

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

**March 8, 2016**

Nadine Gelter, President, called the regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Anderson Park District (“APD”) to order at 6:30 pm at Park District Headquarters, 8249 Clough Pike, Cincinnati, OH 45244. Present were Board Members: Angie Stocker, Rob Herking, Tom Turchiano, and Dominic Wolfer.

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:** Sheila Vilvens, Forest Hills Journal; residents: Jim Rombke, Tara Ackerman, and Jen deVine.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

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

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Beech Acres Property Purchase:** Mrs. Gelter stated Beech Acres Parenting Center (“BAPC”) has withdrawn their desire to sell their property and will be staying for the foreseeable future. The APD will continue the lease and barter trade agreements for the RecPlex and the use of various acreage and facilities on Beech Acres Parenting Center property.

Mr. Kushner stated due to a change in the property status and the timing of the APD spring Park Guide, two Park Guide versions exist. The printed version featured the APD’s plan to make the property into a public park, and the e-version featured BAPC’s new direction for their property. He said the APD will continue on the property on a lease basis, for which the landowner would provide at least six months notice should BAPC no longer wish for the APD to occupy the building.

Mr. Herking suggested Mr. Kushner ask BAPC to extend the evacuation term beyond 6 months since the RecPlex is the community’s only public, indoor recreation center.

Mrs. Gelter stated the Board would table the discussion on the Beech Acres property purchase until Executive Session.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Operating Levy Discussion:** Mrs. Gelter stated the APD’s current operating levy expires in 2018. Since 1992, the APD has run its operating levies during presidential elections because voter turnout is typically larger than non-presidential elections. Before the 2015 attempted capital levy to purchase

the Beech Acres property, the APD would have been on the ballot for an operating levy in November of 2016.

Mr. Kushner said the ballot language would read as an additional levy since the timing would be prior to the last official year of the levy. The language also includes that the previous levy would be rescinded upon passage of the new levy. He said Great Parks of Hamilton County will have a levy on the ballot in 2016 or 2017, and that Anderson Township government has indicated it will run a Fire and Safety levy in November of 2016. He reminded the Board that the November 2008 ballot included both an APD levy and a Fire and Safety levy, which were both successful. The millage of the APD's operating levies since 1992 has been 1.9 mils. The APD is one of the few levies which expires and that if the APD does not pass a new levy, the APD goes out of business as the community has come to expect. He further stated the filing deadline for the November 8, 2016 general election is August 10, 2016.

Mr. Wolfer asked if there was any reason to postpone moving forward with a November 2016 operating levy.

Mrs. Stocker and Mrs. Gelter suggested Mr. Kushner move forward on the necessary steps with the Auditor so the Board can review the information.

Anderson Senior Center Update: Mrs. Gelter presented notices from Anderson Township government ("Township") stating Senior Independence, with whom the Township contracts to operate the Anderson Senior Center ("ASC"), is not interested in renewing their contract with the Township.

Mr. Kushner stated the Township is learning quickly about how the Senior Center operates and the Township is exploring their options. The APD is learning about the ASC's recreational program offerings. The APD serves a significant senior population through the Recreation Department's current offerings and through various amenities throughout the parks. Running a full-fledged senior center requires specific demographic knowledge, training, and certifications, none of which the APD staff has currently.

Mrs. Stocker asked what requests the Township has made of the APD on this matter. She said the APD's RecPlex programming is busting at the seams and the APD simply does not have the space or staff to take on such a significant programming effort, especially now that the APD no longer has the ability to expand the RecPlex because the Beech Acres property is not available to the APD. While the APD will remain open to the Township's effort, the onus is on the Township to figure out what to do with the ASC programming and services and that the APD is in no position to take it on.

Mr. Kushner stated the Township has the lead on the ASC matter. He said the RecPlex is inadequate for people with disabilities, the gym is not air conditioned, and during the summer, the APD's popular Summer Camp program dominates the building. He said the APD will continue to be part of the conversation and he will update the Board accordingly.

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

Mrs. Gelter highlighted the upcoming Adult and Youth Egg Hunts. She congratulated the Recreation Department for making the decision a few years ago to move the Adult Hunt to its own day. Both hunts are very successful and each deserves their own day.

