

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
May 16, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Cincinnati Board of Park Commissioners was held on this day at 950 Eden Park Drive. Commissioners present: President Brad Lindner, Vice President Jim Goetz, Commissioner Susan Castellini, Commissioner Linda Lee Thomas, and Commissioner Kevin Flynn. President Lindner called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

Public Comments

There was one public comment by Dr. Millie Schafer.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Castellini motioned for approval of the April 18, 2019 minutes. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion. Motion passed by vote.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Mary Jo Bazeley was recognized by the Park Board for her more than 30 years as a dedicated volunteer with Cincinnati Parks, working with Urban Forestry, Krohn Conservatory, and Explore Nature.

NEW BUSINESS

Stanbery Park Pavilion Design Concept

Steve Schuckman presented the design concept for the Stanbery Park Pavilion and explained the community's involvement in securing a grant for the design and construction of the pavilion. He explained the overall design intent is to include a covered stage for performances, venue space for events, and storage. The design will be compatible with other structures in the park.

Mr. Schuckman explained next steps are to complete the design documents and put the project out to bid, while the community continues to raise funds.

Wendy O'Neal, Mt. Washington Community Development Corporation addressed the Board to clarify Phase 1 of the design will be designed to accommodate growth and future phases, which depend on fundraising. Ann Brown, Treasurer of Stanbery Park Advisory Committee added Cincinnati Bell has offered to donate Wi-Fi upon completion of the pavilion. Wade Johnston, of Mt. Washington Community Council and Green Umbrella added the community is excited the pavilion will offer more opportunities to continue to activate the park.

Commissioner Thomas asked why the pavilion design concept did not reflect the dedication name. The community members present explained they are sensitive to exploitation of the dedication name while fundraising efforts continue.

Commissioner Flynn complimented Representative Tom Brinkman for his efforts in securing funding for the project.

Commissioner Flynn motioned to approve the Stanbery Park Pavilion design concept. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by vote.

Cincinnati Art Museum Retaining Wall

Steve Schuckman explained the Cincinnati Art Museum is experiencing erosion and slippage along the edge of their roadway, requiring a new retaining wall on City property managed by the Park Board. The retaining wall will be constructed and maintained by the Art Museum. He explained some trees will be lost, but will be replaced, and the facing of the wall has not yet been designed, but will ideally match the facing of the future driveway wall indicated in the Master Plan.

Commissioner Flynn asked if the fund being used for the wall is a restricted fund for the Art Museum. Joel Koopman, Public Services clarified \$200,000 has been appropriated from the City into a capital budget specifically for the Art Museum.

Vice President Goetz asked if the retaining wall will benefit the Park property below. Mr. Schuckman answered it will prevent erosion from slipping downhill onto Park property.

Mr. Schuckman explained an easement will be needed for the ongoing maintenance of the retaining wall, but not to construct it, since it will be built on City property with a City contract.

Mr. Schuckman clarified the wall will be visible from the street.

Director Walcutt asked if the Park Board would authorize Staff to finalize plans and a formal maintenance agreement to expedite the construction of the retaining wall.

Commissioner Flynn motioned to approve the retaining wall in concept as well as the authorization of Parks staff to finalize plans and a formal maintenance agreement with the Cincinnati Art Museum. Commissioner Castellini seconded the motion. The motion passed by vote.

Property Item: Bishop Park

Steve Schuckman presented an opportunity to establish an easement for an existing encroachment at Bishop Park as well as establish a “no build zone” on a portion of the property to accommodate for the adjacent restaurant owner’s desired outdoor dining space. Mr. Schuckman explained that part of the lease agreement would include the restaurant owner’s maintenance of the park.

Commissioner Flynn mentioned the presence of alcohol on the dining space, which would be on Park Board land, and the need for language in the lease that would indemnify the Park Board against liability. It was confirmed, this would be established in the lease terms and through zoning.

Vice President Goetz expressed this would have a positive impact on the park and animate the space, and the community has expressed support. He suggested including a non-transferrable clause in the lease to allow the Park Board to reevaluate if there were a change in business.

Commissioner Thomas asked why the Park Board should lease the land rather than sell. Mr. Schuckman explained it would allow for Park Board control of the property and for the land to return to greenspace if the business left. Mr. Schuckman clarified there will be a clear delineation between the dining space and the rest of the park.

Director Walcutt asked if the Board would prefer to view and take action on final lease terms, or if they would prefer to authorize Staff to move forward with the execution of the lease. The Commissioners expressed interest in reviewing and approving the final terms of the lease before execution.

Vice President Goetz motioned to approve the establishment of the easement for encroachments, the restrictive covenant, and in concept, the leasing of the site for outdoor dining pending final approval by the Park Board, as presented. Commissioner Castellini seconded the motion. The motion passed by vote.

Accounting Consulting Services: Barnes and Dennig

Craig Sherman presented the request to enter into an agreement with Barnes and Dennig to perform a financial audit for endowment expenditures to ensure the Park Board is utilizing funds as intended, to highlight improvements, and to ensure Park Board Policies & Procedures are in accordance with accounting rules and regulations.

Vice President Goetz recommended an additional step to those already recommended to Barnes and Dennig, namely confirmation that donations and grants the Park Board has received were approved by City Council. He also recommended an audit be performed in the future and perhaps be rebid.

Vice President Goetz recommended another audit in one year and then performing every two years going forward.

Director Walcutt clarified Commissioner Flynn's request to identify any gaps in tracking full documents for endowments and trusts.

