



Meeting Minutes for Regular Meeting of the Park District of Ottawa County

Date: 3/5/2021
Time: 9:00 AM

1. Call to Order by Gary Kohli
2. Roll Call

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| a. Gary Kohli – Chairman | Present - Y | |
| b. Angela LeForce – Secretary | Not Present | |
| c. Mike Shadoan – Treasurer | Present - Y | |
| d. Judy Indorf | Present - Y | |
| e. Jack Madison | Present - Y | |
| f. Others: | | |
| i. Linda Amos | Present - Y | |
| ii. Denny Patthoff | Present - Y | |
| iii. Kent Whitehead, Trust for Public Land, Sr. Project Manager | | Present - Y |
| iv. Kevin Joyce, Trust for Public Land, Project Manager | | Present - Y |
| v. Linda Traub, Visitor | Present - Y | |
| vi. Vicki Rae Harder-Thorne, Visitor | Present - Y | |

3. Trust for Public Land Discussion

Kent Whitehead and Kevin Joyce, from Trust for Public Land joined to discuss a potential project in Danbury Twp. Kent and Kevin introduced themselves and indicated they both work on Land Transaction projects. Kent works in Washington D.C and has been filling the Ohio position on a temporary basis. Kevin Joyce has taken over the Ohio position and is from Sylvania, OH. They reviewed a few of the area projects TPL has participated in. At a high level, they help other organizations purchase land with the expectation that the organization they help then manages the property. They do not typically purchase land for TPL ownership and management. TPL can help with due diligence of the property, identification of funding sources, purchase agreements and even at times will hold land as the organization they are helping arranges for funding and finalizes agreements. TPL will often try to absorb the cost of due diligence. Specifically, in Ottawa County, TPL has recently looked at land in Danbury Twp. at the corner of State Rt. 269 and State Rt. 163. It was noted that this is a very preliminary discussion with the intention to gauge the Park District of Ottawa County's interest in this land. Additionally, TPL has not confirmed the landowner is interested in talking about this type of a transaction. The Park District should consider what they would see as the purpose of owning the property. Discussion was held regarding the ongoing cost of owning this type of land. The Park District asked if there would be any requirements we would need to meet or maintain. TPL indicated that some organizations that provide funds may set requirements that must be met to obtain funding and some incentivize certain actions to be taken. The Park District agreed to discuss this opportunity and contact Kevin Joyce regarding our future interest.

Action: *Park District Board to discuss the opportunity to purchase the property at the corner of State Rt. 269 and State Rt. 163 in Danbury Twp., determine our interest and communicate whether we are interested to Kevin Joyce.*

4. Vicki Rae Harder-Thorne joined the Park District meeting to discuss the vision she has for approximately 80 acres of property her family owns in Oak Harbor. Her vision includes non-chemical farming and conservation practices, education, research and local economy benefits. Her parents were founding members of the Black Swamp Bird Observatory and the property has birdwatching trails. Vicki has been working with the Central State University, the Nature Conservancy, Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association. Vicki is inquiring whether the Park District of Ottawa County would like to be part of this effort. Vicki lives in the Chicago area and will be in Ohio in April. It was suggested that we meet and possibly tour the property when Vicki is in Ohio in April.

Action: *Meet with Vicki Rae Harder-Thorne regarding her family's property in Oak Harbor when she is in Ohio in April.*

5. Minutes for Approval – February 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes sent in a separate email due to size

Mike Shadoan moved to approve the February 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes.

Jack Madison seconded the motion to approve the February 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes.

A vote was held to approve the Meeting Minutes with the following outcome:

Gary Kohli	Yes
Angela LeForce	Not Present
Jack Madison	Yes
Mike Shadoan	Yes
Judy Indorf	Yes

The motion to approve the Meeting Minutes carries.

6. Fiscal Report – no change; Note – during the meeting, Mike Shadoan reported a Savings Account balance of \$30. While preparing the minutes, Judy Indorf discovered the \$5 change from the previous report so Judy contacted Mike and asked about the change. Mike confirmed that the Savings Account balance is \$35 rather than the \$30 reported in error at the meeting.

