

Minutes
Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority
Board of Commissioners
Thursday, April 17, 2014

The regular meeting of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority's Board of Commissioners was held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 17, 2014 at Lake Erie Metropark at the Pool Food Bar area. The meeting was convened in pursuance to a call thereof by the Executive Secretary and due notice was given to the HCMA Board of Commissioners.

Commissioners Present:	John E. La Belle John C. Hertel Timothy J. McCarthy Anthony V. Marrocco Harry E. Lester Jaye Quadrozzi Robert W. Marans
Staff Officers:	
Director	John P. McCulloch
Deputy Director	George Phifer
Controller	Rebecca Franchock
Recording Secretary/Corporation Counsel	Joseph W. Colaianne
Others:	
ROI Golf Management	Bill Fountain
ROI Golf Management	Bruce Matthews
Local Citizen	Toni Spears

Chairman La Belle called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

1. Chairman's Statement

Chairman La Belle noted that there are important changes being made and praised the management team for its approach to ensure long-term financial success of the Metropark system.

2. Public Comments

Toni Spears indicated her objections to the proposed logos with the cattail symbol, indicating that cattails are an invasive species and should not be used to represent the Metroparks. She acknowledged her support for logo "D" which identifies the Metroparks with the "tree symbol."

3. Minutes – March 13, 2014 Regular Meeting and Closed Session

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner Hertel that the Board of Commissioners' approve the March 13 regular meeting and closed session minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval – April 17, 2014 Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Lester, supported by Commissioner Hertel that the Board of Commissioners approve the April 17, 2014 meeting agenda as presented by Director McCulloch and staff.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Approval – April 17, 2014 Consent Agenda

Commissioner Marrocco requested that Item 5(c) (2) “Golf Appropriation Adjustment” be added to the Regular Agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners approve the April 17, 2014 Consent Agenda as amended to include the following: Vouchers – March 2014; Financial Statements – March 2014; Appropriation Adjustments consisting of (1) 2014 First Quarter Appropriation Adjustments; and (2) Golf Appropriation Adjustments; Purchases consisting of (1) Garbage Truck Body, Hudson Mills Metropark (2) Lockers, Lake St. Clair Metropark; and Fertilizer and Turf Chemicals, All Locations; Bids – Bath House and Administration – Concession Building Roof and Parapet Repairs, Lake St. Clair Metropark; Bids – Auxiliary Power Connections, Lake St. Clair Metropark; Agreement – Shelby Township Sewer Agreement Addendum, Stony Creek Metropark; Bids – Nature Center Overlook, Kensington Metropark; Bids – Tree Plantings, Huron Meadows, Hudson Mills, Delhi Metroparks; Bids – Roof Replacement Golf Starter Building, Indian Springs Metropark; Bids – Asphalt Trail Repairs, Lower Huron, Willow Metroparks; Bids – Asphalt Trail Infrared Pavement Repairs, Hudson Mills, Indian Springs, Kensington, Lake Erie, Lower Huron Metroparks; and donations.

Motion carried unanimously.

Regular Agenda

5 (c) (2) Golf Appropriation Adjustments

Motion by Commissioner Hertel, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners approve the golf appropriation adjustments.

Vote: Ayes: Hertel, La Belle, Lester, Marans, McCarthy, and Quadrozzi
Nays: Marrocco

Discussion: Commissioner Marrocco raised a question as to how much HCMA paid to ROI on its initial contract and raised a concern about what was now being proposed under the second contract. Mr. Marrocco also questioned ROI’s projections relative to the food and beverage service revenue, as well as the wisdom of HCMA’s assumption of golf course food and beverage service vs. utilizing our catering contractor, Kosch. Director McCulloch indicated that the scope of services under the initial contract with ROI was for ROI to analyze HCMA golf operations and develop a “game plan” towards self-sufficiency. The “second” ROI contract was to assist HCMA staff in implementing this game plan. With respect to the assumption of food and beverage service at the golf courses, Director McCulloch noted that during the recent renegotiation of the Kosch contract, Kosch suggested HCMA assume the golf course concessions so Kosch could focus on catering events; enhancing revenue for HCMA. Director McCulloch also noted that while he did not dispute that golf course concession may “break even at best,” it will nonetheless allow HCMA to control and manage the golf course concession which is part of the golf course experience. Finally, Director McCulloch added that HCMA’s Southern District has historically operated its own golf course concessions with success.

