



Regular Meeting with Work Session April 24, 2023

Call to Order: The Board met in person in Council chambers at Richfield Village Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Anita Gantner, Board Chair.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Present: Anita Gantner, Mike Lyons, Steve McPeake, Holly Price, Mark Robeson, Mike Selig
Mr. Wehner was excused.

Also in Attendance: Park Director John Piepsny, Township Trustee Don Laubacher, Village Council representative Sue Ann Philipbar, Administrative Coordinator Polly Wheeler, Volunteer Coordinator Susan Czaplicki, Lodge Event Consultant Shari Green, and approximately 12-15 other attendees.

Installation of trustee: Township trustee Don Laubacher administered the oath of office to new trustee Mr. Steve McPeake, filling an unexpired term ending on December 31, 2024.

Election of Officer: Ms. Gantner nominated Ms. Holly Price for Secretary. Ms. Price accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations. Mr. Wehner moved to accept the nomination; Mr. Selig seconded. The nomination was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Work Session

Policy change to Standing Committees: Ms. Gantner announced that she is reducing the number of standing committees to two, eliminating the Operations & Capital Projects Committee and the Marketing Committee.

The following appointments were made and accepted:

Grants & Fundraising Committee: Mike Selig, chair; members Steve McPeake and Mark Robeson

Governance Committee: Mike Lyons, chair; members Holly Price and Dave Wehner

Budget Amendment: John Piepsny stated that this is tabled until the May meeting so that the fiscal office can provide the board with the amendment.

Strategic Plan; There have been changes since the plan was first voted on in December, and resolution has not yet been approved. The board can discuss it again now.

Mr. Wehner questioned the Champion program, saying that it does not list the length of time for a contract or the reasons to terminate. Ms. Gantner agreed to add this.

Ms. Price stated that the Champion program is a move in the right direction but that it could benefit from listing further details in the relationship.

Mr. Robeson suggested a specific committee to work on the details before handing the program over to the park director.

Mr. Lyons stated that a specific agreement will be needed for each Champion option, so the board will already have another opportunity to work out details. Not every detail can be included in the description of the program because they will be different for each structure.

Mr. Robeson requested that the term “living document” be included in the plan itself, not just in the resolution.

Ms. Price asked if any structures would be immediately removed or destroyed if the plan is passed. Adoption of the plan should not immediately green-light removal of structures.

Mr. Piepsny responded that the staff is busy with events, so nothing will happen immediately.

Additional discussion followed, including the five listed points of the plan: history, resources, trails, facilities, and operations.

Ms. Price stated that she wants further review of structures and the process for removal. There should be a specific plan and a checklist. She reiterated that the timing of structure removal has not been discussed.

Mr. Selig made comments regarding taking a slower approach to structure removal but stated that he is currently comfortable with the plan document.

Mr. Lyons remarked that no one wants to be surprised by buildings coming down. He verified that the Champion program start date has been revised to June 1, 2023.

Oviatt House lease agreement: Mr. Wehner voiced a concern about leasing a structure to a private organization. He stated the need to list a policy for such agreements and how the board arrived at such a lease agreement.

Ms. Gantner responded that Oviatt House Inc. (OHI) has a deadline for submitting the grant application for their work on Oviatt House. The lease keeps RJRD out of liability for possible issues with the grant.

Mr. Lyons asked if there is a restoration agreement, which there is. He stated that the fact can be different from group to group when considering lease agreements.

Ms. Price questioned the timing and whether there already is a lease. Ms. Gantner responded that the MOU and the lease terms are different.

Mr. Selig stated that the board does not need to have a policy for every decision it makes.

Mr. Robeson asked, if a committee and policy isn't needed for the Strategic Plan, then why would one be needed for this situation?

Amity House restoration agreement: Mr. Piepsny described the process so far of restoring Amity House. He said that the Friends of RHP have been doing the restoration work, and that they are willing to contribute \$15,000 to the project, or approximately half the expected costs, which should take them into the fall of 2023. Ms. Gantner related how the restoration agreement came to be.

