

April 16, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes
Preservation Parks of Delaware County
2:00 PM Deer Haven Park

Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 2:00 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; Casey Smith; Chris Roshon; Tony Benishek; Beth McCollam; Kyle Pace; Tyler Swartzlander; Bonnie Houk; and Sgt. Watkins.

Public Present: Amy Tovar, Curt Cooper (Preservation Parks Foundation)

Consent Agenda:

1. Approval of March 25, 2025 Board Minutes
2. Human Resources Changes in Personnel Report
3. Approving a Declaration of Surplus Property
4. Accepting a donation of animal tanks and accessories valued at \$3,000.00 from Kathy Sandel

Items Removed from the Consent Agenda: None

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

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

Park Updates: None

Department Reports:

Outdoor Connections: C. Smith reported on a pop-up amphibian program at Gallant Woods Park and a geology hike at Hogback Ridge Park led by the Ohio Geological Survey. At Gallant Farm, staff installed vintage wallpaper in the farmhouse parlor. The Braille Trail and accessible restroom at Hogback Ridge Park are now complete. A trail opening celebration is scheduled for April 26 at 10:00 a.m. The trail and restroom were funded by a grant from the Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

Administration: T. Swartzlander reported on his participation in the second year of the National Recreation and Park Association Director's School and provided updates on the Perfect Schoolhouse renovation and the McCammon Creek Park East parking area.

Human Resources: T. Benishek shared that seasonal staff recruitment and interviews are complete. Interviews are underway for the full-time Park Operations Technician vacancy. Work continues on improving the onboarding process for new employees.

Park Police: Sgt. Watkins reported that new Park Officer John Bailey completed internal department training. The department has updated officer uniforms to green pants and black shirts. Officers are investigating damage to approximately 20 trees along the Gallant Woods Park primitive trail. No suspects have been identified.

Marketing & Communications: B. McCollam reported on the launch of a staff logo apparel store in partnership with a new vendor, streamlining the ordering process. An apparel store for volunteers will launch in the coming weeks. Staff are also preparing assisting the Preservation Parks Foundation with marketing materials for the June Fundraising Gala.

Natural Resources: C. Roshon reported on six prairie burns conducted by staff, including a collaborative burn with the Stratford Ecological Center. Staff and volunteers planted 30,000 tree seedlings at Perfect

Creek Park and the former Melvin property north of Camp Lazarus. Salamander surveys are ongoing during the spring migration.

Park Operations: K. Pace reported that bat boxes were relocated from the Bicentennial Barn to nearby sites to support displaced bats ahead of barn renovations. Staff completed projects for Outdoor Connections, including trekking pole storage, a new snake enclosure at the Deer Haven Visitor Center, and a man door added to the Gallant Farm equipment shed. Post-storm cleanup photos were also shared.

Planning & Construction: M. Simpson provided updates on the Deer Haven Park lighting project, quotes for chip sealing the Deer Haven entrance drive and parking lot, reclamite asphalt treatments on the Char-Mar Ridge Park and McCammon Creek North Area parking lots, and design work for a three-sided storage barn at Gallant Farm.

Public Comment: None

Other Business:

1. *Preservation Parks Foundation Update* – Foundation Board Secretary Curt Cooper provided an update on the 2025 Gala Fundraiser, *Area 51*, scheduled on June 26 at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium's Heart of Africa Event Center. He thanked Park District staff for their work on the Gala's communication materials. Mr. Cooper also presented the Foundation's *2024 Impact Report*, highlighting fundraising accomplishments and supported projects. He expressed appreciation to the Board for their continued support of the parks and the Foundation. G. Marluf, in turn, thanked Mr. Cooper his and the Foundation's work to support the mission of Preservation Parks.
2. *Approval of a Contract Award for Renovation of the Bicentennial Barn* – Preservation Parks received six competitive bids for the Bicentennial Barn renovation project at McCammon Creek Park. Following a thorough review, staff recommended awarding the contract to Equity Construction Solutions as the lowest and best bidder, in the amount of \$4,406,302, with allowance for reasonable changes necessary to complete the project, not to exceed the budgeted total of \$4,600,000. G. Marzluf moved to approve the contract award as recommended, J. Bader seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.
3. *Resolution 2025-616 to Approve a Transfer from the General Fund to OTSCIF Bicentennial Barn Fund* – A transfer of \$3,000,000 from the Planning General Fund to the OTSCIF Bicentennial Barn Fund is necessary to support construction and improvements to the Bicentennial Barn at McCammon Creek Park. G. Marzluf moved to approve the resolution as presented, B. Ruhl seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.

Executive Session: B. Ruhl moved to go into executive session at 2:28PM for the purpose of discussing land acquisition and compensation and discipline of park employees. 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 3:12 PM and took the following action:

1. G. Marzluf moved to authorize the Executive Director to purchase approximately 96+/- acres of land in Harlem and Genoa Townships for watershed protection and a future park at the appraised value of \$3,075,000 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., B. Ruhl seconded. All members voted aye. The motion passed.

2. G. Marzluf moved to create a Landscape Architect Project Manager position, J. Bader seconded. All members voted aye. The motion passed.

Next Board Meeting Date: 1:00 PM on May 15, 2025, at Deer Haven Park

Adjournment: G. Marzluf moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:13 PM, J. Bader seconded, all members voted aye. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Van Haaften, Executive Director



Bruce Ruhl, Chair, Park Commissioner