

Minutes
Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority
Board of Commissioners
Thursday, August 10, 2017

A regular meeting of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority's Board of Commissioners was held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, August 10, 2017 at the Thomas Welsh Activity Center at Lake St. Clair Metropark.

Commissioners Present:	Timothy J. McCarthy Robert W. Marans Kurt L. Heise John Paul Rea Steve Williams Jaye Quadrozzi Bernard Parker
Staff Officers:	
Acting Director/Chief of Police	Michael Reese
Deputy Director	David Kirbach
Absent:	
Chief Financial Officer	Michelle Cole
Other Attendees:	
Steve Mann	Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, PLC

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

1. Chairman's Statement

Commissioner McCarthy said he knows it is a difficult time and thanked employees for their cooperation.

2. Public Participation

Adam Graham, attorney at Miller Cohen and legal counsel for the HCMA Employee Association read the following statement on behalf of his clients.

"The Association wants to express their concerns regarding the current situation with the Director and the overall reporting structure between the Board, Senior Management and the Employees.

Specifically, the Association wishes to express their support for a return to a structure in which the Director, Deputy Director, and Chief Financial Officer each report directly to the Board.

The past few years have demonstrated significant issues with the current structure. Employees have been forced to report any concerns directly to the Director and have had no method to raise concerns related to the Director himself or concerns regarding plans that significantly impact the entire organization. A few examples of issues that have occurred due to this structure include: (1) Beginning projects before funding has been properly authorized, leading to cancellations of projects causing financial inefficiencies and lost man hours (these include the Indian Springs EDC dome removal, the Kensington Metropark Farm Center overflow parking lot expansion, Lake Erie Pool shade structures, and many others); (2) Issues related to employee sick leave and benefits going unaddressed despite numerous pleas for attention; and

(3) Reputational Harm to the Department through poor choices related to mowing in high grasses and log removal during an inappropriate time of year.

These concerns have led to public disdain for the work performed by the Employees. Recent news articles have detailed the poor management of the resources of the Authority. As employees of the Authority, the Association takes pride in the work completed every day and feel truly lucky to be able to be a part of an organization that works for the direct betterment of our ecosystems and recreational opportunities while building good neighbor relationships.

We have great faith in the judgment of the Board and the work of the Deputy Director, Acting Director, and CFO. However, the actions of the Director over past the few years demonstrate a need for greater checks and balances in the management of the Authority. A return to a structure where the Deputy Director and CFO also report to the Board will alleviate these issues - if a problem with project funding exists due to a Director's actions, employees could communicate this to the Deputy Director or CFO, who can bring the issue to the attention of the Board. If benefit problems occur, employees could speak with human resources who can bring it to the attention of the Board directly or to the Board through the Deputy Director or CFO.

As the Authority moves forward, we believe a return to this structure will ensure that open communication returns to the organization, limiting conflicts and increasing overall sustainability. We sincerely hope that we can move forward in a spirit of cooperation as we seek to correct the current situation in the Authority.”

Mike Brahm-Henkel, Metropark employee, read the following statement.

“This morning I would like to publicly acknowledge and thank acting Director Mike Reese and Deputy Director Dave Kirbach. These two Individuals exemplify the characters; of compassion, morals, ethics, and leadership which has built them the loyalty and respect of those of us who have the honor and privilege to work with them. These are qualities that make great people, great teams, and great future leaders. These qualities cannot be taught by books or education but come from life experience and natural ability to connect, work, and inspire the people around them to do their best and push to higher levels.

I have worked here for 31 years and have seen many changes. I have always felt that this organization was just 3 steps away from being a great organization. Over the last few weeks I have never seen the magnitude of change that has occurred, and those 3 steps have finally been accomplished. They have been accomplished due to this Board and these two individuals. The motivation and morale of employees has never been higher. What is even more impressive is in my discussions with many employees, from all departments, at all levels, is a renewed common strong motivation that they have the ability to do their best again. Much of that motivation is derived from their desire to do it for these two individuals. It is truly amazing at how quickly these two individuals have changed this organization.

