



**RICHFIELD**  
Joint Recreation District  
**Regular Meeting with Work Session**  
**June 27, 2022**

**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 Chairperson, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call**

Present: Sandy Apidone, Jeff DeLuca, Anita Gantner, Maureen McGinty, Mike Selig, Dave Wehner  
Excused: Mark Robeson

**Also in Attendance:** Village Council representative Sue Ann Philipbar, Township Trustee Don Laubacher, Administrative Coordinator Polly Wheeler, Volunteer Coordinator Susan Czaplicki, Lodge Event Coordinator Shari Green, Friends of RHP president Corey Ringle, and approximately 12 attendees.

**Work Session**

**Open House followup:**

Ms. Gantner announced that the open house was a great success. Comments and feedback are currently being compiled. A stakeholders' Strategic Planning meeting will be held at 6pm on July 25, 2022.

Mr. DeLuca commented that he was pleased to see that people were friendly and happy at the open house.

Ms. Gantner announced that a second open house will be held on Tuesday evening, September 13 but will have a very different format. This one will be led by Kelly Coffman, the Cleveland Metroparks planner who is facilitating RHP's strategic plan. The public will be divided into groups to get their feedback.

Ms. Gantner stated that the survey responses have not been as numerous as the board had hoped. She asked everyone to encourage their neighbors to fill out the survey before the July 10 deadline. She also mentioned the possibility of setting up tables in some public locations to offer residents the opportunity to complete the survey.

**Inflatables:**

Lodge Event Consultant Shari Green shared that a wedding of 225-250 people will be held on Sept. 4, with a casual, family-friendly theme. There will be a firepit and outdoor games, and the couple want to include a smaller jump house for children. It would probably be located on the side of The Lodge. She asked for the board to consider this request.

Mr. Wehner stated that an ACORD certificate would be needed naming the RJRD as an additional insured.

**Software options:**

Ms. Gantner shared that she and Ms. Green met with members of the Cuyahoga Valley Conservancy, the friends group for the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Ms. Green explained that the CVC uses a software package called Triple Seat for all of their reservations. This software can handle invoicing, payments through our Square account, contracts, synching with our calendar, floorplans, and leads. It

builds a database as we gather information from leads and reservations. The cost starts at \$375/month, but the representative indicated that they would be willing to work with the park and reduce that a bit, possibly to \$300/month. This particular package is hospitality-venue focused.

Ms. McGinty asked that Ms. Green check with other parks for comparison to find out what they use. Ms. Green stated that the goal is to end dependence on WeddingWire and use this software's marketing piece instead. WeddingWire is about to move from a lead-based fee to a flat monthly fee of \$660/month. Ms. Gantner stated that, according to projections by Jeff Ramsey in his Lodge business plan, we are on track for Lodge revenue so far this year.

Mr. Wehner asked how this expense would increase revenue, especially for the 6 months remaining this year. He asked if there were still weekend reservation dates available this year. Ms. Green replied that it will increase the response rate and the conversion rate from leads to reservations. A discussion of costs and percent of Lodge revenue followed.

Ms. McGinty reiterated that more information should be obtained from Summit and Medina County park districts about their approach.

Mr. Selig asked about the length of any contract for this program. Ms. Green responded that there is a contract but that it is month-to-month and can be cancelled in any month.

#### **Records Retention and Public Records policies:**

Ms. Gantner stated that the board will wait on this until the next meeting so that the board can be better prepared to discuss. There was confusion over the two policies, and the wrong information was sent in the board packet.

#### **Nature Works budget line items:**

Mr. Wehner stated that \$25,000 is needed to fund the Nature Works grant proposal for the bridge over the upper lake dam. He reviewed the capital expenditures budget of \$232,000 for 2022. \$514,000 has actually been spent, including \$450,000 on the dam, due to agreements approved in 2021.

Mr. Wehner said that a revenue line of \$75,000 is necessary for the state grant money, in addition to the expenditure line for required funding. Mr. Selig expressed the hope that volunteer hours and in-kind services could be received for most of the \$25,000 required funding if the grant is awarded.

Ms. McGinty asked if an engineering plan is necessary. Mr. Selig replied that it is not required but adds to the points on the grant application if we do have it.

#### **Temporary horse access from Broadview Road entrance:**

Ms. Gantner proposed that the board extend permission granted last year to allow horses to enter the park through the Broadview Road entrance. Horse trailer parking would not be allowed, but horses could be ridden down the driveway and access the bridle trail that way. This permission would be in effect while the board and advisors are working on the trail plan.

