

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT
June 11, 2008

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held on June 11, 2008 at The Rookery, Munson Township, Ohio. The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. President Robert McCullough was in the Chair. Board members Mr. Leech and Dr. Rzeszotarski were present.

Employees present:

Tom Curtin, Executive Director
Sherry Bosworth, Business Affairs Director
Linda Gilbert, Naturalist
Kathy Hanes, Executive Secretary
Paige Hosier, Marketing Director
John Oros, Operations Director
Robin Pilarczyk, Human Resources Manager
Bob Urban, Chief Ranger
Aaron Young, Planning Director

Visitors Present:

Joe Rodriguez
Marge Smits
Jeff Suszynski

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Leech moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting.

Dr. Rzeszotarski seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

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

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF MAY 13, 2008

Mr. Leech moved to adopt the minutes of May 13, 2008 as amended.

Dr. Rzeszotarski seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Curtin introduced Marge Smits, Joe Rodriguez and Jeff Suszynski.

Geauga Park District
FINANCIAL STATEMENT MONTH ENDED
MAY 31, 2008

GENERAL FUND

BEGINNING FUND BALANCE MAY 1, 2008

2,344,302.65

EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES

488,693.33

Personnel	196,789.86
Medicare	2,708.61
Dental /Hospitalization	31,904.72
PERS	28,231.44
Vouchers	229,058.70

REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES

84,976.82

General Tax Collections

- State Reimbursed Personal Property Tax	59,385.33
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Investment Income

7,383.11

Gifts & Donations

2,700.00

- Bessie Benner Metzenbaum donation - Cleveland Foundation (\$2,500)
- Display case donation - Marianne Trask (\$200)

Fees

- Camping	10.00
- Shelters	120.00
- NAF Table Fees	45.00
- Lodge rental	75.00
- Workshops - General - Public program	54.00
- Programs - General - Public Program	150.00

Sales

- Tapper's Treasures - MC	199.78
- Tree Tops - TWW	299.25
- Credit Card - All facilities	912.76
- Water Vending Machine Sales - TWW	103.28
- Swine Creek house - Harry	400.00
- Burton Wetlands house- Kolar	400.00
- Hyde house - McKinnon	400.00

Other Receipts

Citation Disbursement	19.00
Parking Ticket Collections	10.00
Recycling Proceeds	214.76
Local Government Funds	11,413.30
Miscellaneous Receipts	682.25

- Tax charge refund - Geauga Credit Union (\$3.58)
- Public records request charges - Anonymous (\$23.27)
- Regional Parks Conference Sponsorship - Classic (\$330.00)
- Postage reimb - GPD Foundation (\$325.40)

ENDING FUND BALANCE AS OF MAY 31, 2008

\$ 1,940,586.14

LAND IMPROVEMENT FUND

BEGINNING FUND BALANCE MAY 1, 2008

5,413,722.29

EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES

70.00

Vouchers

70.00

REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES

20,157.67

Investment Income

9,163.70

Gifts & Donations

10,000.00

- Observatory donation - Betty Cope Trust (\$10,000)

Grants

Royalties

- Oxford Oil Co - Swine Creek property

257.31

- Cedar Valley Energy - Hehmeyer property

394.03

- Great Lakes Energy - Hart property

56.38

- Cedar Valley Energy - Sunnybrook property

189.73

- Power Gas - Farley property

96.52

ENDING FUND BALANCE AS OF MAY 31, 2008

\$ 5,433,809.96

VOUCHER RESOLUTION NO. 25-08

The Board asked for clarification on a number of voucher items. All questions were answered satisfactorily.

Dr. Rzeszotarski moved to adopt Voucher Resolution No. 25-08, a copy of which is on file in the Park District office.

Mr. McCullough seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

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

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

Mr. Curtin had no communications to share with the Board.

Dr. Rzeszotarski mentioned that the Frohring Meadows Dedication went very well and that he heard many positive comments.

OPEN TO PUBLIC

Mr. Curtin opened the floor to members of the public present at the meeting.

Marge Smits of Robinson Road in Chardon thanked Keith McClintock, Deputy Director, for meeting with her regarding concerns about handicap accessibility in the parks. She believes that some of the park facilities and trails are difficult to navigate in a wheelchair and asked the Board to consider making minor changes to park areas so they are more wheelchair-friendly. The Board asked Mrs. Smits if she would be willing to submit some suggestions in writing. The Board thanked Mrs. Smits for coming to the meeting.

Joe Rodriguez of Hosford Road in Chardon Township thanked the Park staff for a good job in managing the controlled hunt last year.

Jeff Suszynski, who lives on Julibee Drive in Chardon, commented that he had the opportunity to harvest deer last year and thanked the Commissioners for allowing hunting in the parks.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS **PARK UPDATES**

Asphalt Improvements

Asphalt improvements are nearing completion.

