

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
December 9, 2014**

The regular meeting of the Geauga Park District Board was held December 9, 2014 at The West Woods Nature Center, Russell Twp., Ohio. The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. President Mary Ruth Shumway was in the Chair. Commissioners Brian Johnston and William Gertz were present.

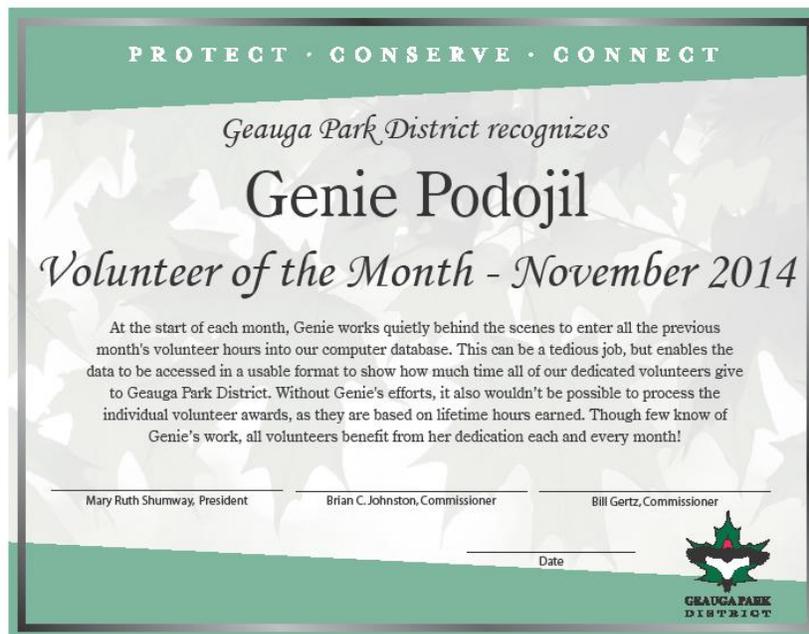
President Mary Ruth Shumway called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

<b>Park District Employees</b>	<b>GUESTS</b>
John Oros, Interim Director	See EXHIBIT "A"
Anna McDonald, Executive Administrative Assistant	
Aaron Young, Director of Planning & Operations	
Michele Pennell, Director of Business & Visitor Services	
Robin Pilarczyk, HR Manager	
Matt McCue, Planning & NRM Manager	

Mrs. Shumway announced that a letter from Judge Grendell would be read and entered into the record. Ms. McDonald read the letter – See EXHIBIT "B".

**VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH**

Mr. Johnston introduced the November Volunteer of the Month, Genie Podojil, and relayed information on the extensive and important work Ms. Podojil performs to track and document the volunteer hours for the Geauga Park District. The following Certificate of Appreciation was read into the record and presented to Ms. Podojil with thanks from the Park Board and employees of Geauga Park District.



**ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**

The Board was presented with minutes from the November 5, 2014 Board meeting. There were no questions from the Board.

Mr. Johnston made a motion to accept the November 5, 2014 Board meeting minutes as presented. Mrs. Shumway seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3-0.

Mrs. Shumway Yes  
Mr. Johnston Yes  
Mr. Gertz Yes

**PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

The Board was provided with a copy of the November 2014 Financial Statement. Ms. Pennell advised that a draft of the 2015 final budget has been provided to the Board for their review and that approval of the budget will be requested at the January 2015 Board meeting.

Ms. Pennell provided an overview of the Financial Statement and explanation of the three funds outlined in the Statement to the Board, and a brief explanation on the approval thresholds and process for payment of vouchers. All questions by the Board were satisfactorily answered.

Mr. Johnston made a motion to enter the Financial Statement into the record as presented. Mr. Gertz seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3-0.

