

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

May 12, 2015

Nadine Gelter, Vice 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: Angie Stocker and Tom Turchiano. Rob Herking arrived shortly after the meeting began.

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:** John Fox, John Fox Marketing Consulting; Sheila Vilvens, Enquirer Media; Residents: Tony Ravagnani, Skip and Jan Berger, Brett Lebhar, Emily Mengel, Tricia Mullin, Jean Wakefield, Bob Drake, Rob Conners, and Martha Bonvillain; Bob Conners, non-resident.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. Herking arrived.

**Chip Rosser Coaches Award Presentation:** Mr. Carpenter introduced Emily Mengel as one of two recipients of the 2014-2015 Chip Rosser Coaches Award. He stated the award was established in 2001, in honor of the late Chip (Alan) Rosser, who coached in the ATPD’s leagues from 1993 to 1999. Coach Rosser’s coaching style exemplified caring, passion, and knowledge of basketball. He saw the big picture regarding the life-lessons learned from sports. Like Coach Rosser, Coach Mengel has a genuine passion for coaching youth sports and a desire for her players to be successful on and off the court.

Mr. Carpenter presented Coach Mengel with a certificate. He said she has coached her daughters, Eleanor and Claire, as well as their friends in the ATPD volleyball leagues for the last 6 years. Her commitment to her players, philosophy of youth sports, and her enthusiasm for teaching children, are what make her stand out as a great coach in our leagues.

Mrs. Gelter stated the ATPD is greatly appreciative of our youth coaches for the time and commitment they contribute to the youth of our community through the Anderson Parks. The staff and the Board congratulated Coach Mengel and took photos.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** Mrs. Stocker moved the Board approve the proposed 2015-2016 Slate of Officers as follows:

President	Nadine Gelter
Vice-President	Rob Herking
	Angie Stocker
	Tom Turchiano
	Dale Bartholomew

Mr. Herking seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mr. Herking, Mrs. Gelter, and Mrs. Stocker. (3); No: None; Abstain: Mr. Turchiano. (1). The motion carried.

Mr. Kushner presented a current Board Member Service Record list.

Mrs. Gelter stated typically at the Board's May meeting, in addition to electing a new slate of officers of the board, an oath of office would be administered to one or two incoming commissioners. The Anderson Township Board of Trustees has not yet acted on reappointment requests by two of the ATPD's current commissioners. Further, their counsel has cited Ohio Revised Code ("ORC") section 3.01 which refers to persons holding an office of public trust. She said section 3.01 states "*A person holding an office of public trust shall continue therein until his successor is elected or appointed and qualified, unless otherwise provided in the constitution or laws of this state.*" She stated the effective date of section 3.01 is January 23, 1963.

Mrs. Gelter said ATPD counsel believes ORC section 511.19, which provides specifically for three-year terms commencing on the second Monday in May for township park commissioners, may supercede ORC 3.01. Until the township reappoints these two commissioners or appoints two new commissioners, this Board is now comprised of three members for voting purposes. She further said all board members in attendance may participate and be part of all discussion on any matter brought before this Board.

Mrs. Gelter stated the means by which she plans to conduct meetings as Board President. She said the regular meetings of the Board of Park Commissioners are public meetings but they are not public hearings. That is, members of the public do not have a right to speak unless the Board invites them to do so. Individuals who would like to share their opinions or comments concerning a topic on the Board's agenda can do so within a time limit of five minutes. Remarks should be addressed to the Board as a group. If several people wish to speak on the same topic, the time limit may be adjusted at the president's discretion. She said members of the public should be prepared to respond to questions from board members seeking to clarify an issue.

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

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Presentation of the Research Study Results by John Fox:** Mr. Fox introduced himself as being from Wyoming, Ohio, and that his niche is in school district and municipality marketing research. He is a former Proctor and Gamble brand manager. His research assists entities with decisions about whether or not to put something on the ballot. He presented at length his forty nine pages of research results, which he said has been prominently featured on the ATPD's website for review by the public. His contact information is included on the publicly posted material, which he said has resulted in zero people contacting him with questions about his research to date.

Mr. Fox said the survey focused on three 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; and Improve the eight existing outdoor parks. He said the community's response was exceptional for both the online and the phone portion of the community survey. Over 900 people contributed to the online survey portion. 268 phone surveys were collected from a random list of registered voters. 133 randomly selected online surveys were included based on a cross section of demographics.

Mr. Fox attributed the extensive community participation in the research to the ATPD's promotion of the survey and as a reflection of how important the matter is to the community. He said the purpose of the survey is to involve the community in the entire process so the outcome reflects what the community wants, not what the administration or board wants. He said this research study yielded one of the most positive end results that he has ever seen regarding support for a tax levy.

