

**RJRD REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**October 27, 2025**

**MEETING MINUTES**

The RJRD Board met in The Park Lodge at Richfield Heritage Preserve.

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m.

**Roll Call:** Holly Price, Dave Wehner, Anita Gantner, Mike Lyons, Steve McPeake, Mike Selig

**ABSENT:** Mark Robeson

**Also present:** John Piepsny, Susan Czaplicki and members of the public

**WORK SESSION**

The board reviewed the 2026 draft budget, which was created by the Park Director and Tim Clymer, fiscal officer. Mr. Piepsny highlighted that the Park has already exceeded \$30,000 in revenues for the year in six months. Board members asked questions and received clarification of certain items, including salary allocation between funds and separation of Amity. Mr. Piepsny also presented a capital budget worksheet to help with long-term planning needs.

The budget will continue to be refined and approved at a later date.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Minutes of the July 28 regular meeting, August 28 regular meeting and September 29 regular meeting were approved. Minutes of the September 5 Ad-Hoc Trails meeting were deferred.

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Governance: No Report; Committee has not met since last meeting.

Fundraising and Grant writing: Committee met October 10. Reported status of Natureworks grant. SHIPO MOU signed. Bridge over upper lake to be delivered Nov 12. Focus on North House for state capital grant. Requested feedback regarding a \$2,500 grant to address erosion near High Lea. Require an additional \$3,500 to authorize report, which would allow us to apply for grants. Mr. Lyons asked which fund the money would come from. Improvement of Sites was the reply.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lyons moved that the RJRD allocate funds to supplement the \$2,500 grant for evaluation of soil erosion near High Lea. Ms. Gantner seconded.

There was no further discussion.

**MOTION PASSED:** Vote was taken by roll call.

Ms. Gantner (yea), Mr. Wehner (yea), Ms. Price (yea), Mr. Selig (yea), Mr. McPeake (yea), Mr. Lyons (yea)

**ADMINISTRATION REPORT:**

Environmental Design Group was invited to present their credentials to provide a proposal to provide services to create a master plan to help guide short and long-term improvements to the north side of the park. The presentation was meant to help the Board better understand the process and deliverables. Mr. Selig mentioned this type of detail is the kind of legwork needed to present well in grant applications. Mr. Lyons mentioned the legacy of earlier plans and wanted to ensure there is no duplication of efforts. Mr. Selig considered it an isolated application versus a broad strategic plan.

A sketch of the traffic flow around the Lodge was shared, with Mr. Piepsny stating some concerns regarding safety with vehicles and pedestrians.

Ohio Horseman's Council installed the new corral fence, following their murder mystery fundraiser. TOTOTT attracted over 900 guests and volunteers. Rentals were starting to wind down for the year. The new 501c3 was approved and is named Richfield Heritage Preserve Conservancy.

#### Treasurer's Report

Mr. Whener reported that a bank balance of \$1,000,700, with cash inflows of \$353,000 and outflows of \$33,000, representing 79% of the operating budget, 74% of the lodge budget, and 28% of the bond budget.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Strategic Plan – Ms. Price discussed creation of an annual park plan for 2026, including objectives of the plan, framework and seven high-level priorities. They include Structures, Revenue, Trails, Nature & Wildlife, Operations & Maintenance, Marketing & Communications and Park Partnerships. Mr. Selig asked how it will be built out. Ms. Price said she is working with Mr. Robeson, but all board members are welcome to contribute. The goal is to approve the plan in December.

ODNR Agreement – Board members received a copy of an agreement regarding the state capital grant.

**MOTION:** Mr. McPeake moved that the RJRD enter into a Capital Improvement Community Park, Recreation/Conservation Project Pass-Through Grant Agreement with the Ohio Department of National Resources. Mr. Lyons seconded.

Mr. Piepsny indicated it had been reviewed by RJRD's attorney. Ms. Price asked about record keeping and recording. Mr. Piepsny confirmed he will be responsible for such.

**MOTION PASSED:** Vote was taken by roll call.

Ms. Gantner (yea), Mr. Wehner (yea), Ms. Price (yea), Mr. Selig (yea), Mr. McPeake (yea), Mr. Lyons (yea)

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Work Agreement – Board members received a draft of a guest organization work agreement developed by the Governance Committee.

**MOTION:** Ms. Price moved that the RJRD approve the Guest Organization Work Agreement. Ms. Wehner seconded.

There was no further discussion

**MOTION PASSED:** Vote was taken by roll call.

Ms. Gantner (yea), Mr. Wehner (yea), Ms. Price (yea), Mr. Selig (yea), Mr. McPeake (yea), Mr. Lyons (yea)

Mill Swing Bridge – Ms. Gantner said the Friends of RJRD had requested further discussion on the topic. She acknowledged the importance of the decision regarding how to proceed and outlined the three options open to the Board: a fully accessible public bridge, a limited access bridge and no bridge. She asked Mr. Selig and Ms. Price to take up the issue as an ad hoc committee, and requested the Friends appoint 2-3 members to represent them in the meeting.

Gate and Fence Discussion – Ms. Price discussed the results of the public survey regarding the fence. 181 submissions were received, including 88 Richfield residents. The majority of respondents (73%) were in favor of keeping the fence and 72% felt the damaged sections should be repaired.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lyons moved that the fence repair proposal submitted by the Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve go forward using the new agreement format. Mr. McPeake seconded.

There was no further discussion

**MOTION PASSED:** Vote was taken by roll call.

Ms. Gantner (yea), Mr. Wehner (yea), Ms. Price (yea), Mr. Selig (yea), Mr. McPeake (yea), Mr. Lyons (yea)

At the time of the meeting, responses by residents abutting the Park had not been categorized and no decision regarding gates in the fence was made. Mr. Lyons restated he is not in favor of allowing gates, and that the survey results would not be the deciding factor, but would like the feedback nonetheless.

Donor Plaque – The RJRD Board had previously approved a plaque to be installed recognizing donors to Kirby's Mill who gave \$5k and above. Ms. Ringle of the Friends presented ideas for freestanding signage. There are currently about 90 names. Ms. Gantner asked why a plaque on the Mill itself was ruled out, and asked that options there be considered. Ms. Price expressed concern about the size of the signage presented, stating it could be confusing to visitors by appearing to be wayfinding.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Piepsny stated that the Oviatt quarterly update would be delayed until the November meeting.

#### Comments from the Floor regarding agenda items

Annette Pederson stated she was excited about the planning moving forward as discussed. She also asked a question about the non-profit entity, which Ms. Gantner clarified.

Christine Nazier asked if Champion applications were approved and/or turned away. Mr. Lyons replied that it was complicated and nothing received met the standard of the program.

Cory Ringle stated that if the Park is considering asphalt in the main parking lot there could be an environmental impact. She also noted that minutes are behind on the website. She also stated that

comments must be allowed on all subject per Sunshine Laws. Ms. Gantner said it would be clarified, but that was not her understanding.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION:** Mr. Lyons moved that the Board enter into an Executive Session for the sole purpose of considering the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of a public employee or official, or the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual. Ms. Price seconded.

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

Executive Session started at 7:49 p.m.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:25 p.m.

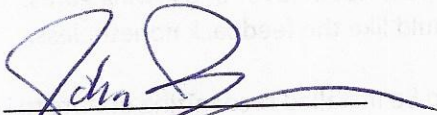
**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** to adjourn made by Mr. Lyons. Mr. Wehner seconded.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Submitted by:

  
John Piepsny, Park Director

Accepted by:

  
Anita Gantner, Board Chair