\$250 in Checking Account

\$ 35 in Savings Account

TOTAL \$285

7. New Business

Gary Kohli has discussed with the Ottawa County Commissioners the possibility of pulling forward Park District funds. The Commissioners are open to the possibility. We need to develop a budget and plan for pulling funds forward. To accomplish this, Gary would like to create a Budget Committee and a Personnel Committee to progress plans in these areas.

- Budget Committee – Mike Shadoan and Linda Amos will be the Budget Committee and Gary Kohli will stay engaged in this committee.
- Personnel Committee – Linda Amos and Judy Indorf will be the Personnel Committee.

As a follow-up to our last meeting, Gary confirmed the process by which Erie Metroparks receives their funds and pay invoices. Twice per year, funds from Erie Metropark's levy are transferred to their account and they pay invoices from their account.

As discussed at our last meeting, the Park District of Ottawa County's preference is for the Ottawa County Auditor to hold our funds in an account and we would then issue a voucher to the Ottawa County Auditor to pay an invoice for the Park District from our account.

Gary noted that he sent the proposed language to describe the payment/voucher process for the payment of bills for the Board's review via email. Gary also requested that the Board members be prepared to review, comment and if finalized, approve in full, the new by-laws for the Park District of Ottawa County at our March 19, 2021 meeting.

Action: *Board members to review the draft Park District of Ottawa County by-laws and provide any comments in preparation for approving the by-laws at our March 19, 2021 meeting.*

a. The Board agreed to update our bylaws which were written in the early 1990s. Gary Kohli and Judy Indorf have completed a draft of the by-laws which is being reviewed by the Board.

i. Below are comments provided on the bylaws to date:

- Gary sent the Board members Erie County Metroparks' bylaws for the Board's reference and inserted the appropriate statute on the page the statute is referenced, to facilitate the Board's review.
- Sandusky County Park District has sent their Staff information and has indicated they will send their by-laws, both for our reference.
- Below is a summary of the comments and discussion to date on the by-laws:
 - Mike Shadoan recommended that we publish meeting notices on social media, such as our Facebook page and website and no longer publish the notices in a hard print paper such as the Beacon. Gary Kohli noted that we need to determine what Ohio

law requires regarding public meeting notices and ensure we comply with Ohio's requirements. We agreed to incorporate the appropriate change in our bylaws' revision.

- Done - Suggestion to delete the last sentence in Section 1
- Done - Suggestion to leave the board membership at 5.
- Noted that the language on the last page of Section 1545.1 gives the Board the power to acquire lands but is silent on the ability to sell land. The suggestion was made to expand the language to give the Board the ability to also sell land.
- Given our current experience of successfully holding meetings remotely, the suggestion was made to adjust the language to indicate presence of a meeting attendee need not be via physical attendance. Since this comment was made, it has been determined that the ORC requires physical presence to vote, unless this requirement is waived by Ohio government.
- The question was raised regarding what type of entity we are. Gary is working with the county to determine if we can be a governmental entity.
- The current version of the Park District of Ottawa County's by-laws was written in 1992 and have not been amended in the interim, with much of the content out of date. Gary Kohli reviewed the content of the current by-laws with the Board.
- Noted that Gary Kohli and Judy Indorf started with Erie County Park District's by-laws to develop our update and used our current by-laws as a reference.
- Discussion was held regarding how to most effectively communicate our meeting schedule to the public.
 - Noted that we have three types of meetings: Regular, Special and Emergency.
 - The board recognized that newspaper circulation has decreased and communication via electronic means has increased. Currently the public is notified of our meeting schedule by:
 - Publishing our meeting notice in the Beacon the Wednesday before our Friday meeting
 - Posting a written notice on the exterior door of the Ottawa County Courthouse
 - Posting our notice on the Friends of Ottawa County Parks Facebook page
- The board identified the following options for notifying the public of our meeting schedule:
 - Continue to post our notice in the Beacon, a once weekly county-wide newspaper
 - Post our notice in the News Herald, a daily newspaper.
 - Post our notice on the Park District of Ottawa County's website.
 - Post our notice on the door of the Ottawa County Courthouse building
 - Publish an evergreen calendar on the Park District of Ottawa County's website
 - Questioned if we could/should add our meeting schedule to the Ottawa County Commissioners' calendar – appears others do this
- It was noted that most entities are posting notices electronically only, or they publish their schedule once, annually, in a newspaper at the start of the year with electronic notices only throughout the year.
- The board would like to confirm how we could retain evidence of posting if the notification is electronic. A time stamped screenshot may be adequate. Judy Indorf will continue to work with Doug Rogers to determine if evidence of posting can be obtained.

