

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.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

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

Also in Attendance: Park Director John Piepsny, Township Trustee Don Laubacher, Administrative Coordinator Polly Wheeler, and approximately 10 attendees.

Work Session

Park Rules policy revisions:

Mr. Wehner presented his updates to the Park Rules policy:

- 1) Clarify that all fishing is catch & release
- 2) In second section, add "unless permission is granted by RJRD"
- 3) Section 14.1, third sentence, remove the shelter restriction from the pet policy. Following discussion, this was revised to remove the lake area restriction also.
- 4) Section 16, include "trustees" along with authorized representatives
- 5) Camping discussion: Park Director stated that Health Department restrictions have been clarified to mean that if there are fewer than five sites, a temporary or permanent campground permit is not required. He would like to begin allowing camping for residents only at this time. Policy will be amended to include camping by permit only. Strike out the sentence placing a restriction on camping.
- 6) Ms. McGinty asked that mushrooms be specified in the list of items that cannot be collected, since people go off trail to collect them, damaging non-trail areas. A discussion followed about how to enforce these rules, such as including them in signage. Visitors should not be off trail anyway.
- 7) A discussion of orienteering, both group and individual, followed. The question was asked how much off trail do orienteering visitors go. Input was accepted from Chris Naizer regarding orienteering.

Capital Project Priorities:

Park Director John Piepsny stated that upgrades in the park would be more successful and quicker if all efforts could be focused on specific projects based upon priorities. One high priority is trail improvement, including bridges, and another is clear signage. Mr. Piepsny offered a list of ten projects and stated that the park needs to address issues of infrastructure. Mr. Piepsny also offered that three decorative streetlamps in good condition have been donated by the Richfield Brewing Company from

their construction area by the library. Mr. Piepsny will contact the Ohio Operating Engineers to see if they will install these in the main parking lot.

Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve financial policy proposal:

Mr. Wehner stated that the board appreciates the work, donations, time, and other efforts from the Friends group; however, the board cannot accept gifts from Friends not earmarked for a specific item. The Friends stated that if a donor cannot donate directly to the park but must donate to a 501(c)3, the Friends could not accept the donation if it did not fit their mission. An example would be if someone donated money to remove an historic structure. Mr. Selig mentioned that the situation was discussed in the Fundraising Committee meeting but that further discussion is needed, since the document needs fewer restrictions. Mr. Wehner reiterated that the RJRD cannot accept some of the restrictions in the document.

Halloween event:

This year's Halloween event will take place on October 30, 2022 as a joint presentation by Richfield Heritage Preserve and the Village of Richfield. The committee is still looking for volunteers and donations. Ms. Apidone asked whether the Halloween parade would still take place, which will happen on October 31 at 6pm. Mr. DeLuca asked if parking would be an issue for the Oct. 30 Halloween event, reminding the board that in the past there was a bus to bring visitors to the park from Richfield Woods. Ms. Gantner asked that advertising of the event be limited to Richfield rather than a wider area due to the overwhelming response in the past.

Comments from the floor:

Referencing the Halloween event, Ms. Naizer stated that, as social media coordinator for Friends, she has not marketed park events to the whole region, other than the June open house.

Ms. Lynn Richardson asked if the capital improvements list and the building champions mutually exclusive. She stated her desire to be the champion for Hickory Hill shelter, Fernwood shelter and outhouse, and Last Chance shelter. Mr. DeLuca reminded everyone that the board already approved Hickory Hill shelter to be removed. That will begin this week. Ms. McGinty, Ms. Gantner, and Mr. Piepsny stated that the building champions should be restricted to the middle tier structures. Ms. McGinty reminded those present that a person or group can present a plan, but that does not mean that it would automatically be approved. The board would consider options if presented.

Ms. Naizer asked whether Cook's Cabin is in the lower tier due to its location.

Ms. Judy Bowman asked for clarification of the statement regarding accepting donations. Mr. Wehner clarified that the board cannot accept pass-through restrictions.

Regular Meeting

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of April 25 special meeting, May 16 special meeting, August 22 regular meeting, September 8 special meeting, and September 13 special meeting were considered. Vote was taken by voice to approve all of the above minutes, which was unanimous.

