



Regular Meeting with Work Session October 23, 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 Mike Selig, Board Vice-Chair.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Present: Mike Lyons, Steve McPeake, Holly Price, Mark Robeson, Mike Selig, Dave Wehner

Excused: Anita Gantner

Also in Attendance: Park Director John Piepsny, Township Trustee Don Laubacher, Administrative Coordinator Polly Wheeler, and approximately 16 other attendees.

Work Session

A) Volunteer Guidebook

Mr. Selig opened a discussion of the Volunteer Guidebook that was previously adopted by the board. Board agreed that all volunteers must sign the volunteer agreement every 2 years in order to volunteer in the park. There was a recent situation in which a person who had not signed was volunteering in the park and claiming that the board was being inconsistent in their requirements.

Mr. Selig asked the board to consider three points:

1. Do all volunteers need to sign the volunteer agreement?
2. How should the agreement be implemented?
3. What should be done if this is not followed?

- 1) Mr. Wehner stated that the waiver [agreement] is solely for the benefit of the RJRD. Volunteers should sign it, and no change should be made in the policy.

Ms. Price said that it is standard for a group to require a volunteer form from its volunteers. Requiring it seems like a best practice.

Mr. Selig agreed that it is standard for all volunteers to submit a signed waiver, regardless of residency, elected official status, or position on the board of trustees.

- 2) Currently the Volunteer Coordinator makes sure that the form is signed. It is up to the partner groups to communicate to their volunteers that this is a requirement. Mr. Selig said that he doesn't think any changes need to be made there but asked the board to discuss.

Mr. Lyons asked if there have been any difficulties implementing the document in the past.

Mr. Selig responded that, once the guidebook was approved, every volunteer was expected to sign; however, not all volunteers have signed. He asked Mr. Piepsny to confirm that the guidebook was approved earlier this year.

Mr. Piepsny responded that the park has had the guidebook for a while but that some modifications have been made to it based on some suggestions.

Mr. Lyons asked if there have been any problems with it, and Mr. Piepsny replied that there have been a few individuals who have not signed but have come in to volunteer in the park.

- 3) In view of these occurrences, Mr. Selig asked how this policy should be enforced. He stated that there is a list of rights and responsibilities for both the volunteer and for the park. Those who have not signed should be given a chance to correct that deficiency, but if it continues to be an issue then the board needs to stand firm in the policy that they are not able to volunteer.

Ms. Lynn Richardson offered a point of information. There are two different documents: a waiver that deals with liability and has been in place for a long time, and a guidebook approved by the board with an agreement at the end that is expected to be signed. This creates confusion between the requirements of the two documents.

Mr. Selig thanked Ms. Richardson for her comment and said that the board should take up the project of making sure that the guidebook and the waiver line up, eliminating the situation of having two similar but different documents. Mr. Lyons agreed that both purposes could be achieved in one document. Mr. Selig said that this would be noted as an action item on which the board should work.

Mr. Wehner reiterated that if someone refuses to sign, then the consequence would be that the person could still come into the park as a visitor but would not be allowed to be part of the volunteer efforts.

B) Bridge Inspections

- 1) Mr. Piepsny explained that the park's bridges do not fall under ODOT rules because the public is not driving on the paths throughout the park. However, they do need to be inspected by a civil engineer every two years.
- 2) Mr. Piepsny showed photos of the supports under the bridge near the Mill. The photos showed the poor and washed-out condition of the failed bridge supports. The bridge received a National Bridge Inspection Standard (NBIS) rating of 3 out of 9 (serious condition) and had to be closed. It will remain closed at least until its condition is analyzed.
- 3) One quote has been received of \$135/hr for the inspections; another quote has been requested. This amounts to \$1,500 to \$2,000 per bridge, or \$6,000 to \$8,000 to have all of the bridges inspected. He will gather additional quotes and bring them to the board in November.
- 4) The bridges were last inspected in 2016. The inspection costs will need to be in the budget every 2 years.

C) Bylaws

- 1) Mr. Lyons presented a redlined and a clean copy of the proposed changes to the bylaws for review prior to approval at the November board meeting, which satisfies the required 30-day advance notice. These use the original legislation from the Township and the Village as a basis for the board's bylaws.
 - a. Both of these cited Section I – Origin
 - b. Section II – Purpose – more explicitly stated
 - c. Section III – Board of Trustees – simplified but drawn from the Township and Village actions
 - d. Section IV – Vacancies
 - e. Section V – Meetings – simplified and defined. Some sections were eliminated because they are moved to other sections.
- 2) Mr. Lyons recommended that the board look over the clean version and review carefully.