I have heard repeatedly people described it as if a switch has been flipped. The collaboration, flow of ideas, the ability to have free conversations between departments, outside agencies, and our local communities will pay dividends for many years to come. I would also like to thank all of the Commissioners for taking the bold steps and actions necessary to do what was right and just, and for selecting the right people, at the right time, and for the right reasons. While

I may be the one speaking let it be known that I am conveying the thoughts of many. I don't say these things lightly, but I feel it is important to make sure that at this moment in time that Mike, Dave, and the Board of Commissioners are commended for their positive far reaching impact they have had on the employees, their families, surrounding communities, and most importantly the people we are here to serve. Thanks to all of you and for the opportunity to speak.”

2. Public Participation (con't)

Jason Smith, Lake St. Clair Metroparks ground maintenance supervisor, thanked the Board in their confidence in all of the staff, Chief Reese, Deputy Director Kirbach. In the last month or so, staff has been able to work with them on scheduling and how to best serve the public. Maintenance staff has been able adjust schedules based on park demand and needs, sometimes at a moment's notice. The staff is going out to do their best to make the parks look as amazing as they are, not because they have to, because staff wants to.

Kathy Hansen, New Hudson, requested the Board not give severance pay to staff.

3. Approval – July 13, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support from Commissioner Rea that the Board of Commissioners' approve the July 13, 2017 meeting minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval – August 10, 2017 Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Rea, support from Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' approve the August 10, 2017 agenda as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Approval – August 10, 2017 Consent Agenda

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

- a. Approval – July 2017 Financial Statements and Payment Registers
- b. Approval – July 2017 Appropriation Adjustments
- c. Purchases
 1. Hay Baler, Wolcott Mill Farm Center
 2. Utility Vehicles, Wolcott Mill Metropark
 3. Herbicide Application for Invasive Shrub Control, All Locations
 4. Backhoe Loader, Kensington Metropark
 5. Lawn and Poolside Furniture, Lake Erie Metropark
- d. Report – Purchases over \$10K
- e. Approval – Exemption of Taxes Subject to Capture

Commissioner Williams requested item 5-e be removed from the consent agenda and added to the regular agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item 5-e now becomes 6-A-3.

Regular Agenda

6. Reports

A. Administrative Department

1. Approval – Renegotiated Kosch Concessionaire Contract

Motion by Commissioner Williams, support from Commissioner Heise that the Board of Commissioners' approve a two (2) year contract extension with Kosch Hospitality, LLC for Metroparks food and beverage services, pending legal counsel review as recommended by Heidi Dziak, Senior Buyer and staff.

Discussion: Senior Buyer Heidi Dziak updated the Board on the decision to extend the Kosch contract and reviewed the status of the RFP for concessionaire services that was sent out in February 2017. She said there were questions regarding the liquor license and staff is still working out details. Ms. Dziak said in order to book Metroparks venues for 2018 and 2019, staff recommends extending the contract with Kosch. She said the commission structure would remain the same, however, Kosch would no longer be the exclusive caterer for picnics and weddings at park locations excluding the Thomas Welsh Activity Center at Lake St. Clair, Sunset Ridge Banquet Tent at Stony Creek and the Environmental Discovery Center at Indian Springs.

Commissioner Parker asked why the contract was being extended for two years instead of one year. Ms. Dziak replied that the RFP process and liquor license review will take time for prospective vendors to review and respond.

Commissioner Parker asked why it will take so long to review and resolve the liquor license issue. Ms. Dziak said it's a lengthy process with the vendors to review the RFP, conduct site visits and respond to the RFP. Extending the Kosch contract for two years give staff the needed time to properly review the RFP and it also lets potential wedding parties know what the caterer is for the venue.

Commissioner McCarthy said he understands wedding venues are booked well over a year in advance and agrees with the two-year contract extension.

Commissioner Marans said the Metroparks has worked with Kosch for several years and that there is a good working relationship, the quality of service is excellent and that's the basis for continuing the relationship.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Appointment – Pension Committee and Retiree Health Care Trust Board

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support from Heise that the Board of Commissioners' appoint Commissioner Quadrozzi to the Pension Committee and Retiree Health Care Trust Board of Trustees.

