

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

September 8, 2015

Nadine Gelter, 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, Dale Bartholomew, Rob Herking, and Tom Turchiano.

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

GUESTS: Mike Niese, Debra Niese, Dan Clark, Kevin Schmidt, Tom Fernandez, Susan Kelley, Brett Lebhar, Dee Stone, Steve Blauwkamp, Kathleen Wagoner, Sue Hardenbergh, Sharon Disher, Dave Disher, Scott Dorsten, Lynn Dorsten, Stephen McGhee, Cathy DiBiagio, Angela Zoglio, Nancy Jeffries, Gregg Jeffries, Terri Brown, Cheryl Martin, Wayne Rod.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mrs. Gelter stated the Board will adjourn into Executive Session in another part of the building and that she expected it to take approximately 15 minutes.

At 6:32p Mrs. Gelter moved the Board adjourn into Executive Session to discuss land acquisition. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Stocker, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

At 7:48 pm Mrs. Stocker moved the Board adjourn the Executive Session and re-open the regular meeting. Mr. Herking seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Stocker, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

Clear Creek Park ~ Little Miami Scenic Trail Construction: Mr. Kushner reported the Little Miami Scenic Trail construction is well under way on both sides of Clear Creek Park. It has taken over three decades to get the trail to this point. The extension will connect the ATPD’s existing portion of the trail at Clear Creek to the Beechmont Levy and the Little Miami Golf Center. The project partners include, but are not limited to: Great Parks of Hamilton County, Anderson Township, and Ohio Department of Transportation. He said good weather has enabled efficient progress on the project. Part of the ATPD’s agreement was to provide excess fill dirt for the project from the Clear Creek Park driving range mound. The project has significantly reduced the size of the mound and large amounts of concrete have been removed. Staff will sculpt the remaining mound. This section is one of the last remaining linkages in this important regional trail system. Soon, this trail will extend completely from the Ohio River to Lake Erie. He further said the ATPD is proud to have contributed to this recreational feature that will greatly enhance this portion of our township for our residents.

Clear Creek Park ~ Pickleball Courts Update: Mr. Kushner reported the pickleball courts project is close to completion at Clear Creek Park. The finishing touches will include re-grading the site and landscaping. The six courts should be open for play in September.

Playground Update ~ Kellogg and Riverside Parks: Mr. Kushner said it has been a goal of the ATPD to feature playgrounds in all of the Anderson Parks. Kellogg Park, established in 1988, will get its first playground this year as a result of a grant. The cost of the playground is approximately \$61,000.00 and is similar in size to the Lavery Park playground. The play equipment manufacturer gave the ATPD a \$30,000.00 discount. The plan was designed with input from 4th graders at Wilson and Maddux Elementary schools, as well as past event participants.

Mr. Kushner said the Riverside Park playground is getting a new play unit and swings to replace the equipment that originally came from the Nagel Park playground. Nagel Park was established in 1977 with an agreement between the Forest Hills School District and the ATPD which allowed the community to enjoy the property as a park until it was needed for school purposes. The playground equipment being replaced has served the community well over its 26 years of use.

Beech Acres Property Purchase and Levy: Mr. Kushner stated the ATPD's upcoming 0.7 mill, 15-year levy to purchase Beech Acres Parenting Center's property has generated a lot of community interest. He presented an August 25, 2015 joint statement on behalf of the Forest Hills School District, Anderson Township government, and the ATPD, which identified "insurmountable hurdles" as the unified reason not to pursue the Anderson High School/economic development concept. He said, however, news articles, feedback from the community, and recently received information from the developer indicate the concept is not dead. He understands that supporters of the Mega Deal/Anderson 2020 Plan/Joint Venture Plan believe that failing the ATPD's levy means Anderson High School will be built at the Beech Acres property.

Mrs. Gelter instructed guests who wish to address the Board to step to the podium, state their name, and address the Board as a group within a three minute time limit. She further asked the guests be prepared to respond to questions from board members seeking to clarify the issue.

