

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
August 11, 2014**

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held August 11, 2014 at the Meyer Center, Big Creek Park, Chardon Twp. Ohio. The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. President Mary Ruth Shumway was in the Chair. Commissioners Louis Mucci and Brian Johnston were present

President Mary Ruth Shumway called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

John Oros, Interim Director	Keli Keyes, Geauga County Resident
Anna McDonald, Executive Secretary	Jim & Gayle Wohlken, Geauga County Residents
Aaron Young, Director of Planning	Barbara Mallin, Lake County Resident
Michele Pennell, CFO	Julie Milliken, East Shore Unitarian
Robin Pilarczyk, Director of Human Resources	Ann & Frank Jacobson, Geauga County Resident
Paige Orvis, Director of Mkt. & Administrative Services	Matthew Sobel, Geauga County Resident
Paul Pira, Director of Natural Resource Management	Barbara Partington, Geauga County Resident
Brett Bellas, Maintenance Supervisor	Phil Gingrich, Geauga County Resident
Sandy Ward, Communications Specialist	Inga Schmidt, Bainbridge
Dennis Sloan, Ranger	Mark Shaver, Middlefield
Holly Sauder, Volunteer Coordinator	Jan & Richard Herwitz, Ashtabula County Residents
Emilie Gottsegen, Development Director	Ken Schmidt, Chardon
	John Hess, Burton
	Joan Francis, Munson
	Dorothy Lemmey, Chardon
	Sister Julie Boehnlein, Munson
	Mathew Valenick, Geauga County Birder/Photographer
	Debbi Mayo, Munson
	Kathryn Hanratty, Chardon
	Sandra & Ed Buckles, Troy
	Kathy Flora, Thompson
	Tom & Diane Jones, Wind in the Woods -Auburn
	Michele Long, Chesterland
	Paul Kiplinger & Susan Prior, S. Russell
	Dick Hoopes, Bainbridge
	Carol Palansky, East Claridon
	Kathleen Webb, Munson
	Karen Goodin, S. Russell
	Fred Welty, Newbury
	Robert Schwartz, Chardon
	John Augustine, Parkman
	Kate & Ray Ritchie, East Claridon
	Fred Dively, Hambden
	Shirley Schellentrager, Chardon
	Catherine & Elbert Whitright, Munson
	Bill Lestock, Munson
	Bill Fedor, Russell
	Tom Sterlekar

### **ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**

The Board was presented with minutes from the July 8, 2014 Board meeting. There were no questions from the Board.

Mr. Mucci made a motion to approve the July 8, 2014 Board meeting minutes as presented.

Mr. Johnston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion as approved 3-0.

Mr. Mucci	Yes
Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes

### **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS/QUESTIONS FROM GUESTS**

Mrs. Shumway stated that due to the large number in attendance, there would be no introduction of guests. Any questions not answered during the course of the meeting will be answered at the end of the Board meeting.

Mr. Mucci thanked all in attendance for taking the time to attend the meeting today and advised the Board tremendously appreciates the passion that all bring to the Park, everyone's input and that the conservation and preservation mission of the Park has not changed. Mr. Mucci expressed his understanding of the confusion over the Bylaws, as it relates to the section that lists activities and acknowledged the Board's wording and communication was far less than ideal on the intent of that section of the Bylaws. He stated there are potential zoning issues regarding localities trying to dictate how the Park uses its property. The addition of the activities was an attempt to put the Park District in a better position to defend itself should the District end up in conflict with a local municipalities. Mr. Mucci assured all that there are no plans or intention by any member of this Board or any staff person to be cutting forests, plowing under meadows or anything of that kind. Mr. Mucci stated he wanted to set the record straight so everyone understood it, and assured the group that the language in the Article will be revisited in an attempt to clarify it and is making a commitment to do better going forward.

Ed Buckles of Troy Township addressed the Board from podium advising that a group of individuals convened at Frohring Meadows to discuss the changes to the Bylaws. Below is a summary of information brought to the Board's attention by Mr. Buckles:

- The changes in the Bylaws appear to reduce the standards that this Park holds high by removing the language "visitors of the park have a better experience than expected", which is an indication that we are hoping to achieve mediocrity, not superiority. Mr. Buckles personal comment in this regard is that he understands there is some discussion about reducing the standards for the new Park Director, that he objects strongly to that and there is no reason for it when there are numerous educational institutions in the area that have qualified people that would be interested in the job.
- The change in the purpose in the introductory portion of the Bylaws – moving recreation up and preservation and protection down.
- Environmental issues: Protection of the headwaters of three major rivers running through Geauga Park District into Lake Erie. Protection of Frohring Meadows, one of the few locations in the State of Ohio for the nesting of the Virginia Rail.
- Permitting of Activities in the Park that are not recreational or compatible with passive recreational activities and the concerns regarding the safety, cost, supervision and control of these activities. Mr. Buckles added that many of the recreational activities listed are already covered by local township parks, and are not being used.
- The fastest growing outdoor activity in the U.S. is birding, and that the Geauga Park District has prime birding spots.
- Why the Park Board is making these changes after only six months – what is the drive, and the answers the group is getting are not reflected in the minutes.