Mrs. Shumway Yes  
Mr. Johnston Yes  
Mr. Gertz Yes

**Geauga Park District  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT MONTH ENDED  
November 30, 2014**

**GENERAL FUND**

**BEGINNING FUND BALANCE NOVEMBER 1, 2014 7,023,573.14**

**EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES**

Personnel 210,098.69  
Medicare 3,012.60  
Dental /Hospitalization (Includes COBRA reimbursement) 46,115.41  
OPERS (October payment to be posted in December) 0.00  
Unemployment Transfers 836.00  
Vouchers 77,031.99

**EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES 337,094.69**

**REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES**

*Investment Income* 312.42  
*Gifts & Donations* 2,383.61  
- TWWNC Bench & Paver - \$1,200.00, Naturescopes - \$910.00  
- Unrestricted - \$58.11, Judge Grendell sponsorship - \$215.50

Fees

- Camping	120.00
- Utility fees	1,470.00
- Workshops - General - Public program	437.00
- Programs - Out-of-county	66.00
- Programs - OP Planetarium programs	16.00

Sales

- Tapper's Treasures - MC	32.40
- Tree Tops - TWW	1,027.03

Other Receipts

- 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	
- Citation Disbursement - \$89.00 Damage reimbursement \$50.00 citation		139.00

Other

- Walmart reimbursement for tax \$.20, Public records request - \$1.26		1.46
- Local Government Funds	8,146.23	
- Auction Proceeds -cordless phone	10.00	

**REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES 16,273.33**

**ENDING FUND BALANCE AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2014 6,702,751.78**

**LAND IMPROVEMENT FUND**

**BEGINNING FUND BALANCE NOVEMBER 1, 2014 3,564,459.55**

**EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES**

Vouchers	314,808.58
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**EXPENDITURES & OTHER USES 314,808.58**

**REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES**

<u>Investment Income</u>	155.98
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<u>Grants Payments -</u>	4,600.00
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- LWCF Grant Reimbursement - BAK - Middlefield Wetland Acquisition

<u>Royalties/In-Lieu Fees</u>	1,226.98
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- Hehmeyer - \$155.06, Ford Windsosr - \$1024.59

- Sunnybrook - \$47.33

Other -

- Cleveland Plumbing refund of pipe returned	926.40
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**REVENUES & OTHER SOURCES 6,909.36**

**ENDING FUND BALANCE AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2014 \$3,256,560.33**

**RETIREMENT RESERVE ACCOUNT**

<b>BEGINNING FUND BALANCE NOVEMBER 1, 2014</b>	<b>\$ 82,430.76</b>
<b>REVENUES &amp; OTHER SOURCES</b>	<b>3.55</b>
<i>Investment Income</i>	3.55
<b>ENDING FUND BALANCE AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2014</b>	<b>\$ 82,434.31</b>

**PURCHASE REQUISITION PRE-APPROVALS**

The Board was presented with a list of outstanding Purchase Requisitions for pre-approval in the amount of \$92,953.31, including some items from the 2015 budget, which approval is requested to insure continuity of projects prior to the final approval of the 2015 budget. Mrs. Shumway requested that records be kept on the rental of the Yanmar C30R to determine if it would be more cost effective to purchase. All additional questions by the Board were satisfactorily answered.

Mr. Johnston made a motion to approve the purchase requisition pre-approvals, in the amount of \$92,953.31.

Mrs. Shumway seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 2 – 0:

Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes
Mr. Gertz	Abstain

**PRESENTATION OF VOUCHERS**

The Board was presented with the vouchers paid during the month of November 2014 in the amount of \$651,903.27. These vouchers represent the normal day-to-day operational expenses, approved budgeted expenses and payroll. All questions by the Board were satisfactorily answered, or will be provided with the requested information.

Mrs. Shumway made a motion to accept the November 2014 paid vouchers into the record.

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

Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes
Mr. Gertz	Yes

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

The Board was provided with informational summaries on 2014 construction project costs to date. Mr. Young advised all 2014 projects are substantially complete and final paperwork is being processed. There were no questions by the Board.

Mr. Young provided information on proposed Park District projects for review. He added that this is the time to make revisions due to the fact that changes made after construction documents and contracts are complete will be much more costly. Mr. Young requested that any suggested revisions be e-mailed to him, John Oros or Matt McCue.

**HEADWATERS PARK IMPROVEMENTS**

The Board had numerous questions/comments on the proposed improvements including location of the playground, price of playground equipment, design of the covered shelter and the addition of

educational signage. Mr. Young gave an overview of State Requirements necessary for playground construction, and advised that State Bid is used for purchasing the playground equipment to insure the lowest cost possible. In discussion regarding the Boathouse improvements at Headwaters Park, the Board requested that the Park District look into to having a third-party manage canoe and kayak rentals versus the purchase of equipment and staffing of the rental facility, to determine the feasibility and possible cost savings to the Park District.