Ms. McGinty asked how the horsemen know which way to go to reach the bridle trails once they ride down the driveway. Mr. Selig responded that he expects they would do their due diligence ahead of time and know the layout of the bridle trails before they ride into the park.

#### **Public Comment from the Floor:**

Public comments included questions about how many open house attendees were from Richfield vs. those from other locations, and whether the RHP volunteer hours listed on the open house map included Friends hours. There were varying responses regarding what portion of attendees were from Richfield. A discussion of listed hours ended inconclusively; the question could not be answered with information available at the meeting.

## Regular Meeting

### Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Gantner asked if all board members had reviewed the minutes from the May 23 regular meeting. All board members had reviewed; minor spelling corrections were suggested. Minutes as corrected were approved by consensus.

### Standing and Special Committee Reports:

**Governance:** Mr. Wehner reported that the committee's time was spent on the Public Records Retention policy.

**Operations and Capital Improvements:** Mr. DeLuca reported the following:

#### Operations

- 1) Another smash & grab theft occurred on Saturday, June 25. Bay Pointe is looking into a camera solution for the large parking lot. A proposal is pending for options including installing on a light pole. Sight lines are required to the modem for the camera system. Right now we are just telling people not to bring valuables into the park. This sort of crime is happening in parks all over Summit County; most other parks do not have cameras. Ms. Apidone asked if a camera can be moved from another location. Mr. DeLuca responded that this is one of the proposals. Ms. Gantner added that signs will be installed warning people not to leave valuables in their vehicles and announcing that there is surveillance.
- 2) The ropes and climbing course was old, in poor condition, and had been damaged by a fallen tree. A Hoffman Tree Service took down the upper part, including the tree that was hanging on the upper portion of the wall. Volunteers dismantled the lower part and picked up all of the pieces from both.
- 3) A corporate volunteer group is coming to work in the park. They will take the sheeting off the addition on the back of Garfield Hall and salvage materials where possible. They will also put up shelves in the winter barn and sort and salvage the lumber stored there.
- 4) Hickory Hill shelter across from Mable Smith shelter is in bad shape. The plan is to take it down. There are other shelters nearby. Ms. McGinty asked about creating parking there for Mable Smith shelter; Mr. DeLuca replied that this is a possibility.
- 5) The outside bar on the back patio at The Lodge has been completed by our volunteer carpenter.

#### Capital Improvements

- 6) The recently completed lower dam is seeping at a point inside the mill house. Gannett Fleming engineers looked at it and said to lower the water level in the lake. Currently the lower lake is down 1 to 1.5 feet, and the seepage is drying up. The engineers will come back and check it again. The dam is open a bit right now to supply St. Bernard's Golf Course with water for irrigation and ponds on the course. Mr. DeLuca offered to take any board members to the lower dam to further explain its situation.

- 7) Invasive species removal program is temporarily halted due to a snake sighting. It could be a timber rattler, but this is not confirmed. The county says this species is very unlikely in our area. The invasive species removal will be reinstated in the near future.

**Grants and Fundraising:** Mr. Selig reported that the committee met on Friday, June 24. They met with the engineering firm and will arrange a site visit regarding the NatureWorks grant due July 15. The engineers should be able to provide a preliminary estimate for replacing the bridge across the upper dam. If not we may need to postpone the submission of grant proposal for a year.

Mr. Selig will contact Cynthia McWilliams and Debbie Williams regarding fundraising.

An additional grant is available for \$50,000 to \$500,000 and due November 15. Possible projects for this grant are a connector trail to another park and improved accessibility. The necessary 50% match might be mostly volunteer work. This opportunity is in the initial investigation phase.

**Marketing/Communications:** No report

**Administration Report:**

Ms. Wheeler read her report as submitted.

**Lodge Event Coordinator's Report:** Ms. Green submitted her report. Ms. McGinty asked if there is a plan for landscaping and paths around The Lodge. Ms. Green responded that there is a basic plan but not a formal plan with a landscape designer. The goal is to create a path to the bridal suite, mostly for photos, as well as a firepit, retaining wall, and other features.

**Volunteer Coordinator's Report:**

Ms. Czaplicki submitted her report.

**Partner group reports:**

**Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve Report:**

Corey Ringle reported that the TLC team has logged 416 hours.

For the Mill fundraiser on Oct. 16, 2022, Thom and Lisa Mandel are the honorary chairs. Planning continues for this event.

The Mill Docent program has been quite successful.

The mill wheel should be back in late July, and a safety fence will be installed.

The Friends continue with the stabilization program. They also repaired, painted, and did other work in preparation for the Open House in June.

**Oviatt House:** Will report next month.

Mr. DeLuca said that they are removing the chimney putting up a safety fence and reroofing the back of the house.

