

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
**July 18, 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 9:01 A.M.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**Stewards of Burnet Woods Update**

Jennifer Spieser, Executive Director of the Cincinnati Parks Foundation, provided a fundraising update for the Stewards of Burnet Woods. She recognized Nora Fink for her fundraising efforts.

**VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

Skip Meinhart was recognized by the Park Board for his dedication as a Parks volunteer and to the preservation and restoration of several west side preserves and natural areas near the Northside community and surrounding Cincinnati areas. Parks Manager Jim Godby, Northside Greenspace Board President Greg Torres, and Mr. Meinhart's partner Claire Darley provided comments about Mr. Meinhart's life and volunteer efforts.

**Approval of Minutes**

Vice President Goetz noted a motion was made for the ODNR Grant item, but a vote was not recorded in the June 2019 Minutes. It was confirmed a vote was not taken on this item at the June meeting. Vice President Goetz restated the motion to approve the staff recommendation to accept the ODNR U.S. Forest Service Grant as presented at the June 2019 meeting. President Lindner seconded. Motion passed by vote.

Commissioner Castellini motioned for approval of the June 20, 2019 minutes. Commissioner Flynn seconded the motion. Motion passed by vote.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Park Property Sale: Walworth Avenue Extension**

Steve Schuckman presented an update on the conditionally-approved sale of 1.7 acres of park property on Walworth Avenue. He explained the Board's conditions have been met by the developer, and final plans will be prepared to meet City standards. Mr. Schuckman requested the Board approve the property sale as presented with the condition the developer commitments are made legally binding.

Commissioner Flynn asked which fund will receive the revenue for the sale. Mr. Schuckman clarified it will go into a restricted park permanent improvement fund.

Vice President Goetz reported on the positive collaboration between the developer and community.

T.J. Ackerman, East End Development LLC, and Craig Davis, Geotechnical Engineer, were present. Mr. Ackerman spoke to the maintenance and cleanup aspect of the agreement.

Commissioner Thomas asked if there is a potential savings for the Park Board as a result of the developer taking on maintenance. Mr. Schuckman confirmed there will be.

Commissioner Flynn motioned to approve the property sale as presented. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by vote.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

President Lindner motioned to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code R.C. 121.22(G)(3) to confer with attorney concerning a dispute that is the subject of pending and imminent court action. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

President Lindner announced the return to an open meeting at 9:36 AM.

#### **Capital Improvement Program**

Director Walcutt provided an update on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) including the policies, requirements, and practices affecting the expenditure of capital project funds, as well as the status of capital projects from 2018 and 2019, and overall improvements that can be made to the program.

Reimbursement of staff costs using capital funds was discussed. Craig Sherman clarified that a percentage of capital funds are allocated to salaries involved with capital projects outside of Planning & Design. Vice President Goetz noted there is a perpetual balance available in the approved capital account that equals two years of staff salaries and half could be allocated to capital projects instead.

There was discussion regarding reasons the total budgeted amount for staff salary reimbursement was not spent in the previous year. Commissioner Flynn expressed a need to be more intentional with capital fund allocation for staff salaries. There was further discussion regarding appropriate use of capital fund dollars for staff salary reimbursement and the need to spend available capital dollars on capital projects.

President Linder noted capacity and policy issues that may be preventing the completion of these projects and suggested hiring a consultant to assist.

Director Walcutt emphasized the need to understand if there are salaries that will not be reimbursed with capital dollars moving forward and the new source of funding for those salaries. There was further discussion regarding processes and timeframes for completing capital projects, identifying future capital needs, and prioritizing projects. Vice President Goetz asked for confirmation that the internal procedure for Commissioner approval of contracts over \$50,000 dollars was being followed, and staff answered affirmatively.

Commissioner Thomas emphasized the need to understand a clearer picture of the time and resources going into capital at each park. Steve Schuckman said these details, plus a finer level of detail, will be included in the Facilities and Infrastructure Plan. Commissioners Castellini and Flynn asked staff if there are barriers due to City policy or internal policy, to bring it to the Board's attention. City procurement processes and procedures were discussed.

### **Annual Plan**

Kara Kish presented the Annual Plan, including components of the plan, the creation process, as well as intentions for advancing the plan and staff accountability. Commissioners provided feedback on language, structure, and content. There was further discussion regarding sharing the plan and the process of drafting the plan.