- 3) In section 2a, under Regular Meetings, Mr. Selig asked why the difference between “preferably” and “must be” notice of 24 hours. Mr. Lyons explained that regular meetings are standard and predictable, but special meetings are not and must be restricted to the stated purpose.
- 4) Mr. Selig asked if the board should consider term limitations. Mr. Lyons responded that the board has no authority to dictate that, since trustees are appointed by Richfield Township and the Village of Richfield.

Comments from the floor

Gary LaGuardia offered comments on the bridges, stating that he has copies of structural analysis reports. Closed bridge had a rating of 10.5 tons, with recommendation to repair undermined center. North metal bridge was rated at 8.5 tons, and Garfield bridge at 7.6 tons, with no priority work recommended for either one, and the upper dam pedestrian bridge was listed as satisfactory with no priority work recommended.

Mr. Wehner asked who signed for the contract for these inspections. Mr. LaGuardia replied that they were sent to Richfield Heritage Preserve, but he does not know who signed the contract. Mr. Piepsny added that weight capacity is not the same as the rating, which is based on a bridge in perfect condition.

Mr. Lyons asked when the reports were done. Mr. LaGuardia replied that they were submitted to the board on Feb. 3, 2017. They are not quotes.

Corey Ringle (3613 Hawthorne) asked for clarification on the distinction between volunteers and consultants. A consultant is not doing work but just giving advice, taking measurements, or similar. Do consultants still need to sign Volunteer Guidebook? Mr. Selig responded that he will discuss with her after the meeting.

Karen Smik (Faith Ln) stated that there is a difference between a single-event student or other volunteer, doing face painting or other one-time work, and a regular volunteer supporting the park by working in it. She emphasized the need to eliminate the confusion between the two existing volunteer forms and their purposes.

Regular Meeting

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Sept. 25 regular meeting were approved as written.

Standing Committee Reports

Governance: This committee’s report was already covered in the work session.

Grants & Fundraising: Mr. Selig reported that the committee’s next focus will be on the Buckeye Trail reroute in the park. The committee will have another meeting in the next month.

Administration Report:

Mr. Piepsny reported that over 900 people participated in the Trick or Treat on the Trail and Spooky Tales event on Oct. 22.

Oviatt House Inc. Report:

Judy Bowman reported that the exterior window casings and sills have been repaired and that new windows have been installed in Oviatt House. The windows also have new working shutters. Plaster has been removed from the second floor ceiling, and the back porch is cleaned up.

Volunteers contributed 764 hours this quarter. OHI worked with RHP on the Music Fest in August.

Trustee Tricia Steiner heads the museum committee and is collaborating with several other museums to conduct research, develop policies, and create a scope and vision for museum. OHI joined the American Association of State and Local History.

NPS Underground Railroad Network to Freedom awarded OHI a second grant to fund the efforts of three University of Akron students to do research.

Treasurer Report:

Mr. Wehner reported that there were \$774,000 in the bank with \$1,000 in outstanding checks. Of that money \$348,000 is unrestricted, and \$424,000 is in the restricted bond fund, which means it can only be spent on servicing the bond.

In September there were \$293,000 of cash inflows: \$88,000 was from the operating levy, and \$186,000 was from the bond levy. \$17,000 was related to renting of The Lodge, \$1,000 from rents collected including the cell tower, and \$2,000 programs and donations.

There were \$34,000 in cash outflows: \$4,000 in legal fees, \$11,000 in tax collections, \$6,000 salaries and benefits, \$2,000 in utilities, \$2,000 in commissions due to Lodge rental, and \$8,000 in miscellaneous fees and maintenance.

October is when the bond payment is made.

Old Business:

Structure Champion Program documents

MOTION by: Mr. Lyons and seconded by Mr. McPeake to approve Resolution 16-2023: A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE MODIFIED STRUCTURE CHAMPION DOCUMENTS.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Price recommended that a version number be added to the Structure Champion Program (SCP) document for clarification. Mr. Lyons asked that the resolution number be corrected on the printed copy. Mr. Selig said the modified SCP document should be version 2.

