

**Minutes  
Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority  
Board of Commissioners  
Thursday, June 8, 2017**

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A regular meeting of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority's Board of Commissioners was held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 8, 2017 at the Administrative Office.

Commissioners Present:	Timothy J. McCarthy Robert W. Marans Bernard Parker Jaye Quadrozzi Kurt L. Heise John Paul Rea
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Staff Officers:	
Director	George Phifer
Chief Financial Officer	Michelle Cole

Absent:	
Livingston County Representative	Steve Williams
Deputy Director	Dave Kirbach

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

Chairman McCarthy called the June 8, 2017 meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

**1. Chairman's Statement**

None.

**2. Approval – June 8, 2017 Amended Agenda**

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support from Commissioner Parker that the Board of Commissioners' approve the amended June 8, 2017 amended agenda as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

**3. Approval – May 11, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Commissioner Parker, support from Commissioner Heise that the Board of Commissioners' approve the May 11, 2017 regular meeting minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

**4. Election of Board Officers**

Commissioner McCarthy requested a motion for the election of Board officers for the 2017-2018 term.

Motion by Commissioner Parker, support by Commissioner Heise that the Board of Commissioners appoint Timothy McCarthy as chair, Robert Marans as vice-chair and Jaye Quadrozzi as Treasurer as officers for the Huron-Clinton Metroparks for the 2017 – 2018 term.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, support by Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners appoint Bernard Parker as Secretary for the Huron-Clinton Metroparks Board of Commissioners for the 2017-2018 term.

Motion carried unanimously.

## 5. Public Comments

Barb Baldinger, Macomb Audubon Society, read a statement from Ron Baker, president of the Macomb Audubon Society and said thousands of people each year visit the Metroparks and partake of the educational programs offered through the nature centers. The highly qualified staff of these facilities have a daunting task; to educate the public about the environment and the world we live in. Good management of the Metroparks should not only include good stewardship of the natural resources but should also include being fiscally responsible.

Bill Kincaid, Dexter, said he has played at the Hudson Mills Golf Course for 15 years and is opposed to closing the course. He said the facility is well maintained and is a good course to play and all the course needs is a few improvements to bring golfers back to the course.

Bert Wilkinson, Dexter, said he has played at the Hudson Mills Golf Course since 1996 and has worked at the course for 14 years. He said tournaments used to be held at the course and run by the employees. After 2007, no more tournaments were held and there was no more advertising for the course. He said golf is one of the only sports where kids can pick up clubs and play the game from an early age. There are many good ideas that could be used to bring in more business, such as creating a short course where families could play at the same time. Turning the course into a par 3 is also another option.

Nate Pound, Mill Creek Outdoor Adventures, said he is attending the meeting with the support of the citizens of Dexter. He said he and his partner started a business plan last year and moved forward with the creation of Mill Creek Outdoor Adventures after receiving a service agreement from the Metroparks. The decision to not move forward with an agreement with Mill Creek has made the company plans to come to a halt. He said businesses, the citizens of Dexter and the Metroparks will all benefit from this concessionaire arrangement. Mr. Pound said he hopes the Metroparks will reconsider and work with Mill Creek Outdoor Adventures.

James Davis, Dexter, said he is a retired historian and is dismayed at the widening gap between government and people. He said the people at the table have the opportunity to bridge the gap between the public and the Metroparks. He asked the Board to reconsider and serve the people and keep the golf course open and work with Mill Creek.

Lou Waldock, Howell, he said everything the public has been told is lies and people have been given false promises. He said commissioners need to do their jobs and listen to the people.

Fred Metzler, Brighton, said he uses the Kensington every day and is happy with the way the park looks. He said the animals are more accessible, the bathrooms are clean and the roadways are clear of debris and he likes what he sees at the parks. He said he supports George Phifer and said he is going a fantastic job.

Laura Rubin, Huron Watershed Council, said she has seen a lot of changes in the river over the past several years and that the Metroparks are a strong partner with helping to keep the rivers clean and accessible to the public. She said there is a bigger demand for river usage and having more canoe and kayak liveries is one way to support business and the people that want access to rivers.