- There was too much activity going on outside of Board meetings and that the Board should not be having conversations with the individuals outside of public forum. There were discussions between Mr. Mucci and Mr. Buckles regarding this point.
- The past use of the gun range at Chickagami Park and the necessary remediation to remove lead bullets posing to danger to the wildlife, and the possible re-use of the gun range without taking into account the liability and safety issues. Mr. Mucci stated that the gun range was not re-opened and there are on-going discussions with the Ranger Department on any future use.
- Cancellation of the Town Hall meetings, and the request that the Board set firm meeting dates and times that are convenient for the public to attend.
- A request that the Board has looked at its statutory obligations and statutory strengths regarding the reason for establishment of Parks.
- The fact that things are being done in the Park without the consideration of any legal obligations or restrictions that might be reflected in any land purchase agreements or gifts of land to the Park District.
- Mr. Buckles stated that Geauga County is a gem, not only to the people of Geauga County and surrounding areas, and the group wants the Board to be conscious of this.
- A request to the Board that they rescind the Bylaws that were changed a month ago, that a longer time is instituted between the bringing up of a motion and its consideration. That the Board limit conversations regarding changes to the Park District to public forum, and that the Board seek legal counsel in regard to the Bylaws, which by statute have to be for preservation of the Park system, and the appropriateness of the activities listed in the Bylaws. In addition, that the minutes reflect that the Board reviewed the deeds, easements or other legal impediments to activities and changes at Park properties.

Mr. Mucci thanked Mr. Buckles for the time he put into his presentation and confirmed the Board is very interested in hearing the input, and appreciated all in attendance that are here to show their support.

Sherry Bosworth, addressed the Board from the podium. Ms. Bosworth stated that as volunteer and during her 30-year career at the Park District she attended every Board meeting. Ms. Bosworth stated that many times the Park Board was challenged by townships regarding zoning laws, but the Board is not responsible to follow Township zoning laws as reflected in the Ohio Revised Code. Ms. Bosworth suggested that when monumental documents are brought forward by the Board it might consider posting them at the front desk for review by the public. Ms. Bosworth also suggested that a representative from interested organizations attend the Board meetings in order to listen. If a topic arises that the group would like to address, request time on the Agenda to do so.

Mr. Mucci thanked Ms. Bosworth for her time.

John Augustine, Parkman Township, addressed the Board from the podium.. Mr. Augustine stated that the Bylaws are a constitution and there should not be a lot of extraneous material in them. Mr. Augustine asked if he could count on one of the Board members to make a motion to rescind the Bylaws and return them to their previous state. Mr. Augustine further suggested that that action take place during this Board meeting.

Mr. Mucci stated the Board thanked everyone, and assured the group that their voices are being heard. He added that there were other items changed in the Bylaws, that would not be appropriate to rescind, but the Board will make a commitment that the Bylaws will be revisited to address the activities issue.

Mrs. Shumway thanked Mr. Augustine for the work he did on the telescope.

Mr. Augustine congratulated Mr. Johnston on his appointment. He added that that in conversation with Judge Grendell, he (Mr. Augustine) felt that the Judge was concerned about appointing a Park Commissioner who would be leaving for another political office right away and understood that Mr. Johnston was running for County Commissioner this fall. Mr. Johnston stated his Park Board term expires December 31<sup>st</sup> and if he were elected as a County Commissioner that term starts January 1<sup>st</sup>. He added that he was appointed for a six-month Park Commissioner term, and that it would not be an automatic appointment to another term, he would have to re-apply. Mr. Johnston gave an overview of his experience: 34 years in law enforcement, very active as a union

negotiator and member of the State Executive Board of the police union. He was advised that there have been some previous issues regarding the Rangers that have been costly and that with his experience in law enforcements, Union negotiations, as a member of the Burton Village finance committee where he was a councilman for 12 years, the Judge felt he would be able to assist with the Ranger Department.

Mr. Augustine further inquired as to Mr. Johnston's membership in organizations actively involved in protecting lands. Mr. Johnston informed that he is an active member of Ducks Unlimited, has used the Park District for years and is a long-time member of Holden Arboretum.

Sandy Buckles addressed the Board from the podium. Ms. Buckles stated that two members of the Board had been on the job for six months and that Mr. Johnston had only been on the Board for three weeks before the voting on the Bylaws. She stated when she was Education Chair for the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland it took her months to ascertain the history and purpose so that she could develop an education program that was in line with their mission statement. Ms. Buckles inquired how Mr. Johnston could vote on the Bylaws without knowing the background.

Mrs. Shumway stated that the Board understands and acknowledges the concerns. She added that the Board cannot make changes to the entire Bylaws at this point because of the financial provisions put into the Bylaws. Mr. Johnston stated there will be no oil and gas drilling in the Park.

Keli Keyes addressed the Board from the podium. No Fracking.

