



## **Regular Meeting April 28, 2025**

**Call to Order:** The Board met in person in The Lodge at Richfield Heritage Preserve. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Anita Gantner, Board Chair.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

### **Roll Call**

**Present:** Anita Gantner, Michael Lyons, Steve McPeake, Holly Price, Mark Robeson, Mike Selig

**Excused:** Dave Wehner

**Also in Attendance:** Park Director John Piepsny, Legal Advisor Bill Hanna, Administrative Coordinator Polly Wheeler, and about 30 additional attendees, plus 5 by Zoom

## **Regular Meeting**

### **Minutes**

Minutes of February 24 and March 17 Regular Meetings were approved as submitted. Minutes of March 27 Special Meeting were approved as submitted. Minutes of April 8 Special Meeting were tabled until May regular meeting.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

#### **Governance**

Mr. Lyons reported that Governance Committee met on Tuesday, April 22. Topics covered included the Mill Work Agreement with the Friends of RHP and the mill docent program. Mr. Lyons had reviewed the agreements with Oviatt House Inc. and with Cuyahoga Valley Career Center for reference. The committee had a productive discussion about what should be included in the Mill Work Agreement. They also agreed that the mill docent program should be registered through the RecDesk system.

Another meeting is scheduled for May 5 to keep the momentum going on the Mill Work Agreement.

#### **Grants & Fundraising**

Mr. Selig reported that there has not been a meeting since January. A grant was submitted to the recreational trails program, and more information for this has been requested from ODNR, specifically relating to the budget. Another meeting will take place in May.

Ms. Price asked about receiving a work schedule for the upper lake bridge replacement grant. Mr. Selig said that he will provide this when the next committee meeting takes place.

#### **Administrative Report**

Mr. Piepsny mentioned the discussion of bridge materials that took place at the last board meeting. Following additional information from Cleveland Metroparks, the Douglas fir material was chosen for the upper lake pedestrian bridge, for a cost of just over \$57,000.

Mr. Piepsny reviewed the plan for the upcoming Goat Derby, including activities and parking.

Mr. Piepsny gave an overview of the Amity House rental plan and associated costs. He suggested that the Governance Committee do a more in-depth review of this. He presented a cost estimate sheet and said that he plans to keep cleaning in-house, done by staff or volunteers. A draft of policies and procedures was included in the board packet and has been submitted for legal review. Mr. Piepsny also mentioned the ad that was created for the Bath Volunteers for Service home tour program.

Ms. Gantner asked about the status of an occupancy certificate. Mr. Piepsny replied that the two required exit signs have been installed, and final approval would be the next step before being able to rent the house. He added that staff would be greeting rental parties upon arrival.

Ms. Price asked if the main focus would be wedding carry-over for the rest of this year. Mr. Piepsny said that about 32 weddings have requested to rent the house. He would like to invite board members to stay and give feedback. Ms. Price asked about cooking in the house, but Mr. Piepsny said there is no stove there, just a microwave, coffee pot, and refrigerator.

Mr. Lyons asked for verification that all of the approvals are done. Mr. Piepsny said that only the final approval remains, following the fire inspection and the installation of the two fire exit signs. He expects that final inspection will take place this week, and then occupancy will be granted.

#### **Oviatt House Inc. report**

Ms. Tricia Steiner gave a presentation covering the first quarter 2025 report for Oviatt House. This included work completed on electrical systems and drywall. A conversation took place with Summit County Building Department about documents needed before drywall work can be done.

The group has shelved the idea of a wagon barn. They have chosen an architect for the design of the indoor restroom, worked with EPA on plans for a septic system, and hired an engineer to design the septic system. They are also working on ways to get water to the building.

The museum logo was finalized. Ms. Steiner reported on activities by the board members, stated volunteer hours for the quarter, and reviewed the financials.

#### **Friends report**

Ms. Gantner said that the Friends submitted a report and that these reports would go out with the agenda in the future. It was included in the board packet.

