

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
December 2, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Cincinnati Board of Park Commissioners was held on this day remotely by video conference. Commissioners present: President Brad Lindner, Vice President Jim Goetz, Commissioner Susan Castellini, Commissioner Kevin Flynn, and Commissioner Linda Lee Thomas. President Lindner called the meeting to order at 3:03 P.M. Attendance was confirmed by roll call.

Acknowledgement of Public Comments

President Lindner confirmed there were no public comments submitted for this meeting.

INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY UPDATE

Director Kish introduced the item, explaining although currently incomplete, it contributed greatly to the Capital Budget. She introduced Steve Schuckman and Cindy France to present further, and announced Pat Hoagland, Brandstetter Carroll, Inc. was available to address any questions.

Steve Schuckman provided background on the infrastructure study. He explained two portions have not yet been completed: a portion identifying needs at Krohn, and an overview of the 2007 Master Plan updated with today's costs. Mr. Schuckman described an overall estimated infrastructure need of \$74.9 million and provided a breakdown of costs for assets in Poor and Fair condition. He explained the general timeline for addressing Poor/Fair infrastructure needs and commented the bulk of assets were in Good to Excellent condition. He highlighted underground utility needs are more difficult to anticipate so the study includes annual funds to address emergency issues. He provided an overview of the study and how it is organized and opened the discussion to questions and comments.

The organization of the infrastructure study was discussed. There was a request to see the study sorted by condition. Commissioner Flynn asked if needs associated with stormwater facilities could be funded with sources outside of the Capital Budget. Mr. Schuckman clarified Stormwater Fund 107 does pay for staff performing stormwater work, but the Capital Budget would be supplemented with other funding sources, where possible. Ways to best present and access the study for Board, public, and City Council use were discussed.

President Lindner asked if there was available funding for continued maintenance of assets in Good to Excellent condition. Mr. Schuckman explained there is funding for basic levels of service and maintenance, depending on Capital funding appropriated by the City.

The difference between "improvement" versus "maintenance" within the study was clarified. Commissioner Thomas noted there are fund balances in parks where improvements are needed. She asked how decisions are made for remaining funds and whether they should be utilized elsewhere if there are needs within the park for which the funds are intended. Director Kish answered it would be up to the discretion of the Board, but expressed support for this consideration.

The way in which costs are presented in the study, namely clarification between cost of repair/improvement and cost of contingencies, was discussed. Commissioner Flynn asked about parking repairs, primarily striping of parking spaces. Mr. Schuckman explained staff is embarking on an internal campaign to address. Director Kish clarified the Operations Division will be evaluating need, funding, and execution of striping.

Vice President Goetz expressed satisfaction with the data detail and the study as a tool. He expressed concern with how timeliness and execution of identified needs are being addressed, especially immediate needs. He referenced remaining funds in the Commissioners Fund and Capital Budget could be utilized. Commissioner Goetz expressed concern regarding added bureaucracy of the proposed Park Improvement Community Request Program and its impact, along with identified infrastructure needs, on the Planning & Design Division.

Director Kish addressed Commissioner Goetz's concerns. She explained infrastructure needs identified in Poor to Fair condition were prioritized and incorporated into the FY 2022-23 Capital Budget. Ms. Kish confirmed there is available money in the Commissioners Fund and Capital fund that should be prioritized, and she explained she will continue to work with the Commissioners on identifying how these funds should be spent. She commented the infrastructure study could provide data-driven reasoning to advocate for the budget request in FY22-23.

Commissioner Castellini asked Director Kish to address remaining capital funds and clarify how they can be utilized for capital improvements or maintenance. Ms. Kish answered, during the recent sunseting process, dollars that need to be spent were identified and planned for, and she expressed confidence in the plans although it may take 2-3 years to execute the projects. Commissioner Castellini expressed concern that FY22-23 budget request would not be granted if Parks had remaining funds to be utilized and suggested making the aforementioned plans for expenditures clear in the staff's future budget presentations to City Council.

President Lindner asked Director Kish how greater work output can be achieved without increasing staff and with the same staff structure. Director Kish described the Park Improvement Community Request Program which is intended to lessen the burden on the Planning & Design Division, create equity and administrative efficiency for processing community requests, and ensuring community support and alignment with Park Board plans. She also described structural changes, including removing facilities from Planning & Design Division and adding two professional positions, which will help strengthen the division.