Action: *Judy Indorf to work with Doug Rogers to confirm how we could retain evidence of notifying the public of our meeting schedule if notification is done electronically through the Park District of Ottawa County's website.*

- Noted that verbiage regarding quorum will change from two to three since the board's membership has changed from three to five and we plan to maintain five board members.
- Reviewed process for approving contract services, vendor purchases, etc.; noted that in general, the State of Ohio requires purchases of goods or services in excess of \$50,000 requires the board's approval
- Noted that when we begin to make payments for goods services, etc. we have two options:
 - Hire a Treasurer who will manage our funds directly
 - Make payments through the Ottawa County treasurer using a voucher system which may entail a fee
- While no decision was made, the general thought was that utilizing the county treasurer could be a good option initially, as we begin to grow
- Noted that regardless of the option we choose, we would be subject to a State Audit
- Gary Kohli and Judy Indorf will continue to work on the by-laws
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DONE Action: *Gary Kohli and Judy Indorf will develop a draft set of by-laws for the Board to review for comment and eventual approval.*

b. Charting our path forward

i. Staff

1. We have job descriptions from Erie and Sandusky County Metroparks for reference – Gary requested the board members review these.

Action: *Board members to review the job descriptions provided by Erie and Sandusky County Metroparks*

2. Agreed the primary objective for an employee, likely a director, will be to write grant requests
3. Timing of hiring staff will be 2022 as set by cashflow; numbers of employees will be based on need
4. Noted that we have two options for managing our finances:
 - a. Keep levy tax dollars in the county fund and we would write Purchase Orders to the county to pay invoices from the fund.
 - b. Establish a Park District Treasurer/Secretary and they would manage our cashflow directly
 - c. No decision needs to be made or will be made at this time; we will consider these options and review how Erie and Sandusky County Park Districts manage their cashflow

ii. Finances

1. Current understanding is that we will receive tax dollars beginning in 2022
 - a. Will this a single check or multiple checks?
 - b. Gary has confirmed that we will receive money in 2022. There is a statute which allows us to borrow or sign notes, but it appears this is only in the year that money will be received. Gary is working to confirm this as well as look into other potential options.

iii. Office location options

1. Former MRDD School Building east of Oak Harbor on the river side of State Rout 163; would be charged a fee
2. Building next to Croghan Bank in Oak Harbor
3. Ottawa County Resource Center across from the fairgrounds

4. County Offices on Lake St. in Oak Harbor
 5. Room in courthouse; Rhonda Slauterbeck confirmed the Park District may continue to use the conference room in the courthouse as needed; files can continue to be retained in the conference room file cabinets.
 6. Work from home with access to the courthouse as needed?
- iv. Maintenance
1. Initially consider partnering with Sandusky County or the community in which the property requiring maintenance is located; Likely not until 2022.
- vi. Property transfers
1. A number of organizations have inquired regarding the Park District's interest in receiving property and taking over management; the board will consider these opportunities, however noted our primary objective is to develop multi-purpose hiking and bike trails throughout Ottawa County as well as water trails; we do not want property maintenance and management to dominate our funds.
 2. Agreed we should have and maintain relationships with the various conservancy and park organizations in our area, e.g. Black Swamp, Ottawa Wildlife Refuge

8. Current Efforts

Gary Kohli asked about the status of the Park District of Ottawa County email address. Judy Indorf noted that compilation of the website changes to work with Doug Rogers on is nearly complete and this compilation includes the email address for the Park District. Judy will work with Doug Rogers on this list before the next meeting.

Judy Indorf noted that the resolution for designation of US Bike Route 30 and State Bike Route 90 has been forwarded to Angela LeForce for her signature as Secretary and then forwarding to Gary Kohli so Gary can provide to the Ottawa County Commissioners. Gary noted he has verbally communicated our support of the designations to the County Commissioners.