**FROHRING MEADOWS PHASE II**

Based on suggestions in Judge Grendell’s letter, Mr. Young requested that changes to the proposed improvements at Frohring Meadows be Board directed. Mrs. Shumway asked and received confirmation from Mr. Young that the proposed playground was based on past input from Geauga county residents. Mrs. Shumway reviewed the proposed changes which include an enclosed shelter with windows for bird watching, double garden area, sliding doors and themed playground. There were discussions on the target age for the playgrounds, type of roofing for the shelter, additional gardens and improvements to existing trails. All questions by the Board were satisfactorily answered.

**NASSAU STATION RENOVATION**

The Board was provided with information on the proposed Nassau Station project which included building, telescope and site renovations. Mr. Young stated that this project will cost approximately 1.3 million dollars and that it is scheduled for implementation in 2016 at the earliest. Mrs. Shumway requested an update on funds raised by the Foundation to date. Mr. Frenchie, of the Geauga Park District Foundation stated that the Foundation has achieved its goal of \$775,000.00 towards this project in cash and pledges.

**COUNTY-WIDE SURVEY CONSULTANT SERVICES PROPOSAL**

A proposal was put to the Board for approval for consultant services to assist with a county-wide survey for use in preparation of the Park District 2015-2015 Strategic Plan. Six requests for Proposals (RFP) were sent out and 3 complete proposals were received and reviewed.

Services	Triad Research Group	Market Vision Research	Ideas in Focus	Action Based Research	The Impact Group
Project Planning	\$500	\$2,500	\$2,500		
Survey Development	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$2,500		
Survey Programming & Testing	\$1,500	\$5,000	\$1,250		
Survey Awareness Campaign	\$700	GPD	\$2,500		
Field Survey	\$500	GPD	\$2,500		
Analysis & Reporting	\$4,500	\$9,500	\$3,750		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,700</b>	<b>\$19,500</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>		
Budget	\$10,500	\$10,500	\$10,500		
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$800</b>	<b>-\$9,000</b>	<b>-\$4,500</b>		

A recommendation was put forth to award the consulting services contract to Triad Research Group based on positive comments from professional references, the positive experience resulting from work Triad Research Group performed for the Park District in the past, and that Triad submitted the lowest proposal. Mr. McCue stated that Triad Research performed the 2008 Public Survey for the Park District.

Mr. Gertz made a motion to award the county-wide survey contract to Triad Research Group in the amount \$9,700.00.

Mrs. Shumway seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3-0.

Mrs. Shumway Yes  
 Mr. Johnston Yes  
 Mr. Gertz Yes

**APPOINTMENT OF PARK RANGER, RESOLUTION NO. 30-14**

The Board was asked to approve Resolution No. 30-14, approving the appointment of Edward Hunziker to the position of Ranger with the Geauga Park District.

Mr. Johnson made a motion to approve Resolution No. 30-14, approving the appointment of Edward Hunziker to the position of Ranger for the Geauga Park District.

Mrs. Shumway seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3-0.

Mrs. Shumway Yes  
 Mr. Johnston Yes  
 Mr. Gertz Yes

**CERTIFICATION OF FUNDS, RESOLUTION NO. 31-14**

The Board was requested to approve a Revenue Certification change based on actual YTD receipts for the following funds and accounts:

<b>6015 – Land Improvement</b>		<b>Certification Change</b>		
<b>Acct.#</b>	<b>Account Name</b>	<b>Current Budget</b>	<b>Requested Change</b>	<b>Amended Budget</b>
412	Federal Grants		62,900.00	62,900.00
413	State Grants		(4,483.96)	132,360.49

<b>6017 – General Fund</b>		<b>Certification Change</b>		
<b>Acct.#</b>	<b>Account Name</b>	<b>Current Budget</b>	<b>Requested Change</b>	<b>Amended Budget</b>
420.5701	Park Board Fees	46,230.00		47,980.00
420.5702	Fees – Park Sales	25,000.00		22,000.00
451	Donations	102,803.14		104,603.14
452.5701	Other Revenue	62,783.78		83,783.78

Mr. Gertz made a motion to approve the Revenue Certification change, Resolution No. 31-14 as presented.