Motion carried.

6. Legislative Report

Motion by Commissioner Hertel, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners receive and file the legislative report dated April 16, 2014 as presented by Legislative Consultant George Carr.

Director McCulloch indicated that Mr. Carr was not available to attend the Board meeting and sent in the most recent report dated April 16, 2014.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Update – Environmental Discovery Center Water Supply

Motion by Commissioner Hertel, supported by Commissioner Lester that the Board of Commissioners receive and file the Environmental Discovery Water Supply report as presented by Manager of Assets and Development Mike Brahm-Henkel.

Discussion: Mr. Brahm-Henkel explained the water clarity problem with the pond at the Environmental Discovery Center at Indian Springs Metropark, and that his department is working with consultants to develop solutions.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. Update – Park Operation

Motion by Commissioner Marrocco, supported by Commissioner Lester that the Board of Commissioners receive and file the Park Operations Update as presented by park operations staff.

Discussion: Deputy Director Phifer indicated that administrative staff thought it would be a good idea for the Board of Commissioners to meet and hear from HCMA employees involved in the Metropark operations. Mr. Phifer introduced Joe Jolly, Southern District maintenance manager to provide an update from the Southern District.

Mr. Jolly indicated that the slow steady pace of snow melt resulted in limited ponding and minor flooding at the Willow Golf Course, and that the course should be open in early April. He also noted minor flooding at Lower Huron picnic area. Revenue through end of March remained flat for the same period last year. Due to significant snowfall this winter and the availability of winter sports, total year-to-date revenue was up 35 percent. Mr. Jolly also mentioned the “Concrete Canoe” event at Lake Erie Metropark on March 30 sponsored by the University of Detroit – Mercy and the American Society of Engineers. This event was scheduled at the last minute due to the unavailability of a boat basin at Belle Isle. This event, along with the good weather resulted in largest tolling revenue day to date. (Please see attached report).

Gary Hopp, park operations manager at Stony Creek Metropark gave the update from the Eastern District. Mr. Hopp noted that the long winter showed significant increase in winter activities, especially cross-country skiing where the revenue generated showed it was the most productive season in recent years. Mr. Hopp also highlighted the “Maple Sweetness” Program at the Historic Mill and the promotion of this event. The golf courses at Stony Creek, Wolcott and (par 3) at Lake St. Clair are now open but were delayed due to the winter weather. Mr. Hopp extended congratulations to the honorees from the Eastern District: Park Support Specialist Mary Dimaggio (Metroparks Employee of the Year) and the Cerku family (Metroparks Volunteers of the Year). Both honorees received recognition at the Metroparks Recognition Dinner at Indian Springs EDC on March 15. Mr. Hopp indicated that a nesting pair of Bald Eagles have produced at least one egg and are being monitored by volunteers. (Please see attached report).

Marcie Robinson, Western District park operations manager provided the update from the Western District. Ms. Robinson noted that it seemed like winter would never end, but the last weekend in March, with the sun and mild temperatures, hundreds of people came out to enjoy the Maple Sugaring Program. Ms. Robinson noted that several new animals additions with the birth of piglets, kids and lambs at the Kensington Farm Center. Ms. Robinson indicated that all of the golf courses are now open. Finally, Ms. Robinson gave praise to Maintenance Manager Dave Kirbach, highlighting a letter received from a park patron praising his assistance with her family 5K Fun Run/Walk at Kensington Metropark. (See attached report).

Motion carried unanimously.