Vice President Goetz clarified this is not an official audit, but an agreed upon review to establish and maintain best practices.

Vice President Goetz motioned to approve entering into an agreement with Barnes Dennig for the agreed upon procedures review for 2016, 2017, 2018, pending the circulation of the agreed upon procedures for input by the Commissioners. Commissioner Thomas seconded. The motion passed by vote.

Investment Manager Consolidation: Park Endowment Portfolio

Craig Sherman presented the Investment Committee's recommendation to consolidate fund managers and custodians for some Private Endowment funds to improve efficiency and reduce fees. There was further discussion regarding the benefits of the proposed consolidation.

Vice President Goetz motioned to approve the recommendation as presented. Commissioner Flynn seconded. Motion passed by vote.

Tom Jones Commons Overview

Steve Schuckman presented the plans for the first phase of Tom Jones Commons.

Clete Benken, Principal at MKSK Studios, further presented plans for the commons including a stairway/walking loop, wetland area with boardwalk, nature play areas, interpretive signage new trees, picnic shelters, welcome kiosk, and landscaping.

Commissioner Flynn asked about the accessibility of the commons and the walkway.

Director Walcutt mentioned there may be opportunities at transition points for further accessibility. Commissioner Flynn clarified, even if not completely ADA compliant, the grade and overall accessibility should be considered. Mr. Schuckman agreed and explained opportunities for increased accessibility will be investigated.

There was further discussion clarifying details of the design and what elements are included in Phase 1.

Commissioner Flynn mentioned opportunities for wetland mitigation on the site.

Commissioner Flynn motioned to approve the design pending the consideration accessibility. Commissioner Castellini seconded. Commissioner Thomas clarified the motion: to approve the design pending the consideration of modifying the design to include handicap accessibility. The motion passed by vote.

Mt. Airy Forest Mountain Bike/ Multi-use Trail

Steve Schuckman presented an update on the status of the mountain bike/ multi-use trail in Mt. Airy Forest being constructed by Cincinnati Off-Road Trail Alliance (CORA), Phase 1 of which has been completed.

Doug McClintock, President of CORA, presented further details on the cleanup process, the current progress and condition of the trail and site, as well as design of future phases.

There was discussion regarding the future potential for a study and master plan for a trail system, for which CORA is currently fundraising.

AARP Donation of Exercise Equipment

Kara Kish presented the opportunity to partner with AARP and FitLot, Inc. to install a series of exercise equipment at Hoffner Park. She described the design of the structure and site logistics.

She explained in addition to the structure, AARP will grant funding to engage with Cincinnati Recreation Commission (CRC) to provide fitness programming at the site.

Steve Schuckman indicated a contractor will construct the concrete slab and shade structure, but the equipment is of no charge to the Park Board and will be installed by volunteers.

Commissioner Castellini expressed concern regarding the quality of the structure material. Mr. Schuckman said he feels relatively comfortable with the quality, despite not having seen the structure in person, because the Park Board has experience with the manufacturer. He clarified the desired timeline for installation and the agreement.

Vice President Goetz mentioned the donation of exercise equipment will be offered to CRC and then the City of Cleveland if not accepted by the Park Board.

Mr. Schuckman mentioned the rubberized surface included with the equipment will be a maintenance burden as it deteriorates. Ms. Kish clarified there are no safety surfacing requirements for exercise equipment.

Commissioner Castellini asked for more information about the signage and roof structure. Further detail was provided by Ms. Kish and Mr. Schuckman.

There was further discussion regarding the timeline for accepting the donation of the structure and installation.

Vice President Goetz motioned to approve the staff recommendation to enter into a partnership with Fit Lot, Inc. and accept the award of exercise equipment as presented. There was further discussion regarding the potential value of the equipment, the ongoing maintenance needs, and how it compares to equipment at other Parks sites. Director Walcutt emphasized adding programming grant to the agreement for CRC's use. Commissioner Flynn seconded the motion. The motion passed by vote.

Award of SRP Lot 23 Design Services

Director Walcutt gave a brief overview of the RFP process for design services of Smale Riverfront Park. He presented the staff recommendation to award design services at SRP to Sasaki Associates as well as the staff request for the Board to authorize the Parks Director to move forward with Sasaki Associates and negotiate a contract for design services at SRP, which will be presented to the Board for approval.

Commissioner Castellini motioned for approval of the staff recommendation as presented. Commissioner Thomas seconded. The motion passed by vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORTS/COMMENTS

Director Walcutt commented on volunteerism and partnerships driving Parks' Core Pillars.

Mr. Walcutt provided the Board with monthly reports on financials, capital improvement projects, personnel, and events. He thanked the Parks Foundation for their hard work and success at the 13th Annual Hats Off Luncheon, which raised over \$600,000 for Parks.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Vice President Goetz mentioned an event with Camping and Education Foundation for National Kids to Parks Day at Burnet Woods.

Commissioner Thomas asked about other events taking part in National Kids to Parks Day. Rocky Merz announced each of the Explore Nature! hosted events.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Lindner motioned to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G) to consider the employment, appointment, compensation, and discipline of public employees. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. The Board adjourned into Executive Session at 11:20 A.M.

ADJOURNMENT

President Lindner announced the return to an open meeting. Vice President Goetz motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Thomas seconded. The motion passed by vote.

Meeting adjourned at 12:34 P.M.

ATTEST:



PRESIDENT



DIRECTOR