Judy Indorf noted the email, embedded below, that Angela LeForce received from Jennifer Fording from the Harris-Elmore Public Library regarding the story walk they would like to install at the Genoa-Elmore trail. It was noted that if they would like funding for this project, the local grants the Park District will be making available is a possibility.

Judy Indorf noted that Gary Cooper, OPRA ODOT Program Coordinator, sent an email to the OPRA ODOT Program participants indicating that the Ohio legislature has not yet approved funding for this program, but approval is expected and OPRA is therefore moving forward with the application process. The deadline is June 1, 2021, but Gary would like to work with us well in advance since this is our first application. Judy will work with Gary to develop our application and present the application to the Board.

Jack Madison and Gary Kohli met with Ron Lajti, the Ottawa County Engineer, to discuss with him the Park District's county-wide trail vision. Ron reviewed the information the county has available for our future use.

In response to Denny Patthoff's question regarding the Marketability Act, Gary reviewed the last two decisions made regarding this act and described the impact the act has on deeds. Gary and Denny intend to review the deed material Denny has collected to understand the impact of the Marketability Act.

- a. Website – Judy Indorf will finalize the following items and then contact Doug Rogers to make the changes for us.
- i. Agreed we will add the board members' picture and short bio to the website
 - ii. Agreed we want to upload our minutes to the site – the website is a good repository for our minutes following approval
 - iii. Agreed we should create an email account. Currently, the volunteer and meeting information request forms on our website are automatically forwarded to Judy's personal email address. We could reply to email senders using the Park District email. Judy will work with Doug Rogers on this effort.

Action: *Judy to work with Doug Rogers to create a Park District email account and modify the website as needed.

Action: *Board members to provide a short bio to Judy for addition to the Park District's website.*

- b. Support to designate US Bike Route 30 and State Bike Route 90
 - i. Confirm Resolution 2021.02 supporting the designation of US Bike Route 30 and State Bike Route 90 has been sent to the County Commissioners.
- c. North Coast Inland Trail/Genoa/Elmore
 - i. Angela LeForce received the following email from Jennifer Fording, Director, Elmore-Harris Public Library. Angela has replied acknowledging receipt of Jennifer Fording's email. Board to discuss way forward.

Hello Angela,

I was talking with Thomas Bergman (Genoa Mayor) and he insisted that I reach out to you about getting an idea I had pitched to him and Rick Claar on this year's budget for the Ottawa County Park System.

The Harris-Elmore Public Library wanted to do a storywalk on the bike path between Elmore and Genoa. It would consist of 16 posts (every quarter mile) and each would have a page or two of a book that they need to follow along the trail to finish (provided and maintained by the library). I have attached a powerpoint from Dover Public Library when they did theirs and also a quote from Envirosigns on the cost of the posts.

Let me know what you think and if the Park Board might be interested in this and in putting this toward your future budget or perhaps help us in fundraising.

Thank you for your time. Please let me know if you have any questions.

**Jennifer Fording
Director
Harris-Elmore Public Library**

- ii. Status of Genoa to Elmore trail opening – The rails for the trail over the Portage River have been backordered, so the ribbon cutting/opening ceremony will not be held until the rails have been received and that portion of the trail completed. We will continue to monitor.
- d. North Coast Inland Trail/Genoa/Millbury
 - i. Item for update: Gary Kohli has provided the Board members with a copy of each of the RFQs we received for Professional Services for the Board's review. Agree way forward.
 - ii. The RFQ for Professional Services was published in the February 1, 2021 edition of the News Herald and is also posted on the Park District's website. Those responding were instructed to send five copies of their qualification statements to Gary Kohli's attention at the Ottawa County Courthouse by February 12, 2021. They were also instructed to direct any questions to Gary Kohli's email address.
 - iii. Linda Amos confirmed the TAP application has been submitted.
 - iv. Tom Bergman noted that this project could be separated into two projects if appropriate.
 - v. The current extension of the NCIT ends at the "back of the Genoa Park". Continuing the trail to the front of the park and routing the trail through Genoa appears to be an attractive option with viability to connect to other communities if desired.
 - vi. Gary Kohli requested Angela LeForce be the Park District Board contact to work with Tom Bergman and Linda Amos on progressing this project.
 - vii. Gary received communication that we are eligible to apply for TAP funding for the Genoa to Millbury trail project. Linda Amos is working on filing our formal application for the funding, which is due January 31, 2021.
 - viii. West Erie Realty provided an appraisal for the Genoa to Millbury trail land.