Carol Palansky, East Claridon, addressed the Board from the podium. Ms. Palansky stated that she does not think there is confusion about the Bylaws and she understands what the Board is saying about the changes regarding finance. She added that she had the privilege of meeting Don and Mary Lou Myers at their home, and Don Meyers mission and passion was conservation. She feels honor and tribute should be given to Don Myers and his family by keeping this park system focused on conservation and preservation. Ms. Palansky requested that the Board rescind the section of the Bylaws regarding recreation.

Craig Lanese, Bass Lake Community, addressed the Board from the podium. Mr. Lanese stated that for many years the Park District has been well supported by the passage of tax levies, and the Park District has been focused on conservation, protection and preservation. He added that there a flurry of activity to fix something that he does not believe is broken, and there is way too much hurry and not enough long range planning to fix something that is not broken. Mr. Lanese added that as taxpayers " we cannot appoint you, we cannot remove you – only Tim Grendell can do that – but we can vote with our wallets."

#### **VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH**

Mr. Johnston announced that the Park District Volunteer of the Month is Fred Dively, and invited him to the podium. Mr. Johnston announced that Fred and his wife, Jean, have volunteered with the Park District since 2003 Fred has put in more than 1,400 hours of volunteer time and has served on the Volunteer Advisory Committee as President. Mr. Johnston also shared a letter from Joe Slepko of West Operations who nominated Fred as Volunteer of the Month.

Mr. Dively stated that the Citizens of Geauga County are very fortunate – no matter where you live in the county you're only a few miles from a Park. He added that the Naturalist Department is second to none, and he has enjoyed working with them on the Nature Scopes program that puts binoculars in the hands of almost every second grader in the county, helping to open up the world of nature for them. Mr. Dively commended West Operations and Holly Sauder, Volunteer Coordinator, for the work they perform. Mr. Dively thanked the Board and all those in attendance at the Board meeting.

Mr. Mucci made a motion to enter the following Volunteer of the Month Certificate honoring Fred Dively into the record:



Mr. Johnston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3 – 0:

Mr. Mucci	Yes
Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes

**PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

The Board was provided with a copy of the July 2014 Financial Statement. Ms. Pennell provided an overview to the Board. Mr. Mucci inquired as to what the Royalties under ‘Revenues and Other Sources’ were from. Ms. Pennell advised they are royalties from gas wells that where on properties when acquired by the Park District. There were no other questions.

Gauga Park District  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT - MONTH ENDED JULY 31, 2014

<b><u>GENERAL FUND</u></b>	
<b>BEGINNING FUND BALANCE JULY 1, 2014</b>	<b>5,673,560.81</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES &amp; OTHER USES</b>	
	229,397.16
Medicare	3,327.49
Dental /Hospitalization	47,275.64
PERS (June payment)	33,021.40
Vouchers	71,142.94
<b>EXPENDITURES &amp; OTHER USES</b>	<b>384,164.63</b>
<b>REVENUES &amp; OTHER SOURCES</b>	
<u>General Tax Collections</u>	
- Real Estate Tax (1st half settlement)	0.00

- State Reimburse Tax (10% rollback) 0.00

Grants 0.00

Investment Income 144.10

Gifts & Donations 8,770.98

- Land Stewardship -\$300.00, Patron Donations - \$ 49.98
- Chip Henry Institute - \$500.00, Naturescopes- \$1,121.00
- Nassau - \$3,000.00, NAF - \$2,700.00, Memorial Bench - \$1,000.00
- Memorial Paver - \$100.00

Fees

- Camping 560.00  
- Shelters 200.00  
- NAF Table Fees 2,685.00  
- Utility fees 90.00  
- Adventure Camp registration fees 1,350.00  
- X-Treme Days Camp registration fees 840.00  
- Programs - Out-of-county 2,250.00  
- Programs - OP Planetarium programs 106.00

Sales

- Tapper's Treasures - MC 125.12  
- Tree Tops - TWW 600.84  
- Syrup Sales 0.00  
- Credit Card - All facilities 762.97

Other Receipts

- Annual driveway lease payment from Hi-Tech Extrusion for MHT 1,000.00  
- GPD Foundation rental space/equipment 212.18  
- Observatory house - Sindelar 300.00  
- Swine Creek house - Harry 400.00  
- Burton Wetlands house- Kolar 400.00  
- Hyde house - Krigbaum 400.00  
- Chickagami house - Maksim 400.00  
- Refund - Ohio Cat for cost of roller assembly 133.31  
- Jury Duty stipend 135.00  
- Local Government Funds 7,522.38  
- Auction Proceeds - Ford Explorer - G.Petersen 2,000.00

**REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES 31,387.88**

**ENDING FUND BALANCE AS OF JULY 31, 2014 3,320,784.06**

**LAND IMPROVEMENT FUND**

**BEGINNING FUND BALANCE JULY 1, 2014 3,818,883.64**

**EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES**

**Vouchers 54,173.78**

<b>EXPENDITURES &amp; OTHER USES</b>	<b>54,173.78</b>
--------------------------------------	------------------