Public to Address the Board: Mr. Dorsten said he is an Anderson Township resident and business owner and thanked the park board for all the work they do. There is a growing sense of frustration and animosity about the Anderson 2020 Plan not moving forward. People want it and it is important. He said he specifically wishes to address the three voting members of the five-member park board. He wants all of the community officials to work together on the Anderson 2020 Plan. Appointed park board members are dragging things out for the sole purpose of the park district. He wants the park board to partner on the Anderson 2020 Plan. They have a social media page with good and valid information about the Anderson 2020 Plan. He does not want more parkland and believes the demand is for the property to be school property. The amount of parkland per resident is excessive in Anderson. The Beech Acres property should be developed for Anderson High School. Park use is not a good use for the property. The Beech Acres Parenting Center folks want their property used for something for all of Anderson.

Mr. Lebhar said Mr. Dorsten made excellent points. The park board has done a good job on making a nice park system. He uses the parks and amenities a lot. Spending money is a tough choice with lots of levies coming up. The community does not need 36 acres more of parkland. All the entities need to

figure out the best way to generate money. The park district could sell parks for money and should just buy the RecPlex. There are more pressing needs in our community than the parks.

Mr. McGee said he is an Anderson resident and has kids who use the parks. Quality parks originally attracted him to Anderson, but now that he has kids, the schools have become the most important reason. There is no air conditioning in many of the schools. Land is a limited resource. He believes the Beech Acres property presents an opportunity to address our community's needs and to explore options for the greatest benefit to everyone.

Mr. Jeffries said he has five kids. Quality schools keep property and home values up. Parks are not as critical as schools. His daughter is a freshman and the building she attends is pathetic. This is an opportunity to put a new building in where everyone benefits. Putting a school at the Beech Acres property is a better solution for the property. The park board's interests should be about the community in general, not just the parks.

Ms. Martin said she loves the parks and thinks the park board does a great job. She is a realtor. When Clermont County announced the new school, joining Amelia and Glen Este High Schools, she said their housing values increased approximately nine percent. A new school building at Beech Acres would positively impact resident's home values. People live in Anderson for the schools.

Mr. Clark said he has been an Anderson resident for 28 years. He echoes what the other guests have said. Everything he has learned about this project has been in the media. He asked if the three entities are continuing to meet to further the Anderson 2020 Plan.

Mr. Bartholomew said the ATPD also learned about the Anderson 2020 Plan in the media. The project is not the ATPD's to lead and in a joint press release, the Forest Hills School District ("FHSD") said the concept is not feasible. The park board is not delaying or preventing the plan. All three entities explored the options and when all three entities met in August, we agreed the plan was not feasible in the August 25, 2015 joint press release. The press release came from the FHSD. The ATPD agreed to the language in the release.

Ms. Zoglio asked when the talks stalled and if there were any additional discussions since August.

Mrs. Gelter referenced the August 25, 2015 joint press release, and that all three entities agreed there were too many insurmountable hurdles to overcome, and therefore determined the project not to be feasible.

At least a majority of the guests were unaware of any joint press release.

Mrs. Gelter read the August 25, 2015 press release and provided copies for the guests:

Schools, parks, township committed to working together

In an unprecedented move, representatives from Forest Hills School District, Anderson Township Park District and Anderson Township spent much of the last year exploring a variety of opportunities to work together for the benefit of the Township as a whole. One of the many opportunities discussed involved a private developer's proposal to bring new development to the current Anderson High School site. In concept, revenue generated from that proposed development

would be utilized to partially fund construction of a new high school on property owned by the Beech Acres Parenting Center.

Officials from the Forest Hills Board of Education, Anderson Township Park Board and Anderson Township Board of Trustees have studied the proposal over the last eight months. While all agree that many benefits may be derived from this type of development, there are simply too many insurmountable hurdles to overcome due to projects in which Forest Hills and the Park District are currently engaged. For these reasons, all three entities have decided this project is not feasible.

Public officials from the three groups are united in this decision and committed to continuing to build on the partnership that has developed among the three entities over the last year. We will continue to work together toward the betterment of the future of our community.

Mr. Herking identified the press release as an official statement from all three entities.