Discussion: Commissioner McCarthy said there is a vacancy on the Pension Committee and traditionally the position is held by the treasurer of the Board, which is Commissioner Quadrozzi. Commissioner McCarthy requested a motion that Commissioner Quadrozzi be appointed to the Pension Committee and Retiree Health Care Trust Board of Trustees.

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval – Exemption of Taxes Subject to Capture

Motion by Commissioner Williams, support from Commissioner Heise that the Board of Commissioners' approve the Resolution exempting Ad Valorem Property Taxes from Capture for the Detroit Region Aerotropolis Development Corporation and direct

staff to file the resolution in accordance with the applicable statutes governing the taxing authorities as recommended by Acting Director Michael Reese and staff.

Discussion: Rebecca Franchock with the finance department reviewed the requested TIFA exemption and said it has been Board policy to opt out whenever possible.

Motion carried unanimously.

6. Reports

B. Planning Department

1. Approval – Master Plan, Lake St. Clair Metropark

Motion by Commissioner Rea, support from Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' approve the Lake St. Clair Metropark Master Plan as presented by Manager of Planning Nina Kelly and staff.

Discussion: Manager of Planning Nina Kelly updated the Board on the master plan, the over view of the public input process, grammatical changes made to the plan as well as the addition of a paragraph to the public input section summarizing the feedback received on the plan.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Update – Hudson Mills Golf Course Public Input

Motion by Commissioner Parker, support from Commissioner Marans that the Board of Commissioners' receive and file the summary report of the public input regarding the Hudson Mills Golf Course as presented by Manager of Planning Nina Kelly and staff.

Discussion: Manager of Planning Nina Kelly updated the Board on the two additional public input meetings held on July 5 and 19. She said the turnout was good and based on feedback from the additional meetings, staff recommends keeping the golf course open and to make efforts to increase its usage. Ms. Kelly said ideas that came out of the two additional public meetings were included in a revised Hudson Mills master plan, which staff will bring to the Board for approval at the Sept. 14, 2017 meeting.

Commissioner McCarthy said he would like to consider a three-year status report built into the master plan as five years is a long time.

Commissioner Marans said that with the changes in the revised master plan, having periodic updates is a good idea. Ms. Kelly said staff would work with the golf services superintendent to come up with a reporting schedule.

Commissioner Parker said he has played at the Hudson Mills Golf Course and said it's a good course. He suggested when it is time to upgrade golf carts, staff may want to look into adding GPS to the carts as it would be a good marketing tool.

Commissioner Quadrozzi thanked Commissioner Williams, the entire Board, Ms. Kelly and said this wasn't initially the direction staff planned to go, however the public voiced their opinion and she is happy the Board heard what the public expressed.

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Report – Baypoint Beach and Maple Beach Redevelopment Projects

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support from Commissioner Parker that the Board of Commissioners' receive and file the following report as presented by Manager of Planning Nina Kelly and staff.

Discussion: Ms. Kelly updated the Board on project history and said the Board approved demolition for both the Baypoint Beach bathhouse building at Stony Creek and the Maple Beach bathhouse building at Kensington Metropark at the Oct. 13, 2016 meeting. She said staff is currently working on conceptual site plans for both beach areas to guide future redevelopment projects.

Commissioner McCarthy said he drove by Maple Beach at Kensington and said its pretty sparse and suggested adding features to enhance the beach area.

Motion carried unanimously.

6. Reports

C. Natural Resources Department

1. Bids – Black Creek Marsh Dredging Project, Lake St. Clair Metropark

Motion by Commissioner Rea, support from Commissioner Heise that the Board of Commissioners' (1) award the Black Creek Dredging Project to the low responsive, responsible bidder, White Lake Dock and Dredge, Inc. in the amount of \$924,000; and (2) approve the transfer of funds totaling \$386,000 from Capital Unallocated accounts (\$150,000), Major Maintenance Unallocated accounts (\$136,000) and grant funding (\$200,000) to cover the cost of the project as recommended by Manager of Natural Resources Ryan Colliton and staff.

