

March 25, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes
Preservation Parks of Delaware County
2:00 PM Deer Haven Park

Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 2:01 PM, with Board members Bruce Ruhl, Chair; Glenn Marzluf, Vice Chair; and John Bader, Secretary present. Staff included Mary Van Haaften, Director; Rich Niccum, Deputy Director; Matt Simpson; Molly Creamer; Lauren Richards; Tony Benishek; Beth McCollam; Craig Flockerzie; Tyler Swartzlander; Bonnie Houk; Sgt. Watkins; and Chief Welch.

Public Present: Amy Tovar

Consent Agenda:

1. Approval of February 20, 2025, Previous Board Minutes
2. Human Resources Changes in Personnel Report

Items Removed from the Consent Agenda: None

Approval of Consent Agenda: G. Marzluf moved to approve the consent agenda, J. Bader seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.

Financial Report and Ratification of Vouchers: J. Bader moved to approve the Financial Report and Ratification of Vouchers, G. Marzluf seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.

Park Updates: M. Van Haaften shared the bids for the Bicentennial Barn project. Six bids were received with Equity Construction Solutions the apparent lowest bidder, with a base bid in the amount of \$4,406,911.00. Schooley Caldwell is reviewing the bid, and staff will present a contract award recommendation at the April board meeting.

Department Reports:

Outdoor Connections: M. Creamer reported on February programs, including Try It Trekking Poles, Trails by Design, and an owl prowling hike. Volunteer contributions were highlighted, including prairie seed processing and the Love, Lanterns & Luminaries Walk. Farm updates included office improvements, a photo contest display, and a new wooden courting swing donated in memory of Sheldon Ross.

Administration: T. Swartzlander shared updates on public records training, historical records review at Hogback Ridge Park, and work on the public records retention policy.

Human Resources: T. Benishek reported staff changes: Kevin Parrott was promoted to Construction Manager, Wes Wingert was promoted to Construction Tech, and Lisa Choy was hired as part-time farm educator. An open Park Tech position has been posted. All staff are completing the DISC Assessment, with follow-up reports and consultations.

Park Police: Chief Welch reported that officers worked with a DCSO detective to investigate a vehicle break-in and theft of credit cards. Through tracking of a credit card payment device, a suspect(s) was tracked across multiple states. Due to the inability to identify a suspect(s), the case was close, pending any further evidence. Five Flock cameras were installed at five parks in February to aid investigative work. The cameras are tied into a nationwide network that allows for identification of vehicles involved in illicit activity.

Marketing & Communications: B. McCollam highlighted website updates, including the Year in Review video, spring programs, and the Camp Lazarus acquisition. New website visitor analytics will inform year-end reporting.

Natural Resources: L. Richards provided updates on volunteer assistance with prairie seed processing for distribution at programs and events. AmeriCorps members are developing summer programs. A pending Browse Agreement with the Columbus Zoo & Aquarium was shared.

Park Operations: C. Flockerzie reported on cattail management at Deer Haven Park to improve access for school groups and program participants.

Planning & Construction: M. Simpson provided updates on projects, including the Hogback Ridge Park stand-alone restroom, Deer Haven Park parking lot lights, and design elements for Hickory Woods Park (open shelter, boardwalk, playground).

Public Comment: None

Other Business:

1. *Approval of a Contract Award for Design and Engineering of Hickory Woods Park Improvements.* Staff recommended awarding a \$300,600 contract to EMH&T for design and engineering of park improvements, including a 75-person shelter with restrooms, a playground, a wetland, and a boardwalk. A contingency of up to \$320,000 is included for design changes and/or unforeseen conditions. G. Marzluf moved to award a contract to EMH&T as recommended, J. Bader seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.
2. *Approval of Browse Agreement with Columbus Zoo and Aquarium.* Staff recommended authorizing the Executive Director to execute an agreement allowing Zoo staff to harvest invasive woody species from Preservation Parks properties for animal feed. In return, the Zoo will donate 200 native black willow trees annually for planting by District staff. G. Marzluf moved to authorize the Executive Director to sign the Browse Agreement with the Columbus Zoo as recommended, J. Bader seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.

Executive Session: G. Marzluf moved to go into executive session at 2:20 PM for the purpose of discussing land acquisition, J. Bader seconded. Roll call was taken, and all members were present. All members voted aye. The motion passed.

The Board returned to regular session at 2:55 PM.

G. Marzluf moved to authorize the Executive Director to purchase approximately 4.1 acres of land in Porter Township to expand an existing park for a price of \$145,000 plus closing costs and to execute all related documents including a purchase agreement, any and all closing documents and escrow agreements contemplated thereby, and that any actions taken by the Executive Director prior to this date regarding the foregoing are within the authority conferred to the Executive Director hereunder and hereby ratified. J. Bader seconded. All members voted aye. The motion passed.

Next Board Meeting Date: 2:00 PM on April 16, 2025, at Deer Haven Park

Adjournment: G. Marzluf moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:03 PM, J. Bader seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Van Haaften, Executive Director



Bruce Ruhl, Chair, Park Commissioner