Mr. Fox entertained various questions from the guests.

Mrs. Gelter said she was encouraged by the number of people who participated in the survey as well as by the number of people who have studied the survey results and levy information on the ATPD website. She thanked Mr. Fox for his work and for his presentation.

Park Improvements and Funding: Mr. Kushner said since September of 2014, the ATPD has been in a whirlwind, upon receiving an RFP from Beech Acres Parenting Center for their property, which he described as very special. At this point, the Board has two levy options on the table to review and decide upon for the upcoming November 3<sup>rd</sup> election. He said a 0.7 mill levy for 15 years would generate \$12,860,055 and a 1.0 mill levy for 20 years would generate \$24,495,340.

Mr. Kushner stated a revised Levy Summary is again included in the Board's materials, to assist the Board in making a final determination on the specific millage and components for the proposed capital levy. He said previously the Board asked staff to review the numbers to make sure the ATPD can deliver what we say we would accomplish with the levy: buy the property, renovate the RecPlex, prepare the property as a public park (demolition, re-grading, parking, trail extension, etc.), and cover the debt service expenses. He said the revised Levy Summary reflects the Board's discussions to focus on the land acquisition and preparing the property for public use. He said it does not include a new rec center, nor any general park improvements.

Mrs. Gelter suggested the Board hold off on any vote until after executive session. She said there may be information and details to be discussed regarding the land acquisition that may assist in the Board's decision. She said if that is the case, the Board could make a decision after executive session, once they return to regular session. She further stated the ATPD submitted another proposal on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup> to Beech Acres Parenting Center regarding the ATPD's intentions for the property.

W. M. Johnson Hills Park: Mr. Kushner stated the Phase I plan for W. M. Johnson Hills Park ("JHP") was presented for public comment at an Open House meeting on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at JHP from 9a-11a. The plan was additionally posted on the ATPD's website, in the bulletin board at JHP, is featured in the summer Park Guide, and was emailed to people who have expressed an interest in JHP since the 2009 planning process. The JHP Plan Status piece was also distributed at the Open House and is posted on the ATPD's website.

Mr. Kushner said the Open House turn-out was good and that over 50 people rendered their opinion about the Phase I plan. He presented the Board with a summary of the comments. He said the comments show that people have different ideas for JHP. Some like the plan and some are against the plan. He said the results mirror the 2013 Park Improvements survey results the Board received following the process. The Phase I plan represents a balance of amenities that promote activities in a passive, natural setting. He further said staff believes there is enough space for the amenities included

in Phase I and that it is important to consider our various populations with park design and amenity options.

Mrs. Gelter said the variations of the comments were interesting to her. The active versus passive nature of the park is consistently a part of all the public input processes conducted in 2000, 2009, 2013, and 2015.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Calendar of Events: Mr. Kushner presented a calendar of upcoming activities for the Board's review. He said the first Concert in the Park is scheduled June 4<sup>th</sup> at Beech Acres Park.

Mrs. Gelter said the Anderson Township Memorial Day ceremony will take place on Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 am at the Anderson Center.

**FUNDRAISING AND GRANT ACTIVITY:**

Mr. Kushner stated there is no fundraising or grant activity to report.

**REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL:**

Staff Changes: Mrs. Armstrong said Carly Yersky is the sibling of Alex Yersky, who has been a camp counselor for the ATPD since May of 2012.

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

Recreation I: **Ariana Buscani, William Carlson, Morgan Cole, Madison Hoffman, Cameron Surette, Laura Walters, and Carlie Yersky**

and to **promote** the following person on their actual date of promotion as Assignable Staff:

From Recreation Staff I to Recreation Staff II: **Kelsey Boyle**

Mr. Herking seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mr. Herking, Mrs. Gelter, and Mrs. Stocker. (3); No: None; Abstain: Mr. Turchiano. (1). The motion carried.

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

<i>Evans Landscaping, Inc.</i>	<i>Dumpsters for 2900 Little Dry Run Demolition, Johnson Hills Park</i>	\$ 8,500.00
<i>Wendling Printing Co.</i>	<i>Summer Park Guide</i>	\$ 5,480.00
<i>Coney Island Park</i>	<i>Summer Camp Passes</i>	\$ 8,245.00

Mr. Herking seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mr. Herking, Mrs. Gelter, and Mrs. Stocker. (3); No: None; Abstain: Mr. Turchiano. (1). The motion carried.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS AND AUTHORIZATION OF EXPENDITURES:**

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

Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mr. Herking, Mrs. Gelter, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (4); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Herking moved the Board approve the minutes from the **March 10, 2015 Regular Meeting** as written. Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mr. Herking and Mrs. Gelter. (2); No: None; Abstain: Mrs. Stocker and Mr. Turchiano. (2). The motion carried.