<b>REVENUES &amp; OTHER SOURCES</b>	
-------------------------------------	--

<u>Investment Income</u>	95.30
<u>Gifts &amp; Donations</u>	0.00
- GPD FDN- Observatory Phase III - Nassau	
<u>Transfer from General Fund</u>	0.00
<u>Grants Payments -</u>	12,659.00
- Nature Works Grant - BAK - Middlefield Wetland Acquisition	
<u>Royalties/In-Lieu Fees</u>	968.99
- Sunnybrook - \$31.61, Ford-Windsor - \$113.82 , Hehmeyer - \$78.21	
- Farley- \$745.35	
<u>Other Revenue</u>	0.00

<b>REVENUES &amp; OTHER SOURCES</b>	<b>13,723.29</b>
-------------------------------------	------------------

<b>ENDING FUND BALANCE AS OF JULY 31, 2014</b>	<b>\$3,778,433.15</b>
--	-----------------------

<b><u>RETIREMENT RESERVE ACCOUNT</u></b>	-
--	---

<b>BEGINNING FUND BALANCE JULY 1, 2014</b>	<b>\$82,421.62</b>
--	--------------------

<b>EXPENDITURES &amp; OTHER USES</b>	<b>0.00</b>
--------------------------------------	-------------

<b>Vouchers</b>	-
-----------------	---

<b>REVENUES &amp; OTHER SOURCES</b>	<b>2.13</b>
-------------------------------------	-------------

<u>Investment Income</u>	2.13
--------------------------	------

<u>Transfer from General Fund</u>	0.00
-----------------------------------	------

<b>ENDING FUND BALANCE AS OF JULY 31, 2014</b>	<b>\$82,423.75</b>
--	--------------------

**PURCHASE REQUISITION PRE-APPROVALS**

The Board was presented with a list of outstanding Purchase Requisitions for pre-approval in the amount of \$24,895.66 . There were no questions from the Board.

Mr. Mucci made a motion to approve the August 2014 purchase requisitions.

Mr. Johnston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3 – 0:

Mr. Mucci	Yes
Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes

**PRESENTATION OF VOUCHERS**

The Board was presented with the vouchers paid during the month of July 2014 in the amount of \$438,338.41. These vouchers represent the normal day-to-day operational expenses, approved budgeted expenses and payroll. There were no questions by the Board.

Mr. Mucci made a motion to accept the July 2014 paid vouchers into the record.

Mr. Johnston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3 – 0:

Mr. Mucci	Yes
Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC -** Below are comment summaries:

Kathy Hanratty, Chardon Township, addressed the Board from the podium. Ms. Hanratty stated the Geauga Park District has done a magnificent job for many years of protecting and preserving our parks and is glad to hear that this commitment will not change. She added that the Parks don't need to be all things to all people and when that is tried, nothing is done well. Ms. Hanratty stated that in addition to revising the statement of activities, the Board should look at rescinding the Bylaws, especially the Statement of Purpose and returning the primary purpose of the Park to preservation, conservation and protection.

Ken Schmidt, Hambden Township, addressed the Board from the podium. Mr. Schmidt stated that it is illegal for any non-state agency to mention drilling because the state has taken it to state level and denied local government to say anything, either pro or con. He added there are many activities listed that are non-recreational and that soon as you try to make a list all-inclusive; it is not all-inclusive, because all people have different ideas of what recreation is. Mr. Schmidt stated that motorized vehicles are incompatible with the Park, due to the layout of the trails (winding, hills), and it would be dangerous to allow them on the same trails with walkers. Mr. Schmidt feels that hunting is incompatible with anything else in the Parks, and individuals in certain clothes could be mistaken by a hunter for a deer.

John Hess, Troy Township, addressed the Board from the Podium. Mr. Hess stated that a sweeping statement regarding conservation would be more effective than a list of activities, and that the all have agreed that language is very poorly constructed, and is not the best for the Parks, the people of Geauga County or nature. Mr. Hess asked the Board what the next steps would be and who would be willing to specifically make a motion to remove the recreational list from the new Bylaws. Mr. Mucci explained that the Bylaws contain a very specific procedure that must be followed to change them, and that changes to Bylaws need to be presented in writing, and cannot be voted on until the next meeting. Mr. Mucci stated that he will speak with the attorney that is handling the zoning issues, and the language will be addressed to clarify the communication to confirm that the primary mission of conservation and preservation is still there, yet not weaken the Park District's position in any future zoning issues. Mr. Mucci added that there is a tendency to connect recreation with the list of activities and this is where our communication was less than ideal – they are totally separate. Mr. Hess stated that oil drilling in the Park District is very disturbing to him. Mr. Mucci confirmed Mr. Johnston's statement that oil drilling will be taken out.