Ms. Price mentioned the Friends' offer to do work on North and Coach Houses. She asked that the Friends submit the full scope of work proposal so that the board can evaluate it. Ms. Price also mentioned that work was done on Garfield that was outside of the scope of work there. She reminded everyone that it is important to make sure work is being done within the agreed-upon scopes.

#### **Treasurer's report**

No report

## **New Business**

### 1) Oviatt House well and septic

Mr. Piepsny mentioned the work done by Doug Wisneski to trace water lines throughout the park. He reviewed the discussion he had with the Ohio EPA about the well near Mable Smith shelter and the water lines from it. The water source and lines are good; they would just need testing and could potentially be used for Oviatt House water.

Ms. Steiner reviewed the options for water.

- a) A map was shown with the location of a well if a new well were to be drilled. The cost quoted by Donamarc Water Systems was \$12,248 for a well less than 100 ft deep, which the company thought was likely to be sufficient.
- b) Another alternative is the well and lines from near Mable Smith, which were originally not thought to be feasible. However, the original Girl Scout drawings and records were found for this water source, showing that it was previously licensed by the EPA and supplied Oviatt House when it was a residence. This option is now much more realistic.

Ms. Steiner discussed the options for a septic system, showing two possible locations on a map. The engineer made a recommendation for the location, based on the soil type and other factors. Another location would require a system to accommodate the septic system. Ms. Gantner asked about the size of the mound and if plantings could be added to hide the mound, which Ms. Steiner said they could.

A second option is to connect to the existing waste water treatment plant. This would require a higher level of electricity, as well as a grinder pump. The initial cost would likely be higher, as would maintenance, but the options for location are much greater. More information is needed on the expenses and process for this option.

Ms. Steiner reported that the group is meeting with engineer Kathy Bender and will have a site visit to explore additional options for both systems. She said they are working on plans for an ADA ramp, which will affect the water and septic locations as well. A site visit is scheduled with Chris Randalls of Summit County Building Department to review the standards for a commercial occupancy permit.

Ms. Steiner asked the RJRD board for guidance on the best options and how to move forward.

## **Board comments**

Mr. Lyons said he thinks the preferred approach is to use the existing water lines and waste water treatment plant. Mr. Selig agreed. Mr. McPeake emphasized the importance of getting cost estimates for all options. Ms. Gantner said the water line usage seems obvious, but the waste water option may depend on the cost.

Ms. Price asked if any information is available on the output of the existing well and what it can sustain. Mr. Piepsny said he does have the report on all the wells on the park property.

Ms. Price asked where the water for The Lodge and Amity House comes from, and Mr.

Piepsny replied that there is a separate well closer to The Lodge.

Ms. Price said the decision is affected by the future uses of Garfield Hall and Kirby House, which the board has not determined yet. She also pointed out that the future plans for the Oviatt House museum are affected because it is permanently tied to the park if the existing water and septic systems are used. This could limit OHI's long-term plans.

Mr. Robeson said that it makes sense to use the existing waste water treatment plant because that was its original purpose.

### Old Business

- 1) Ms. Gantner introduced Resolution 06-2025: A resolution authorizing the hiring of a full-time park director and declaring an emergency. She reviewed the circumstances that led to this decision, beginning with the notice from the Village on Feb. 20, 2025 that the agreement to share a park director was being terminated.

Ms. Gantner shared that the treasurer, Dave Wehner, could not attend this meeting but has done an analysis of the park's ability to fund a full-time position. The difference in total cost will be about \$55,000, which will be offset by the increase in the levy and by current payroll changes. Ms. Gantner also reported that fiscal officer Tim Clymer is confident that RJRD can support the increase in salary.

Ms. Gantner said that the board has determined that it is in the best interest of the park to hire current part-time director John Piepsny to the full-time position. She read the resolution to the audience and said that the board has reviewed the resolution and the job description.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lyons moved to adopt Resolution 06-2025; Mr. McPeake seconded.