9. Reports

A. Lake St. Clair Metropark

1. Report – HEART Freshwater Center

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner Marrocco that the Board of Commissioners approve Work Order # 502.04-658M in the amount of \$50,000.00 to

complete the current expedited building modifications which will transform space in the Administration/Concession building into the (HEART) Huron to Erie Alliance for Research and Training freshwater testing and research facility, as recommended by Manager of Assets and Development Mike Brahm-Henkel and staff.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Kensington Metropark

1. Bids – Martindale Parking Lot Surfacing and Main Park Road Reconstruction

Motion by Commissioner Lester, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners That the Board of Commissioners award Contract No. 504-12U to the low responsive, responsible bidder, Pro-Line Asphalt Paving Corporation, in the amount of \$1,598,910.37 and transfer \$49,000.00 from Capital Fund Balance to Kensington Capital (1504.09.990) to cover the difference between the bid and work order amount as recommended by Manager of Assets and Development Mike Brahm-Henkel and staff.

Discussion: Mr. Brahm-Henkel noted that this was the last phase of a project which involves resurfacing the parking lot. The project is in excess of the original budget due to certain improvements to the storm water structure and adding the repair of the Kent Lake road access (which has significantly deteriorated). Commissioner Quadrozzi expressed concern regarding the impact to the public accessing the park during the construction. Mr. Brahm-Henkel indicated that the work will start immediately and coordination with the contractor to minimize the impact to the public's access is part of the contract..

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Lake Erie Metropark

1. Bids – Tollbooth Replacement

Motion by Commissioner Lester, supported by Commissioner McCarthy that the Board of Commissioners award Contract No. 512-13J to the low responsive, responsible bidder, R.L Sheridan LLC in the amount of \$182,277.15 and transfer \$71,300.00 from Capital Fund Balance to cover the difference between the bid and work order amounts and transfer the \$25,000 in 1712.99 (Major Maintenance) to 1512.09 (Capital) for the associated asphalt work for the project, as recommended by Manager of Assets and Development Mike Brahm-Henkel and staff.

Discussion: Mr. Brahm-Henkel indicated that this project is over budget. He noted that the original project contemplated a rebuild of the tollbooth. However, it was later determined that the width of the access lanes was insufficient and needed to be widened to accommodate boats. This required pushing the road out and relocation of the utilities. In addition, it also made sense to repair the road as well. Mr. Brahm-Henkel indicated that this project will begin immediately and coordination with park staff will be critical.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Administrative Office

1. Update – Marketing

Motion by Commissioner Marans, supported by Commissioner Lester that the Board of Commissioners receive and file the Marketing Update report as recommended by Administrative Services Manager Carol Stone and staff.

Discussion: Administrative Services Manager Carol Stone provided an update regarding marketing and communications, and the contract with Berline. (Please see attached report dated April 10, 2014). Working with Community Relations Coordinator and the new Director of Development, Ms. Stone noted that the Metroparks will be increasing its exposure with local communities and public. Ms Stone indicated that HCMA's consultant, Berline, will be concentrating its resources on social media and digital advertisement. Ms Stone also highlighted key events and projects: CBS/Michigan Golf Weekly; Golf Nine-

Wine & Dine; Mobile Apps (e.g. Golf Now); and Metroparks Celebrate America that combines fireworks at six Metroparks and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra concert.

Motion carried unanimously.

9. Reports

D. Administrative Office

2. Update – Metropark Logo

Motion by Commissioner Marrocco, supported by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners approve Logo D as the general logo for the Metroparks as recommended by Administrative Services Manager Carol Stone and staff.

Discussion: Pursuant to the Board's direction, Administrative Services Manager Carol Stone indicated that HCMA solicited input from the public regarding the proposed Metropark logos. She noted that there was a "slight" preference for the logo "D" ("Tree Logo") over the more "traditional Metropark" logo. However, she also noted that Logo "D" allows for more customization for promoting certain Metropark activities such as "golf." Commissioner McCarthy commented that he appreciated Ms. Spear's comments regarding the logos and that he supports Logo "D."

Motion carried unanimously.

9. Staff Officer Report

Motion by Commissioner McCarthy, supported by Commissioner Lester that the Board of Commissioners receive and file the Staff Officer report as presented.

