

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

October 17, 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, and Commissioner Linda Lee Thomas. President Lindner called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

Public Comments

There were three public comments:

Julie Rimer
Brewster Rhoads
Caryl Fullman

There was discussion regarding the location of a proposed rose garden in Ault Park and its impact on current wildflower gardens.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Castellini motioned for approval of the September 19, 2019 Meeting minutes. Commissioner Thomas seconded. Motion passed by vote.

Vice President Goetz motioned for approval of the October 1, 2019 Special Meeting minutes. Commissioner Castellini seconded. Motion passed by vote.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Rocky Merz explained the ways staff are recognized and celebrated currently and presented the new program for annual staff recognition, which is based on years of service. He described the success of the inaugural recognition ceremony, at which celebrated employees were presented with a plaque.

Mr. Merz presented Steve Schuckman with his recognition gift for his 40 years of service with the City of Cincinnati and highlighted his accomplishments and contributions to Parks.

Mr. Merz presented Paul Tonnis with his recognition gift for his 58 years of service with the City. He explained the essential work that Mr. Tonnis does daily and critical role he plays within the Parks system.

President Lindner thanked Mr. Schuckman and Mr. Tonnis for all they have done at Parks.

OLD BUSINESS

Boat Dock Public Landing Study Update

Mr. Schuckman provided the Board with the results of the Public Landing Study conducted by KZF Design to determine if relocating the transient boat dock from the proposed Main Street location to the Public Landing would reduce construction costs. He revealed relocating would result in an estimated increase of approximately \$300,000 and recommended keeping the Boat Dock at the original Main Street location and to move forward with construction documents to secure a GMP from the Construction Manager at Risk.

Nick Wilkerson of KZF Design presented further details and results of the feasibility study.

Mr. Schuckman explained the cost estimates, including the funding gap will become more accurate as plans are developed, and there are many sources available to potentially fill the gap.

Vice President Goetz asked why grading is estimated to be more expensive at the public landing, where grading already exists, versus at the Main Street location. Mr. Wilkerson explained although graded concrete is in place at the public landing, there are elevation requirements that would have to be met. Mr. Schuckman also explained less steel would be needed at the public landing site, but other costs needed at that site more than account for the differential.

The plans for a lift or elevator was discussed. Mr. Schuckman explained a pedestrian/service lift will be installed to accommodate people, wheelchairs, and utility needs.

There was discussion regarding the ADA considerations included in the designs and associated costs at both sites.

Vice President Goetz asked staff to update the Board again when more accurate estimates of fixed costs are available, as well as operations and maintenance costs, and management plans.

Commissioner Thomas asked if there was consideration of emergency access and its impact on cost. Mr. Schuckman explained the existing available access at both sites.

No Board action was needed.

Contract Amendment: Anderson Pavilion Culinary Group

Jenny Mobley provided background on contract amendment discussions to date, highlighting the Board's conditions for approval set at the September 2019 meeting. She explained both stipulations have been met; AMPLIO has agreed to a one-year renewal and has expressed interest in two additional year renewals, and the Parks Foundation has approved the grant of \$200,000 but has requested to distribute in \$100,000 increments by April 2020.

Mrs. Mobley presented the staff recommendation to approve the terms of the amendment, application for the Cincinnati Parks Foundation grant, and acceptance of funds for distribution according to the terms of the amendment.

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

NEW BUSINESS

Playhouse in the Park Lease

Mr. Schuckman provided background on discussions and approvals regarding the new Playhouse in the Park lease to date. The new lease has been finalized and encompasses a larger lease area to accommodate improvements and plans for a new theater. Tom Arends, of BHDP Architecture presented elements of the design and site plans.

Mr. Schuckman explained the inclusion of Initial Site Work in the lease, what it included, and the intent of these terms. Discussion followed.

Mr. Arends continued with presenting design plans, landscaping, and building materials. Details of the materials were discussed.

Vice President Goetz commended the design for its consideration of the natural setting and measures taken to mitigate impact on plants and wildlife.

Commissioner Castellini asked for further clarification on the construction of the retaining wall, which Mr. Arends offered. He explained the goal is to minimize its visual impact.

Vice President Goetz asked if funding was identified for the retaining wall. Blake Robison, Artistic Director of Playhouse in the Park clarified lead donors, including the State of Ohio, are funding Initial Site Work, which includes the retaining wall.

Mr. Schuckman clarified terms of Base Rent and Determination of Base Rent Every Ten Years.

Commissioner Thomas motioned to approve the staff recommendation as presented. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by vote.

Interim Director Kish recognized the City Law Department, Parks Planning team, and representatives from the Playhouse for their work on this agreement.

Sawyer Point Gateway Recommendation

Mr. Schuckman explained staff has been working with the Board of Visitors (BOV) on improvements at Sawyer Point and Bicentennial Commons, which include restoration of the sculptural gateway and improvements to the parking lot entrance. He explained restoration needs of the gateway and desired changes to the parking lot entrance, which were included in an RFP.

