

**Minutes
Special Meeting
Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority
Board of Commissioners
Thursday, October 25, 2017**

A regular meeting of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority's Board of Commissioners was held at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 25, 2017 at the Administrative Office

Commissioners Present:	Timothy J. McCarthy Robert W. Marans Kurt L. Heise Steve Williams Jaye Quadrozzi (arrived at 2:30 p.m.)
Staff Officers:	
Acting Director/Chief of Police	Michael Reese
Deputy Director	David Kirbach
Absent:	
Commissioner	John Paul Rea
Commissioner	Bernard Parker
Other Attendees:	
Steve Mann	Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, PLC
Kerry Laycock	Consultant

Chairman McCarthy called the Oct. 25, 2017 meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.

1. Chairman's Statement

None.

2. Public Participation

None.

3. Approval – October 12, 2017 Regular Meeting and Closed Session Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support from Commissioner Williams that the Board of Commissioners' approve the Oct. 12, 2017 regular meeting and closed meeting minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval – October 25, 2017 Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Williams, support from Commissioner Heise that the Board of Commissioners' approve the October 25, 2017 agenda as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Reports

A. Engineering Department

1. Approval – Agreement to Commence Work, Green Oak Township Land Sale

Motion by Commissioner Williams, support from Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' approve the agreement to allow Green Oak Township to commence construction work on the parcel approved for sale by the Board on April 13, 2017 as recommended by Manager of Planning, Nina Kelly, and Manager of Engineering, Mike Brahm-Henkel and staff.

Discussion: Manager of Engineering Mike Brahm-Henkel said that on April 13, 2017, the Board approved the sale of 13.02 acres in the amount of \$142,000. to Green Oak Township. Since that time, staff and legal counsel for both the Metroparks and Green Oak Township have been working on the details of the purchase agreement. During this process, an error was discovered in the property description as it relates to the western boundary property line. A third party was hired by the Metroparks to trace the original property descriptions and survey the property where an error was found in a survey completed in 1994 by an outside engineering firm.

Mr. Brahm-Henkel said because Green Oak Township has already hired a contractor to construct the new building and the land sale is in the process of being finalized, a proposed separate agreement has been drafted to allow the Green Oak Township to proceed with construction while indemnifying and holding the Metroparks harmless while the closing of the property sale is being scheduled.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if staff was requesting Green Oaks Township provide the insurance and name the Metroparks as additionally insured? Mr. Brahm-Henkel said having additional insurance is permissible. Legal Counsel for the Metroparks Steve Mann said the insurance could be added.

Commissioner Williams said thank you to staff for working through all the delays.

Motion carried unanimously.

6. Director Selection Process

Commissioner McCarthy said Kerry Laycock was at the meeting today to gather information for the search for a new director. Mr. McCarthy said the Board was looking to retain an executive director and there may be both internal and external candidates.

Commissioner McCarthy said Commissioner Parker was not able to attend the meeting, but wanted the following information relayed to Mr. Laycock and the rest of the Board. The first item is job responsibilities – to increase attendance at parks from individuals living in urban areas and the second item is to have a diverse workforce. Regarding previous employment, the person should have employed a diverse work staff and understand minority communities.

Commissioner McCarthy asked Mr. Laycock to outline his approach for the selection process.

Mr. Laycock outlined his process and said it's important for him to know where the Metroparks are at today and the challenges the next director will face. He said he plans on conducting follow up interviews with Board members, senior leadership as well as conducting focus groups with members of park staff to find out the challenges facing the new director and the characteristics of the person that would be most capable of meeting those challenges. He said his goal for the meeting was to learn where the Metroparks as an organization is today and to find out what type of person would be a successful director. Mr. Laycock said he would summarize everything in a job specification.

Commissioner Marans said he worked with Mr. Laycock for the director search at Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation. He said the Metroparks faces challenges both locally and nationally when looking for a director as the Metroparks reputation is tarnished and the image has been damaged from the past director. Commissioner Marans said the parks and recreation field has changed and one of the new directions is related to social equality. Another area is the preservation of natural resources and that it is important on a national level and in southeast Michigan. Commissioner Marans said someone with these qualities should be reflected in a candidate and that can bring the Metroparks to a prominent position.

Commissioner Marans said the Board should also reexamine the bylaws whether it be parallel to the director search or after a director has been chosen. Some of the problems the Metroparks now faces are a result of the changes in bylaws.

Commissioner Heise said the following were important for a potential candidate – protecting natural resources, natural resources education, environmental stewardship, cooperation and innovation with other local government agencies and non-governmental agencies is important. He said every community within the Metroparks operating boundaries has storm water permits and that has mandated education requirements associated with those permits, which is something the Metroparks is able to assist with. Commissioner Heise also said the director should have staying power, will be around for a long time, be the face of the organization and have a positive outlook.

Commissioner Williams said the candidate should be someone who can work with all types of people, constituencies as well as be able to work cooperatively with staff and others.

Commissioner McCarthy asked how Washtenaw County Parks compared to the Metroparks. Commissioner Marans replied that the system is smaller with half a dozen parks and is also responsible for land preservation, which is an important aspect of the system. He said the Washtenaw County parks also has two millages – an operations millage and development millage.

Commissioner McCarthy asked Mr. Laycock about the timeline used for the Washtenaw County Parks director search and how he would integrate it into the work for the Metroparks. Mr. Laycock said his role with Washtenaw County was to help them define who they were looking for and define the process; not conduct a search.

Commissioner Marans said Washtenaw County decided not to advertise locally and they received a limited number of applicants. Two applicants were selected and interviewed. Mr. Laycock said the process he laid out helped the Washtenaw County Parks board and human resources. He said the HR department handled the candidate process and assisted with the questions asked of both candidates.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if the same process would be used for the Metroparks. Mr. Laycock said yes, he would develop a job classification and then job description.