There was discussion regarding the ability for two additional Planning & Design staff to mobilize the department enough to catch up on capital needs if Parks' budget request was fully granted. Director Kish expressed confidence with increased Planning & Design staff capacity and sunseting plans, the department is on a path to complete projects within 3 years. Vice President Goetz commented although the plans are appreciated, the amount of work getting accomplished was dissatisfactory. He requested the Director communicate what is needed for work to be accomplished sooner. Director Kish clarified current plans were formed with consideration of the department's existing resources, so she will discuss with staff how capacity can be increased. She expressed she shares the Board's vision for wanting to spend money in the parks as soon as possible. Commissioner Goetz asked for staff to provide capital dollar amounts actually spent in the last 5 years.

President Lindner expressed support for improvements to the community request process but questioned how these incoming projects would be prioritized. He commented on the need to be able to project impacts of additional staff capacity and how it translates into accomplished work. He expressed a six-month timeline for hiring additional Planning & Design staff seemed lengthy. Director Kish expressed filling the positions quickly is a priority. Discussion followed regarding the hiring process as well as the inclusion of staff salaries in budget considerations.

Commissioner Thomas commented on prioritization and focus of projects. She asked if items classified as in Poor condition have aligned to any of the projects within the sunseting plan and how that impacts timeline and project priorities. Commissioner Flynn added there are private funding sources for some of these projects as well.

There was discussion regarding infrastructure rehabilitation dollars and plans for funding. Mr. Schuckman described the process for prioritizing funding needs. Commissioner Flynn commented limited capital dollars should first be utilized in parks that do not have associated additional funding and revenue sources. This point was discussed further. Commissioner Castellini echoed this sentiment.

Commissioner Thomas restated the need to look at the previous 5 years to determine capital dollars actually spent to help inform future decisions and projections. She also commented there should not be disparities in condition and appearance of parks depending on the location of the park and this standard should be paramount within operations.

The restoration of a comfort station in Mt. Airy Forest was discussed briefly.

FY 2022 AND FY 2023 CAPITAL BUDGETS

Director Kish presented the recommendation for the FY 2022 and FY 2023 Capital Budgets. She described the target for both years and explained it is commonplace for Parks to request funding in excess of the target, often by millions. Ms. Kish presented the recommended budget request for FY 2022 is \$4,563,500 with exceptions in the amount of \$261,000; and \$4,775,500 for FY 2023 with exceptions in the amount of \$530,000. She explained additional costs will be added to the request for contingency (design and engineering) costs and the budget will be updated to reflect those costs: \$785,510 added to FY 22 for a total of \$5,349,010; and \$828,410 added to FY 23 for a total of \$5,603,910. Director Kish outlined the considerations and documents consulted to inform the budget request. She restated staff reimbursements are included in the budget request, including the vacant Planning & Design positions.

Director Kish described the consideration of the infrastructure study and the approach to determining if an asset should be replaced, repaired, or removed. She explained other funding sources for maintenance and repairs were considered in order to alleviate capital dollars. She continued, describing focuses within the budget including accessibility throughout the system, playgrounds, Mt. Airy Forest, Krohn facility improvements, roadways, comfort stations, utilities, and staffing. Ms. Kish described plans to put a strategy in place to engage in future budget processes including a community park improvement budget request, timely and immersive involvement of the Park Board, and future Equity Study data.

Director Kish presented the staff recommendation for the Board to review and discuss the recommended Parks FY 22 and FY 23 Capital Budgets. Ms. Kish expressed pride in staff's efforts to develop a thoughtful, informed, equitable, and progressive budget and the focus on parks in need of revitalization.

Director Kish clarified the budget will not be submitted until approved by the Park Board.

Vice President Goetz expressed concern regarding the expense and priority for parking lot repairs at Sawyer Point. Mr. Schuckman clarified there are future plans to renovate the revenue-generating parking lot, however, this line item captures more immediate repaving needs which will not impact, and is unrelated to, the future redesign. Commissioner Goetz questioned the priority to expend more capital funding at the riverfront.

