

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
July 20, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

A special 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, and Commissioner Susan Castellini. Commissioner Kevin Flynn and Commissioner Linda Lee Thomas were present via video conference. President Lindner called the meeting to order at 9:02 A.M. Attendance was confirmed by roll call.

There were no public comments submitted.

Approval of Minutes

Two minor corrections to the July 7 Special Meeting Minutes were submitted to the clerk. Additionally, Commissioner Thomas requested the addition of her request for an update on Twin Lakes in Eden Park at the next regular meeting. All three edits were acknowledged.

Director Kish explained an update on Twin Lakes would be provided at the present meeting, but any further discussion would be required to take place at a future meeting.

Vice President Goetz motioned to approve the July 7, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes pending the submitted corrections. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Moerlein Lager House Lease Discussion

Director Kish introduced the lease request from Moerlein Lager House (MLH). Craig Sherman presented the request from MLH to reduce the rent rate to fair market value and waive the second 2020 lease payment, as well as the staff recommendation for the Board to discuss and consider the request.

Commissioner Flynn explained he was not unsympathetic to challenges MLH is facing and is open to a short-term reduction but had concerns regarding committing to a 50% lease reduction for 30 years.

Mr. Sherman described conversations with the City Solicitor's office and MLH leading up to the present discussion and verified the City Solicitor's office requested MLH get an appraisal.

Vice President Goetz expressed support for continuing these discussions with MLH and recommended staff continue to renegotiate the lease with MLH and present a specific recommendation at a future meeting.

President Lindner expressed support regarding comments made by Commissioners Flynn and Goetz. Commissioner Castellini emphasized the need for an appropriate appraisal to be done, one to assess fair market value of the land lease. Commissioner Flynn agreed. President Lindner asked who should perform the appraisal and Mr. Flynn suggested asking the City Solicitor's office for a suggestion.

Commissioner Thomas expressed concern for committing to a fixed rate for the next 30 years as well as support for continuing negotiations with MLH to come to a mutually beneficial conclusion. She also emphasized the need to keep the two requests of MLH, reduction of lease rate and relief from the second 2020 payment, separate discussions.

The rental rate of the Schmidlapp Event Lawn was discussed.

Vice President Goetz stated his recommendation for staff to continue pursuing discussions and negotiations with MLH and return with a lease recommendation at the next regular Board meeting.

Mr. Sherman confirmed staff will follow up with the City Solicitor on an appraisal and with MLH. It was determined any decisions to waive the second 2020 lease payment would also wait until the next regular meeting.

FY 2021 All Funds Budget

Craig Sherman presented the FY 2021 All Funds Budget, including significant reductions and increases.

President Lindner asked when the rates for Explore Nature! summer camps last increased. Mr. Sherman was unaware but thought it had been several years.

Commissioner Thomas commented although she understood the camp fees were undervalued, she felt the 50% increase seemed high for a single fee adjustment; she asked if fees for other services should also be evaluated now to have a more phased approach to fee increases and avoid stark price changes in the future. Mr. Sherman explained the need to increase this specific fee to match the market value this year and that fee waivers are available for qualified campers.

The potential Moerlein Lager House lease reduction was discussed in terms of its inclusion in the budget. Mr. Sherman clarified this potential reduction was not included in the present FY 21 budget.

Vice President Goetz noted the economic-driven components of the budget, which are largely out of Parks' control. He also described how the Lot 23 agreement with the City is reflected in the budget and in the Park Board's utilization of restricted funds for operational needs.

Mr. Sherman continued with the presentation, describing reductions in the Income Tax-Infrastructure Fund 302.

Commissioner Flynn asked about the reduction for the Regional Manager vacancy and how responsibilities for the region will be handled if the position is not filled. Director Kish explained the position oversees the West District and responsibilities have been absorbed by another staff person in the short term through temporary transfer and will be considered further through future restructuring.

Mr. Sherman continued, presenting Capital Improvements Fund 980 and increases to the Commissioner Fund 430.

Vice President Goetz asked Mr. Sherman for clarification that the \$100K for the Carousel is provided by the Parks Foundation and directly distributed to the Carousel operator. Mr. Sherman confirmed the Foundation distributed the funding to the Park Board, but it has not yet been distributed to AMPLIO.

Commissioner Thomas asked where wifi upgrades fit into the IT budget increase. Mr. Sherman clarified equipment that would be included in the IT budget and that facility upgrades would be entirely separate.

Mr. Sherman presented the Investment Committee's recommendation of a 2% distribution fund from the Parks Endowment Funds.

Mr. Sherman presented the staff recommendation to approve the FY21 All Funds budget, accept the recommendation of the FY21 Commissioners Fund budget, and distribution amount of \$342,540 from the Parks Private Endowments.

Vice President Goetz commended Mr. Sherman for providing a clear picture of restricted versus unrestricted funds.

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

Tom Jones Commons Bids

Steve Schuckman provided background on the bid process for Tom Jones Commons, explaining the project was rebid after initial bid prices came in over budget. He described the changes made to the project to reduce costs, which were agreed upon by the donor. He presented the staff recommendation for the Board to approve the lowest and best bid of \$694,000 by Prus Construction.

Commissioner Thomas asked about the inclusion requirements. Mr. Schuckman explained when the need for some trade services were altered, the inclusion goals were lowered, but remain consistent with the City's requirements as the Department of Economic Inclusion sets the goals.

The construction start date was discussed. Mr. Schuckman clarified next steps, explaining the City will issue a contract to the contractor and once executed, the construction, which has a 6-month timeline, can begin.

Commissioner Flynn added since Prus does so much work with the City, the contract negotiation should be able to be executed quickly.

Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve the staff recommendation. Commissioner Flynn seconded. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

MOU with DOTE, DPS, GCWW (SMU)

Mr. Schuckman explained for at least 40 years, the Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE) and the Department of Public Services (DPS) have been maintaining a dozen park roads and associated infrastructure, treated as part of the city street system because they connect to city streets on both ends. He explained the Cincinnati Municipal Code prohibits maintenance of roads not officially designated as city streets. Mr. Schuckman described the MOU between Parks, DOTE, DPS, and GCWW which would designate certain park roads as city streets and allow continued maintenance.

Commissioner Flynn asked if all included streets were already up to city code to be official city streets. Mr. Schuckman confirmed. Further details of the MOU regarding the street lighting and energy costs were discussed. There was discussion regarding the city's parkways and Mr. Schuckman explained they are not included in the present MOU, but delineation of responsibility for them should be considered in the future.

Director Kish concluded the presentation and stated the staff recommendation to enter into the presented MOU in substance.

Vice President Goetz stated his main concern with the MOU was responsibility of lighting maintenance falling to Parks and the associated financial impact. He suggested working with City Budget office to identify an existing funding source rather than committing dedicated Park funds.

Mr. Schuckman clarified there would be opportunities to collaborate on future major capital improvements related to the project.

Commissioner Thomas asked to consider opportunities for efficiencies pertaining to the light maintenance. Mr. Schuckman shared his suggestion that the department that has been responsible for maintaining the lights continue to do the work and Parks pay for it.

Commissioner Flynn suggested the MOU may need to be refined to address the definition of maintenance areas for roads that do not have curbs or standard stormwater drainage.

The roads and parks included in the MOU were discussed further.

Director Kish restated the purpose of the MOU.

Commissioner Flynn agreed funding for new expenses as a result of the MOU should be shifted from its current source to Parks, including funds for maintenance of park roads that were previously under the purview of other departments but will now be the responsibility of Parks per the MOU.

Commissioner Castellini asked if there is a dollar amount for the maintenance of Blue Spruce Road, which will now be the responsibility of Parks. Mr. Schuckman clarified the repaving of the road would be funded from Parks capital budget but there is no dollar amount associated with it currently. Vice President Goetz asked if the repair of this road would in fact be an added expense. Mr. Schuckman confirmed and it would be paid for with Parks funds budgeted for road maintenance. The current condition of Blue Spruce Road was discussed.

Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve entering into the MOU in substance. Commissioner Thomas seconded. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

OLD BUSINESS

Annual Business Plan

Director Kish presented an update on the FY 2020 Annual Business Plan. She described the extraordinary set of circumstances that impacted Park Board operations, and ultimately staff's ability to meet the metrics set in the plan. She detailed the accomplishments of each Division in FY20. Ms. Kish explained the first half of FY 2021 will be dedicated to advancing four goals: continuation of capital projects, continuation of operations, restructuring the organization, and preparing an annual plan for the second half of FY21.

President Lindner commended Ms. Kish and staff for their dedicated work during uncertain times. Commissioner Flynn echoed Mr. Lindner's sentiments and expressed his compliments to Ms. Kish.

STAFF COMMENTS

Rocky Merz provided an update on Twin Lakes at Eden Park, stating it is now open to through traffic and staff has been meeting with the Citizens United Against the Closure of the Overlook at Eden Park, surrounding community, City representatives, and the Police Department to develop additional solutions to the current challenges.

Commissioner Thomas asked if the safety concerns that motivated the decision to initially close the gates have changed at all. Commissioner Castellini commented on the motorcycle activity and asked if there are discussions regarding the use of speed bumps at the overlook. Director Kish commented to meet the needs of park users and remain socially equitable, on site parking was critical. She continued, some of the initial issues remain but solutions are being discussed with stakeholders and community partners. There was further discussion regarding the speed bumps. Commissioner Thomas asked if large crowds were still an issue at the park and Ms. Kish confirmed, as well as it being a city-wide issue. There was discussion regarding creative solutions that have been suggested to prevent some of these issues.

Mr. Merz announced the Fall Releaf event would continue this year. He explained Parks will be working with partners at the Foundation and Mad Tree Brewing on the program which will run from August to October. The amount of Releaf trees in previous years and total trees planted Parks-wide was discussed. Mr. Lindner expressed interest in data on the survivability of the Releaf plantings.

Mr. Merz explained efforts taken to track outreach efforts during the COVID-19 crisis, as digital platforms are experiencing high use. He described the growth Parks' social media platforms have experienced this year and Parks has expanded to Next Door to post messages to neighborhood groups and monitor and respond to community concerns on the platform.

Mr. Merz mentioned the Park Board meetings will be able to take place at the Administration Building, which offers more flexibility than scheduling at City Hall and thanked Mary Unterreiner for facilitating.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Castellini expressed interest in reinstating monthly police reports at the Park Board Meetings. Mr. Merz clarified these were discontinued when Parks' CPD liaison retired.

Commissioner Castellini expressed concern regarding drug use at Smale. Commissioner Flynn commented he believed City Council directed City police not to enforce laws related to marijuana use.

President Lindner commented on an enjoyable experience at the Little Duck Creek trail.

Commissioner Flynn reminded the Commissioners of a previous request to hold an Executive Session to discuss pending litigation. Mr. Lindner requested it be included on the next regular meeting agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

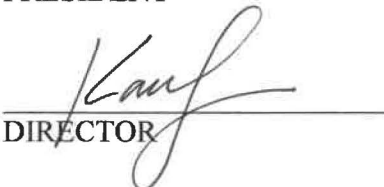
President Lindner announced the next regular meeting date of August 20.

Mr. Lindner adjourned the meeting at 11:08 A.M.

ATTEST:



PRESIDENT



DIRECTOR