Mr. Kushner presented various social media statistics regarding the popularity of the Adult Egg Hunt and he anticipated a large turn-out for the event on Thursday, March 24, 2016 at Riverside Park.

Mrs. Fall stated approximately 1,200 children participated in the 2015 Youth Egg Hunts and that approximately 3,000 people attended the event overall, including parents.

Mrs. Gelter also highlighted the upcoming Great American Clean Up at W. M. Johnson Hills Park on Saturday, April 9, 2016. The volunteers will be clearing honeysuckle and planting trees. She further stated Heritage Days is a new program at W. M. Johnson Hills Park on May 21, 2016, which features the Grassy Run Historical Arts Committee. The groups will re-enact characters from the past with old-time crafters like blacksmiths, rope makers, and woodworkers.

Mrs. Fall said the Pickleball Leagues at the new courts at Clear Creek Park are taking off.

### **REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL:**

#### **Staff Changes:**

Mr. Herking moved the Board approve staff's recommendation to hire the following people on their actual dates of hire as part time staff: **Taylor Justice**, Recreation Staff I; **Edward Blanchard** and **Jerry Rinck**, Operations Staff I.

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

#### **Monthly Purchase Order Approval:**

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

<i>Wendling Printing Co.</i>	<i>Spring Park Guide</i>	\$ 5,975.00
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Mr. Herking seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Stocker, Mr. Herking, Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Turchiano, and Mr. Wolfer. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

### **FINANCIAL REPORTS AND AUTHORIZATION OF EXPENDITURES:**

Mr. Herking moved the Board approve the **February, 2016 Financial Reports** and authorize the **Expenditures** as presented by Mr. Jordan.

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

Mr. Kushner stated in the next few months, the APD will be audited for the years 2014 and 2015. While the APD qualifies for a partial audit, the APD requests a full audit.

Mr. Jordan said the process takes about a week.

Mrs. Gelter confirmed with Mr. Jordan that reports and any findings are sent directly to the Board of Park Commissioners.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mrs. Gelter moved the Board approve the minutes as written from the **February 9, 2016 Regular Meeting**. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Stocker, Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Turchiano, and Mr. Wolfer. (4); No: None. Abstain: Mr. Herking. (1). The motion carried.

**Public to Address the Board:** Ms. Ackerman stated she has attended Anderson Township Trustee and APD meetings because she wants to find out how the citizens can make their voices heard that the Beech Acres property should be purchased as a park. She asked for clarification about the status of the RecPlex and how the APD and the Township function.

Mrs. Gelter stated the Anderson Township Trustees and the APD are two, separate governmental entities. The Trustees are elected and the Park Board is appointed by the Trustees. She said the Trustees approve the APD going on the ballot, but that the Trustees decided last year to seek a legal opinion that exempted them from approving the APD's capital levy to purchase the Beech Acres property. She said this was the first time in the APD's 40-year existence the Trustees did not approve an APD levy on the ballot and that she is still of the opinion the Trustees should approve such action. She said from a resident's perspective, the Trustees' approval is a checks and balances measure. She wants the Trustees approval on future levies or at least to get their public blessing on the matter. The two entities have always enjoyed a good working relationship including sharing equipment and working together on community events.

Mr. Kushner said the APD is here today because of the citizens and that the Township helped the APD get some of its parkland, specifically Riverside and Clear Creek Parks. He explained the APD owns the Beech Acres Park portion, which the APD purchased in 1997. Beech Acres Parenting Center ("BAPC") has owned their property since the 1950's. BAPC's statement was very clear that they are suspending discussions to sell their property. He said the future is unknown, but BAPC understands the APD wants their property for public park purposes. The community sorely needs indoor recreational space for now and for the future.

Mr. Herking said the APD will explore a longer term lease with BAPC for the RecPlex. The demand for programs is why the APD wanted to purchase the Beech Acres property and expand the RecPlex. The idea for a new Anderson High School came up and now BAPC will decide what to do with their property. He said the park board still wants to get the RecPlex. He personally wants to expand the RecPlex there or somewhere else. He would like not to have to do it with taxes but that taxes are how such things get accomplished in a community.

