

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

February 10, 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, Rob Herking, Angie Stocker, 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; and Sheila Fehn, Office Manager.

GUESTS: Sheila Vilvens, Enquirer Media; Josh Gerth, Township Trustee; Residents: Lois Key, David Smith, Janet and Mike Cromer; Ron and Marilyn Bistany; Judy and Larry Niklas; Lisa Summe; Burns Blaxall; Steve Misleh; Susanna Morse Cahill; Barb Lyon; Bob Drake; Dave Rudolph; Peter Mack; Robert Kelly; Lynn Finzer; Barb Kurnick; Janet and Jeff Miller; Kim and Dave McDowell; Mike Stoehr; Julie Tewart; Mary Peterson; Thomas and Ellie Arnold; Todd Calaway; and Jean Wakefield.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA: Mrs. Gelter moved the Board approve the Agenda as presented. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Public to Address the Board: Bob Drake stated that he has been attending ATPD Board meetings the past several months to tell the Board the public at large does not support the ATPD’s plans for Johnson Hills Park (“JHP”). He presented the Board with signatures he has collected representing people who do not want anything to change at JHP. The Board should change the plans for JHP since, in his opinion, the public does not support the plans. He presented his analysis of the ATPD’s survey from the ATPD’s 2009-2010 public input process. He said the survey has major, technical problems and the data is flawed, skewed, and biased with a lack of responses. Other methods would have been better. In his opinion, no one who filled out a survey understood what the plans represented. Since no one knew what they were commenting on and because there were no costs listed, the results are unreliable. The option of maintaining the park in a natural state should be included. Animals live in the park that only live in JHP. The frisbee golf group conspired to complete forms and they did not live in Anderson Township. He said that the Board says in its meetings that people want what’s on the JHP plan but the people in attendance at the meeting tonight want JHP to exist as a natural park. The Board should conduct a scientifically valid survey and abandon the current plan for JHP in order to be accountable to the community’s tax payers.

Mrs. Stocker said Mr. Drake is sensationalizing the JHP plans. The ATPD conducted multiple public meetings where the plans were presented and explained to the public for which the ATPD solicited feedback. Currently, there are no big projects happening at JHP. The Board is not going to change the plan today, and believes it would not be a wise use of funds to do another survey at this time. The Board needs more information to determine what it can do on certain parts of the plan. Before the ATPD does anything major, the Board will go back to the community. She said there is no purpose to rehash the same thing each month with Mr. Drake.

Ms. Arnold stated the plans need to be better explained to the community. She said there is nothing on the ATPD's website that says the Board will re-visit everything on the plans before moving forward with projects.

Ms. McDowell stated the ATPD is good at getting grants and asked if the ATPD would start projects if grants were acquired. She said she is concerned the ATPD could get money for projects in silence and the community wouldn't know about it.

Mr. Kushner said the ATPD has been working on JHP for 15 years. He stated some of the attendees at tonight's meeting were involved in the ATPD's public input processes starting in 2000, some attendees participated in the 2009-2010 public input process, and some are new to the neighborhood for which this is all new information. He is willing to meet with each person to explain the ATPD's plans for JHP. The ATPD is an active park system and the Board has to balance the public's demand for recreational opportunities. JHP is different than any other ATPD park and features activities that complement the natural gifts of the property. The plans have been on the website to keep the community apprised of the ATPD's plans. He said Mr. Drake decided to focus on a tiny part of the ATPD's community input process. Not everyone who attended the Open Houses filled out a survey and much of the input was gathered via conversations at the meetings, in the parks, and at events. The survey was only one of the ways the ATPD collected the public's feedback.

Mr. Kushner presented a large, aerial photograph of the Johnson property at it existed in 1938. He identified the "Park Core" as Mrs. Johnson's house around which there was a high volume of activity, and highlighted several structures ATPD staff had to remove over the past 15 years for various reasons. He stated the property is not going to be a nature preserve, but that much of the property will purposely be managed in a natural state. He encouraged the attendees to meet him at JHP to go through the master plan so that he can explain what the ATPD intends to do. He said he wants to help people understand what has changed since the master plan was adopted five years ago, including the addition of adjacent property and the Hamilton County Engineer's recommendations for an acceptable public entrance/exit. He said JHP is special to everyone in the room. The ATPD's master plan was purposely developed with an emphasis on passive opportunities and the natural elements. The ATPD intentionally did not include sports fields.

Mr. Stoehr said his understanding was that the Johnson property was acquired by the Hamilton County Park District ("HCPD") and the ATPD as a joint venture for passive recreation and that that it was not to be developed as major recreation sports fields. He remembers passive uses like hiking and group camping being discussed. He said all the things on the ATPD's master plan come with a big price tag. He does not like the idea that all of those things can happen eventually and he questions the original intent of the property purchase.

