

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

**March 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 and Rob Herking.

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; Residents: Lois Key; Jean Wakefield; and Bob Drake.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**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 stated it is apparent from recent Board meetings that our residents would benefit greatly from clarification of the W. M. Johnson Hills Park (“JHP”) Phase I plans. The ATPD will host an open house public meeting towards the end of April to present and explain the Phase I plans. He said the Forest Hills Journal once again gave the ATPD great coverage which helps keep the public informed about JHP. He presented two articles which ran after the February meeting.

Mr. Kushner also presented the memo sent to residents who have attended a Board meeting since September 9, 2014 to inform them of the upcoming open house. He said a notice will also be distributed to residents who expressed an interest in the JHP plans as of the 2009 Public Planning Process. The ATPD will continue to post information as it is available on the JHP webpage for the community at large.

Mr. Kushner stated staff met with Human Nature to pull out the Phase I layer from the Master Plan and include updated Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System (“CAGIS”) data, and incorporate the property acquisition on Little Dry Run. Adjustments were also made for things the ATPD has learned since the Master Plan was adopted in 2010, including putting the lake project on the back burner, and relocating the main entrance/exit, as recommended by the Hamilton County Engineer. He said the Moorman Mini Farm area will depend on a determination of the historical significance of the Moorman House. If the house is historical, the ATPD will construct a parking lot off Crooked Stick to enable the public to access the house. If the building is determined not to be historically significant, staff will install a gate at Crooked Stick which would allow for pedestrian access only.

Mr. Kushner presented a revised “Master Plan Status of JHP”, which the Board originally reviewed in the January 2015 meeting, and was subsequently posted online. He highlighted the revisions which

he said provide additional detail to better explain the JHP Phase I plans. This informational piece is intended to serve as a guide 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. Kushner said the ATPD will continue to explore additional features, programs, and grants the ATPD deems to be a good fit for JHP, which may not be necessarily specifically listed in the “Master Plan Status of JHP” piece. Staff will continue to build on existing and new programming opportunities that include, but are not limited to: camping, events, programs, and rental opportunities. ATPD staff will continue to research and develop activities and amenities for JHP, including applying for grants which help accomplish parts or sections of the Phase I plans. He said resident ATPD naturalist, Monica Friedl, is currently working on the following initiative efforts which may ultimately be made possible by grants from various entities and foundations:

**The Cincinnati Nature Center’s, “Milkweed to Monarchs”** initiative educates the public about the current status of Monarch butterfly habitat and promotes the ways we can make a difference for the important pollinators. Over the last decade, the monarch population has declined by an alarming 97% due to habitat loss. Monarch caterpillars feed only on milkweed, and fields where this native plant once grew are being lost to development and agricultural practices. The ATPD can help by extending the educational reach of this effort, and by planting milkweed seeds, and other native plants that promote such habitat. JHP is an ideal place for the ATPD to contribute to this important effort.

**A Nature Playscapes** initiative is being promoted by the University of Cincinnati and the Cincinnati Nature Center throughout our region. Nature playscapes are playgrounds with a natural twist. Staff envisions the JHP playground to be a combination of nature-themed equipment and items found in nature that encourage imaginative play, including but not limited to boulders, logs, digging in dirt, etc. Staff was fortunate to meet Dr. Victoria Carr, Associate Professor with the University of Cincinnati when she recently presented at the Ohio Parks and Recreation Conference. Good examples of nature playscapes exist locally at the University of Cincinnati’s Arlitt Child and Family Research and Education Center and at the Cincinnati Nature Center’s Rowe Woods. Staff is currently working on a grant application to bring this feature to JHP.

Mr. Kushner said these examples are intended to help the community understand how the ATPD plans to improve JHP. The Phase I plan layer establishes a baseline of communication and understanding with the public. The ATPD will continue to work towards including the standard amenities for this public property and to continue to build on programming efforts at JHP that encourage our community at large to discover and enjoy this special place in Anderson.

Mr. Kushner said following the Board’s discussion of the proposed, revised “Master Plan Status of JHP” piece and Phase I plans, staff will post the information on the website and present the Phase I plan layer at the open house public meeting.

Clear Creek Park ~ Surplus Fill Mound and Little Miami Scenic Trail Construction: Mr. Kushner stated great progress will be made this year on the Little Miami Scenic Trail, which will connect the ATPD’s existing portion of the trail to the Beechmont Levy and the Little Miami Golf Center. He said the ATPD has been working in cooperation with all the parties to bring this great regional recreational feature to fruition. He said partners include, but are not limited to: Great Parks of Hamilton County, Ohio Department of Transportation, and Anderson Township.