Discussion: Ms. Price asked if there is any posting requirement for the job opening. Mr. Hanna said that there is no posting requirement applicable to this position.

**MOTION PASSED:** Ms. Gantner (yea); Mr. Lyons (yea); Mr. McPeake (yea); Ms. Price (yea); Mr. Robeson (yea); Mr. Selig (yea).

### 2) Trail signs and names

Ms. Gantner asked Mr. Piepsny to review the plan for trail signs and names.

- a) Mr. Piepsny showed a map of the current posts and signs, saying that the existing posts can be used.
- b) The map colors are being changed for greater visibility and differentiation.
- c) The current map has colors and distances. Symbols are needed to accommodate accessibility needs.
- d) Mr. Piepsny showed examples of markers and signs, as well as the markers to be placed along the trails between posts.
- e) Mr. Piepsny showed the revised map with the new colors. The quote from one company is \$4,800 for composite trail signs, metal markers, and additional posts.

Ms. Gantner said that she likes the idea of posting the mileage on the trails. Mr. Lyons asked if the current posts are in the correct places.

Mr. Selig asked if Mr. Piepsny has had a discussion with Cuyahoga Valley Career Center to see if they can make the signs. Mr. Piepsny said he has not had that yet. Mr. Selig stated that he is concerned about the budget for this year. Mr. Lyons said that he talked to Revere High School art teacher Bob Pierson about the signs as a possible art project. Ms. Gantner suggested that other options should be explored as well.

Mr. Lyons said that trail names are better than naming them with colors. Ms. Price suggested using heritage-related trail names and said that each trail needs to have a symbol, too. Mr. Robeson agreed, saying that the heritage is part of what makes the park special.

### **Announcements**

Richfield Heritage Preserve will have its 10-year anniversary on June 15. A birthday party is planned with cake and ice cream.

### **Comments from the floor**

**Paul Swan** (Humphrey Rd) suggested putting numbers on the trails along with the colors.

**Corey Ringle** (Hawthorne Dr), speaking as a Friends member, thanked the Governance Committee for their work and for approving the mill docent program. She asked that the board consider adding the Friends group update to the RHP newsletter and adding the other Friends events to RecDesk. She asked what the next steps will be on North House. Speaking as a resident, Ms. Ringle said that she loves the idea of historic trail names.

**Rick Hudak** (Brecksville Rd) said that the Oviatt House would require a lift station to utilize the waste water treatment plant and added that a shredder pump would be the best option. Regarding trail markers, Mr. Hudak said that little round badges are great souvenirs for kids. He suggested that the board consider routing the markers into the trail posts. He also said that the round trail badges could be sold in a gift shop.

**Gary LaGuardia** (North Royalton) said that the Friends would offer support for getting potholes and washouts in the driveways repaired, and the board should consider this.

**Sue Serdinak** (W Streetsboro Rd) said that the waste water treatment plant is underused. She suggested that the carpenter's union [at the carpenter's training center] might be willing to make sign posts.

**Meg Slifcak** (Humphrey Rd) expressed her gratitude to everyone for their work and for their civility during the meeting.

**Karen Smik** (Faith Lane) suggested that a Boy Scout could do a project to make the trail signs. Mr. Piepsny responded that an Eagle Scout candidate did make some signs for one of the Village parks.

**Lynn Richardson** (Bedford) said that there was a Girl Scout who was interested in making signs, and she passed that information along to Susan Czaplicki, the volunteer coordinator. Mr.

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Piepsny said they did meet with that scout group but that the signs they wanted to make were not the direction the park wanted to go.

**Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Mr. Lyons to adjourn; Mr. Selig seconded.

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

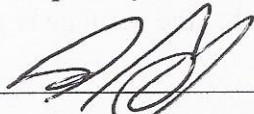
Meeting adjourned at 7:46pm

Submitted by:



Polly Wheeler, Administrative Coordinator

Accepted by:



Anita Gantner, Board Chair