Standing Committee Reports

Governance Committee:

Mr. Wehner stated that the insurance on several structures has been reviewed and increased: Mill Wheel - \$100,000 for replacement

Kirby's Mill - \$200,000 for replacement

Oviatt House - \$100,000 due to the work that has been done, thereby increasing the value

Park Operations Committee:

Mr. DeLuca stated that the committee met on Thursday, Sept. 22 and discussed next steps for The Lodge, Eagle Scout projects, trails and signs, and perimeter fencing. They also discussed the bridge over the upper dam, which is difficult for dogs and some hikers to cross. A mat has been purchased to go over the metal floor, which seems to solve the problem, and more will be purchased to cover the bridge floor.

Capital Projects:

Mr. DeLuca reported that Gannett Fleming and Northstar Construction have been looking at the lower dam. Dam Safety will come out to certify the dam.

Grants and Fundraising:

Mr. Selig reported that the committee met on Friday, August 23. They discussed possible funding form Akron Community Foundation, and Ms. Richardson presented the Friends proposed financial policy.

The committee plans to apply for a Land and Water Conservancy grant, due in November, that could aid in construction of a connector trail in the park from the entrance to the main drive. Mr. Selig also mentioned that he reviewed the construction plans and costs of the Carter-Pedigo Trail by the Richfield Library.

The donor plaque for Friends donors to the Mill project was discussed. The consensus of the committee is that the plaque should be at or near the Mill. Possible design of the plaque was discussed, and Friends president Corey Ringle will create options for the design.

Marketing/Communications: No report.

Administration Report:

Park Director John Piepsny stated that for future meetings, he wants the reports from the various coordinators and partner groups by noon on the Friday before each board meeting. That way the board has time to review and can ask questions at the meeting, saving time during the meeting.

Administrative Coordinator's Report: Mrs. Wheeler highlighted items from her report: a Volunteer Registry for the park has been created, requesting donations of specific tools and other items to assist volunteers and staff in their maintenance work. Mrs. Wheeler reported that she fielded phone calls about camping, trail riding, shelter rentals, fishing, and orienteering this month. RJRD was represented at the Village of Richfield's Fall Fest at Eastwood Preserve and at the Oviatt House open house.

Lodge Event Coordinator's Report: Ms. Green's report stands as submitted.

Volunteer Coordinator's Report: Ms. Czaplicki's report stands as submitted.

Partner group reports:

Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve Report: Corey Ringle reported the following:

- 1) The mill area has been reseeded following installation of the wheel. The mill wheel will only run on weekends, allowing it to rest during the week.
- 2) The Friends' major Mill fundraiser will take place in The Lodge on October 16.

- 3) Ms. Ringle reported on invasive species, natural species, and historic structures, especially stabilization in North House.
- 4) Friends participated in various programs, and their volunteer hours were reported.

Treasurer Report:

Mr. Wehner reported that in the past month there has been a \$72,000 outflow and a \$15,000 inflow of money. Of this inflow, about \$13,000 was from Lodge rentals and about \$2,000 was from other sources. The Capital Fund has a \$592,000 deficit due to the dam work.

Old Business:

Ms. Gantner announced that RJRD has officially received a clean audit for 2020-2021.

New Business: None

Announcements:

On Sunday, Sept. 25 Ms. Green conducted five showings of The Lodge. Nearly all of the Fridays and Saturdays in October 2023 have been reserved.

Questions / Comments from the Floor:

Ms. Smik stated that she wants to hear the reports from the various coordinators and partner groups but could not if they were not read at the meetings. Ms. Gantner offered that the reports would be made available by sending them out with the agenda before the meetings.

Ms. Bowman reminded the board that their MOU with the board requires them to give a verbal report quarterly during the meetings.

Ms. Norris announced that the board missed a good Oviatt House open house event. Ms. Bowman added that the board missed their opportunity to tour the house. Ms. Bowman also reminded the board that the house is a construction site, so please let OHI know ahead of time if board members are going in so that the area can be made safer.

Adjournment:

MOTION by: Ms. Apidone, seconded by Mr. DeLuca, to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by voice, which was unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Submitted by:

Accepted by:

Polly Wheeler,

Administrative Coordinator

Anita Gantner, Board Chairperson