

Stark County Park District Park Board – Regular Meeting Minutes
Exploration Gateway at Sippo Lake Park, 5712 12th St. NW, Canton, OH 44708
August 3, 2021
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(AGENDA ITEM: 4)

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – The regular meeting of the Stark County Park Commission was called to order by Denise Freeland at 2:03 p.m.

A. Roll Call of Members

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Pat Quick

STAFF PRESENT:

Robert A. Fonte, Park Director/Secretary to the Board

Barbara Wells, Financial Manager

Corianne Kocarek, Clerk to the Board

Justin Laps, Chief of Public Safety

Talula Wiater, Natural Resources Manager

Aimee Engelhart, Marketing Administrator

Rick Summers, Operations Manager

GUESTS PRESENT:

Mark Walker

B. Adoption of Agenda

B. Bryan MOVED to adopt the agenda, which was SECONDED by P. Quick

DISCUSSION:

None

MOTION CARRIED on a vote as follows:

Voting Aye: Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Pat Quick

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

WHEREAS, minutes from the July 6, 2021 Special Park Board meeting have been submitted for review.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Stark County Park District Board of Park Commissioners to approve the minutes from the July 6, 2021 Special Park Board meeting as submitted.

P. Quick MOVED to adopt this resolution, which was SECONDED by B. Bryan

DISCUSSION: None

MOTION CARRIED to approve the minutes on a vote as follows:

Voting Aye: Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Pat Quick

WHEREAS, minutes from the July 6, 2021 Regular Park Board meeting have been submitted for review.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Stark County Park District Board of Park Commissioners to approve the minutes from the July 6, 2021 Regular Park Board meeting as submitted.

B. Bryan MOVED to adopt this resolution, which was SECONDED by P. Quick

DISCUSSION: None

MOTION CARRIED to approve the minutes on a vote as follows:

Voting Aye: Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Pat Quick

• **Reference 57**

WHEREAS, minutes from the July 16, 2021 Special Park Board meeting have been submitted for review.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Stark County Park District Board of Park Commissioners to approve the minutes from the July 16, 2021 Special Park Board meeting as submitted.

P. Quick MOVED to adopt this resolution, which was SECONDED by B. Bryan

DISCUSSION: None

MOTION CARRIED to approve the minutes on a vote as follows:

Voting Aye: Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Pat Quick

4. FINANCIAL REPORTS

WHEREAS, the monthly Financial Report and Summary Financial Report for the period ending June 30, 2021 have been submitted to the Board for review.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Stark County Park District Board of Park Commissioners to approve and accept for audit the Financial Report and Summary Financial Report for the period ending June 30, 2021 as submitted.

B. Bryan MOVED to adopt this resolution, which was SECONDED by P. Quick

DISCUSSION:

B. Bryan asked if the environment to obtain grants will be favorable or less favorable in the future?

R. Fonte answered that the Park District has quite a few grants we're exploring and we should be able to be consistent with the level of funding received compared to prior years

B. Wells stated that some of the new funding coming out does not require a match

R. Fonte stated that the current grants are keeping the staff busy. You may see the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)/Ohio Emergency Management Agency (OEMA) grants drop off due to running out of eligible properties for the grant funding

MOTION CARRIED on a vote as follows:

Voting Aye: Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Pat Quick

5. APPROVAL OF PAYROLLS AND BILLS

WHEREAS, copies of payroll and bills for the month of June 2021 were submitted for the Board's review in accordance with Resolution #98-133.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Stark County Park District Board of Park Commissioners to approve and accept for audit the payroll and bills for June 30, 2021 as submitted.

P. Quick MOVED to adopt this resolution, which was SECONDED by B. Bryan

DISCUSSION: None

MOTION CARRIED on a vote as follows:

Voting Aye: Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Pat Quick

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. Informational: Upcoming Events

DISCUSSION:

D. Freeland asked for details regarding the Richard Fry Trail Challenge

A. Engelhart stated it is an 8 mile trek on the trails at Fry Family Park. It's a timed challenge that you can compete against yourself

B. Informational: Quail Hollow Controlled Hunt Proposal (Exhibit A)

DISCUSSION:

J. Laps stated that every spring the Park District meets with Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) regarding our operating plan, including lakes. During the discussion this year, we talked about opening Quail Hollow Park up for a controlled hunt due to the deer damage reports from ODNR and research conducted by the Stark Parks and the university study.