Mr. Kushner said part of the ATPD's existing agreement was to provide excess fill dirt from the Clear Creek Park driving range mound. He stated the time has come to move forward with this step. The creator of the driving range mound was the previous owner of the property, Scott Menke. While the plans for the trail were being developed, Mr. Menke continued to change the variables due to the filling operation he was running. Accordingly, this has resulted in minor adjustments to the trail alignment and design.

Mr. Kushner stated the ATPD previously committed approximately 30,000 yards of excess fill to the project. Considering the adjustments to the plans as a result of Mr. Menke's fill operation, the revised amount of fill dirt required for the project is approximately 50,000 yards. The amount of excess fill dirt at the ATPD's driving range site is approximately 90,000 yards. He presented a map to the Board to explain where the excess fill dirt will be removed from the site and used to fill various areas on this 3.1 mile link of the trail.

Mr. Kushner said the arrangement between the Hamilton County Park District and the ATPD will save tax dollars. ATPD staff would work with Great Parks of Hamilton County to see the project through. He said the ATPD would establish the parameters the contractor(s) must abide by in order to protect the ATPD's interest, such as, ensuring the remaining large pieces of concrete are removed from the site, and maintaining the existing water way, etc. He further added this section is one of the last remaining linkages in this overall regional trail system. Soon, this trail will extend completely from the Ohio River to Lake Erie. The ATPD is proud to have contributed to this recreational feature that will greatly enhance this portion of our township for our residents.

**Approval:** Mr. Herking moved the Board approve the ATPD's mound at Clear Creek Park, as identified on the map presented by Mr. Kushner, serve as a borrow sight, at no cost to the contractor(s) selected to build this portion of this trail, for an approximate amount of 50,000 yards of excess fill dirt. Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Herking. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Park Improvements Research Survey: Mr. Kushner said this is an exciting time for the community, as the ATPD has been diligently working to present park improvement options for the public's input. This March, the ATPD will go live with a research study, focusing on the following components:

- 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.

The ATPD contracted with John Fox Marketing Consulting who is administering the survey. The results of this survey will help the Board decide what goes on the ballot this November.

Mr. Kushner said the community has been using the Beech Acres Parenting property for recreational purposes since the 1950's. This private agency is giving the community the chance to acquire this property through the ATPD. He further stated this is a once in a community's lifetime opportunity. He presented the following survey timeline:

March 3<sup>rd</sup>, Beech Acres Parenting Center released their press release.

March 4<sup>th</sup>, the ATPD released our press release and posted the information on our website.  
March 6<sup>th</sup>, the ATPD sent an eblast featuring the pre-publicity survey information.  
March 7<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, the pre-publicity postcard and the Park Guide hit homes.  
March 18<sup>th</sup>, the survey goes live.

Mr. Kushner said the Board can expect the survey results by mid-April. He presented the pre-publicity marketing materials and stated approval of the initially required resolutions will be formally requested later in the meeting.

Mr. Herking stated the residents will ultimately decide if the property becomes parkland for the life of the community.

Recreation Department Financial Summary ~ 2014: Mrs. Fall presented the 2014 Recreation Department Financial Summary. She said staff continues to tweak programs and events to maximize participation and the ATPD's resources. Overall, there were no major changes.

Mr. Bartholomew said the participation and financial numbers look great and he congratulated the Rec Department for another exceptional year of programs, events, and leagues. He further stated that he looks forward to the ATPD continuing to build upon the success with the RecPlex.

ODOT Biennium Allocation and Redistribution of Funds: Mr. Kushner presented documents regarding the Ohio Department of Transportation's ("ODOT") 2014-2015 Biennium Allocation of Funds through the Great Parks of Hamilton County. In turn, Great Parks distributes a share to the ATPD, based upon the population percentages from the 2010 Census. The amount the ATPD is to receive is \$17,603.82, for which the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association has passed new guidelines and policies for the use of these funds, with which the ATPD will comply. Mr. Jordan will adjust the budget accordingly, once the funds are received.

Calendar of Events: Mr. Kushner presented a calendar of upcoming activities for the Board's review.

#### **FUNDRAISING AND GRANT ACTIVITY:**

Mr. Kushner stated staff is working on a NatureWorks grant for the Johnson Hills Park Nature Playscape. A resolution will be presented at next month's meeting.