Jennifer Salo, Ohio Horsemen's Council, addressed the Board from the podium. Ms. Salo shared the Geauga Chapter of Ohio Horsemen's Association mission statement with the group: "The mission of the Geauga County Chapter shall be to unite and educate the horse people and promote horse activities in Ohio, and to further promote the development and usage of the bridle trails in Geauga County, specifically within the Geauga County Park District." Ms. Salo suggested education be introduced to the public on the usage and co-existence of shared trails so all are aware of trail hierarchy, and possible signage with guidelines for hikers and bikers when encountering horses on a trail.



Ann Jacobsen, South Russell Township, addressed the Board from the podium. Ms. Jacobsen stated her concern is that the list of stated recreational activities arises from a re-visioning of the purpose of Geauga Park District, and that the Park District now has a Statement of Purpose, not a Mission Statement. She added that the original Mission Statement was in line with the O.R.C. statute relating to why the Park District was created, and that recreation is not in the original mission statement, it is not in the statute and that to reconfigure (add) a purpose is in violation of what the statute says.

Bill Lestock, Bass Lake- Munson Twp, addressed the Board from the podium. Mr. Lestock stated that there were two pontoon boats on Bass Lake on Sunday, both of which have gas motors. One of the boats was pulling kids around on rafts. He added this is not the nature of why he moved to Bass Lake and asked that this be addressed immediately. The Board and Mr. Oros confirmed it will be addressed and Ms. Shumway asked the public to call the Park District immediately if they observe such activities. Mr. Oros advised the public to call the Park District main number (440.286.9516) and the Ranger Department would be notified.

Debbie Mayo, Munson Twp., addressed the Board from the podium. Ms. Mayo stated that what she is hearing from all in attendance, as well as from the Board, is that the vision of the Park going forward is to preserve not only the Parks, but Geauga County and Ohio. She added we have an obligation to protect the rivers that run into Lake Erie, and that we live in a jewel. Ms. Mayo suggested that going forward- to preserve the integrity of Ohio, Geauga County, of our homes, towns and the quality of our lives, that the Board take into serious consideration how to preserve the Parks and maintain this precious jewel, and not change what has been achieved in the last 54 years.

Julie Milliken, addressed the Board from the podium. Ms Milliken inquired as to the name of the attorney referenced by Mr. Mucci. Mr. Mucci advised: John Slagter of Buckingham, Doolittle and Burroughs. Ms. Milliken also asked the Board, with their contemplation of drilling for oil and gas, what company the Park District is negotiating with. Mr. Mucci advised that the Park District is not contemplating drilling for oil and gas and there have been no discussions with any oil and gas companies.

Mr. Buckles presented the Board with a copy of the minutes from the August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 meeting held at Frohring Meadows and asked that they be entered into the minutes. Mrs. Shumway instructed that the information be entered into the Board minutes. SEE ATTACHMENT "A" – ***Protect Geauga Parks Grassroots***

#### **PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS - BESSIE BENNER METZENBAUM PARK**

The Board was provided with information they requested for a preliminary concept to provide additional equipment at Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park playground for those with physical challenges. The Board was provided with two cost options. Mrs. Shumway requested Mr. Young explain the two options. Mr. Young stated that the items chosen were quoted through the State Bid Purchasing Contract run by the State of Ohio, which eliminates the need for bidding. One option is to purchase components only, with installation by Park District employees. The other option would be purchase the components and contract outside the Park District for installation. Mr. Oros informed that each Park District Department submits an Annual Plan of Operations (APO), and this project is not on the 2014 plan. He requested that this project be delayed until it can be completely vetted through the planning process and included in a future Annual Plan of Operations.

#### **PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS - 2014 CONSTRUCTION COST SUMMARIES**

The Board was provided with informational summaries on 2014 construction project costs to date. Mr. Young provided updates on Maple Highlands Trail –Chardon Connector, Maple Highlands Trail – South and the Nassau Connector Trail at Observatory Park advising all should be complete by the end of October, weather permitting.

#### **PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS – NASSAU STATION RESTORATION**

The Board was provided with an update from project architects Westlake Reed Leskosky including preliminary drawings. There were no questions.

### **PARK UPDATES – HUNTING PROGRAM**

The Board was provided with a 2014-15 Controlled Hunting Overview and Recommendations from the Natural Resource Management Department. Mr. Pira advised that the Park District has had a controlled hunting program since 2006, in response to deer-associated problems due to over population of deer. Mr. Pira clarified that the properties on which archery hunting is permitted are not open to the public, and Public Parks where firearm hunting is scheduled will be closed to the public on days the hunting occurs.

Mr. Pira provided an overview on this year's program advising that 652 applications have been received, a random lottery drawing will be held to choose the hunters, that all hunters must qualify to participate and that qualifications for both archery and firearms will be held at Great Lakes Outdoor Supply. Mr. Pira added that the same properties that were hunted last year will be utilized again. Mr. Pira informed that hunters are requested to submit information on their hunting (time spent, deer culled), and all archery hunters are required to call the Ranger Department the day before, or the day their scheduled hunt to advise where and when he/she will be hunting.