Paul Cousins, Dexter, said he is a retired teacher and grew up in Dexter. He also cited four principals used at his weekly rotary club meetings – is it the truth, is it fair to all concerned, does it build good will and better friendships and would it be beneficial to everyone. He asked the Board to do the right thing when it came time to vote.

Michelle Aniol, Dexter, said she was attending to support Mill Creek Adventure Outdoor Adventures. She said Dexter, the Metroparks, the Huron Watershed Council and other organizations have a lot to be proud as there are a lot of strong partnerships and that these partnerships can be made stronger by working with Mill Creek. She also references the Hudson Mills Master Plan and said the Metroparks operating a canoe livery operation was a short-term plan and that she didn't understand why cancelling concessionaires was necessary.

Barb Jenson, Milford, said the recently mowed area at Stony Creek includes habitat for the Massasauga Rattlesnake and that mowing the area goes against the EMR that the Metroparks entered into with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Rebecca McCluskey, legal counsel for Mill Creek Outdoor Adventures, said the Metroparks presented her client with an edited contract and said there is no reason to believe this was/is not a binding contract. She said Mill Creek went forward with a business plan and that her clients lost contact with the Metroparks after February 2017 when she was not able to reach anyone at the Metroparks. She said when her clients did finally hear from the Metroparks, they were told that the Metroparks were no longer willing to move forward with canoe liveries. She said based on correspondence and the service agreement that the Metroparks entered into a professional services contract.

Phyllis Risdon, Dexter, said she lives across from the Hudson Mills Golf Course and was concerned with the lack of communication regarding the master plan with adjacent land owners and that the neighbors should have been notified.

Shawn Keough, Dexter, said he is the mayor of the city of Dexter and does not support the Hudson Mills Master Plan. He urged the Board to reconsider and keep the course open, as it is a great course. He also said he supports Mill Creek Outdoor Adventures and the partnership with the Metroparks would both help promote the river and the Metroparks by allowing patrons to stop in the Metroparks while using the river. He also said the Metroparks should not be competing with private businesses.

Mike Ratliff, Dexter, said he lives near Hudson Mills and uses the golf course frequently and that it is a great course. He doesn't understand why the Metroparks would close the course as it is always busy. He asked the Board to reconsider closing the course.

Susan Glowski said she is a long-term user of the golf course and is one of the only courses she can walk and not have to use a cart. She said she did not want the course to close.

## **6. Approval – June 8, 2017 Consent Agenda**

Motion by Commissioner Quadrozzi, support from Commissioner Heise that the Board of Commissioners' approve the consent agenda consisting of the following:

- a. Approval – May 2017 Financial Statements and Payment Registers
- b. Approval – May 2017 Appropriation Adjustments
- c. Purchases
  1. Glow Products for Fireworks events
- d. Approval – 2017 Tax Levy Report
- e. Bids – Hike/Bike Trail Crack Filling/Seal Coating, All Locations
- f. Bids – Tollbooth Replacement, Stony Creek Metropark
- g. Approval – Temporary and Highway Easement, Stony Creek Metropark
- h. Approval – Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs Grant Request
- i. Report – Correction to Culvert Repairs, Willow Metropark
- j. Approval – Contractual Services

Motion carried unanimously.

## **Regular Agenda**

### **7. Reports**

#### **A. Finance Department**

##### **1. Report – 2016 Audited Financial Statements**

Motion by Commissioner Parker, support from Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' receive and file the 2016 Audited Financial Statements Report as recommended by Chief Financial Officer Cole and staff.

Chief Financial Officer Michelle Cole introduced Alan Panter with Abraham and Gaffney to the Board and said he would be reviewing the 2016 Audited Financial Statements.

*Discussion:* Mr. Panter reviewed the 2016 audited financial statements and said Abraham and Gaffney gave an unmodified or clean opinion to the Metroparks, which means there were no issues with the audit.