Mr. Dorsten said he is hearing the Anderson 2020 Plan is definitely feasible. The joint statement is not the truth.

Mr. Bartholomew said the joint press release was a unanimous decision by all three boards. If members of the public are hearing individuals from various boards say otherwise, that is out of the control of the park board.

Mr. McGhee asked if notes are available from official meetings of the FHSD and Anderson Township government.

Mrs. Gelter said the ATPD posts approved ATPD meeting minutes online and suggested Mr. McGhee check with the other entities regarding their meeting notes and minutes. The ATPD was provided with the draft release to agree with the language prior to meetings by the FHSD and Township. She believes the FHSD formally voted to approve the press release.

Ms. Brown said at a recent Republican Club meeting, there was still no official reading on the bond to use for the new school which is why the FHSD decided not to do it.

Mr. Herking said there have been numerous meetings on this matter. The timeline on this property purchase started a year ago between the ATPD and Beech Acres Parenting Center. The first the park board heard about the school concept was in March. The landowner held the entities to deadlines to work things out. The FHSD and the Township were aware of these deadlines, and at the final deadline on June 24th, there were still legal and financial concerns for the school concept, so the park board moved forward with a levy to purchase the property. He further stated the legal and financial concerns with the concept continue to be unresolved.

Ms. Martin confirmed the ATPD to be in contract with Beech Acres Parenting Center, contingent upon the passage of the levy.

Ms. Zoglio said she is a resident and uses the parks often. She is concerned no one will get the property if the levy fails. Most people want the property to be a school. She asked the park board for reassurance that if the ATPD gets the land, the park board will continue to work to make it a school. She said there has been so much miscommunication that it has been hard to know what is really going on. She does not want another Tire Discounters and believes there is a desperate need for senior housing.

Mrs. Gelter said the ATPD's levy this November is not about the property being a park or a school. The levy is to purchase the property for parkland but the door is not shut on the school concept. She talked with school board member, Randy Smith after the press release, and told him if the ATPD secures the property, the park board is committed to continuing discussions to partner on the property. Ultimately, the property owner will decide what becomes of the property.

Mr. Dorsten said if the parks do not champion the Anderson 2020 Plan the ATPD levy will fail. The levy will pass if all three entities get together in support of the Anderson 2020 Plan. The Anderson 2020 Plan is such a good deal, it has to happen.

Mr. Bartholomew said the Anderson 2020 Plan has one paragraph at the end that pertains to the ATPD, which is to turn the property over to the Port Authority. The Anderson 2020 Plan is not a Township plan, it is a developer's plan.

Ms. Wagoner said the reason the property has to go to the Port Authority is so the property can be turned over for the school.

Mr. Bartholomew stated the ATPD is trying to keep the RecPlex, which is Anderson's only public recreational facility.

Mr. Herking stated conversations about the school concept are still happening. The park board is cognizant of costs of a levy to home owners, and how good schools and parks affect property values.

Mr. McGhee said he is hearing different things. The park board has done a good job of staying on the same page and the other entities have not. If the park levy is to pass, the community needs a clear plan.

Mr. Kushner asked the guests who created the Anderson 2020 Plan to which the guests responded with the following answers: Anderson Township government, the Forest Hills School District, and/or individual Trustees and/or board members.

Mr. Kushner said the information is purposefully being disseminated in a confusing manner. The ATPD is not confused. Beech Acres Parenting Center is interested in their property becoming community property through the ATPD. The 26 acres of the existing Beech Acres Park was bought to replace Nagel Park, and now the community again faces losing a community park to another school. There have been many conversations with the entities about things we can do to make everyone better, instead of cannibalizing one community entity for another in the name of collaboration.

Mr. Dorsten asked if Mr. Kushner has seen Anderson High School.

