

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS ANDERSON TOWNSHIP PARK DISTRICT

April 14, 2015

Dale Bartholomew, President, called the regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Anderson Township Park District ("ATPD") to order at 6:30 pm at Park District Headquarters, 8249 Clough Pike, Cincinnati, OH 45244. Present were Board Members: Nadine Gelter and Tom Turchiano.

Also present were: Ken Kushner, Executive Director; Emily Armstrong, Assistant Director/Board Clerk; Brian Jordan, Financial Officer; Jessica Fall, Recreation Manager; Mike Smith, Operations Manager; Marshal Carpenter, Recreation Supervisor; and Sheila Fehn, Office Manager.

GUESTS: Sheila Vilvens, Enquirer Media; Residents: Lois Key; Jean Wakefield; and Bob Drake.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA: Mr. Turchiano moved the Board approve the Agenda as presented. Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bartholomew said he recently discovered a document being distributed regarding the ATPD's plans for W. M. Johnson Hills Park ("JHP") which included false or misleading statements. He read the following statements from the document that he determined to be false or misleading:

- *approximately \$50 million on development of Johnson Hills.*
- *the Park Board will build in JHP, contrary to the public's expressed desires.*
- *the Park Board refuses to abandon plans to destroy the habitat of Johnson Hills Park.*
- *this Park Board has no interest in public opinion.*
- *intends to install features wanted by personal friends at public expense.*
- *neither response will influence the Park Board's plans for Johnson Hills.*
- *destroying another section of woods to create a campground.*
- *destroying a different section of woods to create a 12-foot wide paved bicycle path.*
- *destroying another section of woods to create a sand volleyball court.*
- *destroying another section of woods to build a playground that isn't needed.*
- *the Park Board insists on wasting \$50 million on features that their existing data already demonstrates are unwanted by Anderson residents.*
- *the Park Board wants to build a second entrance at the rear of the park, tear down one more section of woods to create a parking lot, build a greenhouse, and restore an old house (the Moorman House) that is ready to collapse.*
- *the Park Board indicated that their survey is intended as a "marketing tool,".*
- *they won't share (dollars amounts) information since the amount for each project is large.*
- *this Board has approached Johnson Hills as though it were their personal property rather than something owned by Anderson Township residents.*
- *plans are being pushed forward by the Park Board.*
- *they are attempting to stop discussion of Johnson Hills Park because they know we have many people attending.*
- *They are seeking to clear out forest to build massive shelters, pavilions, visitor centers,*

storage facilities, a dog park, paved roads and bike trails, and an artificial reservoir and dock.

- *opposition by the EPA.*
- *to create a Frisbee golf course (for the benefit of personal friends of the Executive Director).*
- *building a dog park (another benefit for a personal friend of the Executive Director, and to be named for this friend).*
- *the Dog Park and Frisbee golf course) are done as personal favors for friends of the Executive Director are not mere speculation. I have documentation of both claims.*

He said the ATPD has an unfortunate uphill battle to oppose a dishonest campaign by members of the public regarding the ATPD's plans for JHP. He stated that if a member of the public has evidence of the ATPD Executive Director making inappropriate decisions on behalf of the ATPD for personal friends, the person should come forward to present the evidence to the Board so they can properly deal with such accusations.

No one came forward or commented on Mr. Bartholomew's address.

Public to Address the Board: No one wished to address the Board at this time.

OLD BUSINESS:

W. M. Johnson Hills Park Update ~ Phase I Plans: Mr. Kushner presented the W. M. Johnson Hills Park ("JHP") Phase I plan to the Board, which he said the ATPD has been revising since the February regular meeting. He described the plan as a boiled-down version of the master plan that was adopted in 2010. The Phase I plan clarifies the plans for JHP for the benefit of the residents who were overwhelmed by the previous plan. He additionally presented a "Plan Status" document which provides additional information and details about the plans for JHP, which he said is also posted online.

He said staff met with Human Nature to pull out the Phase I layer from the Master Plan and include updated CAGIS data, incorporate the property acquisition on Little Dry Run, and make adjustments for things learned since the Master Plan was adopted in 2010, including putting the lake on the back burner and entrance/exit requirements. He stated following the Board's suggestions and recommendations, the plan will be presented for public comment at the Open House meeting on Saturday, April 25th at JHP, from 9a-11a, as well as posted on the ATPD's website, and featured in the upcoming summer Park Guide. He presented the Open House memo which he said was emailed to residents who have attended a Board meeting since September 9, 2014 and to residents who expressed an interest in the JHP plans as of the 2009 Public Planning Process. He said it is additionally posted online for the community at large.