Discussion: Manager of Natural Resources Ryan Colliton said Dr. Carol Miller with Wayne State University was at the meeting to answer questions and Dr. David Szlag with Oakland University would be available for HEART Lab tours.

Mr. Colliton updated the Board on the background of the project and said he had signed letters of intent with the contractors to reduce their prices in order to complete the project. He also listed the funding sources for the project and requested the necessary approvals for funds transfers. Mr. Colliton said he received questions from the Board on maintenance and said he had staff do some research on the subject. He said maintenance can go one of two ways – wait until it is no longer usable and redredge (approximately a 10-year time frame) or do spot treatments, which is what he recommends.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Bids – HEART Lab and Food Bar Improvements, Lake St. Clair Metropark

Motion by Commissioner Marans, support from Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners' Commissioners' (1) award a contract to the low responsive, responsible bidder, Corby Energy Services in the amount of \$29,000; and (2) approve a \$10,000 fund transfer from the Lake St. Clair Fencing project and receipt of the \$19,000 cost share to cover the cost of the project as recommended by Manager of Natural Resources Ryan Colliton and staff.

Discussion: Mr. Colliton updated the Board on the history of the HEART Lab, which stands for Huron to Erie Alliance for Research and Training. He said the modification of the electrical system will allow the storing samples for research without loss due to power failures and would also help to eliminate lost revenue due to power failures in the food bar area.

Commissioner Williams asked how staff decided on the size of the generator and if it would be used as a backup generator. Mr. Colliton said yes, it was sized to accommodate the food bar and the HEART Lab.

Commissioner Marans asked when the partnership with Wayne State University began. Mr. Colliton said 2014.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if the lab tests for E. coli. Dr. Miller with Wayne State University said yes and will cut the testing time down from days to hours. She said in addition to the water quality sampling done there is a lot of other research going on with ground water and surface water testing.

Commissioner Heise said he was colleagues with Dr. Miller at Wayne State and that this type of real time monitoring has been around for a long time and had worked to promote a regionalized system in 2007. For the Metroparks to be a partner with Wayne State is cutting edge technology and should be used on a broader basis across the state.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Other Business

None.

8. Staff Leadership Update

None.

9. Closed Session

At the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners' held on Aug. 10, 2017 there was a motion by Commissioner Marans, support from Commissioner Quadrozzi that the Board of Commissioners adjourn to a closed session for the purpose of discussing material, which is exempt from discussion or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, this is a permissible purpose for closed session pursuant to Section 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Voting yes: Quadrozzi, Marans, Williams, Rea, Parker, Heise, McCarthy

Voting no: None

Motion carried unanimously.

The regular meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.

Commissioner Quadrozzi left the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

Commissioner McCarthy reconvened the regular meeting at 11:57 a.m.

10. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Williams said he spoke with a lot of employees about restrictions on speaking with the Board and he welcomes anyone to contact him.

Commissioner Marans said he appreciates the comments during the public participation and said it was very meaningful.

Commissioner Heise said at a future meeting, he would like representatives from the DNR and SEMCOG to attend a meeting and give presentations regarding funding sources to help offset project costs. He also said everyone appreciates all the hard work staff does and it is greatly appreciated. He said he knows we are (the Metroparks) going through a tough time, but we will get through it and said the best days are still ahead.

Commissioner Parker said his school came out for Summer Fun and filled two busses this year. He said it was a successful event and the kids had fun. He also said that many people come out to the park to be near the beach and water even when the beach is closed and suggested staff consider reducing prices at the pool when the beach is closed.

Commissioner Rea thanked Chief Reese and staff that he met with regarding lingering water quality issues on Lake St. Clair. He said the county is deploying resources from the Public Health Department and the Public Works Department to not only understand the evolving intricacies of the ecosystems in the waterways but also to work towards finding solutions.

11. Motion to Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn M. Athayde
Recording Secretary