Mr. Kushner said he served on the FHSD community facilities committee before the FHSD ran their last levy. The FHSD told the committee that Anderson High School was one of the easiest and best buildings structurally to renovate. The community just passed a \$103 million levy to renovate the schools to new, and now because the Beech Acres Parenting Center has offered its property to the community through the parks, suddenly it is the ATPD's fault that Anderson High School does not have air conditioning, and that it cannot be renovated as described in 2014. The ATPD and the FHSD have worked together for the benefit of the community since the late 1970s. It is unfortunate for the

community that developers are pitting public entities against each other. The ATPD cannot answer for the Township or the FHSD. He encouraged the guests to ask their boards if the Anderson 2020 Plan is feasible. All three entities agreed to the joint press release from August 25th, but since then people in this room have been led by individuals on those boards to believe the ATPD is the only obstacle in the way of a new Anderson High School. He said the new school is not free, no matter what the developers say. Now the proponents for a new Anderson High School are saying the community has too much parkland. A third of the ATPD's property is in the floodplain and can only be used for recreational or agricultural purposes. The 36 acres at Beech Acres includes the community's only public recreation center and the future, central recreational component this community is lacking. He asked why a community would want excellent schools and public services, but now suddenly demands that its parks be average. The opportunity for the community to acquire the Beech Acres property has come about because of a 25-year relationship between the ATPD and Beech Acres Parenting Center.

Mrs. Dorsten mentioned Johnson Hills Park and the Senior Center.

Mr. Kushner stated Johnson Hills Park is 139 acres and has been open to the public since 2007. Many people regularly enjoy its hills and wooded terrain. Public land in the community exists for different purposes. Greenspace is public land that the community cannot use for recreational purposes, except if there were existing trails on the property when it was purchased. Within the active ATPD parks, much of the land resides in the floodplain, including the Bicentennial Legacy Parks, Clear Creek Park and Riverside Park. The Anderson Senior Center is landlocked behind a maintenance facility and salt dome and will need to be moved at some point in the future. The Beech Acres property would be a good location for such a facility to be relocated.

Mrs. Gelter said Great Parks of Hamilton County is a significant land owner but their parks are passive.

Mr. Disher said he is a 32 year resident and moved here because of the schools. He believes Anderson Township offers the best of all worlds with great parks and schools. He asked what the contingency is if the park levy is defeated and if it is possible for everyone to get what they want with the Anderson 2020 Plan.

Mrs. Gelter said the three entities would have to get back together if the Anderson 2020 Plan is to be further discussed and that the landowner will ultimately decide who they sell their property to if the levy fails.

Mrs. Stocker said the ATPD is not included in the plan financially. The levy the ATPD has on the ballot is to purchase the land and renovate the RecPlex.

Mr. Disher said he has been misled because he was told there was money in the Anderson 2020 Plan for the ATPD.

Mrs. Stocker said in the beginning, the ATPD was going to get a new, free RecPlex. It became apparent soon after that the ATPD would not get anything. The ATPD learned of the plans in the newspaper.

Mr. Kushner said the latest plan shows a blue rectangle as being reserved for the ATPD, but that the ATPD already owns most of the reserved area, which includes the Beech Acres Park amphitheater. He said if you look closely, there is a parking lot in place of the existing RecPlex.

Ms. Wagoner said the ATPD would get to keep the amphitheater.

There was some confusion among the guests as to if the ATPD was or was not getting money in the Anderson 2020 Plan.

Mr. Kushner said various individuals who do not represent the ATPD, FHSD, or the Township are promoting and negotiating on behalf of the Anderson 2020 Plan. Beech Acres Parenting Center wanted all three entities to work together, which we did. The end result was the August 25th joint statement, in which all three entities identified insurmountable hurdles and determined the project not to be feasible. Funds to renovate the RecPlex are included in the levy.

Ms. Brown said at a recent Republican Club meeting it was the architect who said there was money in the plan for the ATPD, not representatives of the FHSD or the Township. Mr. Smith of the school board said TIF dollars can be used to build the school.

Ms. Neace said she helped fund raise for the skatepark at Beech Acres Park. She asked various questions about the levy information on the ATPD's website, including the community survey conducted by John Fox. She believes the ATPD should come out of the arrangement with something good.

Mr. Clark said it has become clear to him from this meeting that if people have an issue with the FHSD or the Township, then they should all be taking it up with them and not the ATPD.

