

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
December 8, 2009**

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held on December 8, 2009 at the Donald W. Meyer Center, Chardon, Ohio. The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. President Robert McCullough was in the Chair. Board member John Leech was present. Board member Dr. Mark Rzeszotarski was absent.

Employees present:

Tom Curtin, Executive Director
Keith McClintock, Deputy Director
Sherry Bosworth, Business Affairs Director
Kathy Hanes, Executive Secretary
Paige Hosier, Marketing Director
Robert Keesecker, Development Officer
Chris Lynn, Park Planner
Matt McCue, Senior Park Planner
John Oros, Director of Operations
Michele Pennell, Accountant
Robin Pilarczyk, Human Resources Manager
Paul Pira, Park Biologist
Holly Sauder, Volunteer Coordinator
Diane Valen, Naturalist Services Director
Aaron Young, Planning Director

Visitors Present:

Jeff Frischkorn, *The News Herald*
Neal Hess, The Trust for Public Land
Glen Miller, *The Maple Leaf*
Chris and Rose Yaecker

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

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

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

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 10, 2009

Mr. Leech moved to adopt the minutes of November 10, 2009 as written.

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

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Curtin introduced Neal Hess of The Trust for Public Land, Mr. Frischkorn from *The News Herald*, Glen Miller from *The Maple Leaf* and Chris and Rose Yaecker.

**PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTION TO THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND,
RESOLUTION NO. 58-09**

Mr. Leech presented Neal Hess of The Trust for Public Land (TPL) with a resolution thanking TPL for their assistance in preparing the Clean Ohio Fund application for the Grandview property.

WHEREAS, The Trust for Public Land is a non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to conserve land for people to enjoy, ensuring livable communities for generations to come;

WHEREAS, Geauga Park District and The Trust for Public Land share a common vision to provide all people with a connection to the abundant natural areas found in Geauga County;

WHEREAS, The Trust for Public Land, through their dedication of time and resources, obtained \$575,000.00 in grant funding for the acquisition of 250 acres of property located in Middlefield Township, formally known as Grandview Golf Course;

WHEREAS, acquisition of the Grandview property will preserve and enhance the water quality of the East Branch of the Cuyahoga River, protect the habitat of the Ohio endangered Eastern Pond Mussel, and provide a safe travel route for the Amish community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Geauga Park District, on this eighth day of December, 2009, expresses its sincere gratitude to the outstanding staff of The Trust for Public Land for their efforts in preserving the natural areas of Geauga County for the benefit of future generations.

Mr. Hess expressed his appreciation to the Board of Commissioners for the recognition.

PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT

**Geauga Park District
FINANCIAL STATEMENT MONTH ENDED
NOVEMBER 30, 2009**

GENERAL FUND

BEGINNING FUND BALANCE NOVEMBER 1, 2009 **2,787,192.63**

EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES **562,843.67**

Personnel	209,507.20
Medicare	2,925.43
Dental /Hospitalization	35,675.68
PERS	30,179.93
Vouchers	284,555.43

REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES**302,203.72**General Tax Collections

- Personal Property Tax 32,335.42
- State Reimbursed Personal Property Tax 245,174.33

Investment Income

368.08

Gifts & Donations

190.00

- In mem of Edna Locke - Various (\$80)
- Program donation - Humphrey (\$25)
- General donation - Bissell (\$5)
- Exhibit donation box - TWW patrons (\$80)

Fees

- Programs - Schools - Out-of-county 46.00
- Camping 60.00
- Lodge heat fee 975.00
- Workshops - General - Public program 627.00
- Programs - General - Public Program 840.00

Sales

- Tapper's Treasures - MC 81.39
- Tree Tops - TWW 1,900.08
- Credit Card - All facilities 971.39

Other Receipts

- Swine Creek house - Harry 400.00
- Burton Wetlands house- Kolar 400.00
- Hyde house - McKinnon 400.00
- Chickagami house - Mast 400.00
- Citation Disbursement 180.00
- Recycling Proceeds 176.79
- Local Government Funds 8,103.32
- Auction Proceeds (2002 truck, walk-in cooler) 7,686.75
- Miscellaneous Receipts 888.17

- Jury duty reimb - Bellas (\$15)
- RPC registration - Various (\$240)
- Payment overage returned - News-Herald (\$633.17)

ENDING FUND BALANCE AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2009**\$2,526,552.68**

LAND IMPROVEMENT FUND

BEGINNING FUND BALANCE NOVEMBER 1, 2009		3,330,821.31
EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES		35,058.46
Vouchers	35,058.46	
REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES		1,887.00
<u>Investment Income</u>	393.30	
<u>Royalties</u>		
- Oxford Oil Co - Swine Creek property	440.26	
- Cedar Valley Energy - Hehmeyer property	176.78	
- Cedar Valley Energy - Sunnybrook property	286.31	
- Power Gas - Farley property	590.35	
ENDING FUND BALANCE AS NOVEMBER 30, 2009		3,297,649.85

VOUCHER RESOLUTION NO. 59-09

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

Mr. Leech moved to adopt Voucher Resolution No. 59-09, 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:

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

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

Mr. Curtin read a letter he received from Maureen Stern of the Bainbridge Library thanking Judy Barnhart, Nature Education Coordinator, for presenting “Wildlife Detectives” at the library. Ms. Stern commented that it was one of the library’s most popular and well-attended family programs.