He said the Phase I plan and the associated information is intended to provide residents with as much information as possible about the evolution of JHP. Phase I is anticipated to take approximately ten years to accomplish. It will be reviewed and updated annually by the Board of Park Commissioners.

Mr. Bartholomew stated the ATPD made the decision to put the lake on the back burner. He said the document mentioned at the beginning of the meeting stated the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency is opposed to the pond, which is an additional false statement.

Mr. Kushner stated the ATPD has owned JHP for 15 years and that he recently talked with a resident who has lived near JHP since 1980 who expressed the difficulty with the park's entrance/exit. He said staff will additionally present the plan at Juilfs Park for public comment during business hours for those who cannot make the open house. He said the public has been enjoying various areas for recreational purposes for years and that the paved trail amenity will provide for most populations in the community. He said the ATPD is committed to clearing out the invasive honeysuckle and he described each area on the plan. He has had many conversations with residents on Wycliffe and Crooked Stick to determine some consensus from the neighborhood. He explained the driveway on Little Dry Run will continue to provide for pedestrian access, as discussed with various neighbors from Williams Creek over the years. Dogs off leash are a problem at JHP. Staff will provide comment cards to encourage feedback.

Mrs. Gelter confirmed with Mr. Kushner that the paved trail would be constructed in the open area and that it does not seem there would be a need to remove trees in a non-wooded area. She stated the ATPD saved JHP by partnering with the Hamilton County Park District in 1998.

Mr. Bartholomew confirmed that staff intends to move the trail away from the property line by the homes on Crooked Stick. He said the Phase I plan succeeded at un-cluttering the Master Plan.

Mr. Kushner stated the ATPD is working with a historical architect to determine if the house is historic, now that there is no longer a tenant in the house. Once the architect submits his report, the Board can then evaluate the options for the house.

The Board had no suggestions for the Phase I plan and instructed staff to move forward with presenting the plan at the upcoming Open House.

Hamilton County Sheriff's Office Contract: Mr. Kushner presented a draft of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office ("HCSO") contract which he has been working on with Lieutenant Guy. The Township has signed their contract with the HCSO. The ATPD's contract is modeled after the Township's contract. There is no significant difference from the previous contract, except that it is simplified. He requested Board approval to sign the final contract.

Mrs. Gelter confirmed this contract to be the first since the initial contract went into effect.

Approval: Mr. Turchiano moved the Board authorize Mr. Kushner to execute the contract with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, providing police patrol services to the ATPD, commencing April 1, 2015, terminating March 31, 2018, unless the agreement is renewed on an annual basis.

Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Park Improvements and Funding: Mr. Kushner said since the April 8th special meeting, staff has looked at the projects being considered in the three part components to improve the parks:

- Purchase the Beech Acres Parenting Center's property and the RecPlex adjacent to Beech Acres Park, upgrade the RecPlex, and extend the Beech Acres Park trail;
- Build a new community recreation center;
- Improve the eight existing outdoor parks.

He said the response was very good for both the online and the phone portion of the community survey. He presented an updated Levy Summary piece that included the possible components and revenue generated at a 1.0 mill level for 20 years for approximately \$24.5 million, previously voted upon at the April 8th special meeting.

The Board discussed the borrowing interest that would need to be considered in the costs. They discussed various projects that should be included on the general park improvements, including shade structures throughout the parks.

Mrs. Gelter said the 2013 Park Improvements public input process revealed shade to be a significantly desired park improvement, including covered dug outs and on and around the playgrounds.

Mr. Bartholomew asked about the Metropolitan Sewer District's schedule for the sewers along Riverside Park, since the restroom project at the All Weather fields is an improvement priority.

Mr. Kushner said the sewers are complete to the small ball fields, numbers 1 and 2. He said restrooms and improved parking have been regularly requested at the little fields. He said staff has broken out the projects by priority, leaving items that are not particularly exciting, but are what is needed to make the parks functional.

Mr. Bartholomew suggested Mr. Kushner continue discussions about the JHP driveway project with the neighbors who have an easement with the ATPD.

Calendar of Events: Mr. Kushner presented a calendar of upcoming activities for the Board's review. He stated the Great American Clean Up took place on April 11th, during which 40 volunteers helped plant 600 trees and remove invasive honeysuckle at Veterans Park. He said the ATPD has planted several thousand trees over the years. The ATPD cares about trees and reforestation. The success rate of the trees planted is about 70%. Deer pose a significant problem for young trees.