Mr. Bartholomew asked how the Anderson Hills Kiwanis arrangement ended up regarding the Kiwanis Basketball Association ("KBA") this past year.

Mr. Kushner stated the arrangement was very successful and that minor adjustments will make the process even more smooth next year. He said the ATPD cannot do everything youth sports related. KBA is a great program and the ATPD is committed to serving in a support role as long as they are interested in the arrangement.

#### **REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL:**

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

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

<i>Human Nature, Inc</i>	<i>Johnson Hills Park Plan Update</i>	<i>\$10,000.00</i>
<i>Intelligent Products</i>	<i>Mutt Mitts</i>	<i>\$ 5,520.00</i>

*Wendling Printing*

*Park Guide*

\$ 5,455.00

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

**Resolutions ~ County Auditor to Certify Matters in Connection with a Proposed Tax Levy:**

Mr. Kushner stated the following resolutions represent differing amounts and terms for a capital levy, intended for the November 2015 ballot. The various resolutions afford the Board options regarding the time-sensitive land purchase, a new Rec Center, and/or general park improvements. The survey results will assist the Board in determining the amount and length of the levy to be placed on the ballot. The Anderson Township Trustees will then need to approve the ATPD's levy to be on the ballot, followed by the residents' ultimate determination with their vote in November.

**Resolution 2015-05 ~ County Auditor to Certify Matters in Connection with a Proposed Tax Levy:** Mrs. Gelter moved the Board approve **Resolution 2015-05, requesting the County Auditor to certify matters in connection with a proposed tax levy for 1.0 mill for 20 years.**

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

**Resolution 2015-06 ~ County Auditor to Certify Matters in Connection with a Proposed Tax Levy:** Mrs. Gelter moved the Board approve **Resolution 2015-06, requesting the County Auditor to certify matters in connection with a proposed tax levy for 0.9 mill for 20 years.**

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

**Resolution 2015-07 ~ County Auditor to Certify Matters in Connection a with Proposed Tax Levy:** Mr. Herking moved the Board approve **Resolution 2015-07, requesting the County Auditor to certify matters in connection with a proposed tax levy for 0.8 mill for 20 years.**

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

**Resolution 2015-08 ~ County Auditor to Certify Matters in Connection with a Proposed Tax Levy:** Mr. Herking moved the Board approve **Resolution 2015-08, requesting the County Auditor to certify matters in connection with a proposed tax levy for 0.7 mill for 20 years.**

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

**Resolution 2015-09 ~ County Auditor to Certify Matters in Connection with a Proposed Tax Levy:** Mrs. Gelter moved the Board approve **Resolution 2015-09, requesting the County Auditor to certify matters in connection with a proposed tax levy for 0.7 mill for 15 years.**

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

**Resolution 2015-10 ~ County Auditor to Certify Matters in Connection with a Proposed Tax Levy:** Mr. Herking moved the Board approve **Resolution 2015-10, requesting the County Auditor to certify matters in connection with a proposed tax levy for 0.6 mill for 15 years.**

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

**FINANCIAL REPORTS AND AUTHORIZATION OF EXPENDITURES:**

Mr. Herking moved the Board approve the **February, 2015 Financial Reports and Authorize the Expenditures** as presented by Mr. Jordan.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Bartholomew moved the Board approve the minutes from the **February 10, 2015 Regular Meeting** as written. Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Herking. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

**Public to Address the Board:**

Mr. Drake asked what the multiple resolutions were for and why there were different amounts.

Mr. Kushner said the County Auditor has to certify funds as part of the process to get on the November ballot for a capital levy. The amount certified includes what it costs per \$100,000 home value and what the ATPD would receive. The ATPD is determining with a professional survey what the community would support for any, all, or none of the three items being considered:

- 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.

Mr. Kushner said the ATPD's operating levy is 1.9 mill and expires after 10 years. In order for the ATPD to do any of the items being considered in the survey, additional funding must be acquired. The maximum capital levy amount for the ATPD is 1.0 mill, for which the ATPD would not want to exceed a 20-year term. The ATPD's priority for the capital levy is to acquire the Beech Acres Parenting Center ("BAPC") property. This property includes the ATPD's RecPlex which the ATPD has been leasing for the past 25 years, the Operations warehouse, and the low elements ropes course. The ATPD has been using all of the BAPC property for large events and over-flow parking, in exchange for taking care of the BAPC grounds. The community has been the benefactor of a long-standing, public-private partnership with the BAPC. The BAPC no longer needs their asset and they are giving the community a chance at acquiring it through the ATPD. Their press release is very specific about it not being for sale to the general public.