Commissioner Goetz requested staff share the more detailed internal version of the document so the Board can review. He provided further feedback regarding sustainable funding and staffing goals. Commissioners provided further feedback and discussion ensued regarding staffing and job descriptions and which staffing elements to include in the Annual Plan.

Commissioner Castellini asked about an internship program. Ms. Kish offered to follow up on this.

The Board requested staff respond to their feedback before approval of the Annual Plan in August.

### **FY 2020 Commissioner Fund Budget**

Craig Sherman presented the FY2020 Commissioner Fund Budget, which has previously been referred to as the Private Endowment Fund, for Board approval. He noted the overall decrease from FY2019 and that the FY2020 budget is based on revenue forecasts, existing proposed expenditures, and spending of the prior year.

There was discussion regarding funds returned to the Trust and identifying if there are alternative uses for funds moved to the Trust, if they are unrestricted.

Mr. Sherman presented the expenses and variances between fiscal years. Vice President Goetz asked if lobbyists will be added to Professional Services in this budget. Mr. Sherman explained a different restricted fund will be used instead because the expense was deemed an inappropriate use of endowment funds by the State. There was discussion regarding whether dollars budgeted for certain projects would need to be moved to the Capital Fund.

Staff salary reimbursement out of the Commissioner Fund was discussed. Mr. Sherman explained reimbursing salaries with commissioner funds intended for services, where permitted, will free up Capital funds used for salary reimbursement. Vice President Goetz expressed General Fund dollars authorized for salaries should be used for salaries first before Commissioner Fund dollars are. Mr. Sherman clarified this is the intent.

Vice President Goetz requested a consolidated budget to get a comprehensive picture of total expenditures and funding sources across the agency, and how the Commissioner Fund supports the other Park Board funds. Mr. Sherman said this can be developed. Commissioner Flynn further emphasized the need for this comprehensive look at all Park Board funds, especially to understand funding sources for salaries. He requested in addition to the comprehensive budget, also seeing the all funds budget income and expenses broken down by Division. There was further discussion about reimbursing the General fund for salaries out of other fund sources. Director Walcutt emphasized the intent to pay staff out of funds that were designated for services in specific locations.

Rocky Merz presented elements of the marketing plan and further information regarding the budget request for marketing, as well as ways of measuring effectiveness of marketing efforts as on revenue and awareness.

Comparable marketing budgets were discussed, and the Board requested seeing data from other Parks districts. Vice President Goetz commented on Cincinnati Recreation Commission's marketing budget, options for free marketing. He noted the increase in the Park Board's marketing budget in recent years and challenged the efficacy and necessity of the Sinclair contract.

Commissioner Castellini commented on the importance of the contract if it included online advertising. Mr. Merz clarified specific campaigns for revenue generation are part of the marketing plan, along with general advertising and brand awareness. Director Walcutt emphasized the overall vision and goal for current marketing techniques of the Park Board. Commissioner Thomas commented marketing is necessary for brand awareness and allows the Park Board to advertise revenue generating assets to the community.

Commissioner Goetz questioned the accuracy of data demonstrating increased revenue and awareness as a direct result of advertising.

There was further discussion regarding impact of additional marketing resources on revenue. Commissioner Thomas emphasized the need to track the Park Board's investment in marketing to understand its true impact on revenue. Mr. Merz explained the methods currently in place to track data and trends and agreed tracking is critical to ensure this is an appropriate investment.

Commissioner Flynn asked if any dollars budgeted for marketing in the Commissioners Fund went to internal staff salaries. Mr. Merz answered they did not.

Additional funding sources for marketing across the organization and the effectiveness of differing marketing and advertising methods were discussed. President Lindner asked if it was possible to track and understand the monetary value and impact of free media. Mr. Merz clarified there are methods and services to track and run reports on free media available for purchase.

Commissioner Flynn expressed the need for revenue generated from programs to cover associated marketing expenses. Mr. Sherman explained potential opportunities for targeting revenue to ensure this happens. Tracking marketing expenses per program was further discussed.

Vice President Goetz proposed tabling the item until the August meeting.

