

Minutes
Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority
Board of Commissioners
Thursday, July 14, 2016

A regular meeting of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority's Board of Commissioners was held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, July 14, 2016 at Indian Springs Metropark at the Environmental Discovery Center.

Commissioners Present: John C. Hertel
Timothy J. McCarthy
Robert W. Marans
Bernard Parker

Staff Officers:
Director George Phifer

Other Attendees:
Steve Mann Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, PLC

Absent:
Commissioner Jaye Quadrozzi
Commissioner Anthony V. Marrocco
Commissioner John E. La Belle

Chairman Hertel called the July 14, 2016 meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

1. Chairman's Statement

Commissioner Hertel said we have had good weather for the parks system.

2. Public Comments

Commissioner Hertel acknowledged the audience members that wished to speak during public participation, explained the three-minute-rule speaking limit and asked that the public be respectful and courteous.

Ken Dean, Metroparks part-time retiree, said he was hired in 1979 and worked at the Kensington Golf Course for 37 seasons. He said he is the representative of more than 90 silver card recipients who worked more than 1,500 seasonal hours at the Metroparks. Last year, 31 of these past employees were told that the Silver Card was going to be eliminated at the end of 2015, and if they wanted the benefits that went along with the card, they would need to retire. Mr. Dean said the retirees were upset when they learned all silver card benefits would be eliminated at the end of 2016. He asked why the silver card was being discontinued, as they were never given an explanation.

Paul Gilson, Metroparks part-time retiree, said the parks make money when retirees golf at the parks because they bring paying guests and purchase food and beverages. He said former director Gary Bartsch sent a memo to employees in April 2005 stating employees were encouraged to use facilities; he said they were told seasonal employees were valuable and asked (the Board) if this is how employees should be treated. Mr. Gilson asked that the elimination of the silver card be reconsidered.

Rita Harp, Metroparks part-time retiree, said she worked at Kensington for 10 years, requested a card and was denied because she was not 65. She said she waited another year to leave the parks so she would be eligible for a silver card and that this is was the first season she could use it. Ms. Harp said people deserve an explanation for the elimination of the silver card.

Marty Schneider, Metroparks part-time retiree, said he worked at Hudson Mills for 10 years and was told he would need to retire in 2015 if he wanted to receive a silver card.

Janet McAlpine, Metroparks part-time retiree, said she worked at Kensington for 37 years and wasn't ready to retire in 2015. She said Gary Bartsch told her she would receive a silver card and was disappointed to learn it was being eliminated.

Frank Campbell, Metroparks part-time retiree, said he brings 40 people to Wolcott to golf at least once a week and that retirees have brought in a lot of revenue during the past several years and would like the discontinuation of the silver card to be reconsidered.

Robert Pierce, Metroparks part-time retiree, said he worked at Indian Springs for 15 seasons; was forced to retire in 2015 and is now not getting a silver card.

Jerry Lange, Metroparks part-time retiree, said he worked at Lake Erie for 11 seasons and that the silver card policy changed several times while he was an employee. He said he worked a couple of extra years so he could receive a card and that the retirees are hardworking and deserve the silver card benefits.

Tom Harp, Metroparks part-time retiree, said he worked at Hudson Mills for 13 seasons and started out as a volunteer building a rapport with the employees and guests. He said the employees deserve better treatment and card benefits should not be eliminated and requested that the Board grandfather in past employees.

Toni Spears, Dexter, thanked Paul Muelle for his leadership and expertise during his employment at the Metroparks.

Theresa Bismack, Pontiac Lake Horseman's Association and Nelson's Ranch, said she is a veterinarian and wanted to know what was going to happen with the Hillsborough development and if the horse trails would be looped into the parks for trail use.

Rebecca Anderson, Metroparks part-time retiree, said she was hired in 1991 and worked for 24 years at Huron Meadows and was denied a silver card, as she was short one year. She said she opted not to work in order to receive a card and asked the Board to reconsider a silver card on her behalf and that recent retirees be grandfathered in for this benefit.

Paul Renko, Metroparks part-time retiree, said he brings 40-60 people to the Willow Golf Course every week, and brings 40-60 people for league play on Sundays. He said he made the mistake of changing courses from Willow to Riverview, cancelled at Riverview and went back to Willow. He asked the Board to reconsider this decision and not cancel the silver card.

