

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
December 19, 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 Kevin Flynn. President Lindner called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

Public Comments

There were six public comments:

Michelle Baxter	Jennifer Smith	Andy Melchers
Peter Wimberg	Cynthia Duval	Daniel Traicoff

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Castellini motioned for approval of the November 21, 2019 Meeting minutes. Commissioner Flynn seconded. Motion passed by vote.

STAFF RECOGNITION

Larry Parker described the work, major projects, and accomplishments of Matt DiBona, GIS Analyst. Mr. Parker expressed the impact Mr. DiBona's work has had in his relatively short tenure at Parks, and how his successes will continue to add efficiency, transparency, and accuracy to key processes and systems in Natural Resource Management and throughout the department.

Mr. DiBona expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve the citizens of Cincinnati and benefit the community, as well as his excitement for his continued work at Parks. Mr. Lindner thanked him for his work.

RETIREMENT RECOGNITION

Interim Director Kish presented a Certificate of Recognition to Erin Morris for her retirement from Parks and expressed gratitude on behalf of the Board and Staff for her work.

Jennifer Spieser, Parks Foundation, presented the accomplishments Ms. Morris has had in her 32 years with Parks and the support she has provided to the Parks Foundation and the community through nature education. Mrs. Spieser announced the Parks Foundation's plan to establish a scholarship in honor of Ms. Morris to send underserved youth to the summer nature camps.

Ms. Morris expressed gratitude to the Board, staff, and her team at Explore Nature!, and her excitement for the ability to provide youth with quality nature education programming.

Jennifer Harten also expressed gratitude to Ms. Morris for all she has done for the Park Board and the community during her time at Parks.

NEW BUSINESS

Mt. Airy Mountain Bike Beginner Skills Park

Ms. Kish introduced Doug McClintock, President of Cincinnati Off-Road Alliance to propose plans for a mountain bike beginner skills park in Mt. Airy Forest. Mr. McClintock presented the vision, concept and proposal to pursue design and construction of a bike skills facility at Mt. Airy Forest's Area #23, as well as the need to begin fundraising. He described the scope of the plans, including the features of the park facility, audience, and purpose, as well as the intent to engage the public as part of the planning process. He explained the timeline for a critical state grant and the need to solicit private funds. Ms. Kish presented the recommendation to the Board to approve the advancement of the Mt. Airy Mountain Bike Beginner Skills Park concept.

Commissioner Castellini asked if the conceptual trail plans would interfere with the existing hiking trails. Mr. McClintock confirmed it would not interfere and would be a standalone trail unit.

Commissioner Flynn commented cyclists and hikers can ultimately coexist on trails and expressed his excitement for the concept. He challenged CORA to think about linking this beginner course to the advanced course.

Vice President Goetz asked for Mr. McClintock to address concerns from the community regarding CORA's control over the area. Mr. McClintock clarified CORA does not own land, and their role is to work with the land manager to provide recommendations for trail rules and maintenance plans for the land manager to enforce. Commissioner Flynn clarified Area #23 is currently only closed to vehicular traffic and more welcoming fencing and signage has been discussed to welcome pedestrians and cyclists.

Vice President Goetz further encouraged CORA's interaction with and engagement of the community and groups currently using the trails in Mt. Airy during the planning process. Mr. McClintock agreed this engagement is important and CORA desires to build relationships with these groups. Commissioner Flynn expressed the benefit of having an accessible facility located within the forest.

Ms. Kish reiterated the staff recommendation and expressed final design plans would be presented to the Board.

Commissioner Flynn motioned to approve the staff recommendation as presented. Commissioner Castellini seconded. Motion passed by vote.

Hauck Gardens: Sooty Acres Project

Jenny Mobley introduced Dave Boutelle, Regional Manager for Central district and Karen Kahle, Civic Garden Center. Mrs. Mobley introduced the concept and funding source for the Hauck Gardens project.

Mr. Boutelle presented the background, need, and vision of the proposed collaboration with Civic Garden Center (CGC) to return the 6-acres of Hauck Gardens to a beautifully maintained attraction. Ms. Kahle described CGC and its role in achieving the shared vision for the plans for Hauck Gardens. Mr. Boutelle continued the presentation, describing priority areas and plans for improvements and ongoing maintenance, and the added benefit to the community. Steve Schuckman commented on the plans to make the site fully ADA accessible, which would be done in phases as funding is identified.

Ms. Kish explained the funding source for this project is a fund within the Commissioners Fund restricted to the Hauck Gardens site. She presented the staff recommendation to increase the Commissioners Fund by \$105,000 in order to facilitate the initial priorities of Hauck Gardens: Sooty Acres.

Commissioner Flynn suggested engaging the Office of Environment and Sustainability for future phases of the project. Ms. Kahle mentioned CGC has been working with them on green infrastructure.

The timeline, community impact, and benefit of partnerships were discussed. Commissioner Goetz commended the staff and the project plan as a model for the rest of the City.

Commissioner Flynn commented this project demonstrates how Parks utilizes revenue generated from endowments for their intended purposes.

Commissioner Castellini motioned to accept the staff recommendation as presented. Vice President Goetz seconded the motion. Motion passed by vote.

Urban Forestry 2021 Tree Assessment

Crystal Courtney provided the Board with background information regarding the Urban Street Tree Assessment, changes in the assessment over the past twenty years, proposed budget, and recommendation for the 8% budget increase resulting from newly identified parcels. She presented the staff recommendation to continue the assessment rate at 21 cents per front foot for 2021.