Bass Lake Preserve

One year walk-through was completed; no items were noted for correction.

Headwaters Park

A preconstruction meeting was held. Construction may start in a few weeks.

Hyde Dam

Improvements will begin later this summer.

Mountain Run Station

One year walk-through is scheduled for July.

Observatory Park, Phase I

Construction scheduled to begin the week of June 23, 2008.

Sunnybrook Preserve

Construction is temporarily on hold due to weather conditions (rain).

Frohring Meadows Lightning Arrestors

Mr. Curtin reported that the cost of lightning arrestors for the picnic shelter at Frohring Meadows would cost \$2,730.

Horse Mounting Blocks

Dr. Rzeszotarski inquired as to the status of the horse mounting blocks. Mr. Curtin replied that he would follow up on the matter.

Park Levy

Mr. Curtin informed the Board that he received a response from Kelly Slattery of Thrasher, Dinsmore & Dolan, Park District legal counsel, regarding the combine and replace levy. Ms. Slattery reviewed the information and concluded that the Park District can combine two existing tax levies and place them on the ballot as a single levy in 2012. Mr. Curtin noted that the Geauga County Auditor was contacted and concurred with Ms. Slattery's legal opinion.

West Branch of the Cuyahoga River

Mr. Curtin distributed maps which identified parcels of 50 acres or more within the West Branch of the Cuyahoga River. Mr. Leech suggested that the maps could be compiled to include information supplied by Western Reserve Land Conservancy (WRLC) with the possibility of the Park District working with WRLC in cooperative conservation efforts.

Sunnybrook Preserve Update

Mr. Curtin received a phone call from Joann Robbins on Heath Road in Chesterland regarding the Sunnybrook Preserve property. She was inquiring about information in a letter she received from the Stratherns, who are Heath Road residents. Mr. Curtin clarified and corrected some of the information for Mrs. Robbins. The Board suggested sending a letter to the neighbors of Sunnybrook Preserve which would update them on the progress of the project and correct the information contained in the Strathern letter. Mr. Leech will contact Mrs. Strathern again to discuss changes to the site.

Transmission Lines

Mr. Curtin updated the Board on the status of the proposed location for First Energy's transmission lines. A telephone conference is scheduled for June 23, 2008 with the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB), Citizens Advocating Responsible Energy (CARE) and Park legal counsel, David Ondrey. The motion for intervener status has not yet been granted. OPSB staff has asked First Energy to amend the application to include The Maple Highlands Trail as an alternative route. Mr. Curtin also stated that other Ohio park districts and agencies are sending letters to the Ohio Power Siting Board voicing opposition to the power lines.

Mr. Curtin asked the Board to consider amending Resolution No. 20-08 passed at the Board meeting on May 13, 2008. Changes to the documents would include inserting the word "underground" so the resolution would read "both overhead and underground" transmission lines. This is based on a recommendation made by David Ondrey, Park legal counsel, who advised the Park District that they should go on record stating that construction of the transmission lines underground would disrupt habitats and trail use within The Maple Highlands Trail.

The Board agreed by unanimous consent to amend the previous resolution and insert the word "underground". Mr. McCullough suggested having Mr. Ondrey review the document. Mr. Curtin advised the Board that he will mail the amended resolution to the Ohio Power Siting Board.

The amended Resolution reads as follows:

**AN AMENDED RESOLUTION
OPPOSING THE CONSTRUCTION OF
TRANSMISSION LINES WITHIN THE MAPLE HIGHLANDS TRAIL
RESOLUTION NO. 26-08
JUNE 11, 2008**

WHEREAS, after twenty years of discussion and planning, Geauga Park District constructed The Maple Highlands Trail;

WHEREAS, The Maple Highlands Trail is a linear park which provides a high quality nature experience and a unique opportunity for its users to view nature and Geauga County's countryside;

WHEREAS, The Maple Highlands Trail linear park is a significant part of Geauga Park District's efforts to preserve the natural areas of Geauga County and to link communities to those natural areas;

WHEREAS, Geauga Park District has purchased additional acreage along The Maple Highlands Trail to buffer the trail from encroachment by development and to preserve the natural features along this linear park;

WHEREAS, the staff of the Ohio Power Siting Board has requested American Transmission Systems, Inc. to consider constructing high voltage transmission lines within The Maple Highlands Trail linear park;

WHEREAS, the construction of both overhead and underground transmission lines within The Maple Highlands linear park is not consistent with the mission of Geauga Park District to preserve, conserve and protect the natural features of Geauga County while providing the opportunity for people to enjoy and appreciate those features;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, on this eleventh day of June, 2008, the Board of Park Commissioners of Geauga Park District opposes the use of The Maple Highlands Trail linear park for construction of both overhead and underground transmission lines by American Transmission Systems, Inc.

Heat Fees

Dr. Rzeszotarski suggested that any change in heating fees for the Park lodges should be revisited in August when more information would be available on energy prices for the winter.