Mr. Kushner explained the HCPD and the ATPD purchased the land together and that the property was purchased to round out the ATPD's recreational offerings with an emphasis on passive activities. The HCPD deeded their portion to the ATPD. The only restriction placed on the property by Mrs. Johnson is that it is to remain a park in perpetuity. Mrs. Johnson additionally requested Mac's name be included in the name of the park and that the headwaters of the Dry Run Creek be recognized.

Ms. Niklas asked about the parking spaces and the shelter represented on the plan, and how the cars would come and go from the park.

Mr. Kushner said the main entrance for the park is currently located on Bridle Road. Little Dry Run cannot be a public vehicle access because the road is particularly dangerous in that spot, with very poor lines of sight. He said he worked with neighbors over the years to pull the trails away from their houses.

Ms. Finzer said the Board does not show how it intends to go about the plans. The Board was receptive to working with her on the parking lot off Crooked Stick so that she did not have to see it from her home. She thought the parking lot was inevitable. She would prefer the parking lot not be there at all. She participated in the public input processes and surveys and Mr. Kushner walked the property with her and her neighbors. She said her understanding of the "Potential Alternative Road Connection to the Moorman Mini Farm" listed on the master plan was a hike/bike path for emergency access. She asked if there was still a need for the Moorman Mini Farm.

Mr. Kushner said the emergency access is the same as the ATPD's paved trails, and that it would only be included if there is a dam. He said looping trails are well received by the public and that 12 foot wide trails are standard ATPD amenities that allow people to walk side-by-side while passing people approaching from the opposite direction, as well as enable the ATPD's service vehicles to access the park.

Ms. Arnold said there is a lot of garbage on Bridle Road and that she calls the county but they are not responsive.

Mr. Miller said he participated in the public input process and would prefer the Moorman Mini Farm not be included in the plan. He thought the ATPD had to have it there so he worked with the ATPD on the plan.

Mr. Kushner said he understands that JHP is in a lot of people's back yards. He said many residents would like to have a 139-acre park in their back yard which is why the ATPD's plan is to make the park accessible and usable for all residents.

Several of the attendees at the meeting expressed their dissatisfaction at having a park in their back yard and said that no one want things like paved, looping trails.

Mr. Kushner said if the ATPD were to start the public input process over with the public that all of Anderson Township will be asked and that all amenities will be back on the table, including athletic fields. He said the current plan is purposefully designed to emphasize the natural gifts of the property, including plenty of open space and the wooded areas that feature trails. He spent a lot of time with neighbors on Crooked Stick to alleviate their concerns about the parking lot next to the Moorman Mini Farm. He said without the parking lot, their neighbors would park on Crooked Stick in front of their houses to access the park.

Mrs. Miller said she knew Mrs. Johnson and that she recalls that Mrs. Johnson said the deed would require the property to remain in a natural state.

A brief discussion took place regarding who knew Mrs. Johnson and when, and what Mrs. Johnson and the HCPD wanted before the ATPD came into the picture.

Mr. Kushner said Mrs. Johnson sought out the ATPD herself, and that the only restriction she put in the deed was that the property remain a park in perpetuity.

Mr. Drake stated that he research the JHP deed himself at the courthouse, and confirmed the only restriction is for the property to remain a park in perpetuity, and that the deed includes no stipulation as to how the property is to be managed.

Mr. Blaxall said the people in attendance at the meeting tonight want the park to stay the way it is. He does not want increased traffic in their neighborhood. He would love to see the park be passive fields.

Mr. Misleh stated he lives on Crooked Stick. He said there is no traffic from their neighborhood in front of their houses, and that there is no need for the parking lot off Crooked Stick. He said the plans look fine but the ATPD should consider that there is \$50 million in houses surrounding JHP.

Ms. Finzer disagreed with Mr. Misleh about the amount of traffic in front of their houses on Crooked Stick.

Mr. Kushner said he has had many conversations with many people over the years about JHP and that he understands that change can be difficult to accept. For example, the Emerald Ash Borer has changed JHP in a significant way, so the ATPD has planted thousands of trees to counteract the loss.

Ms. Kurnick said the character of JHP should be maintained. She understands the homeowners concerns. She believes she is blessed to have this rural setting. The people at the meeting are in different phases of their lives, and the parks are not just for people who have kids. She believes JHP is an opportunity to have a rural setting in close proximity and that there are a lot of possibilities for the park. The ATPD should get rid of the honeysuckle. Not all the trails need to be 12 feet wide because not everyone has a stroller. She visits JHP often and prefers the serenity and peace that JHP offers currently.

