

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT
April 19, 2008

A special meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held on April 19, 2008 at Orchard Hills Park, Chester, Ohio. The meeting was called to order at 9:33 a.m. President Robert McCullough was in the Chair (after arriving at 9:45 a.m.). Board members Mr. Leech and Dr. Rzeszotarski were present.

Employees present:
Tom Curtin, Executive Director
Keith McClintock, Deputy Director
Les Bednar, Development Officer

Visitors Present:
Jim Galm
Tom Lee
Dave Lelko
Debbie Lowers, The News-Herald
John Karlovich, The Maple Leaf
Ann Wishart, The Maple Leaf

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting.
Mr. Leech seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Mr. McCullough	Absent
Dr. Rzeszotarski	Yes
Mr. Leech	Yes

Mr. McCullough arrived at 9:45 a.m.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Curtin introduced visitors Tom Lee and Jim Galm from CARE. Reporters from The Maple Leaf and The News-Herald were present.

OPEN TO PUBLIC

Mr. Curtin opened the floor to members of the public present at the meeting. Tom Lee addressed the Board serving as legal counsel on behalf of Citizens Advocating Responsible Energy (CARE), a group of Geauga County residents. Mr. Lee stated that 100 letters from CARE members are being sent to Geauga Park District Board of Commissioners asking them not to act hastily on passing a resolution opposing running the utility corridor down The Maple Highlands Trail. Mr. Lee suggested the Board hear out First Energy and fully investigate the Rachel Route with the Pinegrove Extension through Chardon (maps were provided). Mr. Lee also presented a figure illustrating the differences in distance between several proposed routes. Mr. Lee stated that CARE is looking for full and fair disclosure and dialogue.

Mr. Lee stated that First Energy's public hearings have been postponed. Mr. Lee stated that The Maple Highlands Trail is an existing "scar" and would be, in his opinion, a better route. In addition, Mr. Lee believes that the access drive could be used for a bridle trail.

Mr. Leech asked if Mr. Lee was specifically asking the Board of Park Commissioners to voluntarily run the power lines down The Maple Highlands Trail instead of through his client's property. Mr. Lee responded that he and his clients are looking for a full opportunity to be heard and that the Board makes decisions with care.

Dr. Rzeszotarski stated that The Maple Highlands Trail is very narrow in some areas, and First Energy will require a 60 foot clear cut for their lines.

Mr. Curtin stated that representatives for the Ohio Power Siting Board and First Energy have asked for a delay of the public hearings. On April 30, 2008 representatives from First Energy and the Ohio Power Siting Board will host a three-hour walk of The Maple Highlands Trail so that they can see the proposed route first hand. Legal counsel, environmental consultants, and guest participants will be amongst the representatives on this hike.

Mr. Curtin presented several Photoshopped images of what The Maple Highlands Trail currently looks like versus what it would look like with utility poles and a 60 foot clear cut. Mr. Curtin also clarified that First Energy would not be cutting in a separate maintenance road to access the bike trail; they would use the existing bike path. Since First Energy trucks can not get through the existing covered bridges, truck access would be needed on either side of the covered bridges. Mr. Curtin stated that The Maple Highlands Trail was not designed to handle construction equipment.

Dr. Rzeszotarski stated that a deed restriction exists for one of the properties along The Maple Highlands Trail and stated that Geauga Park District will oppose any above ground utility lines. As a result, Mr. Leech stated that he sees no reason in delaying passing a resolution in opposition to running the power lines down The Maple Highlands Trail (in that the Board is legally required to do so). Mr. Leech addressed Mr. Lee stating that although Geauga Park District appreciates CARE's concerns, it is in Geauga Park District's best interest to oppose their suggestion.

Dr. Rzeszotarski stated that the Board is on record opposing running the power lines down The Maple Highlands Trail. As such, he recommended that the board hold off voting on a resolution until the May 13, 2008 board meeting. Anticipating larger than normal crowds for this meeting, Mr. Curtin suggested that the May 13, 2008 board meeting be moved to the Donald W. Meyer Center at Big Creek Park.

Mr. Lelko from the City of Chardon stated that the City has not received any direct communications regarding this alternate route; therefore, the City has not had an opportunity to act. However, there are numerous concerns.

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

SUNSHINE LAW COMPLIANCE

The rules of the Park Board were complied with by sending notice pursuant to the rules adopted by the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas G. Curtin, Executive Director

Robert McCullough, President