Mr. Schuckman presented the selection committee's recommendation of award to Burgess and Niple and reasons for selection. He mentioned BOV have offered to pay for the design, through funding from Greater Cincinnati Foundation. He explained cost estimates will be determined based on completed designs and funding and phasing will be considered at that time.

Mr. Schuckman presented the staff recommendation to approve awarding the work to Burgess and Niple and accept the funding from the Greater Cincinnati Foundation to fund the design work.

Vice President Goetz expressed support and suggested staff meeting with BOV soon to discuss further funding options.

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

Application and Acceptance of Parks Foundation Funds

Craig Sherman presented the two Foundation grant applications for consideration: Tom Jones Commons for \$369,000, and Bramble Park Stream Restoration for \$15,000. He presented the staff recommendation to approve the application and acceptance of funds.

Commissioner Thomas asked if the acceptance of funds in this case is contingent upon the immediate expenditure of the funds. Mr. Sherman answered the funds will be accepted and transferred from the Foundation into a Parks account immediately and will reside there until transferred to a City account or spent on the project.

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

Commissioner Comment: Funding for Shelter at Tom Jones Commons

Vice President Goetz mentioned the donor wish to have a picnic shelter at Tom Jones Commons. He proposed including a shelter in the initial bid package design plans and explained the need for additional funding.

Vice President Goetz motioned to use unspent 2019 Capital funds up to \$125,000 to fund one picnic shelter in the initial plans and bid package for Tom Jones Commons. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion. The motion passed by vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORTS/COMMENTS

Interim Director Kara Kish announced upcoming events, including the groundbreaking of Tom Jones Commons, the Inwood Park playground, and the ribbon cutting for Westwood Town Hall. The program for the ribbon cutting was discussed. Jennifer Spieser provided background for the Inwood Park playground project.

Ms. Kish updated the Board on the success of the ReLeaf program. She mentioned the distribution has increased from 165 trees last year to 823 trees this year. She thanked the Board for their support of the program and the Business Services team for their marketing efforts. She mentioned the partnerships involved in increasing this program. Commissioner Thomas asked if there were plans to map the areas these trees were planted, to understand impact on tree canopy in areas that are lacking. Ms. Kish said that information could be provided. The species of trees and the details of program were discussed.

Ms. Kish updated the board on the deer culling program and announced restrooms in the parks will be closing for the season this month.

Ms. Kish announced the success of Blink, which brought an estimated 1 million visitors through the parks. She mentioned the collaboration with the Parks Foundation, Camping and Education Foundation, Smale Foundation, Kolar Design, and Moerlein Lager House to bring the Urban Campsite attraction to Schmidlapp Lawn.

Ms. Kish announced Parks' partner, Green Corps, formerly with Millcreek Alliance, is now working with Groundwork Ohio River Valley and will continue to work with Parks at Bramble Park and Little Duck Creek. She explained they have worked with Parks on clearing invasives.

She announced Gerald Checco has been appointed to the Urban Forestry Advisory Board.

Ms. Kish updated the Board on the most recent Parks All Staff meeting.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Castellini asked for an update on the Ault Park gardens donation and plans. Jennifer Spieser provided background on the project and explained the Foundation and Parks staff worked with the donor to identify needs and a design for the garden. Commissioner Castellini asked if the location of the improvements was absolutely determined. Mrs. Spieser explained work will take place throughout all of the gardens and the historic rose garden is to be enhanced. Ms. Kish clarified the enhancement of the historic rose garden is part of the original historical plans for the park, but concerns have been raised regarding the impact on the existing perennial gardens and pollinators. Mrs. Spieser expressed the Foundation is willing to work with the donor to on a solution. Vice President Goetz commented on the need to address rising concerns that donors have ultimate control or access over projects in the parks. Ms. Kish expressed she and Mrs. Spieser will be discussing opportunities to improve communications and address this concern.

Vice President Goetz announced the opportunity to apply for state capital funding, with the due date of November 2 at 4:00 PM. He mentioned the Mayor's office proposed applying for funding for the extension of Smale Riverfront Park on Lot 23. He said the Parks Foundation has also been working with Representative Tom Brinkman to identify opportunities for state funding.

Commissioner Castellini asked what amount should be applied for. Vice President Goetz did not feel it was necessary for the Board to recommend a dollar amount but encouraged staff to request only what is needed for the identified project. Vice President Goetz provided more detail on the application process and there was further discussion regarding the approval process.

Vice President Goetz motioned to authorize the application for State of Ohio capital funds for projects as determined by Parks staff. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by vote.

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. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. The Board adjourned into Executive Session at 10:51 A.M.

ADJOURNMENT

President Lindner announced the return to an open meeting.

Commissioner Castellini motioned to increase Kara Kish's salary by 15%. Commissioner Thomas seconded. The motion passed by vote.

Meeting adjourned at 11:19 A.M.

ATTEST:



PRESIDENT



ACTING DIRECTOR