Ms. Price asked if the agreement is just for the interior, to which Mr. Piepsny responded that it applies to the exterior too. Ms. Price stated that she believes \$30,000 is light for the expected costs.

Ms. Gantner stated that the \$15,000 from the Friends does not include the labor that is being donated nor the labor from the other RHP volunteers.

Mr. Piepsny said that he has a construction schedule that he can share. The project period is approximately until November 2023.

Ms. Price questioned any costs that are not listed.

Mr. Lyons stated that approving the agreement will get the process moving forward and that the projected costs should get close to the actual cost of the project.

Mr. Wehner requested that the extra sentence added by the insurance agent be added to the agreement.

Policy change to standing committees: Ms. Gantner reviewed the standing committee changes. Only Grants' & Fundraising and Governance will remain as committees. There was no further discussion.

Operating levy: Ms. Gantner requested that the board consider the approach and timing of the upcoming operating levy. She said that one option is to put it on the November 2023 ballot; the other opportunities are May and November 2024. The township may have a safety levy on the ballot in May 2024. For RJRD, the decision must be made whether to go for a replacement levy or renewal.

Mr. Lyons suggested that the board go through the exercise of determining whether to put the levy on the ballot this fall and get started on the two-step process.

Further discussion followed, during which Mr. Lyons stated that there is no charge from the county for this process. Following questions from the board, Mr. Lyons reminded the board of the difference between a renewal levy, which results in the same effective millage but a lower rate per household, and a replacement levy, which reverts back to the original 0.5 mil rate but is based on current property values, thereby bringing in more funds to the park.

Mr. Selig stated that he is leaning toward a replacement levy. The general consensus of the board appeared to be that a replacement levy is the goal.

Ms. Gantner said that there will be a resolution at the May meeting to go forward with the levy process. She also stated that the board must show determination behind the decision.

Comments from the floor:

Karen Smik (Village resident) stated that she is concerned that park structures are being torn down before the Strategic Plan is approved.

Judy Bowman (Village resident/Oviatt House) stated that she reviewed letters regarding the Oviatt House lease agreement. She questioned the reason for bringing up policy now, after six months' work on the lease agreement.

Regular Meeting

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of March regular meeting were not available, so approval will take place next month.

Standing Committee Reports

Governance: No meeting / no report

Grants & Fundraising: Mr. Selig reported that a meeting took place on April 21 and reviewed the topics covered in that meeting.

Marketing: No meeting / no report

Administration Report:

Park Director John Piepsny announced that the new park brochure will go to print this week and briefly described the brochure. He also announced that RecDesk is live and will be active this week.

The asphalt in front of The Lodge is completed. The trail is completed south from Mable Smith to Garfield Hall with the help of the Ohio Operating Engineers.

Oviatt House Quarterly Report:

Ms. Judy Bowman reported that the gas line, furnace, and flooring are installed, and the concrete pad at the back of the house has been reduced in size to its original footprint. During the first quarter 2023, volunteers contributed 143 ½ hours of time.

Broadview Heating donated the entire HVAC system, including installation. Ohio Hardwood Furniture donated wood flooring for the house.

Treasurer Report:

Mr. Wehner reported the following numbers for April:

About \$449,000 in the bank, with \$1,000 in outstanding checks. This leaves \$288,000 in the operating/capital/Lodge cash funds and \$160,000 restricted for the bond fund.

About \$9,000 in revenue, and about \$41,000 in expenses. About \$17,000 of the expenses were for The Lodge.

Old Business:

Ms. Gantner reintroduced the Strategic Plan.

MOTION by: Mr. Wehner and seconded by Mr. Selig to approve **Resolution 02-2023- A Resolution to adopt the Strategic Plan as a living document developed in 2022, completed in 2023, with guidance from Cleveland Metroparks, subject to periodic updates as necessary.**

DISCUSSION: Mr. Robeson asked why it is necessary to remove third tier structures, stating that there is no disadvantage to keeping them. He requested that board members consider this in the vote. Ms. Price asked for clarification that the plan is a living document and can be amended. Further details and conflicting information need to be considered. She suggested that a committee be called to oversee the plan if it is passed. This would add accountability.