Mr. Kushner stated if the ATPD is not able to acquire the BAPC property, the ATPD will have to consider every park on the hill (those that are not in the flood plain) for reconfiguration. Future recreational facilities will best serve the community by being on the BAPC property. This is the last large tract of land left on Beechmont Avenue and it is adjacent to our most popular park. Most people think the ATPD already owns it. This is a once in a community's lifetime opportunity and the ATPD is working to bring the issue before the community for their vote in November.

Mr. Kushner stated the ATPD has been discussing this property in Executive Session since September. Just like Juilfs Park and Johnson Hills Park, developers want to put houses on this property. BAPC is giving us a shot at acquiring what we are already using, as well as providing the

potential for whatever recreational amenities the community of the future may want. They sold us the first part of Beech Acres Park in 1997, which has become a signature feature of the community.

Mr. Drake said that he is concerned because the ATPD's last survey was so poorly developed. He asked if the ATPD solicited the input of anyone in the creation of the survey. He said he does not understand what the survey is about. His concern is only for Johnson Hills Park and that he may be in favor of the Beech Acres purchase if it means the ATPD will not do anything at JHP. He hopes the ATPD considered his critique of the JHP survey before doing another survey. His data does not support anything the ATPD wants. He said he is concerned the ATPD is moving forward when no one wants anything the ATPD is proposing.

Mrs. Armstrong distributed the survey post card to the meeting attendees and said it was mailed to every household in Anderson Township, emailed to all addresses on file, posted on the ATPD's website home page, and included in the ATPD's eblasts.

Mr. Bartholomew said the survey was developed by a professional survey company, with the input of the ATPD, and the landowner. He said the ATPD is moving forward with Phase I of the JHP plans. The Board decided the Master Plan adopted in 2010 for JHP is overwhelming to people, so the ATPD is breaking out Phase I of the plan, which will represent the next 10 years. The ATPD is hosting a public meeting to explain what Phase I includes and provide the community with an opportunity to comment on what they like and don't like, just as the ATPD did on the previously adopted Master Plan. He said the ATPD is not going to ask for permission to remove tree limbs or to conduct other daily maintenance tasks at JHP.

Ms. Key asked where the nature playscape would go and stated that it would be good for children to have a place to dig in the dirt and play in nature. She asked if Phase I will include cleaning up the existing pond and if the ATPD would consider putting an aerator in the pond. She said the staff in her opinion has been polite and helpful.

Mr. Kushner said the pond has some vernal pond characteristics and that it was probably last mucked out in the 1960's. He stated the pond is a neat feature of the park which warrants a good clean-up.

Mrs. Wakefield asked what is included in the RecPlex.

Mr. Kushner stated the RecPlex is the building that contains our only gym out of which the ATPD runs all of our programs, events, and leagues. The ATPD rents other gyms, too, because everything can't fit in the RecPlex. The ATPD needs covered space to bring indoors the best of what we do outdoors. We need gym floors and an indoor walking trail. Our community continues to want more from us. The Beech Acres Park trail would extend through this property. Mr. Kushner said the community has had a gym shortage for decades and that any new gyms built only replaced gyms that were sold or torn down. He said the senior population of today is not what it was 20 years ago. Today's seniors are more active farther into life than ever before. Adults of all ages want programs and leagues.

Mrs. Armstrong invited the meeting attendees to visit the RecPlex for a tour any time and said the facility is typically open seven days a week, from approximately 8:30 am until late evening.

Mrs. Key said the school district has sold facilities that contained gyms including Newtown Elementary, which in her opinion was a mistake.

Mr. Kushner said the Forest Hills School District gave the ATPD its start by leasing us the Nagel property, which was the ATPD's first park. The ATPD always knew the time would come when they needed it back, and that's why Beech Acres Park was so important because it replaced Nagel Park when Nagel Middle School was needed.

At 7:37 pm Mrs. Gelter moved the Board adjourn into Executive Session to discuss land acquisition. Mr. Herking seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Herking. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

At 8:05 pm Mr. Herking 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. Herking. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

No decision was made by the Board at this time.

At 8:05 pm, there being no further business to be brought before this Board, Mrs. Gelter moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Herking seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Herking. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

*I hereby certify that the foregoing are the minutes of the March 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*

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Dale Bartholomew

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Nadine Gelter

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Rob Herking