Commissioner Marans asked if the Fund Balance has been increasing. Mr. Panter said yes.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **Regular Agenda**

### **7. Reports**

#### **B. Planning Department**

##### **1. Approval – Hudson Mills Master Plan**

*Discussion:* Manager of Planning Nina Kelly reviewed the Master Plan process for Hudson Mills and said it was similar to other park master plan processes. She said the document was posted on the website through May 30, 2017. Ms. Kelly said minor grammatical changes were made and added a paragraph to the public input page for comments specifically relating to the closure of the golf course. Ms. Kelly said staff received three emails during the public comment period through May 30 from individuals objecting to closing the course and another two responses after the commented period ended.

Director Phifer said he spoke to Board members about the Hudson Mills Master Plan and his recommendation is to keep everything east of the golf course/park as is, which will give him a chance to meet with stakeholders and have discussions on this matter. He said he has not met with many of the people that spoke at the meeting today and it appears that through the process some people did not get a chance to voice their concerns.

Director Phifer requested approval of the Master Plan for the main facility, which is the activity center on the east end of the park, and keep the west end of the park, which includes the golf course as is until more discussions can be held on usage.

Commissioner Marans said he was going to make that motion but wanted to make a few comments. He said the process began in January 2017 and two public meetings were held in which he and Commissioner Williams attended. He said there was no mention of the golf course at either of the meetings. The process that staff goes through to seek input (i.e. posting information on the website, at the park offices and golf course) may not be enough for future activities. Commissioner Marans said we (board/staff) need to do a better job reaching out to the public as we move through the master planning process.

Commissioner Marans said he had not heard about the issue with Mill Creek Adventure Center until approximately 10 days ago.

Commissioner Marans said he would like to formally adopt the Hudson Mills Master Plan East of the Huron River as Director Phifer suggested and then engage in process of meeting with the community, the Mill Creek Adventure Center, Skip's Canoe Livery, the Huron River Watershed Council and representatives from the city of Dexter. He said the point that was made about public partnerships could turn into an ideal arrangement for the future.

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support by Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners approve the Hudson Mills Master Plan east of the Huron River not to include areas west of the river.

Commissioner McCarthy said that if anyone has taken the implication that there is the intent on the part of the Authority to go into competition against other businesses, to terminate concessionaires or be our own business and that is not the case.

Commissioner Parker asked what exactly was included in the motion. Commissioner Marans said it was to keep everything as is west of the river where the Border-to-Border trail and golf course is located is the area that needs more attention and meetings.

Commissioner Parker said it's a good course and that he recently played golf there. He said he wanted to know what could be done to bring in revenue for the course and what improvements could be made to make the course sustainable to operate.

Commissioner Heise said he as concerned about approving a partial master plan and suggested tabling the item until all the issues could be resolved.

Commissioner Marans withdrew his original motion in favor of tabling approval of the master plan.

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support by Commissioner Heise that the Board of Commissioners approve tabling approval of the Hudson Mills Master Plan for a 90-day period in which time other activities west of the river would be examined.

Commissioner Quadrozzi asked Manager of Planning Nina Kelly if this was a feasible timeline. Ms. Kelly said yes with direction from Director Phifer and the Board.

Director Phifer said postponing the approval of the Hudson Mills Master Plan may delay other park master plans currently in process.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **7. Reports**

### **C. Engineering Department**

#### **1. Bids – Exterior Insulated Finish System Repairs, Lake St. Clair Metropark**

Motion by Commissioner Parker, support from Commissioner Heise that the Board of Commissioners' award Contract No. 702-17-297 to the low responsive, responsible bidder, General Painting Company, LLC in the amount of \$65,800 as recommended by Manager of Engineering Mike Brahm-Henkel and Staff.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **D. Natural Resources Department**

#### **1. Report – Black Creek Marsh Dredging Project, Lake St. Clair Metropark**

Motion by Commissioner Rea, support from Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' receive and file the Black Creek Marsh Dredging Report recommended by Manager of Natural Resources and Environmental Compliance Ryan Colliton and staff

Discussion: Manager of Natural Resources and Environmental Compliance Ryan Colliton updated the Board on the history of the project and said the project is phase II of a larger restoration project and, which was approved by the Board at its April 11, 2015 meeting. He said Phase I included the restoration of threatened and endangered species (snake hibernacula), the control of invasive Phragmites, the replacement of nature trails and the construction of a dipping platform for nature programs. Phase I was approved by the board at the May 2011 board meeting and work began in April 2011. The final portion of Phase I, a dipping platform for nature programs, was completed in December 2016. With the completion of Phase I, staff is prepared to begin Phase II, which is the restoration of fish and wildlife habitat in Black Creek Marsh.