Mrs. Stocker moved the Board approve the minutes from the **March 19, 2015 Special Meeting** as written. Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mrs. Stocker and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None; Abstain: Mr. Herking. (1). The motion carried.

Mr. Herking moved the Board approve the minutes from the **April 8, 2015 Special Meeting** as written. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mr. Herking, Mrs. Gelter, Mrs. Stocker and Mr. Turchiano. (4); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Turchiano moved the Board approve the minutes from the **April 14, 2015 Regular Meeting** as amended. Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter and Mr. Turchiano. (2); No: None; Abstain: Mr. Herking and Mrs. Stocker. (2). The motion carried.

Mrs. Stocker moved the Board approve the minutes from the **April 16, 2015 Special Meeting** as written. Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None; Abstain: Mr. Herking. (1). The motion carried.

Mr. Herking moved the Board approve the minutes from the **April 21, 2015 Special Meeting** as written. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mr. Herking, Mrs. Gelter, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (4); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Herking moved the Board approve the minutes from the **May 1, 2015 Special Meeting** as written. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mr. Herking, Mrs. Stocker, and Mrs. Gelter. (3); No: None; Abstain: Mr. Turchiano. (1). The motion carried.

**Public to Address the Board:**

Mr. Drake asked what grants were applied for or awarded this month.

Mrs. Gelter stated there was no grant activity this month.

Ms. Bonvillain asked how much of the \$23 million proposed levy amount would be for a new recreation center; what the other improvements would be included in the other parks, specifically JHP; and if it is possible for a ballot issue to allow voters to vote for specific parts and not other parts. She said when she was a child her family moved a lot. When her parents looked for a home, they first looked for good schools, safe and nice amenities like parks, and then they looked for a house. She said parks maintain property values and are an important part of a community.

Mrs. Gelter said the amount for a new recreation center depends on many variables. At a minimum, the Board's priority is to purchase the property and make renovations to the property for public use. Some of the unknowns regard the existing buildings and structures, and exactly how much land Beech Acres may wish to sell. She said for the most part, restrooms would comprise the majority of improvements throughout the parks, should the Board decide to include a general park improvements component in the levy. Shade structures and land acquisition adjacent to existing parks are priorities of the Board. After these components, the amount remaining would be for a new recreation center, or to leverage towards a partnership for a new building. Specifically regarding JHP, a safe road in and out of the park, infrastructure including water lines, electric, a parking lot, and restrooms would be priorities for the next 10 years, regardless of a capital improvements levy.

Mr. Kushner said the JHP status piece that is posted on the ATPD's website is the 10 year plan for JHP, which includes the improvements Mrs. Gelter referenced. Not all of the information is being distributed by the people who are purposely trying to mislead people regarding the ATPD's plans for the levy and for JHP. He said the ATPD conducts business transparently which is why the information is posted on the ATPD's website for the public's review.

Mr. Herking said the levy summary on the website enables the community to see what improvements are being considered and the associated costs. He said the ATPD Board is not interested in making a mistake like the township's parking garage and is giving thorough consideration to the possible levy components, the cost to the taxpayer, and the long-term benefit to the community. He said the amount of the levy on the ballot will be certified and voters will not be able to pick and choose the individual parts they prefer. The improvements to the driveway at JHP are needed immediately to create a more safe line of site for vehicles.

Mrs. Stocker said the paved trail length is approximately a half mile through the open area.

Mrs. Gelter said the ATPD is not going to pave the trail system through the woods. The inclusion of the paved trail serves populations with mobility issues or those with strollers. Trail surface options help people to get their physical activity in on muddy days. She said Veterans Park is an example of a park that features a variety of surfaces.

Mr. Kushner said none of the ATPD parks are finished. All parks are works in progress.

Mr. Berger asked what the status is with Anderson Township Government and the ATPD and if it would affect the amount for the levy.

Mrs. Gelter said the topic is being discussed in executive session and that the Board is not at liberty to discuss the details with the public at this time. She further said the ATPD's intention is to make the Beech Acres property into a park. The Board has been discussing the levy options diligently and deliberately, weighing all the options. She said a capital levy is a big deal for the ATPD and that the Board is leaning towards going only for an amount that secures the property for the future of the community and enables basic improvements to the property. She said the ATPD has told the landowner for decades that we want the property for parkland. People have many ideas for the property. Nothing specific or concrete has been presented for serious consideration by the ATPD. The ATPD is pursuing the plan we put forth to the landowner last year.

Mrs. Stocker said \$23 million is the maximum levy amount that is being discussed and that the Board is considering less than the maximum.