T. Wiater talked about the study Malone University did that concluded that there is an estimated 300+ deer

• **Reference 58**

in just over one square mile of the property. Stark Parks has also performed our own study using a drone to survey. The Park was split into 5 sections, in 1 out of the 5 sections, there were 66 deer counted. A healthy population is around 12-25 deer per square mile. We utilized our data and the data collected from Malone as justification of the overpopulation.

J. Laps stated that Summit MetroParks utilized their Ranger department to cull the deer originally, but now are utilizing a similar model as Hamilton County and what we're proposing at Stark Parks along with the culling program. There is a map of 13 sites that are 14 acres in size. We would then narrow the area down to about 4-6 sites. We would run a lottery based system. Each hunter would have two weeks to hunt their assigned site. They would have to be a Stark County resident in order to enter the lottery and could take a maximum of three deer and could have a companion with them. The Ranger department would qualify people in order to participate and there would be a \$15 fee to enter the lottery. Sign up would be on our StarkParks.com website. Our goal is to fill each spot and the hunters would report their harvest to us for tracking purposes. We would like this to be open to the community which includes staff (again, as long as they enter the lottery and reside in the county of Stark) and staff would have to enter the lottery and hunt on their own time.

R. Fonte added that other park districts have done this and had staff perform the hunt (culling program) and received community pushback. We would enforce all hunting rules and post closures, if needed, during the hunting season just as we do in other public hunting areas in the Park District.

J. Laps stated that Walborn and Deer Creek Reservoirs both have public hunting areas but are more remote and do not contain trail access in those areas.

B. Bryan stated it will be difficult to make a dent in the deer population.

J. Laps stated this would involve up to 80 people in the hunt.

D. Freeland asked if there is an overpopulation of deer in other Stark Parks?

T. Wiater stated yes, but other parks like Fry Family Park in Pike Township are surrounded by adjacent lands that are hunted, so the population can be better controlled.

R. Fonte stated that the Park District would have written conditions from the Division of Wildlife and Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR-lease agreement for Quail Hollow).

B. Bryan stated it would be nice to have a youth focus.

J. Laps stated that it would be a good opportunity for younger hunters because there are so many deer.

C. Informational: Magnolia Flouring Mills Master Plan (Exhibit B)

DISCUSSION:

R. Fonte stated that a lot of work has been done by the consultant and staff in coordination with the Village of Magnolia. The Master Plan will help the Park District to prioritize the work. The majority of the work that has been done so far is not aesthetic. We would like to finish the siding and public access. We're optimistic moving forward that this will be a tourist destination

D. Freeland asked how much right-of-way is needed in order to connect the Magnolia Flouring Mills to Fry Family Park

R. Fonte stated that the Park District does not currently own any of the right-of-way

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. RESOLUTION: #21-08-052: Budget Transfer: 2021 Community Survey

WHEREAS, the marketing department for Stark Parks has identified a need to determine budgeting priorities for the 2022 budget year; and

WHEREAS, the marketing department solicited preliminary estimates for survey; and

WHEREAS, the survey will allow Stark Parks to gather information on how the community prefers to receive information in order to better target marketing funding; and

WHEREAS, the estimates indicate that a survey could be conducted for the amount not to exceed Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Stark County Park District Board of Park Commissioners to authorize a transfer/s of funds in an amount not to exceed Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) from the Project Fund-Unallocated (072.28.0000.65000) to the appropriate accounts to complete the marketing survey.

• **Reference 59**

B. Bryan MOVED to adopt this resolution, which was SECONDED by P. Quick

DISCUSSION:

A. Engelhart stated that the Park District has had a couple of tough years between the levy failure in 2019 and COVID in 2020-2021. The marketing department has drafted a couple of questions for a survey to ask the public in order to better craft our marketing message

P. Quick asked if the survey was part of a marketing plan

A. Engelhart answered yes, it is part of our overall marketing plan and it's time to re-evaluate how we communicate. One question asks how the public is getting their media?