- ix. We have received a letter from Wood County Park District indicating their intention to work with us to develop and construct the trail as well as fund their portion of the development.
 - x. The Park District is working with the Village of Genoa to identify the most cost effective and efficient funding option. Potential sources of funding include ODNR, Clean Ohio Trails and Recreational Trails. The potential sources have various match requirements and may have stipulations for use.
- e. Magsig Farm
- i. Judy Indorf received an email from Gary Cooper, OPRA ODOT Program Coordinator on February 19, 2021 indicating that the Ohio Department of Transportation Budget (House Bill 74) has been introduced in the House, and although it has not yet been passed, ODOT is moving forward with the application process, as they expect the allocation to be approved. Attached is a Word Document which contains the email from Gary Cooper regarding the 2021 to 2023 program along with a Sample Resolution we must pass to participate in this program.



ODOT OPRA Email
Regarding 2021 2023

It was noted that we either need a long term easement or ownership of the Magsig Farm to apply for funds. Denny Pathoff noted that the taxes for 2020, due in 2021, have been paid in full by Sandusky County. Gary Kohli will reach out to Andy Brown, Director, Sandusky County Park District to discuss the property transfer.

Action: *Gary Kohli to reach out to Andy Brown, Director, Sandusky County Park District to discuss the Magsig Farm property transfer.*

Discuss way forward.

- ii. Judy talked to Gary Cooper, OPRA ODOT Program Coordinator, regarding the ODOT Metropark Program funds. He has sent several documents for the Park District's use regarding the ODOT Metroparks Program along with two other unrelated documents he felt we may be interested in regarding funds for bikeways. Judy has forwarded these to the board. Gary Cooper noted that the next biennial term runs from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023. Included in the documents Gary Cooper sent is the previous term's Park Board Resolution template for our review and discussion. This term's funds and program have not yet been approved by the Ohio legislature. Gary agreed to help the Park District of Ottawa County participate in the upcoming term. He noted that the resolution form for the next two year term will likely be sent out in February after the Ohio Legislature has enacted the State Biennium Transportation funding act, and it has been signed into Law by the Governor. The resolution will likely be due June 1, 2021, noting that since this will be our first request, he would like to receive it prior to June 1.
- iii. Request from the Friends of Ottawa County Parks that we initiate transfer of the Magsig Farm to the Park District of Ottawa County to enable the Park District of Ottawa County to participate in the ODOT Metroparks Program to improve road access to this property.
- iv. Would like L. J. Overmeyer's ideas on entrance modifications and then will contact ODOT regarding modified/upgraded entrance to the farm; Judy sent L. J. Overmeyer an email on June 1, 2020 and hasn't received a response. It was noted that L. J. is very busy with his business. We will wait until he has time to work with us on the development of the Magsig Farm.
- v. The preferred entrance is likely from S. Schutt Rd.
- vi. L. J. inquired about receiving stone/funds from ODOT. We need to ensure we do not miss applying for money from ODOT. Judy is working with Gary Cooper from OPRA on accessing these funds.

Action: *Judy to work with Gary Cooper to apply for participation in the ODOT Metroparks Program.

- f. Friends of Ottawa County Parks (FoOCP)
 - i. TPL continues to move forward with a possible purchase of the land north of the Rt. 269 and Rt. 163 intersection west of Fort Firelands, with the intention to have the Park District manage it. Denny Patthoff noted that Kevin Joyce of Trust for Public Land, will contact Gary regarding this property. We would need to leave all but 10% of it as wetlands. Denny requested we think about a name for the land.
- g. Portage River Water Trail
 - i. Expected designation as a water trail in 2021.
- h. Danbury Twp./Lafarge
 - i. No update

9. Adjournment:

Judy Indorf moved we adjourn

Jack Madison seconded the motion

Meeting adjourned

Next working meeting will be **March 19, 2021**

Next regular meeting will be **April 2, 2021**