Mr. Herking said he agrees with Ms. Kurnick that JHP is different. He lives by Juilfs Park but visits JHP regularly with his three young children. He does not enjoy the port-o-lets at JHP but that does not mean the Board plans to have huge bathrooms. The JHP master plan includes basic infrastructure including upgrading water service, bathrooms, park benches. He said the entrance at JHP is a mess and park visitors cannot pass each other on the existing gravel driveway. The plans will provide for the general public. People want different things but the ATPD has to take into account that many park visitors do have strollers or may have other mobility limitations.

Ms. Morris Cahill said she lives near the park and uses it often. She is concerned the only reason the ATPD is not moving forward with the plans is because the ATPD has no money for the projects. She said positive ideas exist at JHP now. She stated the Board is minimizing the plans which is making everyone nervous. She believes the ATPD is misrepresenting what is happening at JHP and that the Board's message is misleading.

Mr. Bartholomew said the JHP master plan is the Board's plan. He stated that because the ATPD has not moved forward with the plans, the subject comes up again and gets rehashed all over.

Mr. Kushner said JHP has been a work in progress and that every few years there have been different variables to consider. He said the state of JHP during the ATPD's last public input process in 2009 was different than it is now. The ATPD is committed to making JHP a proper public facility for all residents.

Mr. Cromer said the ATPD created an amazing park and that its work is done, and the park is finished.

Mr. Kelly stated he is concerned about what may happen in the future as a result of grant applications and the Environmental Protection Agency's response to the lake. He asked how the public can stay adequately informed.

Mrs. Gelter said the Board will re-visit major improvements when we have money to do the projects, which is years away. For instance, basic infrastructure is lacking, including sewers.

Mr. Smith said the ATPD Board is open and conducts business transparently. The ATPD budget is on-line. The Board budgets for projects which would have funds dedicated if there was anything planned for JHP. The Forest Hills Journal provides excellent coverage for people to stay apprised of the ATPD's plans. Monthly minutes are kept and are online so the public can stay informed.

Mrs. Stocker said the ATPD serves 45,000 people with the plans the Board adopts. The ATPD's goal is for the park to exist in a relatively natural state, which the plan represents. There are upgrades the ATPD must do to make the park functional for the public.

Mr. Rudolph said calling the plan a "Preliminary Master Plan" is an oxymoron and that the verbiage is confusing.

Mr. Kushner said once the Board adopted the master plan, the expense to redo the plans was not warranted. The plans on the ATPD's website have been the correct master plan for JHP.

Ms. Niklas asked about the hours for ATPD programming at the shelter.

Mr. Kushner said ATPD parks are typically open from dawn to dusk, but that programs can be exceptions. Summer Movies in the Park typically begin at dusk and run until the movie ends. Concerts in the Park usually begin around 7p or so, and end around 9p. The ATPD has had camping at JHP which takes place overnight. The Star Gazers program has had visitors in the park after dusk, depending on the ideal viewing times. The ATPD has many programs at JHP and other ATPD parks.

Mr. Kushner said the ATPD plans to formalize JHP with basic upgrades in the first phase of improvements. The electric is from 1937, and needs to be upgraded, as well as restroom facilities, and access to the park. Staff has and will continue to investigate the upgrades and budget accordingly.

Ms. Key suggested the Board check into the Valley View Nature Preserve in Milford. If the ATPD changes JHP, everything there today will be gone and she doesn't want everything to be gone.

Mr. Kushner said the ATPD owns JHP and that it will remain a park forever. He said the ATPD needs to add to the park to make it more accessible to the public.

Ms. McDowell stated the ATPD does a good job and that she was sad to see the horses go. She is worried about not knowing what is happening at JHP like disc golf and the Moorman Mini Farm. She asked how she would know if the ATPD is applying for a grant. She does not want the ATPD to apply for grants for things she does not want at JHP.

Mr. Kushner stated it seems people are confused about what is represented on the master plan. The Moorman Mini Farm came about because the horses were going away and people who attended the public meetings wanted to see some element of horses in the master plan and they expressed interest in a community garden concept. The Moorman house is still there and may be of historical significance, pending an analysis by an archaeologist. He said disc golf is a great application for JHP because it complements the rolling terrain and is a fun activity that people have been interested in, on this property, since 2000.

Mrs. Miller said the ATPD should have another meeting to discuss the plans so people can better understand what would be included in the various phases of development. She remembers when Juilfs Park development was being discussed and that the ATPD has to earn the trust of the neighbors.

Ms. Finzer said the ATPD has been receptive to her concerns as a neighbor, but that the community needs security that the ATPD can be trusted to follow through with a redesign of the plans. When people were commenting on the JHP master plan during the public input process, no one had experienced the park as it exists now. She requested the ATPD notify the community about any major development.