Mr. Lyons stated that the big element in the plan is the Champion program. Documents are inconsistent and hard to reconcile. He said that the plan will operate on its own if passed.

Mr. Selig said that he thinks the plan is a good framework and is comfortable with the board serving as the committee to oversee it.

Ms. Price stated that this is too much for the board to manage when meeting only once a month. Ms. Gantner responded that it is Mr. Piepsny's job to implement the plan. Ms. Price asked if it is a plan for the director to implement, or is it truly a living document?

Mr. Wehner offered that he thinks the Strategic Plan is good and should not be delayed, especially in view of the levy.

Mr. Robeson asked the board to go back to the rationale of the bottom tier: why not let structures have their place in the Champion process?

Ms. Gantner called for the vote.

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by roll call: Ms. Gantner (Yea); Mr. Lyons (Yea); Mr. McPeake (Yea); Ms. Price (Yea); Mr. Robeson (Nay); Mr. Selig (Yea); Mr Wehner (Yea).

New Business:

Mr. Selig introduced application for the Nature Works grant.

MOTION by: Mr. Selig and seconded by Mr. Wehner to approve **Resolution 08-2023: A Resolution to authorize filing of an application for ODNR Nature Works Grant funding and agree to obligate the necessary funds to replace the bridge over the upper lake dam.**

DISCUSSION: Ms. Price asked what the purpose is of the grant. Mr. Selig explained that the bridge over the upper lake dam is not user-friendly. The grant would be just over \$61,000, including the cost of the bridge and engineering, and would be a 25% matching grant. The match from the park can be labor, materials, etc. The park's goal is to use in-kind labor for the majority of the match.

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by roll call, which was unanimously Yea.

Ms. Gantner reiterated her intention to revise the Standing Committee Policy.

MOTION by: Mr. Selig and seconded by Mr. Wehner to approve **Resolution 09-2023: A Resolution amending the Board of Trustees Committee Policy**

DISCUSSION: None

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by voice Yea, which was unanimous.

Ms. Gantner introduced the lease agreement with Oviatt House, Inc.

MOTION by: Mr. Robeson and seconded by Mr. Selig to approve **Resolution 10-2023: A Resolution authorizing Richfield Joint Recreation District to enter into a lease agreement with Oviatt House, Inc. for the Oviatt House.**

DISCUSSION: Mr. Lyons asked for clarification of why RJRD did not want to be the grantee on the grant applied for by Oviatt House, Inc. Ms. Price asked if it is permitted to pass a resolution that is not on the agenda. Ms. Gantner replied that it is permitted; she checked with the legal advisor.

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by roll call, which was unanimously Yea.

Mr. Piepsny discussed the invasive species management program. Due to Mr. DeLuca's resignation from the board, no park staff or board member has the required chemical certification. Chris Moore, the park maintenance technician, studied for this certification and took the test last week. He is awaiting his results. This would allow the Invasive Species Management Team to operate under the certification of park personnel.

MOTION by: Mr. Lyons and seconded by Ms. Price to approve the Amity House Restoration Agreement in the form in which it was most recently submitted with the insurance clause added.

DISCUSSION: None further

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by roll call, which was unanimously Yea.

Ms. Gantner brought up the Amity House Restoration Agreement that was briefly overlooked.

Announcements:

The next regular board meeting will be held on May 22, 2023.

The photo contest submission deadline is April 30.

The inaugural Goat Derby will take place on May 6. Everyone is invited to attend this fun event.

Comments from the Floor: It was requested that the Amity House Restoration Agreement be posted on the RJRD website in draft form until it is signed.

Adjournment:

MOTION by: Mr. Lyons, seconded by Mr. Robeson, to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by voice, which was unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Submitted by:

Accepted by:

Polly Wheeler, Administrative Coordinator

Anita Gantner, Board Chairperson