FUNDRAISING AND GRANT ACTIVITY:

Mr. Kushner stated staff is working on a NatureWorks grant for the W. M. Johnson Hills Park ("JHP") Nature Playscape. In keeping with the natural theme of JHP, the nature play area would be a combination of playscape and woodland-themed playground equipment and materials. The matching grant is administered by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. A resolution will be presented later in the meeting for the Board's approval. He said the resolution is one of the steps in a long grant process.

REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL:

Staff Changes: Mrs. Gelter moved the Board approve staff's recommendation to **hire** the following people on their actual dates of hire as Assignable Staff:

Operations Staff I: **Jeffrey Campbell, William Meiser, and Ronald Pollack.**

Recreation I/Operations I, Intern: **Philip Chad Gibson.**

Recreation I: **Kelli Finzer.**

Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Monthly Purchase Order Approval: Mr. Turchiano moved the Board approve the following between-meeting Purchase Orders, as presented by Mr. Jordan:

<i>Advanced Turf Solutions</i>	<i>440 Bags of Fertilizer</i>	\$ 6,050.00
<i>Superior Company</i>	<i>Repair Seat Walls at Beech Acres Park</i>	\$ 6,000.00

Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2015-13 ~ Equipment Lease-Purchase Agreement:

A brief discussion ensued regarding various equipment details and specifications.

Mrs. Gelter moved the Board approve **Resolution 2015-13, authorizing an equipment lease-purchase agreement with 5/3 Bank for certain equipment and authorizing other documents in connection with such transaction.**

Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2015-14 ~ NatureWorks Grant: Mr. Turchiano moved the Board approve **Resolution 2015-14, authorizing staff to apply for a NatureWorks grant for the W. M. Johnson Hills Park Nature Play Area**, to sign all documents necessary and appropriate for obtaining the grant, and to obligate the matching funds in the ATPD's 2016 budget.

Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS AND AUTHORIZATION OF EXPENDITURES:

Mrs. Gelter moved the Board approve the **March, 2015 Financial Reports and Authorize the Expenditures** as presented by Mr. Jordan.

Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mrs. Gelter moved the Board approve the minutes from the **March 10, 2015 Regular Meeting** as written.

Discussion: Mr. Bartholomew suggested the minutes be tabled for further review by the Board.

Mrs. Gelter withdrew her motion.

Mr. Bartholomew moved the Board table the minutes from the **March 10, 2015 Regular Meeting** to allow for additional review by the Board. Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Public to Address the Board:

Mr. Drake asked for a copy of the JHP Phase I plan.

Mrs. Fehn provided all of the guests with a copy of the Phase I plan. The guests asked various questions to orient themselves with the plan.

Mr. Kushner said the length of the paved trail would be approximately a half mile. The paved trail does not extend to Crooked Stick. The existing barn will continue to be used for dry storage, but since it is not built for public use, it will eventually be taken down. The playground will go in the approximate vicinity of the existing barn.

Mrs. Wakefield likes the idea of the playscape playground. She asked when the results of the public survey will be available.

Mr. Kushner said the results of the survey will be online tomorrow.

Mr. Drake said the plan helps his understanding of the plan. He asked if the Board considered the public comment from the February Board meeting and said many people at that meeting understood the features on the JHP plan were subject to review and removal. He asked if the ATPD was seeking public approval for disc golf at the Open House and if the Board was still open for negotiation.

Mr. Bartholomew said there is no negotiation on the disc golf amenity or the other features on the plan. While every item can be changed by the Board, he said it is the Board's intention not to commit any future Board to what can or cannot be included in the park.

Mrs. Gelter said all of the included amenities have been discussed over the years and are a result of what residents have said they want. The features included have nothing to do with the Executive Director then or now. The plan is a result of public input all along, not just those who attended the meeting in February. The ATPD cannot accommodate all of the things people want, but is committed to finding a balance that serves the community at large.

Mr. Kushner said a lot of people want a lot of different things for JHP. Many people are interested in disc golf, regardless of what Mr. Drake keeps saying. Some people want the pond cleaned out. The planning for JHP is not a numbers game. Soccer has big interest numbers, but even if the soccer community united in favor of soccer fields at JHP, the Board would not necessarily include fields. The plan for JHP is simple. The Board has intentionally taken JHP in a different direction than the other parks. People are interested in what is on the plan. The ATPD will include amenities that enable access for various populations in the community, including people with walkers, wheelchairs, and strollers. He said he never thought JHP would be such an issue. The recent interest in JHP has moved it up on the improvements schedule.