Mr. Lyons questioned the program ending date in the redline version. Ms. Price asked what were the final decisions on the boathouse, packout building, and pool house. Mr. Piepsny responded that the packout and pool house were not intended to be options. Mr. Selig said whether these are removed or not, the verbiage is still valid. He suggested that they be left in rather than making another change.

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by roll call: Mr. Lyons (yea); Mr. McPeake (yea); Ms. Price (yea); Mr. Robeson (yea), Mr. Selig (yea), Mr. Wehner (abstain).

New Business:

Ms. Lynn Richardson presented the Friends intention to apply for a grant for Kirby's Mill. The grant is available from the National Park Service for the historic preservation of nationally significant structures. It is a dollar-for-dollar match, with a minimum of \$125,000 and a maximum of \$750,000. The grant is highly competitive: only one is awarded per state.

Ms. Richardson stated that the Friends would like two things from the board:

- 1) Letter of approval of the project, which has been approved since 2015 or 2016

- 2) Maintenance easement – Friends of RHP are willing to continue maintaining for at least 10 years, which is required for the grant.
- 3) Added context would strengthen the grant application: a discussion of the significance and value, continuity and adaptability of the mill. The board could provide a reasonable assurance that the Kirby-era structures will be there to provide support.

The Friends previously submitted a Letter of Intent for Kirby's house. They also want to champion Garfield Hall and some of the other Kirby structures as well. They are willing to provide whatever information is needed. The deadline for the grant is Dec. 19. Ms. Richardson reminded the board that they have the authority to fast-track the project and that they need approval at the next meeting.

Mr. Selig thanked Ms. Richardson for the information. He stated that the letter of approval is not a challenge. For the maintenance easement, the board cannot agree to anything without review.

Mr. Selig stated that the minimum total expenditure would be \$250,000 and asked if the mill would cost more than that. Ms. Richardson replied that it is not anticipated to go beyond that, but they can't tell exactly what's needed until repairs start, and the cost is not certain due to cost increases. Mr. Selig recommended that, given the expected total cost to complete the mill would take the total amount of the \$250,000, if the grant is applied for the Friends should focus on just the mill and not the other structures.

Mr. Wehner asked if the RJRD could apply for the grant with the Friends' support. Ms. Richardson replied that the Friends has an agreement with the board to do the mill project, and it would cause confusion if there were a sudden change. She said that they have been doing the maintenance so far and she will be writing the maintenance manual for it.

Announcements:

The next regular board meeting will be held on November 27, 2023.

The park is purchasing a 2011 Ford F-250 utility truck from Richfield Township for \$3,500. It comes with two snowplow blades, which will allow the park to do their own snow plowing, thereby saving money.

Comments from the Floor:

Corey Ringle (Hawthorne Dr) added a point to Ms. Richardson's comments. The mill does not have facilities for water and washrooms. The Kirby house is needed as an augmented space for STEM education.

Renee Tuttle (Broadview Rd) thanked all of the board members for their service on the board. She spoke to Mr. Piepsny today and thanked him for his time. She advised the board to work on ways to make the Strategic Plan available online. Ms. Tuttle thanked the board for having a question and answer session regarding Issue 16 on Nov. 2 and recommended that they make the details of the levy available online. Lastly, she encouraged the board not to fast-track any decisions and thanked them for being fiscally responsible regarding agreements and structures.

Karen Smik (Faith Lane) asked how the Nov. 2 meeting is being advertised, since she is the PAC treasurer and did not even know about it. Mr. Piepsny responded that the decision was just made the previous evening. The meeting will be at 6pm on Nov. 2 at The Lodge.

Lynn Richardson (Berea) commented on Garfield Hall. She reminded the board that it was originally on the list from architect Tim Franklin. Mr. Bob Becker, then-chairman of the board, asked how the decisions were made about the buildings. Mr. Franklin said that he was given the parameter that there was \$3 million to spend. Later Mr. Franklin said that the board should save whatever they can.

Adjournment:

MOTION by: Ms. Price moved, seconded by Mr. McPeake, to adjourn the meeting.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Submitted by:



Polly Wheeler, Administrative Coordinator

Accepted by:



Mike Selig, Board Vice-Chairperson