Ms. Apidone asked if all the pledged money was received.

**Ohio Horsemen's Council:**

Ms. Molly Eastwood reported that \$2,000 was raised at a recent fundraiser toward the summer barn roof. The quote from Hinckley Roofing was \$26,000 plus \$85 per sheet for wood replacement as needed.

The group would like to have horse camping available. They believe it would be a money-maker.

Mr. Selig asked why the summer barn gate code is not just automatically available instead of requiring a call to the office or to Ms. Eastwood. The issue has been security.

**Treasurer Report:**

Mr. Wehner reported that the 2022 budget for capital improvements is \$232,000. An inflow of \$122,000 has been received from the ODNR grant for the dam. Delays on the lower dam cost \$96,000 more than expected. The Lodge HVAC system cost \$63,000, and refinishing the kitchen floor cost about \$5,000. The Lodge fund needs to be established so that Lodge expenses come out of it instead of general capital improvements budget. Mr. Wehner said that a resolution would be needed to have the fund established. Ms. McGinty asked what the bottom line is in the capital improvements fund. Mr. Wehner responded that it is currently a negative due to the dam overruns. The budget needs revision to be able to answer this question.

**Old Business:**

Ms. Gantner reintroduced Resolution 19-2022.

**MOTION by:** Ms. McGinty moved and seconded by Mr. Wehner adopt the Volunteer Guidebook as revised.

**MOTION PASSED:** Vote taken by roll call: Mr. DeLuca (Yea), Ms. Gantner (Yea), Ms. McGinty (Yea), Mr. Selig (Yea), Mr. Wehner (Yea), Ms. Apidone (Yea).

Ms. Gantner reminded the board that horse access was allowed last fall for horses to enter the park from Broadview Road while the Rivers and Trails plan is still being formulated. Horse trailer parking is still only allowed at the summer barn parking lot.

**MOTION by:** Ms. McGinty moved and seconded by Mr. Selig to allow temporary horse access to the park through the Broadview Road entrance.

**MOTION PASSED:** Vote taken by roll call: Ms. Gantner (Yea), Ms. McGinty (Yea), Mr. Selig (Abstain), Mr. Wehner (Yea), Ms. Apidone (Yea), Mr. DeLuca (Yea).

**New Business:**

Mr. Wehner introduced Resolution 22-2022, stating that budget line items must be created to allow for funding of the NatureWorks grant if received.

**MOTION by:** Mr. Wehner moved and seconded by Mr. Selig to create budget line items to allow for the receipt of grant funds, if received, and for the costs of the project if implemented.

**MOTION PASSED:** Vote taken by roll call: Ms. McGinty (Yea), Mr. Selig (Yea), Mr. Wehner (Yea), Ms. Apidone (Yea), Mr. DeLuca (Yea), : Ms. Gantner (Yea).

**Announcements:**

A Strategic Planning stakeholders' meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on Monday, July 25. The regular board meeting will be delayed until 7:30 p.m. that day to allow for this planning meeting.

The grant for purchase of the Duffy property was not received, so RJRD will not be purchasing that property.

Ms. Gantner introduced prospective park director Todd Alexander.

Ms. Apidone thanked park volunteer husband/wife team Doug and Lisa, in absentia, for performing security detail in the park each evening.

**Questions / Comments from the Floor:**

Pat Norris made two comments: 1) The bullet point list of expenses on the Open House map/information sheet should have had a total at the bottom.

2) Why is there focus on a bridge in good shape rather than one in bad shape?

Mr. Selig responded that the safety of the bridge across the upper dam is actually good, but because of the rough look, the metal grate flooring and other factors, the perceived safety of that bridge is less. This project fit the specifications of the current grant, while other bridge projects are too large. The stairs make access to this bridge poor. Mr. DeLuca stated that dogs won't cross the metal grate flooring.

Ms. Eastwood asked about the Kirby crossing bridge. Mr. DeLuca replied that it is on the list for repair or replacement. Mr. Selig suggested that the strategic plan will hopefully help prioritize projects within the park.

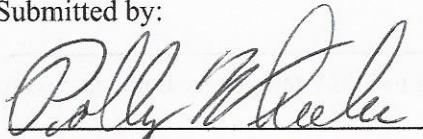
**Adjournment:**

**MOTION by:** Mr. Wehner moved and seconded by Ms. McGinty to adjourn the meeting.

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

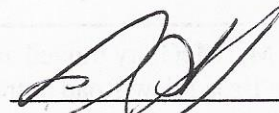
Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Submitted by:



Polly Wheeler,  
Administrative Coordinator

Accepted by:



Anita Gantner, Board Chairperson