Mr. Herking said the ATPD can pull the levy if something comes to light that warrants another path.

Ms. Bonvillain asked if the new recreation center would be supported by tax dollars and program registration fees.

Mrs. Gelter said she anticipated the new recreation center running much like the existing RecPlex, with registration fees covering the cost of the programs and off-setting the costs for the facility. The ATPD's operating levy is a 1.9 mill, 10-year levy which was passed in 2008, and expires in 2018.

Mr. Kushner said if the ATPD's operating levy is not voted in, the Anderson parks would be out of business. The ATPD charges fees for exclusive use of amenities including shelters, athletic fields, dog field, gym space, etc. A RecPlex addition or a new recreation center has the potential for new features such as an indoor walking trail. We anticipate a fee for the indoor walking trail. The ATPD would develop a fee structure as we have done for every program, event, league, and facility we manage. The ATPD does not currently have a membership base. People pay for the programs they choose to participate in and for the space they choose to rent with the ATPD. The ATPD just hosted the annual Mother Son Dance at the RecPlex on Friday night, which was sold out with over 230 moms and sons dressed up as super heroes. The ATPD has built its recreation business in other people's places over the last 40 years. The option to buy the building the ATPD has been renting for over 25 years has come up, which is why the ATPD is to this point today. Acquiring the property continues the recreation business the ATPD has developed to meet the community's needs of today and sets up the community for success to meet the recreational needs for our families of tomorrow. He further stated the survey results demonstrate community support for this property and the public recreational potential it represents.

Ms. Mullin asked what the deadline is for the Beech Acres property; where she can find the master plan for JHP; and what Phase II for JHP includes.

Mrs. Gelter said Beech Acres imposed a deadline of May 8<sup>th</sup> for us to formalize our intentions for their property. They are aware we have timeline obligations to get a levy on the November ballot. She said the current JHP Phase I plan is online and represents a boiled down version of the previous master plan. The former master plan is no longer posted as the park will develop in phases. Phase II depends on what the Board and community of tomorrow want.

Mr. Kushner said every park has a master plan. Juilfs Park has a master plan that took 30 years to substantially accomplish. A master plan is a guide to develop a park which evolves with community input and the Board's priorities. Mr. Kushner said the former JHP master plan is no longer relevant. The Phase I plan was developed because of a recent spike in interest in the park. JHP was not on the ATPD's radar as a priority until recently. The realistic improvements for the next ten years are explained in the JHP status piece, including the roadway, water lines, electric, and restrooms. The community has owned JHP for 15 years, and the community has been using it as a public park since 2007. The horse operation significantly limited visitation by the public until 2010. JHP is growing with the community just as all the Anderson Parks have done over time. Projects require money which the ATPD rarely has all at one time. The ATPD chips away at projects over time as money becomes available. Beech Acres Park is the only park for which money was available to develop all at one time.

Mr. Drake asked for the property purchase price stated in the letter of intent sent to Beech Acres Parenting Center on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Kushner stated the ATPD's May 8<sup>th</sup> proposal contained no figure for the property. No offer or contract for the property exists. The ATPD's figures are based on the ATPD's appraised value of the property. We are just one option for the landowner who is in the exploration phase at this time. The ATPD continues to work through the process to take advantage of this once in a lifetime opportunity for the future of the community.

Mrs. Gelter said the landowner has not yet decided how much property to sell.

Mrs. Stocker said the Board intends to proceed with the plan to run a levy to purchase the property.

Mrs. Gelter welcomed the guests to stay until the Board returns from executive session.

At 7:53 pm Mr. Herking moved the Board adjourn into Executive Session to discuss land acquisition. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mr. Herking, Mrs. Gelter, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (4); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board took a short break before moving to another space in the office for the Executive Session portion of the meeting.

Mr. Herking left the meeting at 8:20 pm.

At 8:46 pm Mrs. Stocker moved the Board adjourn the Executive Session and re-open the regular meeting. Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Gelter said the Board is going to wait to make a final decision regarding a specific levy amount and the components to be included. The amount is between a 0.7 mill and 1.0 mill level for a maximum of 20 years. The Board intends to continue discussions with other entities regarding options for the Beech Acres property that would result in a benefit to the entire community. The Board wants to gather as many facts and figures in order to make the best decision possible for the community. She further stated while additional special meetings may be necessary, she would prefer such decisions be made in regular meetings, if possible.

At 8:50 pm, there being no further business to be brought before this Board, Mrs. Stocker moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (3); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

*I hereby certify that the foregoing are the minutes of the May 12, 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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Nadine Gelter

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Rob Herking

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Angie Stocker

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Tom Turchiano