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

FY20 Commissioners Fund Budget Increase

Craig Sherman presented the staff recommendation to increase the Central Parkway budget to \$37,500 for needed repairs due to a recent car accident and damages incurred from an unreported accident. There was discussion regarding the total expense and amount to be received from insurance.

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

Acceptance of Private Funding for Kyle Plush Pavilion

Mr. Sherman presented the staff recommendation to accept up to \$50,000 in private funding to use for the construction of the Kyle Plush Pavilion in Stanbery Park. He described the need and sources of this funding.

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

FY 2021 Capital Improvement Budget

Ms. Kish explained options are being presented to the Board for exceptions to the budget over the target amount. Mr. Sherman described the exceptions and presented the capital budget request.

Vice President Goetz commented the Board looks forward to engaging further with staff regarding the capital budget and providing input in the future. He expressed concern regarding the usage of the term “deferred maintenance,” and expressed the benefits of having a completed facilities study for this conversation next year.

Commissioner Flynn expressed a more compelling argument should be made regarding capital need requests because the requested budget is consistently not granted by the City. He expressed concern regarding funding for the Boat Dock and the possibility of losing state funding. Mr. Schuckman commented final drawings and a guaranteed maximum price should be ready soon and funding recommendations for any funding gap will be presented to the Board. Commissioner Flynn commented on the need to explore other sources of private funding.

Commissioner Castellini commented Parks’ access to additional funding sources should not impact the City’s willingness to provide capital funds. There was further discussion regarding understanding deferred maintenance needs and how it could be utilized to ask for support from the City.

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

Vice President Goetz requested the Permanent Improvement Fund 752 be included in the fund balances in the Director’s Reports.

Additional Motion

Vice President Goetz provided an update on the Lot 23 Music Venue Development. He described the funding need for the Base Park plus enhancements needed to open it to the public, including granite pavers. He explained the cost savings associated with installing the granite pavers now as opposed to a later date.

Vice President Goetz proposed the Park Board provide money upfront from Fund 329 with the understanding that as funds are raised, Fund 329 will be reimbursed before additional money is spent. He described potential future funding sources to replenish the fund and mentioned the Joint Banks Steering Committee has committed to help identify future sources of donated funds.

Commissioner Flynn expressed concern regarding the expenditure of Smale's capital reserve funds and commented on the inconvenience put on Parks within the City/County agreement. Vice President Goetz mentioned Fund 329 could be replenished by revenue generated on Lot 23. President Lindner expressed concern regarding the potential need for the capital reserve and the ability to reimburse the fund. There was further discussion regarding sources of the City's monetary contribution to the project.

Commissioner Flynn asked it be stated that the Park Board would be utilizing a fund needed and intended for other purposes, which must be replenished, so the need for this fund is not misunderstood.

Vice President Goetz motioned to provide access to \$4 million in Fund 329, and the Board of Park Commissioners will agree to replenish the fund before committing Park Board money towards the project, with the statement that Fund 329 is intended for long term capital improvement and maintenance needs of the park and is only being utilized by the Park Board because the Board is dedicated to identifying funds to replenish the Fund. Commissioner Flynn seconded.

Mr. Sherman mentioned the language of Fund 329 will need to be altered to change its permitted use before it can be spent on capital projects. Mr. Goetz expressed he is hopeful this will not be necessary if outside funding sources are identified before the fund is used.

Commissioner Goetz amended the motion to authorize staff to perform administrative tasks necessary to implement the motion. Commissioner Castellini seconded the amendment. The motion to amend passed by vote.

The motion in full passed by vote.

Park Board Appointments

Ms. Kish presented her recommendation to appoint Larry Parker to the position of Division Manager of Operations with a salary commensurate with other Division Managers at \$106,050.

Vice President Goetz motioned to accept the appointment. Commissioner Flynn seconded the motion. Motion passed by vote.

Ms. Kish presented her recommendation to increase Jenny Mobley's salary to \$106,050 to create equity amongst the Division Managers.

Commissioner Flynn motioned to accept the recommendation. Commissioner Castellini seconded. Motion passed by vote.

Urban Wilderness Center Discussion

Vice President Goetz suggested tabling the agenda item with the understanding staff will be working toward a presentation to the Board on this topic. He suggested the discussion take place at the January regular meeting of the Board and a presentation take place at the regular meeting in March.

DIRECTOR'S REPORTS/COMMENTS

Interim Director Kish commented on engagement efforts with community groups in Burnet Woods, including a meeting in January with the various groups to create a collaborative calendar of events in the park.

Ms. Kish highlighted Parks' partnership with Christ Hospital to promote their community health initiative, The 180 Project. Christ Hospital will feature Cincinnati Parks in a health article and profile several parks.

Ms. Kish updated the Board on successful Explore Nature! events, the deer management program, the Krohn Tree Lighting event, as well as the latest CPAC meeting. She updated the Board on the Barnes-Dennig audit of Parks' endowment expenditures and explained a final report will be available soon.

Ms. Kish thanked the staff and the Commissioners for their continued support and work.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

President Lindner expressed his gratitude toward the Board and staff and commented on the growth of the organization and strengthening of partnerships within the last year.

Commissioner Castellini exited the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Lindner motioned to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G) to consider the employment of public employees. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. The Board adjourned into Executive Session at 11:03 A.M.

ADJOURNMENT

President Lindner announced the return to an open meeting at 11:09 A.M.

Vice President Goetz motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Flynn seconded. Meeting adjourned at 11:09 A.M.

ATTEST:



PRESIDENT



ACTING DIRECTOR