Mrs. Shumway seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3-0.

Mrs. Shumway Yes  
 Mr. Johnston Yes  
 Mr. Gertz Yes

**PAYROLL AND ACCOUNTING AUTHORIZATION FORMS**

The Board was presented with copies of an Accounting Authorization Form and Payroll Authorization Form, which need to be filed yearly with the County Auditor to provide the Auditor with information on individuals who have authorization to sign payment requests for the Park District. Board President Mary Ruth Shumway will be required to sign the original forms prior to filing with the County Auditor. No other action is required by the Board.

**PRINTING AND MAILING SERVICES CONTRACT PROPOSAL**

A proposal was put to the Board for approval of 2015 printing and mailing services for the Geauga Park District’s newsletter and special mailings. Thirty-four (34) Requests for Proposals (RFP) were sent out, and requests were solicited online. Fifteen (15) proposals were received.

A recommendation was put forth to award the contract to HKM Direct Marketing Communications, in an amount of \$39,550.00, as it represented the best and lowest bid and based on positive comments from professional references regarding flexibility, reliability and quality.

There were Board discussions regarding awarding contracts to in-county versus out-of-county vendors, and a request was made by the Board to include information on the location (county) of the vendor, and vendor owner in the future.

Mr. Gertz made a motion to award the printing and mailing services contract to HKM Direct Communications in an amount of \$39,550.00.

Mrs. Shumway seconded the motion and after roll-call voice vote, the motion was approved 3-0.

- Mrs. Shumway Yes
- Mr. Johnston Yes
- Mr. Gertz Yes

**2015 PARK BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE**

The Board was presented with the 2015 Park Board meeting schedule, wherein regular Park Board meetings will be held the second Tuesday of each month at 3:30 p.m. at the Meyer Center located at Big Creek Park. No action was required by the Board.

**SURPLUS PROPERTY**

The Board was asked to approve the following as Surplus Property. All questions by the Board were satisfactorily answered.

Item	Inventory No.	Description	Starting Bid
1	-	Sharp copier	Scrap
2	1795 C	Nakajma typewriter	Scrap

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

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

- Mrs. Shumway Yes
- Mr. Johnston Yes
- Mr. Gertz Yes

### **COMMISSIONER'S TIME**

Mrs. Shumway requested that the location of 'horse only' trails be listed on the Park District website, and suggested a clinic be held for horse riders to assist in training horses that are ridden on shared use trails. Ms. Pennell advised that the Park District is in the early stages of working on a program for the horse enthusiast community which would be conducted by a trainer and held in an arena and on a Park District trail. Ms. Pennell requested suggestions on a location for the arena based portion of the program be forwarded to her attention.

Mrs. Shumway stated that the recommendations for park improvements come from Park District Staff and are presented to the Board for review and approval.

Mrs. Shumway advised that the Park District had a total of 6,386 hours of volunteer time which equated to an approximate value of \$136,660. She also commented on recent programs including the Mistletoe Market (a place where children can buy quality gifts at discounted prices) and the STAT – Stand Tall for American Troops – where volunteers constructed over 250 arrangements to be delivered to Veterans in hospitals over the holidays.

Mrs. Pilarczyk gave an overview of the annual Staff Turkey Bowl, where the winner of the staff competition competes against 'corporate' teams that pay to bowl. She added that all money raised, along with canned goods donated by the staff, was donated to the Geauga Hunger Taskforce and that it a great way for the Park District to give back to the community that supports us.

Mr. Frenchie from the Geauga Park District Foundation reiterated that their goal for the capital campaign for the Nassau Observatory has been met. Mr. Oros and the Board expressed appreciation of their efforts.

### **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC** - below are comment summaries:

**John Augustine**, of Parkman Township addressed the Board from the podium. Mr. Augustine welcomed Mr. Gertz to the Board and requested his (Mr. Gertz) background relating to natural areas. Mr. Gertz advised he has a 135 acre farm in Hambden, where 1,500 white and red oak have been planted, that it has been a working farm since 1953 and that he was instrumental in the development of Hambden Township Park. He added that Geauga Park District is a gem and there is nothing he would do or vote for that would endanger any of that. Mr. Augustine requested that the Board change the Bylaws back to what there were prior to the changes the Board made in July 2014.