There were discussions regarding non-lead vs. lead ammunition being used for hunting on Park property, with Mr. Pira advising that the Park District paralleled ODNR guidelines and Ranger Sloan providing input on the challenges to the Park District, and the public, if it were to require copper ammunition for firearms hunting

Bill Kennedy, Newbury Township, addressed the Board. Mr. Kennedy inquired if there were statistics on the number of deer harvested each year and what is done with the deer meat. He stated that if the Mission is to preserve and protect the animals of the county, deer qualified as animals. He added that if the Parks are closed for hunting, he cannot use that Park for walking. Mr. Pira explained that the Park District utilizes hunting as a method to balance plants and animals, and that part of the Natural Resource Management Department's responsibility is to monitor the impact of deer to Park properties as a result of deer browse. He added that harvest statistics are available, that Park District hunters harvest deer for the meat and that ethical treatment of deer is expected of all hunters.

### **PARK UPDATES – TOWN HALL MEETINGS**

Mrs. Shumway put forth the suggestion to distribute a county-wide survey before the Town Hall meetings in order to compile more detailed input from county residents on what they want. Mr. Mucci stated that Town Hall meetings were scheduled to go first, but agreed with Mrs. Shumway that in light of the heightened public awareness on activities of the Park District, a survey to all registered voters may be a better way to proceed at this time. Mr. Mucci requested that Park District staff discuss and get back to the Board with their opinion on the best way to proceed.

In response to questions on the need for a survey, Mrs. Shumway stated that the survey is for use by the Strategic Planning Department to help determine priorities for park improvement. Mr. Young confirmed that the Park works in 10 year cycles, with the current cycle ending in 2015. Current approved projects, such as Headwaters and Frohring Meadows Park improvements, are from previous Strategic Plans and based on input from the public that it would like more amenities at these Parks. The Strategic Plan process the Park District is working on will be for 2015 and beyond, and will include input from the public on what it would like to see from the Park District in the next 10 years.

The Board partook in dialogue with the public regarding the Strategic Plan process.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS – BUDGET AMENDMENT #7, RESOLUTION NO. 18-14**

The Board was asked to approve Resolution No. 18-14, Supplemental Appropriations Budget Amendment No. 7 to the 2014 Budget, for an Appropriations Transfer of \$716.00 from the General Fund-Worker's Compensation Account to Unemployment Account, and a Supplemental Appropriation to add additional appropriations of \$5,000.00 into the General Fund and \$15,000.00 into the Land Improvement Fund.

The Appropriations Transfer will be transferred from the Funds and Accounts shown below:

**General Fund (6017)**

***\$716.00 – From Workers’ Compensation Account (6017-057-00-505) to Unemployment Account (6017-057-00-506)***

- To move \$716.00 in appropriations from the Workers’ Compensation account which has a balance of \$15,286.93 remaining after the annual payment for this benefit to the Unemployment account which has a \$6.00 balance and a cash transfer is required to pay for the June unemployment charges of \$724.00 for former employee R. Mast.

The Supplemental Appropriation will be added to the Fund and Accounts shown below:

**General Fund (6017)**

***\$5,000.00 - Contracts - Services Account (6017-057-00-601)***

- To increase appropriations budgeted for HVAC services based on the unexpected repairs at TWWNC, MC and SC which have depleted the amended budget of \$10,000.00.

**Land Improvement Fund (6015)**

***\$15,000 – Contracts – Projects Account (6015-057-00-603)***

- To increase appropriations for an unbudgeted project at Sunnybrook Preserve to remove a trail and install some landscaping.

Total budget appropriations (including carryover encumbrance appropriations) for the General fund after these additions will be changed to \$6,171,639.77 and \$1,209,664.81 for the Land Improvement Fund for the 2014 Fiscal year.

Mr. Mucci made a motion to approve Resolution No. 18-14 to transfer appropriations of \$716.00 from the General Fund-Worker’s Compensation Account to Unemployment Account, and to add appropriations of \$5,000.00 into the General Fund and \$15,000.00 into the Land Improvement Fund.

Mr. Johnston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3 – 0:

Mr. Mucci	Yes
Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes

**SURPLUS PROPERTY**

The Board was asked to approve the following as Surplus Property:

	Inventory No.	Description	Starting Bid
1	-	APC Battery Backup ES750 (Item defective)	scrap
2		Playground Equipment-Swine Creek Woods Edge	scrap
3	2107 V	2007 Ford Explorer-GV 6367	\$5,000

Mr. Mucci made a motion to approve the items declared surplus as presented.

Mr. Johnston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3 – 0:

Mr. Mucci	Yes
Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes

**PARK UPDATES – JOHN OROS**

**WESTERN RESERVE LAND CONSERVANCY:** Keith McClintock of Western Reserve Land Conservancy would like to present to the Board on past and possible future land acquisition partnerships. The Board requested that Mr. Oros schedule the presentation

**VILLAGE OF MIDDLEFIELD:** Mr. Oros advised that he has had communications with the Village of Middlefield’s Economic Development Director regarding the possibility of transferring Village property to the Park District, in exchange for paving the MHT-South aggregate trail. There were discussions regarding who would be responsible for payment of the conversion; environmental issues/permits that would be required; Amish use of the trail and the impact to Geauga County Horsemen’s Group which prefers aggregate trails.