Mr. Turchiano asked if there were results from the vote since the issue was on the ballot.

Mrs. Stocker said the Board of Elections did not tally the votes on the withdrawn issue. The survey results showed the community was highly supportive of the APD acquiring the property with tax dollars. The survey was done before the school ideas came up. She encouraged Ms. Ackerman to attend meetings as she is doing to get each entity's perspective on why they are making the decisions they are making. Each entity wants to make the community better in their respective areas. She encouraged Ms. Ackerman to participate in community surveys and in public input forums so the community is represented. Many amenities enjoyed by all in the parks exist because of community involvement. The APD has had several public input opportunities for the public over the years to give their feedback about playgrounds, park design, amenities, and their satisfaction with the APD's facilities and services. She encouraged Ms. Ackerman to consider participating in the Foundation for Parks and Recreation with fundraisers for the APD.

Mr. Herking said the staff forwards messages from residents to the park board.

Mrs. Gelter said specifically regarding the need for indoor recreation facilities, an actual facility owned by the public for use by the public in general benefits everyone who chooses to use it, as opposed to a special interest which serves a narrow group. She believes the community could get an indoor facility faster with citizen involvement.

Mrs. Stocker said an indoor recreation facility has been on the APD's agenda for decades. While she is disappointed the APD could not capture the Beech Acres property for the community when the opportunity existed, she said the APD is not abandoning the indoor recreation facility effort. The APD is keeping its options open for partnering with BAPC or finding additional space elsewhere, even in surrounding communities.

Mr. Rombke said he was disappointed with the way things ended with BAPC. He is happy to hear the APD is still interested in acquiring the property. He asked for more information about the APD's lease with BAPC and if it can be renegotiated for the right of first refusal.

Mr. Kushner said the arrangement with BAPC is that should they decide to do something else with their property, they will notify the APD that it has six months to vacate the premises.

Mrs. Stocker said BAPC knows the APD is interested.

Mr. Herking said the APD has limited funding options should BAPC wish to sell to the APD. The property belongs to the landowner and they will decide if, what, or when to sell some or all of it.

Mr. Kushner said BAPC has been great to work with since the APD began leasing the gym in the RecPlex in 1990. In 2004 the APD took over the lease for the full building. The APD has built a significant business in the RecPlex and the community wants more than the APD can provide.

Mrs. Gelter said BAPC issued a press release which represented what they are willing to say about the matter. She said she believes the community may have another chance someday. A successful APD operating levy this year would put the APD in position to do something down the road. The indoor recreation facility plan time line appeared in 2014 because the property became available. BAPC is careful about their decisions and they have always valued community use for their property. The landowner tried to give the community a chance to acquire their property. She said she is glad the property remains in their hands for now.

Mrs. Vilvens asked what the Board's next order of business would be regarding the possible operating levy.

Mrs. Gelter said a resolution would need to be presented for the Board's consideration.

There were no more comments or questions for the Board.

At 7:15 pm Mrs. Stocker moved the Board adjourn into Executive Session to discuss the employment of an employee. Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Stocker, Mr. Herking, Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Turchiano, and Mr. Wolfer. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board took a ten-minute break while the guests left the meeting room.

Mr. Kushner asked if one of the Board members wished to be an Anderson Township Independence Day Parade judge, for which Mr. Turchiano agreed to participate.

Mr. Kushner informed the Board the APD would be in the process of installing new computers and a new server, and that staff's email may be down at times through the upcoming weekend.

Mr. Kushner said APD staff is regularly background checked and that he will keep the Board apprised if the Township should wish to background check the Board members in the future.

At 7:46 pm Mrs. Gelter moved the Board adjourn the Executive Session and re-open the regular meeting. Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Stocker, Mr. Herking, Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Turchiano, and Mr. Wolfer. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

No decisions were made at this time.

At 7:46 pm, there being no further business to be brought before this Board, Mrs. Stocker moved to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Gelter seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Stocker, Mr. Herking, Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Turchiano, and Mr. Wolfer. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

*I hereby certify that the foregoing are the minutes of the March 8, 2016 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

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Dominic Wolfer