Dan Collins, Metroparks part-time retiree, said he worked at Kensington for 15 years and hopes to continue enjoying free golf.

Fred Carlton, Metroparks part-time retiree, said he worked at Indian Springs for 16 years that employees were loyal and asked that the silver card benefits be reconsidered.

3. Minutes – June 9, 2016 Regular Meeting

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, supported by Commissioner Parker that the Board of Commissioners' approve the June 9, 2016 meeting minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval – July 14, 2016 Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners' approve the amended July 14, 2016 agenda as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Approval – June 9, 2016 Consent Agenda**

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners' approve the consent agenda consisting of the following:

- a. Approval – June 2016 Financial Statements and Payment Registers
- b. Approval – June 2016 Appropriation Adjustments
- c. Purchases
 1. Invasive Shrub Control, All Locations
- d. Update – Purchases over \$10,000
- e. Update – Lake St. Clair 2015 Property Tax Payment
- f. Update – Metroparks Research Projects
- g. Bids – Painting Cob Building and Horse Barn, Wolcott Mill Metropark
- h. Bids – Main Park Road Surface/Overlay, Stony Creek Metropark
- i. Bids – Roof Repairs and Replacement, Kensington and Hudson Mills Metroparks

Commissioner Parker pointed out that the financials look good to date and if it changes the overall outlook for the budget. Controller Franchock responded that while financials are looking good, the budget project is still conservative.

Motion carried unanimously.

Regular Agenda

6. **Legislative Report**

None

7. **Reports**

A. **Planning Department**

1. **Update – Stony Creek Draft Master Plan**

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner Parker that the Board of Commissioners' receive and file the report on the Stony Creek Draft Master Plan as recommended by Manager of Planning Nina Kelly and staff.

Discussion: Manager of Planning Nina Kelly updated the Board on the draft Master Plan for Stony Creek reviewing the planning process; Stony Creek as it is today (which includes biodiversity and cultural history, infrastructure and facilities); revenue, visitation, program and events; community influences, public input and action plan.

Commissioner Marans said he was impressed and asked if the Master Plan would be on the website for public input and if so, how would staff let people and agencies know it's available for review. Ms. Kelly said the draft Master Plan would be added to the website and that staff planned on using social media and emailing local stakeholders to let agencies know the draft was available for review.

Commissioner Marans also suggested having a flyer at the tollbooths to hand out to the public.

Commissioner Parker asked if staff was looking to add new facilities or just refurbish existing facilities. Ms. Kelly said mainly refurbish existing facilities.

Commissioner Hertel asked staff to locate the area in Stony Creek that is high enough to see the downtown Detroit skyline and suggested adding an area where people could pull off to view the cityscape. Ms. Kelly said that Detroit is the heart of the metropolitan area and that an area to view the skyline would be a good feature and addition to the park.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Reports

B. Lake St. Clair Metropark

1. Approval – Contract Termination for Design Services, Playground and West Beachfront Redevelopment

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, supported by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' approve the termination of the design services contract with Johnson Hill Land Ethics Studio and direct staff to pursue retention of another firm to complete design revisions for the Lake St. Clair Playground and West Beachfront Redevelopment project as recommended by Manager of Planning Nina Kelly.

Manager of Planning Nina Kelly briefly updated the Board on the history of the project and requested the termination of the contract with JHLE.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Administrative Office

1. Approval – Blue Cross Blue Shield Rate Stabilization

Motion by Commissioner Marans Supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners' approve committing an additional \$146,815.50 of current Fund Balance, which reflects the amount received in June 2016 related to the 2015 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) rate stabilization surplus as recommended by Controller Franchock and staff.

Discussion: Controller Franchock updated the Board on the Blue Cross Blue Shield rate stabilization and that it was a \$293,000 difference this year with \$146,815 paid to the Metroparks.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if the amount was allocated back to each department. Ms. Franchock said it is credited to the revenue account.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if that was the best way to handle and if the amount could be prorated. Ms. Franchock said prorating is not an option as this payment was for 2015.

Commissioner Parker asked how much was in the account. Ms. Franchock said \$580,000. Commissioner Parker also asked if the funds were in place to cover the expenses. Ms. Franchock said yes, it is a good rate stabilization.

Commissioner Parker said he would like to see enough in the account to cover Metroparks expected fees and then have the remainder given back to employees.