A note was received from Donald Winton thanking the Park District for the new camping area and lean-to site at Headwaters Park.

Mr. McCullough commented that he received a letter from Karen Henck of Bainbridge who asked the Park District to reconsider the hunting policy at Frohring Meadows. She was concerned that numerous entrances to the park made it difficult to control access. John Oros, Director of Operations, stated that the hunt at Frohring Meadows was limited to Park employees using tree stands. Mr. Leech suggested that a follow-up letter be sent to Ms. Henck and that the response should also be shared with the public through a press release.

OPEN TO PUBLIC

Chris and Rose Yaecker of Sperry Road in Novelty expressed their concern about allowing Park District employees to hunt at The West Woods when other hunters are not allowed. They also stated they were not aware that a hunt was taking place. Mr. Curtin apologized and stated that neighbors in the vicinity should have been notified and that it was an oversight which will be corrected so it doesn’t happen again.

Mr. Oros explained that park employees were utilized for a greater level of accountability and safety. Mrs. Yaecker asked if employees were required to go through the same process as hunters participating in the hunting program. Mr. Oros replied that park employees go through the same proficiency testing and that safety during hunting season is the Park District’s primary concern.

Mr. Yaecker commented that he believes the Park District is doing a good job and that he understands the need for deer culling. The Board thanked Mr. and Mrs. Yaecker for taking the time to attend the meeting.

Holden Arboretum – Master Plan Presentation

Clem Hamilton, Executive Director of Holden Arboretum, discussed the planning process for the Arboretum’s master plan. He explained that the plan was externally focused and that it took approximately five months of interviews and discussions. In the end, the information was winnowed to three specific goals: 1) growing trees in communities 2) conserving native forests and 3) engaging children with plants. The Holden staff then integrated these three ideas into all aspects of their operations.

The Board thanked Mr. Hamilton for the informative presentation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PARK UPDATES

Stafford Property

Mr. Curtin reported that David Ondrey, Park legal counsel, is drafting a deed to transfer the Charlotte Stafford property from the Geauga Park District Foundation to the Geauga Park District. The property, consisting of 31 acres off Mulberry Road in Chester Township, was bequeathed to the Foundation by Ms. Stafford.

PERS Adjustment

Mr. Curtin informed the Board that a park ranger’s employment status was changed from part-time to fulltime three years ago. However, the ranger’s PERS status was never modified to reflect the change. The Park District will be making the necessary adjustments.

Park Projects

Mr. Curtin provided an update on the following park projects:

- Bass Lake dam improvements are complete.
- Improvements at Chickagami Park are complete.
- The Walter C. Best Preserve project is complete.

Volunteer Advisory Council

The Board was updated on the current status of the Volunteer Advisory Council. The current members of the Volunteer Advisory Council (VAC) voted unanimously on November 9, 2009 to dissolve the Council. This decision was made after it was determined there was not strong interest on the part of current volunteers to be involved in the VAC.

Mr. Leech made a motion to disband the Volunteer Advisory Council.

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

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

The Board expressed their appreciation to the Council for their work over the years and the valuable role they played in Geauga Park District’s volunteer program.

2010 Contracts

The Board was presented with a list of opening year contracts for 2010. Mr. Curtin explained that the contracts are included in the budget, which will be presented to the Board for approval in February.

Update on Observatory Park Donations

Mr. Curtin reported that the Observatory Park capital campaign is at \$871,276, with \$248,500 in outstanding pledges. Sponsors have been secured for the night garden, day garden, and refurbishing the Oberle telescope. A gift of \$10,000.00 was designated as an endowment for Observatory Park.

Robert Keesecker, Development Officer, has been in discussion with the Cleveland Foundation to establish a planned giving program which will be implemented through the Geauga Park District Foundation.

Grandview Property

Paul Pira, Park Biologist, provided a presentation to the Board on the Clean Ohio grant application for the Grandview property. Mr. Pira explained the ecological features of the site which includes riparian forests, wetlands and the state endangered Eastern Pond Mussel. The Board thanked Mr. Pira for his presentation and his assistance on the Clean Ohio grant application.