Mr. Drake said the ATPD padded the numbers regarding disc golf. The Board has made up its mind about what is going to be included at JHP, which in his opinion does not represent the desires of the community. There is no valid data to prove the community wants what the ATPD has on the JHP plan.

Mr. Bartholomew said the plan does reflect what the community wants and that the Board and Mr. Drake will have to agree to disagree. The park has enough space to accommodate various amenities that appeal to the community at large. Disc golf is appropriate for the topography and flavor of JHP.

Mr. Kushner said a big problem in the parks, and especially at JHP, is people who do not keep their dogs on a leash. The parks are for people first, not dogs first. Last year the ATPD had a person who decided he should be allowed to train his pit bulls off leash at Juilfs Park because he was an expert trainer, and the leash law should not apply to him. Eventually, one of his dogs bit a park visitor, and

now his dog is banned from the park. While the ATPD trusts people to do the right thing in the parks, sometimes it takes someone getting a ticket to realize the rules apply to everyone.

The Board thanked the guests for attending the meeting.

At 7:42 pm Mrs. Gelter moved the Board adjourn into Executive Session to discuss land acquisition. Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board took a short break while the guests finished up discussions among themselves and individual staff and Board members.

At 7:47 pm the meeting resumed.

At 8:30 pm Mr. Turchiano moved the Board adjourn the Executive Session and re-open the regular meeting. Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Gelter moved the Board approve Mr. Kushner to arrange for an appraisal of the agreed to property. Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Gelter said land acquisition has been a priority of the Board for as long as she has been a Board member. In her opinion, acquiring land next to adjacent parks is one of the most effective ways this Board can set up the ATPD for success in the future. The feedback she has been getting from various community members is that the 1.0 mill levy is too much. She expressed her concern that the ATPD is risking losing the land at Beech Acres by including the other components, which in her opinion are distracting from what is most important.

Mr. Turchiano said while the survey results were very positive for all three components, he agreed the ultimate priority for the ATPD is to acquire the land at Beech Acres. He said the Board has to make the best decision for the long term and it is the land that is most important at this point in the ATPD's history.

Mr. Bartholomew said he believes the community would support the levy at the 1.0 mill level but that he too has heard from Trustees that the amount is too much. He asked if the Board was interested in creating an alternative to the 1.0 mill levy with an option that would represent a lower amount. He said it is important the ATPD work well with the Township.

Mr. Kushner presented the original levy table for the Board's review. He said the ATPD has evolved in phases, and once the ATPD acquires the land, the other improvements will follow in time. Without the land, a new rec center is not possible.

A lengthy discussion ensued in which the Board weighed the positive survey results, the risks of requesting various levy amounts, and the components to be accomplished.

Mr. Bartholomew stated passing a levy resolution at a lower amount gives the ATPD an option should the Trustees want to see a lower amount. Depending on the end result, the Board would need to rescind the resolutions the ATPD chooses not to go forward with. He said a 0.7 mill levy for 15 years would provide enough revenue to buy the property, renovate the RecPlex, and make immediate accommodations to the property.

Mr. Turchiano said the 0.7 mill levy for 15 years would generate approximately \$12,860,055. He said this amount would give the ATPD the ability to buy the 36 acres, if Beech Acres decides to sell the additional 8 acres, or give the ATPD some funds to leverage towards a partnership to build a rec center.

Mrs. Gelter agreed the 0.7 mill levy for 15 years was a good option to have on the table.

Resolution 2015-15 ~ Declaring It Necessary to Levy a Tax:

Mr. Turchiano moved the Board approve **Resolution 2015-15, declaring it necessary to levy a tax in excess of the ten-mill limitation**, at a rate not exceeding seven tenths (0.70) mills for each one dollar (\$1.00) of valuation, which amounts to seven cents (\$0.07) for each one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of valuation, for a fifteen (15) year period of time.

Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2015-16 ~ Requesting Board of Township Trustees of Anderson Township to Approve Tax Levy Request:

Mrs. Gelter moved the Board approve **Resolution 2015-16, requesting Board of Township Trustees of Anderson Township to Approve Tax Levy Request**, at a rate not exceeding seven tenths (0.70) mills for each one dollar (\$1.00) of valuation, which amounts to seven cents (\$0.07) for each one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of valuation, for a fifteen (15) year period of time.

Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

At 9:16 pm, there being no further business to be brought before this Board, Mrs. Gelter moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

I hereby certify that the foregoing are the minutes of the April 14, 2015 regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners, which minutes reflect the essence of the meeting and are not verbatim.

Emily Armstrong
Board Clerk

Dale Bartholomew

Nadine Gelter

Tom Turchiano