Mr. Bartholomew said the ATPD would discuss the topic again if the other entities wanted to discuss it again.

Mrs. Stocker said the Anderson 2020 Plan project is not the ATPD's to champion. The ATPD's goal is to capture the land for the community and to renovate the RecPlex. We would like to build a new RecPlex eventually but we would need partners. All three entities agreed the 36 acres is not big enough for Anderson High School and a RecPlex. We intend to continue to collaborate with the FHSD. She encouraged the guests to contact the FHSD or the Township if they have questions about the financial mechanisms or the legalities of the Anderson 2020 Plan. Such decisions are not the ATPD's to make.

Mrs. Neace suggested the ATPD put out a statement with the facts and truth about this subject to alleviate the community's confusion.

Mr. Bartholomew said Trustee Gerth posted on Facebook that the plan was dead the weekend of Greater Anderson Days. All three entities stated in a joint press release that the plan was dead. All three entities' logos were put on the plan, while none of the three entities produced the plan. If individual board members are saying something different than what their boards voted on, then the community should call them out.

Mr. Herking encouraged the guests to ask questions at the FHSD Board of Education meetings.

Mrs. Gelter said the ATPD has openly and publicly discussed the ATPD's plan for the property. When the three entities agreed to the joint statement, we believed all three entities were committed to the statement. The ATPD operates openly and truthfully and has no ulterior agenda for the property. When the FHSD said they were out of time by the June 24th deadline, the ATPD made plans accordingly and we moved forward with our levy to purchase the property.

She thanked everyone for attending the meeting, as most of the guests left at the conclusion of this part of the meeting.

Ms. Neace said the skatepark is a great feature of Beech Acres Park. She appreciates that it is always in use by visitors of various ages.

NEW BUSINESS:

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

Mrs. Gelter highlighted the Fair of the Arts at Beech Acres Park on September 19th.

Mr. Bartholomew said he is in need of a few volunteers to help with the annual Veterans Day event he coordinates at the Anderson Center on November 11th.

FUNDRAISING AND GRANT ACTIVITY:

Current Grant Projects: Mr. Kushner stated the following are active grant projects currently under construction:

Pickleball Courts ~ NatureWorks Grant: This grant is administered by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for the construction of six courts at Clear Creek Park. The grant amount is \$66,816; the ATPD is providing a match of land, labor, and construction equipment.

Kellogg Park Playground ~ Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant: This grant is administered by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for the construction of a playground at Kellogg Park. This will be the first playground for Kellogg Park. The matching grant amounts to \$25,742.00; the ATPD's match is in labor, construction equipment, and additional play equipment. The playground will be similar in size to the Laverty Park playground.

REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL:

Staff Changes: Mr. Herking moved the Board approve staff's recommendation to accept the resignation of Marshal Carpenter, full time Recreation Supervisor, effective September 21, 2015. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Stocker, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Monthly Purchase Order Approval:

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

Wendling Printing, Co.	Fall Park Guide	\$ 5,830.00
------------------------	-----------------	-------------

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

FINANCIAL REPORTS AND AUTHORIZATION OF EXPENDITURES:

Mrs. Stocker moved the Board approve the **August, 2015 Financial Reports and Authorize the Expenditures** as presented by Mr. Jordan. Mr. Herking seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Stocker, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mrs. Stocker moved the Board approve the minutes from the **August 11, 2015 Regular Meeting** as written. Mr. Herking seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Stocker, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Public to Address the Board:

No one wished to address the Board at this time.

At 7:57 pm Mrs. Stocker moved the Board adjourn into Executive Session to discuss land acquisition and the status of an employee. Mr. Herking seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Stocker, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

At 8:07 pm Mr. Bartholomew moved the Board adjourn the Executive Session and re-open the regular meeting. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Stocker, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

No decision was made by the Board at this time.

At 8:07 pm, there being no further business to be brought before this Board, Mr. Bartholomew moved to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Stocker, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

I hereby certify that the foregoing are the minutes of the September 8, 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