Director Phifer said staff would continue to monitor health care expenditures and look for ways to give back to employees.

Ms. Franchock said she hopes to have the 2017 rate sometime in August.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Approval – Gabriel Roeder Smith and Company Five-Year Experience Study

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, supported by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' (1) approve the proposal from Gabriel Roeder Smith and Company (GRS) to perform a five-year experience analysis for the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority Employees' Retirement Plan; and (2) transfer \$19,000 from Fund Balance to cover the expenditure as recommended by Controller Franchock and staff.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. Closed Session

Commissioner Hertel said there was not a quorum to hold a closed session and it would not be held at the July 14, 2016 meeting.

9. Other Business

Director Phifer introduced John Chang as the new information technology manager. Mr. Chang introduced himself to the Board and reviewed his background.

Director Phifer introduced Interpretive Services Manager Jennifer Hollenbeck who gave a presentation on Summer Fun in the Metroparks activities.

Ms. Hollenbeck said seven of the 24 scheduled Summer Fun dates were completed; that there were structured and unstructured events for participants; that many different groups were participating; and people attending were asked if they had visited a Metropark before and what was important to them. Ms. Hollenbeck said staff has received good responses regarding the event.

Media Relations Specialist Lisa Croff showed the Board a video of Summer Fun activities.

Commissioner Marans said he has heard it's a success and would like to see a report in the fall on statistics, demographics etc.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if the event was taking place at all the parks. Ms. Hollenbeck said events are taking place in each of the five counties and scheduled for Stony Creek, Lake St. Clair, Hudson Mills, Kensington, Lake Erie and Lower Huron.

Commissioner Parker said the kids he spoke to that attended were excited and it is great exposure for the parks.

George Phifer introduced Community Relations Specialist Hilary Simmet who updated the Board on social media.

Ms. Simmet said social media is a way for the Metroparks to tell "our" story; she reviewed goals for social media, branding and Facebook posts and said the main Metroparks Facebook page was reactivated.

Commissioner Hertel said it looked like everything was going in the right direction; that most people don't know there are 13 Metroparks and are only aware of the park closest to them.

Commissioner Hertel also said one of the biggest issues was the website and asked how staff planned to drive people to the website. Ms. Simmet said the new website was up and running and staff would use multiple media tools to bring people to the website.

Commissioner Hertel said he would like to see the entire Metroparks system on the website. Director Phifer said the new website has a new look and feel and brands the Metroparks as one park system and that the home page begins with the 13 parks covering five counties and then rotates through the parks with photos.

The website was brought up for the Board to review. Commissioner Hertel said he was pleased with the changes. Director Phifer said Bradley Felder, the Metroparks webmaster would update the Board on the changes to the website at the next meeting.

Commissioner Marans said he would like to see a timeline or history of when the parks were added into the system.

10. Staff Officer Update

None.

11. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Marans said it was nice to see the turnout for the silver card and wanted to see a financial analysis and the impact on the policy. He suggested phasing the policy out over time instead of all at once.

Commissioner Hertel said he would like to see a historic timeline on the printed material handed out to employees over the years.

Commissioner Parker said that perhaps retirees could receive a set of coupons that could be used during the golf season.

Commissioner Parker also said he wanted to see a compensation review committee to review executive salaries; that the review shouldn't come from the employees and that the commissioners should be the ones to review compensation.

Commissioner Hertel said he knows Commissioner Marrocco wants to be involved in the conversation on compensation and that one option is to hire a consultant. Commissioner Hertel also said he would like the item added to the August 2016 agenda on how the salary survey should be handled.

Commissioner McCarthy said a salary survey hasn't been done since he has been on the Board and he supports it. He said he is inclined to hire a consultant so that it's an independent review and would be an unbiased opinion.

Commissioner McCarthy also said it is challenging for staff when meetings are held in the field and suggested that staff have a dress rehearsal with the microphones, audio and visual equipment to make sure everything works.

Commissioner McCarthy also would like to reexamine the silver card policy. He also thanked Paul Muelle for his service to the parks.

Commissioner Hertel requested that staff research a number of firms to conduct the executive salary survey.

Commissioner Hertel also requested the silver card policy be added to the August 2016 meeting agenda.

12. Motion to Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Marans supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners' adjourn the regular meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn M. Athayde
Recording Secretary