**Katherine Malmquist**, of South Russell addressed the Board from the podium. Ms. Malmquist applauded Mr. Gertz for his past efforts in park development. She added that some feel that county parks are different in that they should be left natural for people to hike, listen to the birds and watch wildlife, not for playgrounds or other recreational amenities which are available in parks located in all the villages. Mr. Gertz stated that the Park District must look at what the majority of the residents want, that constructive criticism is welcome, and that the Park District must serve all residents of the county. Ms. Malmquist requested that additional changes/additions to the parks wait until the 2015 survey is complete so that the Park District knows what the citizens of the County want in their Park District. Mr. Gertz stated the Board would take her recommendation under consideration.

**Kathy Hanratty**, Chardon Township, addressed the Board from the podium. Ms. Hanratty welcomed Mr. Gertz and invited the entire Board to a ‘conservation conversation’ featuring Tim Barber of Environ International who will be presenting on the valuation of conservation. The event is the afternoon of January 25<sup>th</sup> at Patterson Center @Patterson Fruit Farm.

**Jerry Holzheimer**, retired Geauga Park District employee, addressed the Board from the podium. Mr. Holzheimer wanted the Board to know that the Geauga Park District staff is tremendous and that the Board should take advantage of their qualifications. He encouraged the Board to accomplish getting a Director in place to assist with planned projects.

**Heather**, of Bainbridge Township, addressed the Board from the podium. Heather stated her property, which is protected with a conservation easement, is contiguous to Park property where hunting is permitted. Heather inquired whether the trapping program is new, and inquired as to what type of trapping was allowed. Mr. Oros stated that trapping is not new and that the Park District allows trapping of fur-bearers that affect the infrastructure, primarily beaver and muskrat. Mr. Oros added that this is the first year the lottery was open to the public for trapping permits. There were discussions regarding the type of traps utilized with Mr. Oros advising a conibear trap is used (underwater trap) specific to the wildlife being targeted.

**John Leech**, of Newbury Township, addressed the Board from the podium. Mr. Leech expressed his disappointment that the Nassau Observatory renovation project was being delayed to 2016. He added that in view of the fact the Foundation has raised \$775,000, that a levy was postponed, and that the improvements to the Nassau Observatory can improve the use of our Parks by schools and educational institutions downtown, he urged the Board to consider the project for 2015, as this project would be spectacular for the parks.

**Pat Leech**, of Newbury Township, addressed the Board from the podium. Ms. Leech stated she understands the need to cull deer and raccoon, but was concerned that other animals might be inadvertently trapped and injured. Mr. Oros confirmed that leg-hold traps are not used, and currently only under-water conibear traps are being used in the Park District.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Johnston made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss pending legal matters, Ranger Contract, land acquisition and personnel compensation.

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

Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes
Mr. Gertz	Yes

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:51 p.m.

Mr. Shumway 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:

Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes
Mr. Gertz	Yes

The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:52 p.m. The following items were brought forward.

Mrs. Shumway made a motion to approve Resolution No. 32-14 authorizing execution of a deed conveying 0.2793 acres located in Chester Township to Rob MacAdam-King.

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

Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes
Mr. Gertz	Yes

Mrs. Shumway made a motion to post the position of Executive Director for Geauga Park District.

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

Mrs. Shumway made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

Mrs. Shumway	Yes
Mr. Johnston	Yes
Mr. Gertz	Yes

The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 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,

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John Oros, Interim Director

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Mary Ruth Shumway, President

Exhibit A

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT**  
 Board of Park Commissioners  
 The West Woods Nature Center  
 December 9, 2014 - Regular

Name	Organization/Company
Tom + Diane Jones	A Wind in the Woods
Robert Cole	GPD
Eric + Det Reiter	
Bills Parngton	taxpayer Munson
Sandy Buckles	
Ed Buckles	
Doyle Wohlken	
Mitt Mck	GPD
Phil Singreat	MD
Don + Inez Tostera	
Leslie + Rich Nering	
Jim Wohlken	
Brenda Mossbrugger	
Tom LUDICK	Georgia City residence #8 of 10.
John Jones	
Samantha Jones	
Frank Swartz	
JERRY WILZARIMAR	GPD - RETIRED
Jason	
Shelley Chernin	fussell
Det + John Beech	Newberry
Joe Kozul	Times

**GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT**  
 Board of Park Commissioners  
 The West Woods Nature Center  
 December 9, 2014 – Regular

Name	Organization/Company
<del>Robert Jensen</del>	GPA-7
Bob Rogish	
John Augustine	Pacheco resident
Sam McCallan	
Kathryn Hammon	Chardon tw P.
Kathy Fisher	THOMPSON
Marilyn Blatnik	Clavdon
McCallahan	South Russell
Steph Piekos	Newbury
Arlene	Lambden
Sec Prior & Paul Kiplinger	G. Russell
Bill Schwinn	Shale Heights
FRAN CVERNA	
Fran & Ed Meyer	Newbury
Cathy & Ron	Chester
Chris Yaeger	Newbury
Helen K. Green	Troy Township
Martha Cathcart	Bainbridge
Sharmyn Clark	Russell
Mark McGreevy	Russell
JOANN DEARRANCONI	BURTON
Mark Staver	Geauga Taxpayer Middlefield
Mark Eckman	Chester



**COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
PROBATE / JUVENILE DIVISION  
GEAUGA COUNTY**

**TIMOTHY J. GRENDALL – JUDGE**

Courthouse Annex, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
231 Main Street, Suite 200  
Chardon, Ohio 44024  
Voice: 440-279-1830  
Fax Probation: 440-285-5025

December 9, 2014

Commissioner Mary Ruth Shumway  
Commissioner Brian Johnston  
Commissioner Bill Gertz  
Gauga Park District  
9160 Robinson Road  
Chardon OH 44024

Dear Members of the County Park Board:

Had my schedule permitted, I would have liked the opportunity to read this letter to you in person. However, since I cannot attend your meeting, I ask that it be read into the record.

There is no question that numerous misrepresentations and lies have been published over the past several months by a small group of folks pursuing their personal agenda, with the assistance of some irresponsible reporters and editorial writers.

The time has come to address these misrepresentations and falsehoods and share with you my vision of the Park District's mission and future.

My wife, Diane, and I are and have been avid supporters of the Geauga County Parks. As a State Representative, Diane obtained some state funds for the acquisition of Westwoods. As State Senator, I obtained some state funds for the acquisition of Orchard Hills. We also have made multiple financial donations for park programs.

Gauga County has more than 9,500 acres of County Park District owned park land. This large amount of acreage allows the Park District the opportunity to preserve and conserve as well as to provide some appropriate facilities and areas that meet the diverse recreational needs of Geauga County residents.

Some Geauga County Parks should be designated solely for passive recreational use, such as hiking and nature watching, or strictly for preservation. For example, and for that reason, I

recommend that playground and recreational equipment not be put in Frohring Meadows, but are appropriate at Orchard Hills, Headwaters, and Westwoods, if placed appropriately by the picnic shelters.

Some parks should provide for more active recreation, such as horseback riding, cross country skiing, fishing, horseshoes, and limited playground areas near picnic shelters. Multiple horse only trails also should be provided in some parks. The Park District should develop at least one park area for limited snowmobile use, limited to four cycle snowmobiles (like Yellowstone National Park), afternoon hours, and by park permit only (for insurance and waiver of liability purposes). Hunting and trapping should be permitted for game management purposes, as appropriate. The hunting/game management program was initiated while Judge Henry served as Probate Court Judge.

When Tom Curtin was Director and Jim Patterson was on the Board, Mr. Patterson came to me and told me that the Park District was “considering” the possible purchase of a gravel pit to be used for dirt bikes and ATV’s. Purchasing a gravel pit raises certain environmental and reclamation concerns. The allowance of even one designated ATV area raises serious liability concerns which would require substantial evaluation. The Board would have to decide if such evaluation is even warranted. It is solely the Board’s decision.

Oil and gas drilling and logging should be prohibited within the Geauga County Parks. Why Lou Mucci slipped these two uses into the revised Bylaws defies logic and remains a mystery. Upon initial adoption, I sought the Board’s removal of those two unwanted uses from the Bylaws. Eventually, the Bylaws were corrected and fortunately those two unwanted uses were ultimately removed. Unfortunately, the correction process took much longer than I expected.

I have never supported “fracking” in the parks or outside of the parks. As a State Senator, the oil and gas industry considered me one of their most ardent opponents. I expect that oil and gas drilling, fracking and logging will remain prohibited in our County Parks.

