This is a 30 acre nature preserve in East Price Hill. MSD recently did a major watershed project to better control storm water conveyance and prevent erosion. The site, however, requires extensive trail work and restoration.

Grant funds could be used to improve access into Glenway Woods and create educational signs and materials that explain the watershed project that was recently constructed by MSD. The signs would explain the following:

- a) understand how the project operates
- b) understand it's purpose
- c) explain the improvements made in storm water quality
- d) how it benefits overall environmental quality

- e) Habitat improvements such as what a wetland is, what lives there, how it improves water quality

Underserved community access would be improved by creating trail connections to the project from Fairbanks, Ross, and other streets as well as perhaps identifying/creating some parking along Ross. Explore Nature would also be part of the project. The grant could finance special programming targeting the surrounding community.

Grant asks: trail construction to improve access, educational signage, and nature education programming.

Grant Partners: Parks, MSD on the signage, volunteer hours, East Price Hill community.

**Little Duck Creek Nature Preserve** – Little Duck Creek (LDC) flows through Madisonville and Bramble Park. These two sites are a combined 23 acres. The area has some trails, but more are proposed as well as removal of invasive plants along with site restoration. Park staff have been working with the community on this project for the last two years. The larger goal is to have a continuous connected trail all through this green corridor.

The grant could fund the LDC trail and site restoration at Bramble Park and in the preserve. There is available funding in the Clean Ohio Fund and these funds have been awarded in the past to similar storm water projects. The other grant-funded items are similar to above – educational signage, trail head markers, explanations of environmental improvements, storm water detention and its benefits to the stream and how it reduces erosion and flooding. There would also be habitat improvements – in-stream as well as in and along the floodplain.

Community access would be improved by the creation of the trail and it would lead to greater public awareness of green infrastructure through interpretive signage.

Grant asks: trail construction, signage

Grant Partners: Parks, MSD, Clean Ohio program, Madisonville Redevelopment Corporation, volunteers, Community, CRC, Cincinnati Nature Center

Commissioner Castellini moves for approval to explore the options and apply for the grant. Commissioner Thomas seconds the motion. The motion passes by unanimous vote.

### **New Community Authority**

Chapter 349 of Ohio Revised Code established NCAs. These authorities, governed by a board of trustees, can support development by constructing, owning and maintaining infrastructure, levying and collecting community development charges, issuing bonds, and sponsoring programming benefitting businesses, residents and guests within the NCA. To form NCAs, developers/property owners who own and control the land to be considered within the boundaries of an NCA have to unanimously agree to be a part of the NCA. A petition is then prepared and signed by all owners, which is then filed with City Council. Council then establishes the specific requested NCA.

An NCA has been proposed for a number of parcels within The Banks which would have the following basic purposes:

- To develop, provide and execute social, cultural, beautification and amusement activities for visitors, residents, employers and employees working within the defined NCA boundaries
- To develop, acquire and maintain improvements and community facilities to support the above activities if/when determined necessary by the NCA Board of Trustees
- To raise revenue through the collection of a Community Development Charge
- To pursue grant monies to support the above primary activities if/when determined desirable by the NCA Board

An NCA established for The Banks would have broad powers to market and promote the area, sponsor and produce programs, events and activities to draw people to The Banks, and create, manage and maintain additional public improvements and beautification efforts as may be needed. It is anticipated that the community development charge would be a percentage of food and beverage sales. The amount of the charge and its purposes would be spelled out in property covenants established for each property within the NCA.

The NCA would be operated by a Board of Trustees with a majority appointed by City Council. This Board would be the decision-making body for the use of funds and any subsequent changes to the NCA boundaries, charges and uses of revenue.

In order for some of the potential direct benefits of the NCA beyond programming and beautification to apply to Smale Riverfront Park, the park, or parts of the park would have to be included within the boundaries of the NCA, and this would then require food and beverage sales within the park to pay the community development charge.

It is anticipated that as more development occurs in The Banks, additional properties will be included in an amended NCA, though this would have to be approved by all owners already within the NCA.

Commissioner Castellini asks where and how the money is collected and secured. The New Community Authority will collect the funds through the retailers and hire a third party to invest and secure these funds.

If participation of Parks is not approved today, is there a deadline to join the NCA? The NCA controls the timeline, so joining the NCA is an option in the future.

President Lindner present a motion to allow Moerlein Lager House to be included as a portion of property in the NCA and the opportunity for staff to explore the option of including Smale Riverfront Park as part of this inclusion. Vice President Goetz moves for approval. Commissioner Thomas seconds the motion. The motion passes by unanimous vote.

### **Natural Resources Plan – update**

The 2004 Natural Resource Management was intended to guide the street tree and park tree management programs and was based on the best standards available in 2004. The 6-year inspection

and maintenance cycle for street trees has been implemented since 2004 and remains one of the shortest maintenance cycles in the US.

The 2004 NRMS plan was also intended to be updated periodically. This did occur in response to EAB in 2007. After EAB was addressed, staff began updating the entire plan. The tree management plan being presented today is a major component. If approved, the entire plan will be updated by the end of 2018 and place Cincinnati Parks as one of the few cities in the country to incorporate the new ISA standards.

The Tree Management Plan seeks to:

- Reduce risk;
- Maximize the aesthetic, ecological, environmental, and social benefits trees provide to the City of Cincinnati;
- Take appropriate and timely action while avoiding unnecessary tree loss;
- Align with national standards and best practices; and
- Be consistent with a duty of care and will be well documented, implemented, and communicated.

President Lindner presents a motion to approve the Natural Resource Tree plan. Commissioner Castellini moves for approval. Commissioner Flynn seconds the motion. The motion is passed by unanimous vote.

### **Directors Comments**

- You will receive a copy of a report that was created for City Council in regard to the Tree Plan.
- Please join us at the Crilley Family Alms Park Playground dedication on August 4, 2018 at 10 am.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 am.

### **Speakers**

Cynthia Duvall – Thank you for your passionate discussion about Burnet Woods. I am here representing a newly formed group called “Preserve Burnet Woods”. This group has formed since the last Board meeting. This group is aimed to help with the immediate discussion and plans of Burnet Woods as well as the long term goals. We are leading tours and hikes through Burnet Woods showing the bird population and identifying nature components. The group currently has members, which include Rama and herself, who go through the park and pick up litter on a daily basis.

- She wanted to speak in regard to the environmental impact study. This group has been studying Burnet Woods for the past 30 years and they have concerns about the credentials of the contractor or group that would conduct the environmental impact study.
- The second concern is the timeline. She knows that CCAC has an urgent timeline and asks that the Parks timeline is more important than the groups with the proposals.

Rama – She sees that there is a sense of urgency to meet the needs of this proposal but there has not been a sense of urgency until now. She feels that there needs to be a new Master Plan and it needs to be developed

strategically. She wants to be a part of the development of the new Master Plan. She asks to be informed on the amount of money needed to improve Burnet Woods and she will assist in raising the money.

Attest:

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PRESIDENT

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DIRECTOR