Public Records Request

Mr. Curtin asked the Board if they had any questions regarding the recent public records requests the Park District received. The Board replied that they did not have any questions.

Mr. McCullough asked to revise the agenda and move the "Raising Aeshna" presentation from New Business to Unfinished Business. The Board agreed.

Raising Aeshna

Linda Gilbert, Naturalist, presented a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Raising Aeshna", which explained how Ms. Gilbert raised a dragonfly from egg to adult. The Board thanked Ms. Gilbert for the informative and worthwhile presentation.

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT FOUNDATION REPORT

Jeff Suszynski reported that the Foundation is working hard on developing a plan for fundraising for Observatory Park.

He also reported that the Foundation represented the Park District at the Art by the Falls Festival in Chagrin Falls last week.

CONTRACT REVIEW

The Board was provided with the Contract Review documents prior to the meeting. There were no questions regarding the documents.

2008-09 DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN

John Oros, Operations Director, asked the Board for their approval of the 2008-09 Deer Management Plan.

Dr. Rzeszotarski stated that he was uncomfortable with the recommendation for muzzleloader hunting at Frohring Meadows because of the newness of the Park. Mr. Leech agreed and asked if another park could be considered. Mr. Oros said Frohring Meadows was picked due to the high deer population. After some discussion, it was agreed that muzzleloader hunting would be conducted at The Rookery during the first part of November and not at Frohring Meadows, if a special controlled hunt with dates outside of the Ohio Deer season is approved by Ohio Division of Wildlife.

Dr. Rzeszotarski also expressed concern about staffing and security if firearm hunting was conducted at The West Woods when the Wild Nights Exhibit was taking place. He asked if Mr. Oros would consider a different park and Mr. Oros agreed to find an alternative.

The Board also approved:

- Hand-picking hunters based on their ability to harvest deer and their willingness to participate in the program.
- Allowing bow hunting by neighbors on all park lands currently not open to the public: Abela, Brede, Buff Chard, Clause, Farley, Hart, Hehmeyer, Husted Woods, Hyde/Kaplan, Krehlik, Wild and Yoder.
- Allowing bow hunting by Geauga Park District staff at one park that is currently open to the public (The Rookery) to evaluate interaction between park visitors and hunters. Bow hunting zone(s) would be designated away from park trails and other infrastructure. Park staff would be required to meet the same criteria as public applicants when applying for a hunting permit.
- Opening Beartown Lakes Reservation, Big Creek Park and The Rookery to firearms hunting for 2 to 4 days per park on a rotating schedule during the 2008-09 deer firearms season. The 2 to 4 day rotating schedule for each park will be finalized with Director Tom Curtin and the Ranger Department. However, the tentative schedule is as follows:

Beartown Lakes Reservation	December 1 to December 3
Big Creek Park	December 27 to December 30
The Rookery	December 20 to December 21

Triad Survey

The Board was presented with the results of the image assessment survey conducted by Triad Research. The Board felt the results were positive and that the new branding program will help "get the message" out about the Park District.

NEW BUSINESS

2009 Budget, Draft

The Board was provided with the 2009 Draft Budget for their review prior to the meeting. The Board will vote to finalize the budget at the August meeting.

Commissioners' Time

Mr. McCullough asked if other Park staff could give presentations at Board meetings. Mr. Curtin stated he will follow up on Mr. McCullough's request.

Dr. Rzeszotarski commented he would like to review the draft of the strategic plan and have it completed by fall.

Mr. McCullough inquired if a name has been chosen for Observatory Park. Mr. Curtin replied that there have been many suggestions, but none has been chosen yet.

Mr. McCullough asked if a public education program could be conducted on wind and solar power. Mr. Curtin replied that the Park District has been exploring the possibility of using alternative energy at Observatory Park and that a public education program would be worthwhile.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – ROLL CALL

Mr. McCullough moved to go into Executive Session at 6:10 p.m. for the purpose of discussing land acquisition and compensation of a public employee.

Mr. Leech seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

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

The Board returned from Executive Session at 6:55 p.m.

The following items were brought forward for resolution:

LAND ACQUISITION

Huntsburg Investments, Resolution 27-08

Mr. Leech moved to authorize the Executive Director to purchase 53.8606 acres of real property located in Hambden Township, identified as Permanent Parcel No.15-074800, from Huntsburg Investments in the amount of Four Hundred Thirty Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty-Five and 00/100 Dollars (\$430,885.00).

Dr. Rzeszotarski seconded the motion and the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

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

CONSULTANT FOR OBSERVATORY PARK CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Mr. Curtin provided the Board with information on hiring a consultant for the Observatory Park Capital Campaign. The consultant's salary would be paid out of donated funds.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

There were no reports from committees of the Board.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE BOARD

Departmental reports from the Supervisors were submitted for the month of May to the Executive Director and a summary sheet was forwarded to the Board in their packets prior to the Board meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.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