1. Director McCulloch presented to each of the Board members a copy of the Board's annual picture. He also presented each Board member a jar of maple syrup that was packed for the Kensington Farm and Learning Center as part of the Maple Syrup Program. Director McCulloch introduced Molly Bell as the HCMA Development Director who will assist with the HCMA Foundation. Mr. McCulloch noted that Ms. Bell previously worked for Habitat for Humanity International. Ms. Bell stated that she is very excited to be working on behalf of the Metroparks and sees a lot of potential for improving the financial prospects of the Metroparks and its foundation. She is looking forward to working with marketing and the community relations.
2. Deputy Director Phifer introduced Susan Schmidt, who accepted the position of Agricultural Coordinating Supervisor at Wolcott Mill Metropark. Mr. Phifer noted that that Ms. Schmidt has a background in organic food and previously employment at the Henry Ford. Ms. Schmidt was hired to develop opportunities and programming to enhance and increase attendance at Wolcott Mill Metropark. Ms. Schmidt stated that she is very excited to part of the Metropark team and is looking forward to creating new experiences at Wolcott. She also indicated that she is very impressed with passion and dedication of the Metropark staff.
3. Controller Franchock indicated that the organization is moving in the direction of "doing things in a better and efficient way." The Software License and Services agreement with New World Systems will be presented at the next Board meeting for approval. In addition, staff is currently working on the Pension Plan Restatement which should be presented to Pension Committee and Retiree Health Care Trust Board of Trustees at an upcoming meeting (before the regular meeting). Ms. Franchock indicated that staff also continues to work on the Five-Year-Plan and will be presenting it the Board for its comments. Commissioner Marans indicated that he would like to see the goals and objectives before the Board is asked to comment on the Five-Year-Plan. Ms. Franchock also noted that the auditors had completed the fieldwork and that the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) will be presented in June 2014.

Motion carried unanimously.

10. Other Business

1. Corporation Counsel Colaianne indicated that the Federal case involving two employees that sued HCMA and Chief Phifer was dismissed with prejudice. Mr. Colaianne noted that the employees, Wittman and Wrobel had previously filed a lawsuit in the Livingston County circuit court which was dismissed and is now pending in the Michigan Court of Appeals. While that case was under consideration, the same employees filed a federal lawsuit alleging that they were deprived of their first amendment rights. The court dismissed the claims on a *res judicata* grounds. Mr. Colaianne noted that the matter was before the court on April 9 for argument and the court dismissed the claims on April 15.
2. Commissioner Hertel raised a concern regarding reorganization on the interpretive staff. Mr. Hertel stressed that as departments go through reorganization and streamlining, those in the field need to have understanding of the new structure.
3. William Fountain, ROI Golf Management, presented an update regarding HCMA Golf operations. (See attached ROI Golf Management report dated April 17, 2014). Mr. Fountain noted that ROI is working with all of the courses to make significant adjustments with the goal of having the golf courses become self-sustaining. Mr. Fountain indicated that the 2014 budgets have the potential of a 27 percent positive cash flow. One example of long-term potential savings is the rotation of golf carts for all courses to improve life span of the carts. Newer carts would go the higher use facilities, and rotated with the lower use courses. Commissioner Marans raised a concern with moving from electric to gas carts as to whether the impact on the environment was considered. Mr. Fountain noted that both electric and gas carts have environmental issues. Electric carts require battery replacement and disposal; and require charging. Gas carts are much more efficient today than in the past, they are less expensive and greater return on investment when sold as used.

11. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Hertel praised Director McCulloch for the hiring a development director.

Commissioner Lester welcomed everyone to Lake Erie Metropark.

Commissioner McCarthy appreciated the Maple Syrup.

Commissioner Marrocco mentioned the Kensington Metropark marketing program with Macy's department store and although he was not sure how much revenue was raised, suggested that HCMA broaden to include other regions.

Commissioner Marans noted that he liked the idea of having the operational staff provide the updates at the meeting.

Commissioner Quadrozzi – no comment.

12. Motion to Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Marrocco, supported by Commissioner Hertel that the Board of Commissioners adjourn the regular meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Colaianne
Recording Secretary/Corporation Counsel