**HUNTING PROGRAM:** The lottery for hunters is taking place, and communications to hunters chosen will go out this week.

**DEPARTMENT OF AGING:** The Geauga County Department of Aging has offered \$5,500.00 for a Honda Civic previously declared Surplus by the Board with a starting bid of \$6,100. Ms. Pennell advised that it is permissible for the Park District to sell the vehicle to a non-profit or other county entity without going through the bid process. The Board agreed to this action on property they previously declared surplus.

**NASSAU STATION UPDATE BY NATURALIST DAN BEST:** Mr. Best provided a brief update on the June 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the volunteer Technical Advisory Group (TAG) advising that they are assisting with the rehabbing of the 36” telescope, providing input on displays and programming and will help institute collaborations with other institutions that promote astronomy and science.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Mucci made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel issues.

Mr. Johnston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3 – 0:

Mr. Mucci	Yes
Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes

The Board entered Executive Session at 11:44 a.m.

Mr. Mucci made a motion to come out Executive Session.

Mr. Johnston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3 – 0:

Mr. Mucci	Yes
Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes

The Board came out of Executive Session at 1:01 p.m. There were no items brought forward.

Mr. Mucci made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Johnston seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3 – 0:

Mr. Mucci	Yes
Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes

The meeting was adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

**SUNSHINE LAW COMPLIANCE**

It is declared that notification of this meeting and any business conducted therein by the Geauga Park District Board of Commissioners was in compliance with Ohio’s Sunshine Laws.

Respectfully submitted,

---

John Oros, Interim Director

---

Mary Ruth Shumway, President

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Exhibit “A”: Entered into the meeting minutes as part of the record. Minutes of August 9<sup>th</sup> Protect Geauga Parks Grassroots meeting, presented by Ed Buckles

Exhibit “B”: Communication to the Board from Kathryn Hanratty.

**EXHIBIT "A"**

**Protect Geauga Parks Grassroots**

The meeting scheduled to be held at 9:00 AM Saturday August 9, 2014 (prior to the 10 AM interview by the Geauga Times Courier and other local papers reporter, Joseph Koziol, Jr.) began on time with 27 people in attendance and a few arriving later. At least 12 Geauga County Townships were represented plus two individuals from neighboring counties. The attendees represented a variety of activities in the park-horseback riding, birding, wild flowers and other native plants, hiking, photography, butterfly identification, fishing, picnicking, and volunteering, etc.

It was generally agreed that as many people as are able should attend the up-coming meeting of the Board of the Geauga County Park District, currently and abruptly scheduled for 9:00 AM Monday, August 11 at the Meyer Center at Big Creek. One attendee suggested that we call the park district office after 8:00 AM on Monday morning to be certain that there had not been another schedule change.

**Concerns expressed were severalfold but in general order of importance were:**

**Environmental concerns**

**Process and transparency issues by the Board activities and procedures**

**Use of park facilities especially, but not exclusively, as related to the environment**

**Legal issues related to whether the Board had considered deed, grant, easement, and donation restrictions imposed or assumed by the donors of land or funds**

The purpose of the parks, according to Ohio state law, is primarily to preserve the natural environment. This may be especially critical in our area as we are the headwaters of the Chagrin, Grand and Cuyahoga Rivers. Moreover there is a human need for quiet, open spaces. We are all enriched by the plants and animal species in our area, some of them unique. With land in Geauga County being developed rapidly, now is the time to expand not contract preservation. Orchard Hills Park was reclaimed from a golf course not visa versa. The creation of additional recreation areas or the expansion of activities which destroy these resources is not a matter to be quickly and summarily dismissed by a new and inexperienced Board.

Activities that should be encouraged are those of a passive nature- in a cliché expression- take only pictures, leave only footprints. All activity in the Park has some negative impact on the "natural" order, but some substantially less than others. Activities should be compatible with preservation and with the activities of other park users (horseback riding and ATVs, mountain biking and dirtbikes do not mix). Moreover many of the activities contemplated by the Board might entail substantial expenditure for trails, equipment, maintenance, supervision and ranger time. Will the park rangers have to enforce DUI issues? Night snowmobiling? Firerange monitoring (with ultimate land remediation for lead shot as occurred at Chickagam!) Are there new liability responsibilities to be insured against? While lumped together as one and two, environment and use, in this summary, that consolidation has been for flow of report and clarity only.

The second most important concern of the attendees, after environmental/preservation issues, was the process and procedure of the new Board in its general activities and, in particular, the revision of the by-laws to deemphasize quality of experience in the Parks, place recreation on an even footing with preservation, and to allow for new detrimental activities without thoughtful consideration and ample opportunity for community involvement. More than once in many forms the question was raised- "Why now?" Why after only six months of experience? What is the driving force?"