P. Quick stated this will help the department to be more strategic

A. Engelhart stated yes, and to be sure we're spending our dollars on the right things, we're looking at everything with an open mind

MOTION CARRIED on a vote as follows:

Voting Aye: Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Pat Quick

B. RESOLUTION: #21-08-053: Tam O'Shanter Deed Restrictions Suspension

WHEREAS, the Stark County Park District is the owner of a 101.5463-acre parcel of land in the Southwest Quarters of Section 25 and the Southeast Quarter of Section 26, Jackson Township, Stark County, Ohio, having acquired same by deeds recorded at Stark County Official Records Imaging Nos. 201812280051935 (Stark County Auditor's Permanent Parcel No. 10011778), the same being developed by the Park District as a part of Tam O'Shanter Park; and

WHEREAS, the Stark County Park District Board of Park Commissioners approved the Tam O'Shanter Master Plan for the development of Tam O' Shanter Park by Resolution #19-09-065; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan has identified an approximate 8.0-acre portion of the above-described parcel that would be suitable for active recreation and food and beverage service, including a restaurant (See attached "Exhibit C"); and

WHEREAS, as part of the Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC)/Ohio Public Works Commission grant process for the acquisition of the real estate, a Declaration of Restrictions was placed upon the real estate by instrument recorded at Stark County Official Records Imaging No. 20181228005193, restricting the uses and the development of the property and its transfer; and

WHEREAS, said Declarations of Restrictions would avert the proposed active recreation and food and beverage service on said 8.0-acre parcel;

WHEREAS, the District 19 - Natural Resource Assistance Council has accepted the Stark County Park District's proposal to remove/suspend 8.0 acres of the above-described 101.5463-acre parcel of land property from the restrictive covenants regarding the uses to which the property can be placed and permitting active recreation and food and beverage service thereon, conditioned upon:

- a. The placement of a Declaration of Restrictions, equivalent to that recorded at Stark County Official Records Imaging No. 20181228005193, upon approximately 36.28 acres of Stark County Park District owned real estate known as the "Plain Center Wetlands" in the City of Canton, Ohio situated along the Middlebranch Trail, acquired by deeds recorded at Stark County Official Records Imaging Nos. 1999092954, 2000068267, and 20010888 (Stark County Auditor's Permanent Parcel Nos. 380326, 380327, 380328 and 380332); and
- b. The placement of a Declaration of Restrictions, equivalent to that recorded at Stark County Official Records Imaging No. 20181228005193, upon approximately 21.8412 acres of real estate situated in the Southwest Quarter of Section 26, Jackson Township Stark County, Ohio located at 5625 Everhard Road being acquired by the Stark County Park District from C.W. Vail, LLC which took title by deeds recorded at Stark County Official Records Imaging Nos. 200407200052194 and 200407200052195 (Stark County Auditor's Permanent Parcel No. 1630184) with an anticipated closing of August 31, 2021; and
- c. The profits generated from the business operation on the 8.0-acre parcel to be used solely for the purposes of improving and maintaining the Tam O'Shanter Park property and the 21.8412-acre parcel being acquired from C.W. Vail, LLC; and

d. The restrictions on transfer of the 8.0-acre parcel imposed by the Declaration of Restrictions, recorded at Stark County Official Records Imaging No. 20181228005195, continuing to remain in effect; and

WHEREAS, it may be necessary for the Stark County Park District to enter in an Amended Grant Agreement with Ohio Public Works Commission to accomplish the foregoing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Stark County Park District Board of Park Commissioners that the Park Director is authorized to pursue full approval through the District 19 Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC) for the suspension of use restrictions on the above- described 8.0-acre property; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Robert A. Fonte, Park Director, is authorized to sign/execute the necessary instruments to effectuate the project as outlined above.

P. Quick MOVED to adopt this resolution, which was SECONDED by B. Bryan

DISCUSSION:

R. Fonte stated that the Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC) approved the land swap. The Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) stated they would accept the land swap if the NRAC approved. This would place the deed restrictions that were previously on the 8 acres at Tam O’Shanter Park on 36 acres along the Middle Branch Trail (Plain Center Wetlands) that the Park District currently owns and on 21 acres that the Park District anticipates closing on in Jackson Township (C.W. Vail, LLC) in August. We’ve had internal discussions about next steps to advertise for a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the bar/restaurant and “Adventure Park.”