Proposed Plans – Orchard Hills Park, Observatory Park, Bass Lake Preserve, Chickagami Park

The Planning Department presented the Board with an overview of plans for the following parks:

- Orchard Hills Park - Plans for phase one include stream and wetland restoration, the construction of an entrance pergola, shelter, 60-car parking lot, and restroom. The \$1.9 million dollar project will be partially funded from a grant in the amount of \$525,000.00 from the Water Resources Restoration Sponsorship Program (WRRSP).
- Observatory Park - Plans for phase two include construction of the central plaza, public building, and observatory. The plans incorporate numerous green features, such as solar and green roof materials on the public buildings, waterless restrooms, cistern, and use of recycled materials. The preliminary estimate is \$1 million.
- Bass Lake - Two successful public input meetings were held. Plans call for construction of a combination shelter (similar to the one at Sunnybrook Preserve), a covered walk-way connecting the shelter to an existing heated restroom and the addition of parking lot lighting. The preliminary estimate is \$300,000.00.
- Chickagami Park - The bid for phase two improvements to Chickagami Park includes an octagonal shelter, entrance pergola, loop trail and restroom. The estimated cost is \$200,000. The Park District's operations department will construct a service road and individual camp sites.

The Board commented that they were pleased with the plans and the progress that has been made.

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT FOUNDATION REPORT

The Foundation trustees are scheduled to meet on December 10, 2009 at 5:30 p.m.

The Observatory Park capital campaign is moving forward.

CONTRACT REVIEW

There were no documents to review, as all projects are complete.

NEW BUSINESS

APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBER – JOHN LEECH

IN THE MATTER OF:) JUDGE CHARLES HENRY
THE APPOINTMENT OF A) NO. 13092
PARK BOARD MEMBER TO THE)
GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT) JOURNAL ENTRY

On this 17th day of November, 2009 the Court reappoints John Leech, 10149 Cedar Road, Chesterland, Ohio 44026, to a three year term on the Geauga County Park District Board of Commissioners commencing January 1, 2010 and ending on December 31, 2012.

Before entering upon the performance of his duties, said Commissioner shall take an oath to faithfully perform his duties of office and shall post bond for the faithful performance of the duties of office in a sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00). Such bond shall be approved and filed with the auditor of Geauga County.

The Commissioner herein appointed shall serve without commission, but shall be allowed actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of duties. This appointment is made in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 1545.05.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

CHARLES E. HENRY, PROBATE JUDGE
November 17, 2009

Mr. Curtin expressed his appreciation to Mr. Leech for his willingness to serve another term on the Board.

2010 RENTAL HOUSE FEES, RESOLUTION NO. 60-09

Mr. Curtin informed the Board that the current rental house fees are \$400.00 per month. The rate has been in effect for a number of years.

Mr. Leech commented that the low rental rate reflects the security and maintenance aspects provided by having a park employee live on park property. Based on these benefits, Mr. Leech suggested keeping the rental rates the same.

Mr. McCullough made a motion to maintain the rental house fees at \$400.00 per month.

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

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

COMMISSIONERS' TIME

Mr. Leech commented that it was interesting that Observatory Park's dark sky designation was mentioned in a recent article of the *Scotland News*. Kathy Hanes reported that she has received phone calls from astronomers in Ireland and England inquiring about Observatory Park in response to a presentation given at the International Dark Sky Association's Annual Conference in November.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – ROLL CALL

Mr. Leech moved to go into Executive Session at 4:56 p.m. for the purpose of discussing land acquisition and compensation of a public employee.

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

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

The Board returned from Executive Session at 5:27 p.m. Due to time constraints, employee compensation was not discussed. The Board indicated that they will reconvene into Executive Session later in the meeting to discuss compensation of a public employee.

The following land acquisition issue was brought forward for resolution:

Montville Township

Mr. Leech moved to authorize the Executive Director to enter into negotiations for real property located in Montville Township.

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

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

EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION

Mr. Curtin presented the Board with a survey from other park districts and cities regarding current wage schedules. A discussion was held regarding employee compensation for 2010.

Mr. Leech commented that the Board would like to recognize employees for their hard work, but given the current economic situation and the fact that Geauga County employees will not be receiving wage increases, it may not be appropriate to give park employees an increase at this time. Mr. Leech asked if there were other ways to compensate employees rather than giving them an increase.

Sherry Bosworth, Business Affairs Director, and Michele Pennell, Accountant, both commented that the proposed budget includes wage increases for 2010. It was suggested that providing bonus days for employees in lieu of a wage increase with a cash payout at the end of the year might be an option.

No consensus was reached and it was determined that the matter would be discussed at a special board meeting when all board members could be present.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – ROLL CALL

Mr. Leech moved to go into Executive Session at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of discussing compensation of a public employee.

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

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

The Board returned from Executive Session at 6:31 p.m. There were no items brought forward for resolution.

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 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