Mr. Bistany asked if the EPA says the ATPD cannot build the lake, would the Moorman Mini Farm go away.

Mr. Kushner said the Moorman Mini Farm is dependent on a volunteer base, which currently does not exist. The Moorman Mini Farm is low on the list of priorities for JHP. The items referenced as Phase I on the website are the priorities. The paved trail on the lake dam would only be constructed if the dam is constructed.

Mr. Blaxall stated the Wycliffe residents do not want traffic through their covenant neighborhood. He asked about the ATPD's deviation from plans regarding grant applications.

Mr. Kushner said the ATPD applies for grants with plans for projects it intends to do. The ATPD will notify the public about another Open House to walk the property to make sure people understand what the plans represent.

Mrs. Gelter said the ATPD seeks public opinion before major construction projects. The JHP planning began in 2000 and plans were revised again in 2009. Contrary to what Mr. Drake keeps telling people, the ATPD did not rely only on thirteen families' surveys. Staff and the Board gathered public comment from hundreds of people throughout the process at multiple Open House sessions and events, where the plans were explained. She said people are not always willing to fill out a comment card, but their opinion still matters if they wish to provide it. Considerations for JHP

features were incorporated into the plans based on the input of people who were engaged in the process.

Mr. Bartholomew stated the Board appreciates everyone's time and interest in JHP. He said the Board's goal is to make JHP a park for the general public. People with the opinion that nothing should happen at JHP are probably not going to be happy with the Board's decisions. He said everyone who signed in at the meeting will receive the notification about the upcoming Open House.

At 8:05 pm, many of the attendees lined up to sign in on the meeting attendance sheet before they departed, while continuing many individual conversations.

Mrs. Gelter handed out the "Master Plan Status" update that was posted on the JHP website page after the January, 2015 meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

2014 Year in Review: The annual "Year in Review" video, created by Allison Cottrill, ATPD Marketing Specialist, was shown highlighting the ATPD's accomplishments for 2014.

2014 Participation Numbers: Mr. Kushner presented the 2014 "Participation Numbers" piece, summarizing public participation at events, programs, and facility rentals throughout the year.

Lost and Found: Mr. Kushner presented "Guidelines and Procedures" for the Board's review, representing the ATPD's potential process to periodically give away items the public leaves behind in the parks and facilities throughout the year. He said a resolution is included in the "Approvals" section of the meeting for the Board's consideration.

Mr. Bartholomew stated he was pleased the Board will be adopting a policy on this matter.

NEW BUSINESS:

Calendar of Events: Mr. Kushner presented a Calendar of Events of upcoming activities for review by the Board.

FUNDRAISING AND GRANT ACTIVITY:

Mr. Kushner stated he was pleased to announce the ATPD was selected for the NatureWorks Grant for the Juilfs Park Playground Water Play Area. The amount applied for was \$63,520 and the total estimated project cost is \$123,058. The NatureWorks funding is awarded on the condition that the State of Ohio Controlling Board approves the NatureWorks grant awards in their upcoming 2015 meeting. The project is slated for construction in 2016.

Mrs. Gelter reminded the group about the upcoming Chico's Fundraiser to benefit the Juilfs Park Playground completion.

REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL:

Staff Changes: Mrs. Armstrong reported there were no staff changes this month.

Monthly Purchase Order Approval: Mr. Jordan reported there were no between-meeting purchase orders this month.

Resolution 2015-04 ~ Lost and Found Resolution:

Mrs. Stocker moved the Board approve **Resolution 2015-04, establishing a policy for the disposal of unneeded personal property.**

Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Request for Training: Mr. Kushner presented training opportunities provided by the Auditor of State's Office for the Board's review.

Mr. Turchiano moved the Board approve the registration and related costs of the 2015 **Auditor of State Local Government Officials' Conference** for Mr. Kushner for an amount not to exceed \$580.00. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS AND AUTHORIZATION OF EXPENDITURES:

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

Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mrs. Gelter moved the Board approve the minutes from the **January 13, 2015 Regular Meeting** as written. Mr. Herking seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (4); No: None. Abstain: Mrs. Stocker (1). The motion carried.

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

At 8:27 pm Mrs. Gelter moved the Board adjourn into Executive Session to discuss land acquisition. Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

At 9:07 pm Mr. Herking moved the Board adjourn the Executive Session and re-open the regular meeting. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

No decision was made by the Board at this time.

At 9:07 pm, there being no further business to be brought before this Board, Mr. Herking moved to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

I hereby certify that the foregoing are the minutes of the February 10, 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

Rob Herking

Angie Stocker

Tom Turchiano