Several answers have been provided by various Board members to individuals at the meeting - a survey was conducted (this later amended to "will be conducted"); people have written or called (but all input to the Board, in our opinion, should be in public meetings not private conversations); there are zoning problems with some townships (this is not reflected in the minutes but responded to by Mr. Mucci regarding the proposed list of activities in an email- "It's sole reason for inclusion was a response to several ongoing local zoning issues concerning Park properties. Several local government entities are, or have attempted, to control what uses the Park can do with property located in their town. This is a usurpation of the Park's authority to use its lands, paid for with all county resident tax dollars, for their own local preference as opposed to what is in the best interest of the Park District and all county tax payers. By including an exhaustive list of possible uses in our bylaws we improve our ability to deal with potential zoning conflicts. It is not a list of currently planned activities.")

Moreover, the parks and the Park Board are by Ohio statute not subservient to local and county governments.

Meetings of the Board have been moved at the last minute to less convenient times, different locations and in the case of the August 2014 meeting, to a totally different day and time than has been the practice of the Board. Town Hall Meetings to get input on the 2015-2025 Strategic Plans for the Geauga County Parks and posted in a detailed list of dates and locations on the Parks website have now been removed and in effect canceled.

There has been no reasonable explanation of why the Park must provide playing fields, etc (at a cost to the taxpayers) when township and school facilities of the same nature are readily available and unused.

Was the Amish community, a substantial user and neighbors of the Parks, considered?

*The minutes of the Board do not reflect any dissatisfaction with the Parks or any input from residents.*

All of this has contributed to a distrust of the process and of the intentions of the Board. The Board needs to take steps to allay these concerns.

Further it was the consensus that the Board has not adhered to the enabling laws of the state of Ohio which not only specifies that Parks can be created with the primary mission of protecting the natural environment of the state and that Boards may amend their by-laws only insofar as those amendments further such preservation and protection. We believe these new by-laws to be in contravention of those statutes.

The last concern expressed was as to the donors to the Parks, living and dead. Has the Board considered that there may be restrictions on land use imposed by the terms of gifts (either in money or in land) and grants to the Park. Many people have contributed to the Parks since their founding. There could be legal liability associated with violating the terms of those gifts. Moreover the horseback riding community has contributed time, money, land and effort into the Parks with the reasonable expectations (perhaps legal force) that their activities will not be curtailed. There is no indication in the minutes of the Board that legal or ethical restrictions were considered.

Based upon these concerns (environmental, process, use, legal) the group will ask the Geauga Parks Commissioners to show good faith with the community by:

- 1) Rescinding the by-law changes (except as to financial management) including but not limited to the list of proposed activities.
- 2) Instituting a longer time and a better communication network to advise the community of proposed changes
- 3) Require all communication with the Park Commissioners related to Park business and activities to be at a public forum.
- 4) Seek proper legal counsel before any by-laws are proposed as to the appropriateness of the activities allowed in the Parks and as to any deed, easement, gift or other legal impediments to the activities allowed at any individual location and the Parks in general.

At 10 AM the reporter, Joseph Koziol, Jr., arrived. The above concerns and requests were communicated to him during his interview with the group. A number of people responded to his questions with those concerns expressed in a variety of ways and many illustrated with personal anecdotes about the Geauga Parks and especially about the quality of the Parks compared to others in the area. Several recounted the poor experiences other parks have had trying to institute some of the activities outlined in the revised by-laws of the Geauga Park District. In general people were deeply concerned that actions would be undertaken peremptorily by this Board which will permanently and irrevocably damage this great asset.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30 pm.



EXHIBIT "B"

August 11, 2014

Preserving land and protecting the habitat of threatened species is a magnificent investment in the future And the DUTY of the Public County Parks in Ohio.

It is imperative that we have protected places where the public can appreciate the peace and beauty of nature. Public County Parks are often the only places where people have the opportunity to contemplate their personal role as a part of a natural system. It is well documented that children thrive when they have the opportunity to get out in the woods. Public Parks provide that opportunity.

Improved quality of life, better health for residents and cleaner air and water are all benefits of the land preserved by the Geauga County Parks. The Wetlands preserved by the park help to absorb rain water and allow it to percolate deep into the aquifer. In addition to keeping our wells supplied, this helps to prevent erosion and flooding, which are incredibly costly. Our protected lands also act as the lungs and kidneys of an ecosystem, filtering out pollutants and providing oxygen. Geauga County is the home of the headwaters of 3 Rivers that flow to Lake Erie. Protected areas in Geauga Co. Parks and preserves sustain a healthier Lake Erie, which has an enormous impact on the economic health and vitality of the entire region. So our parks are doing PLENTY!!! The parks do not need to be all things to all people. People don't go to church looking for a beer bash and people should realize that you don't go to the County Park looking for amusement park rides, football games or ATV trails. There are plenty of places for those things – but they do NOT belong in a County Park District.

Kathryn Hanratty  
9059 Auburn Rd.  
Chardon, OH 44024