### **Approval/Acceptance of Parks Foundation Grant: Carol Ann's Carousel**

Jenny Mobley presented a Parks Foundation grant application for costs associated with an amendment to the existing contract with Amplio at the Anderson Pavilion. She described the expanded contracted scope of services to be included in the amendment and the one-time financial contribution to support materials, supplies, and personnel.

Commissioner Flynn asked if standards for operations and maintenance would be included in the amendment to ensure the Carousel remains a Park Board asset. Mrs. Mobley confirmed the intent is for the Carousel to remain a Park Board operation that Amplio is managing and that changes to operations are agreed to. She explained the amendment is still being drafted and is contingent upon grant funding being available. Commissioner Flynn asked to ensure Foundation donors' wishes are reflected in the agreement.

Terms of the current contract and amendment as well as revenue share were discussed. Vice President Goetz expressed concern over not having seen the amendment and spending grant funds on the Carousel when the success of the operation cannot be ensured. Mrs. Mobley explained Amplio will have a more efficient staffing structure and ability to enhance events, catering options, and Carousel promotion, than the Park Board, which has potential to bring in more revenue. Director Walcutt noted the expense savings, previously approved in the budget, and improved customer service and hours of operation to be offered. He explained the contract amendment will be brought back to the Board. Potential risks of the agreement were discussed further.

Commissioner Flynn motioned to approve the request to apply for the grant. Commissioner Castellini seconded. Vice President Goetz voted in opposition. The motion passed by vote.

### **Approval/Acceptance of Parks Foundation Grant: Kyle Plush Pavilion**

Mr. Schuckman presented the Parks Foundation grant application for costs associated with the Kyle Plush Pavilion in Stanbery Park. Commissioner Flynn asked how much money the community has raised for the project. Mr. Schuckman answered he was unsure, but identified the funding gap and confirmed the project cannot begin until the gap is filled.

Vice President Goetz motioned to approve the request to apply for and accept the grant as presented. Commissioner Thomas seconded. The motion passed by vote.

### **Approval/Acceptance of Parks Foundation Grant: Burnet Woods**

Mr. Schuckman presented the Parks Foundation grant application for improvements and enhancements to Burnet Woods. The fundraising role of the Stewards of Burnet Woods was

discussed. Commissioner Thomas asked if the funds raised by the Stewards were housed at the Foundation. This was confirmed. Commissioner Flynn asked if this grant would be in addition to what was recommended on the Commissioner's Fund Budget for invasive species removal at Burnet Woods. This was confirmed. Commissioner Lindner asked if the full grant request would be spent on invasive species removal. Mr. Schuckman answered only a portion would be spent on this. The estimated total cost of all invasive species removal at Burnet Woods and the importance of using best practices were discussed.

Commissioner Flynn motioned to approve the request to apply for and accept the grant as presented. Vice President Goetz seconded. The motion passed by vote.

### **Development Agreement**

Mr. Schuckman provided background on "The Artistry" residential development, planned for construction. He presented the developer's request to use an existing storm sewer within adjacent park property. He described the current condition and use of the existing sewer, as well as agreements to be put in place to formalize the arrangement. The developer's responsibility and capacity of the sewer were discussed. Mr. Schuckman confirmed any revenue from an easement would go to the permanent improvement fund.

Vice President Goetz motioned to approve the staff recommendation. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by vote.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORTS/COMMENTS**

There were no comments from the Director.

### **COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS**

Commissioner Flynn asked for a follow up on mulch piles at Mt. Airy Forest. Kara Kish provided an update. Commissioner Flynn wanted to confirm that Parks maintenance is using existing mulch first before purchasing from an outside vendor.

Vice President Goetz provided the Board with an update on the operating agreement and discussions pertaining to the Music Venue project at Smale Riverfront Park.

Commissioner Castellini asked for an update on the Boat Dock. Director Walcutt explained KZF has not yet produced their result for the alternative location study. She also asked about the progress on AARP Fit Lot at Hoffner Park. The status and timeline of the project was explained.

Director Walcutt updated the Board on tree removal at Lytle Park and that a court order had been issued to cease work.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 1:40 P.M.

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. M. [unclear]", written over a horizontal line.

PRESIDENT

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. A. [unclear]", written over a horizontal line.

DIRECTOR