Director Kish and Commissioner Goetz determined a course of action for gathering and utilizing Commissioner feedback to construct a modified budget recommendation to present at the next regular Board of Park Commissioners meeting.

Vice President Goetz asked about the Mt. Airy Forest Area 23 – Beginner Bike Skills Area & ADA Walkway line item and why an additional \$110,000 was budgeted when CORA is funding the project. Steven Schuckman clarified this funding is Parks' contribution for an ADA accessible walkway leading to the Bike Skills Area and comfort station. Director Kish explained if partnership-driven projects do not move forward, or there is funding leftover after a project is complete, unspent dollars would be planned for during the annual budget planning process with the Park Board.

Commissioner Flynn commented on the need for the accessible walkway in the Area. Commissioner Goetz expressed his support for the project and commented on the need to see the full picture of expense for projects. Commissioner Goetz commented on the amount budgeted for Mt. Airy Forest and wanted to ensure the budget reflects needs throughout the system. Mr. Schuckman confirmed for Commissioner Flynn budgeted ADA accessible paths would be leading to accessible assets and playgrounds.

Vice President Goetz questioned the necessity of road removal at the Burnet Woods bandstand. Terminology and reasoning for "enhancements" versus budgeted items were discussed. Commissioner Goetz asked about the capital funds currently budgeted for consulting for the Reading Road Operations relocation. Mr. Schuckman explained this money is budgeted to begin a design program for the associated building renovation. Commissioner Goetz commented the amount should have been part of original project discussions and recommended classifying it as an enhancement in the budget request and putting Burnet Woods road removal at the Bandstand/Brookline in approved capital. The availability of funds for the Operations Center project and timeline was discussed.

Commissioner Thomas asked assets classified in Poor condition be called out in the budget.

The data for the City Map of Parks and Public Greenspaces with 10-minute walk zones was discussed. Vice President Goetz questioned the priority of focus on data collection for land acquisition. Commissioner Thomas expressed the importance of having the data and knowledge

of gaps in park access regardless of ability to fund land acquisition at present. Commissioner Goetz agreed and suggested utilizing data from the Trust for Public Land's study. Mr. Schuckman confirmed staff has utilized this data.

Commissioner Thomas left the meeting.

Vice President Goetz questioned the priority and focus of the FY 2023 budget request including proposal for assets with other funding sources and additional consulting and planning fees. The community budget request for Kennedy Heights was discussed. Director Kish clarified this item and Mt. Airy Forest are prioritized to line up with the City Planning Department's plan. The Hauck Gardens enhancement item was discussed and staff explained the current Hauck fund balance would be evaluated to see if additional funds are available outside of capital.

Vice President Goetz questioned the need for the Burnet Woods concession renovation in the 2021 current budgeted projects. Mr. Schuckman explained it was classified as in Poor condition and prioritized. Commissioner Goetz clarified he will be proposing funding to augment the upcoming Camping and Education Foundation proposal and suggested substituting this project in place of the concession renovation in the current budgeted projects. The considerations for prioritizing infrastructure classified as in Poor condition was discussed. Commissioner Goetz commented the concession building will be part of the discussion for Burnet Woods plans at the next regular meeting.

Commissioner Flynn asked about responsibility to fund renovation of roads in Burnet Woods, namely Clifton/MLK. Mr. Schuckman clarified this as Lake Drive and Parks' responsibility to maintain. The potential for repaving of park roads to fit within the City's resurfacing program was discussed. Commissioner Flynn explained there is good rationale for labeling this item as an exception.

Director Kish thanked the Board for their thorough review and feedback. She restated the feedback will be used to update the budget for a second presentation at the next regular meeting on December 17. Commissioner Flynn expressed appreciation for the thoroughness and intent of the budget recommendation.

Commissioner Castellini asked why the Owl's Nest building proposed for demolition is slated for 2023 and not sooner. Mr. Schuckman explained this may be able to be accommodated in the budget recommendation. He expressed gratitude to the Board for their feedback. President Lindner thanked Mr. Schuckman for his work and the work of the Planning & Design team on the budget.

ADJOURNMENT

President Lindner announced the next meeting date of December 17, 2020.

Vice President Goetz motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

ATTEST:



PRESIDENT



DIRECTOR