Commissioner McCarthy said the Board was holding the special meeting to begin the process and wanted to know if Mr. Laycock would be ready to present his information at the next regular Board meeting on Nov. 9. Mr. Laycock said no as he will not have had the other interviews completed.

Commissioner Heise said he would like to see a written timeline. Mr. Laycock said it is still developing and would be a part of the document he brings to the Board. He said HR can begin advertising and collecting resumes. He said the process should wrap in the first quarter of 2018.

Commissioner Marans said if we don't have initial summary by Nov. 9 meeting, it could be done at another special meeting or at the December Board meeting. Mr. Laycock said it's up to the Board on whether they want to approve the job classification/description.

Legal Counsel Steve Mann said it's best for the Board approve the position specification.

Commissioner Heise asked what would the Board be approving at the special meeting? Mr. Laycock said the position specification, which guides the search.

Commissioner Williams said because of issues with hiring previous directors, he said he prefers it be done in an open meeting. Mr. Laycock said we are always balancing transparency; however, once the document becomes a public document, the candidates have the answer sheet. Commissioner Williams said he is fine with anonymity until a certain point in the process.

Commissioner Heise asked how many people would be interviewed. Commissioner McCarthy said three is a reasonable goal.

Commissioner Marans asked Mr. Laycock if he would be working with the Board and Human Resources. Mr. Laycock said yes. The candidates would come to him first for vetting and then selected candidates would come to the Board for review.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if there was anything Mr. Laycock wanted to discuss at the

Nov. 9 regular meeting, he was encouraged to do so, and if not, the Board can hold another special meeting. Mr. Laycock said he would have a summary of the Oct. 25 meeting ready for discussion at the Nov. 9 meeting.

Commissioner Marans asked when the position specification would be ready for review by the full Board. Mr. Laycock said approximately a week later. Commissioner Marans suggested holding another special meeting the week of Nov. 20.

Discussion held on special meeting availability.

Commissioner Williams said the candidate needs to be able to delegate, trust staff to attend meetings and balance natural resources management with parks and recreation. He said he would like to make sure the process was open and available to internal candidates as well. Commissioner Williams said he is good with conducting a national search, but that his preference is to find people that are familiar with Michigan and the state.

Commissioner McCarthy said he prefers not to have strict definitions on competencies, qualifications and/or accreditations. Mr. Laycock said he agrees with this approach.

Mr. Laycock asked the Board questions and said one of the themes of the discussions was that the Metroparks has a bad reputation and a high turnover rate. He said he is trying to sell the organization to candidates and will need to be able to make assurances to the top candidate that they will be supported in their job and that things are different now than in the past.

Commissioner McCarthy said that when the Metroparks were filling the position for the Manager of Planning, a friend of his said that he had a candidate he knew and that person brought up the high turnover rate. He said it has been mostly at the executive director level and that system wide, the Metroparks has a stable, dedicated work force. Commissioner McCarthy said he encourages candidates to speak with current employees about working at the Metroparks.

Commissioner Williams said Mr. Laycock was trying to tactfully allude to that the Board is the problem and that is the reason for the high turnover rate and how is the Board going to convince someone to come for us with such a bad recent history.

Commissioner Heise said board members are political appointees and cannot guarantee that members will be around past the end of their term.

Commissioner Quadrozzi arrived at 2:30 p.m.

Mr. Laycock said one of the things the candidate should have is public sector governance.

Commissioner McCarthy highlighted strong points for the organization such as a strong financial position with a good fund balance, a perpetual millage and has long-term planning for capital expenditures.

Commissioner Heise said the Metroparks financial situation is not perfect and funding is reduced every year due to the Headlee Act. He said the next director needs to have more communications with the Board on long range plans for construction.

Commissioner McCarthy also said the Metroparks no longer has a defined benefit plan but a defined contribution plan. However, the organization is still funding two defined benefit plans (Pension and Retiree Health Care Trust). He also said members have no input on appointees to the Board. Commissioner McCarthy said the Metroparks does have a Foundation, which has a 501(c)(3) designation.

Commissioner Heise asked what the director's role is with the Foundation. Commissioner McCarthy said the director is a member of the Foundation board.

Commissioner Marans asked what other information Mr. Laycock needed to help with a candidate search. Mr. Laycock asked if the Board was looking for a person to come in and make a lot of changes or someone to keep moving the organization forward.

Commissioner Marans said he doesn't believe the organization needs a lot of operational changes and that repairing relationships with other agencies and employees was needed right now.

Commissioner Quadrozzi said the Metroparks are a good organization and we need someone that can portray the excellence of the organization. The person needs to be positive and can embrace the park system.

Commissioner McCarthy said the Metroparks are a diverse park system and no two parks are alike. Candidates should visit the website and learn what each park and the overall system is like.

Commissioner Heise said the infrastructure is strong and that the next director needs to mend fences with employees, communities and other agencies. He said the Metroparks is supposed to be a good agency to work for.

Commissioner Quadrozzi said the person should have park experience.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Heise said he hopes the Board has given Mr. Laycock a good foundation and direction to work with.

Commissioner Williams asked if Mr. Laycock will talk with employees. Mr. Laycock said yes in the focus group portion of the process.

Commissioner Williams asked if surveys would be used. Mr. Laycock said no.

Mr. Laycock said setting the stage for a new director is important and should be transparent and that should be reflected in the process and decision making.

Commissioner Marans said employee surveys are important and relates to accountability of the director to the Board.

Commissioner McCarthy said a collaborative approach to leadership is what is needed and wanted.


Commissioner Marans said the director should have a collaborative approach for running a park system.

9. Motion to Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support from Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' adjourn the regular meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn M. Athayde
Recording Secretary