MOTION CARRIED on a vote as follows:

Voting Aye: Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Pat Quick

C. RESOLUTION: #21-08-054: 2021 Project List & Budget Classification: Tam O’Shanter Park-Adventure Area

WHEREAS, the Stark County Park District Board of Park Commissioners approved the Tam O’Shanter Master Landscape Plan with Resolution #19-09-065; and

WHEREAS, the Master Landscape Plan process identified areas of Tam O’Shanter Park that would be suitable for active recreation and food and beverage service including a restaurant; and

WHEREAS, the Stark County Park District Board of Park Commissioners approved the Tam O’Shanter Park-Adventure Area as part of the 2021 Project List & Budget in the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) with Resolution #21-02-015; and

WHEREAS, it has been determined in order to identify a restaurateur the Park District needs to administer and advertise for a request for qualifications (RFQ) and a request for proposals (RFP) and these would needed to be added to the project description.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Stark County Park District Board of Park Commissioners to authorize the classification for funds to be used from the Tam O’Shanter Park-Adventure Area to also include advertising and a request for qualifications (RFQ) and a request for proposals (RFP); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Stark County Park District Board of Park Commissioners to authorize Robert A. Fonte, Park Director, to sign/execute the necessary paperwork to complete said revised project at Tam O’Shanter Park.

B. Bryan MOVED to adopt this resolution, which was SECONDED by P. Quick

DISCUSSION:

R. Fonte stated this resolution specifies money that was set aside for the adventure area at Tam O’Shanter Park can be spent on advertising for a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) as well as a Request for Proposals (RFP)

B. Bryan stated this ties back to the Master Plan for the park and what was heard from the public as to what they wanted to see at the Park

R. Fonte stated yes, this is in response to the public meetings and survey that 80% of respondents stated they’d be willing to pay fees for activities.

MOTION CARRIED on a vote as follows:

Voting Aye: Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Pat Quick

D. RESOLUTION: #21-08-055: Budget Transfer: Purchased Services to General Supplies

WHEREAS, the Operations Manager, Rick Summers, has determined in order to meet customer service standards additional funds are needed for general supplies and materials for parks and trails; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended to reallocate funds from Purchased Services to General Supplies in an amount not to exceed Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Stark County Park District Board of Park Commissioners to authorize the transfer of funds in an amount not to exceed Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) from the Purchased Services: Repair/Maintenance-Land/Buildings-Mowing (072.28.1035.64206) to General Supplies (072.28.1035.63104) for general supplies and materials for parks and trails.

P. Quick MOVED to adopt this resolution, which was SECONDED by B. Bryan

DISCUSSION:

R. Fonte stated that the Park District is still experiencing an over 200% increase in visitor ship. We hope to keep these levels up. This resolution reallocates money to keep performing general maintenance at current levels

MOTION CARRIED on a vote as follows:

Voting Aye: Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Ralph Dublikar, Pat Quick, David Regula

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. 2021 Project List and Budget

DISCUSSION: None

B. Director's Report:

DISCUSSION:

R. Fonte shared the following with the Park Board:

- The Park District was approached by the Stark County District Library to assist with a grant application for a story book walk. We helped them to submit the grant and will help install the story book if the grant is awarded
- The Mindfulness Walk has been recreated at Preservation Parks in Delaware County Ohio. They gave Stark Parks credit for the idea on their signage
- Progress photos of the commercial development next to Tam O'Shanter Park. They have approached the Park District regarding partnering with them on a grant application for American Rescue funds
- Some of the most recent correspondence regarding grant activity and the public's interest was shared with the Board

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

BE IT RESOLVED, to adjourn into Executive Session at 2:56 p.m. to discuss the discipline of a public employee and to consider the purchase of property for public purposes.

B. Bryan moved to adopt this motion, which was SECONDED by P. Quick

MOTION CARRIED on a roll call vote as follows:

Voting Aye: Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Pat Quick

10. RECONVENE FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

BE IT RESOLVED to reconvene to Regular Session at 3:22 p.m.

P. Quick MOVED to adopt this resolution, which was SECONDED by B. Bryan

MOTION CARRIED on a vote as follows:

Voting Aye: Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Pat Quick

- **Reference 62**

11. ADJOURNMENT

BE IT RESOLVED to adjourn at 3:23 p.m. Next scheduled meeting: September 7, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. at the Exploration Gateway at Sippo Lake Park.

B. Bryan MOVED to adjourn the meeting, which was SECONDED by P. Quick.

MOTION CARRIED on a vote as follows:

Voting Aye: Denise Freeland, Bill Bryan, Pat Quick

APPROVAL DATE: September 7, 2021

ATTEST:

Denise Freeland, Chairperson
Stark County Park Commission

Robert A. Fonte, Director/Secretary to the Board
Stark County Park District

Corianne Kocarek/Clerk to the Board
Stark County Park District

- **Reference 63**