Commissioner Quadrozzi asked if the map they were looking at was the north marsh area. Mr. Colliton said yes and that the project would open the channels with dredging to open canals and pools.

Commissioner Parker asked what the cost to maintain the dredging once completed. Mr. Colliton said he would get back to him with regarding costs. Commissioner Parker suggested dredging maintenance be included in upcoming budgets.

Motion carried unanimously.

**8. Other Business**

None.

**9. Staff Officer Update**

Director Phifer introduced Manager of Interpretive Services Jennifer Hollenbeck and Manager of Natural Resources and Environmental Compliance Ryan Colliton who updated the Board on Natural Resources for the Metroparks including land usage within the parks.

Mr. Colliton reviewed the mowing incident that recently occurred at Stony Creek Metropark and steps staff was taking to help prevent further loss of wildlife.

Commissioner Parker asked if there was a mowing plan or schedule and when the last time it was reviewed. Mr. Colliton said the grassland management plan was last updated in 2014.

Commissioner Parker asked if staff was staying with the mowing plan. Mr. Colliton said yes.

Commissioner Parker also asked if staff planned to bring an updated grassland management plan to Board for review. Mr. Colliton said yes that staff hoped to bring the plan to the Board for review in the near future.

Commissioner Quadrozzi said Mr. Colliton was very polished today, however she could see his passion for what he does when she met with him and Director Phifer earlier in the week.

Commissioner Quadrozzi also said that the grounds crews are doing a great job and that staff should be careful in areas that patrons use to run and walk to make sure areas do not get too overgrown. Keeping the trails clear so that people feel safe when they walk in the park is important and should be continued.

Commissioner McCarthy said he met with Director Phifer and Mr. Colliton at Stony Creek and walked the area where the mowing incident occurred in order to compare the area to the mowing plan. He said the where the fawn was bedded down was in an area that is in the mowing plan. Commissioner McCarthy also said Mr. Colliton is very knowledgeable of the mowing plan.

Director Phifer thanked the public for the comments that were made today. He said the mowing issues has been on the radar for several years and one of the challenges has been implementing the plan approved in 2014. He said the process of change can be difficult, especially in an organization such as the Metroparks. Director Phifer said he encourages staff and the public to provide information and feedback.

**10. Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Parker welcomed Commissioner Rea to the Board and offered any assistance he may need. He said he was encouraged to hear about filling the media relations and community outreach positions and said he still would like to see a media plan. Commissioner Parker also said he would like an update on 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary events and the possibility of offering a free day or a \$.75 admission day.

Director Phifer said staff was working on holding a dinner in September to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Metroparks and that staff would provide an update on events at the July 2017 meeting.

Commissioner Heise said he met with former colleagues with the DNR and he suggested staff have them come to a meeting sometime in the fall as they have good ideas that are looking into.

Commissioner Rea thanked everyone for the warm welcome and looked forward to working with everyone.

Commissioner Quadrozzi asked when the AARP event was going to be held. Community Relations Specialist Hilary Simmet said it was going to take place June 22, 2017 at Lake St. Clair Metropark.

Commissioner Marans asked if there would be opportunities in the planning process within the next 90 days to meet with groups such as the Audubon Society and other groups to receive their input. Mr. Colliton said yes, staff would look into reaching out to stakeholders.

Commissioner Marans also requested to see stats on land usage for all the parks.

Commissioner McCarthy said Commissioner Williams could not attend today due to a work commitment.

Commissioner McCarthy said he requested the land usage for Stony Creek and said the park has 6,287 acres and 409 acres or nine percent is regularly mowed.

**11. Motion to Adjourn**

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

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn M. Athayde  
Recording Secretary