The inclusion of the term “recreation” in the Park District’s Bylaws is neither a new concept, nor inconsistent with preservation and conservation. County park districts throughout Ohio include recreation in their mission statements or bylaws. (See attached information sheet) In fact, the park districts managed by former Geauga County Park District Directors John O’Meara (a staunch conservationist) and Tom Curtin include “recreation” within their respective purposes and parks. Their respective park districts have some playgrounds and other recreational facilities such as horseshoe pits, a climbing wall, and obstacle/rope course.

Additionally, it is my understanding that the Geauga County Park District has prior survey results indicating that our residents wanted children playgrounds or play areas for children in our parks. For some reason, the then Park Director did not want to provide those facilities even though the county residents wanted them.

Recreation is compatible with preservation and conservation, as long as the Park District maintains an appropriate balance. In Geauga County, only approximately 3% of the County Parks are currently used for trails, parking areas and recreation. The Park District employs several naturalists and a planner who can maintain the appropriate balance. Of course, as

previously mentioned, some parks should be set aside and maintained solely as passive recreation areas or preserves.

The Park District also must operate in a fiscally responsible manner and the Park Board must be good and vigilant stewards of our citizens' tax dollars. The Park District should spend funds as needed to maintain and operate our wonderful parks and acquire additional land when the right opportunities arise. However, the Park District should not spend money just to reduce its excess funds so it can put another tax levy on the ballot. The Park District is required by state law to comply with the statutory requirements enforced by the Geauga County Budget Commission. It should be noted that, according to the Park District's latest Financial Statement, the Park District is operating in the black in 2014.

In appointing Bill Gertz to the Board, it is my hope that he will lead an effort to attract more Geauga Seniors to our wonderful parks. The purchase of a park trail appropriate seniors' transportation vehicle that would facilitate such use would be a big step in developing more senior use of the parks. I hope the Board and Park Staff will work with Commissioner Gertz in this worthwhile endeavor.

I appreciate each Board Member's willingness to serve on the Park Board. Your service on the Board is important to all of our County's residents. I am confident that you will pursue the best interests of these residents in making your decisions and not misuse your authority for personal benefit or to pursue a personal agenda as some prior Board Members have apparently tried to do.

Finally, the notion that the Probate Court's sole involvement with the Park District is making board appointments is simply wrong, as a matter of Ohio law. The Probate Court maintains the unfettered statutory authority to change the board membership and, as such, has ongoing responsibility for assuring that board members act consistently with the purposes for which they were appointed.

Thank you for your voluntary board service and your consideration of this correspondence.

Sincerely,



Judge Timothy J. Grendell

## THE TRUTH ABOUT "RECREATION" IN COUNTY PARKS

A few folks have expressed some concern about the inclusion of "recreation" in the Geauga Park District's Bylaws/Mission Statement.

Once again, here are the TRUE and RELEVANT FACTS.

Gauga Park District's previous mission statement was:

"to preserve, conserve, and protect the natural features of Geauga County and to provide outdoor recreational experiences to our residents and visitor's that exceed their expectations."

Gauga Park District's current mission statement:

"to preserve, conserve, and protect the natural features of Geauga County and to provide outdoor recreational experiences to our residents of every age, every ability and all times of the year."

A review of other county park districts' documents demonstrates that the folks' complaint is without merit.

1. Lake County Park District's mission includes:

"recreational programs and activities"

2. Lorain County Park District's mission includes:

"educational and recreational opportunities"

3. Delaware County's Preservation Parks (where Tom Curtin now is employed) has had goals that include providing:

"safe places for recreation for all members of our community"

Some Delaware County Parks even have horseshoe pits.

4. Franklin County's Park District (where John O'Meara, the Geauga Parks Director before Curtin was employed) provides a wide range of recreational facilities, including a climbing wall and playgrounds. The playground at one County park includes:

"The play equipment includes safe and modern features such as a climbing web, two climbing boulders, a tire swing, merry-go-round, balancing log with crawl through, a spiral spinner and two conventional swings, one of them ADA accessible. The playground areas are surrounded by beautiful serviceberry and red maple trees."

As proven by these other park districts, the notion that limited recreational use somehow is incompatible with county park purposes or preservation/conservation, is simply NOT TRUE!