



RJRD Board Regular Meeting
July 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 PM by Anita Gantner, Board Chair.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Present: Ms. Gantner, Mr. Lyons, Mr. McPeake, Ms. Price, Mr. Robeson, Mr. Selig, Mr. Wehner

Also in Attendance: Park Director John Piepsny, Volunteer Coordinator/Recreation Programmer, Susan Czaplicki, and approximately 33 attendees.

Minutes

Minutes stand approved for the June 23, 2025, RJRD board meeting and the July 11, 2025, RJRD special meeting.

Meg Hennessy – Presentation about beavers in the park

Ms. Hennessy shared an insightful presentation on beaver management, offering helpful suggestions and practical solutions. Information included benefits of beaver activity and new methods to co-exist; park flood zones compared to building locations; and how their activity helps in various situations. The park is planning to install cages to protect specific trees.

Perimeter fence on social media

Ms. Gantner brought attention to a post on social media that reported that, “the Park director and several board members seemed to be pushing for demolition of the Park’s perimeter fence”. Ms. Gantner stated it’s a disservice to the park and to the community to post inaccurate information on social media.

Standing Committee Reports

Governance

Mr. Lyons reported that the governance committee has not met and discussed scheduling a meeting in the next few weeks.

Grants & Fundraising

Mr. Selig commented on the grants and fundraising committee and the timeline for the state capital grant. Mr. Selig noted that the park had received feedback indicating the ODNR grant does not align with the trail program and suggested withdrawing the grant for reevaluation.

Administration Report**Park Director Report**

Mr. Piepsny provided information to the board regarding lodge rental information. He invited the board to review and offer feedback. Mr. Piepsny provided a recap of the music festival and mentioned that most people came for a specific band and most didn't stay for the whole event. He also requested an executive session to discuss employment of a public employee.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Wehner read a treasurer's report.

Mr. Piepsny commented that Amity was not coded correctly on RecDesk.

New Business**501(c)(3) – Draft Articles – Heritage Preservation Trust**

Ms. Gantner led a discussion regarding the creation of a new 501 (c) (3) to benefit RJRD and RHP. Ms. Price asked a few questions and stated her support. Mr. McPeake fully supported the creation of a new 501 (c) (3) to address the needs in the park.

MOTION: Mr. McPeake moved to create the Heritage Preserve Trust as a 501(c)(3) organization to support the park. Ms. Price seconded. There was no further discussion.

Discussion: None

MOTION PASSED: Ms. Gantner (yea), Ms. Price (yea), Mr. Robeson (yea), Mr. McPeake (yea), Mr. Selig (yea), Mr. Wehner (yea), Mr. Lyons (yea)

Mr. Wehner led a discussion regarding volunteers at the park and gave a quick reminder to the board that the insurance policy from the Ohio Plan governs how and when volunteers are covered, and the concept of authorization. The park needs to follow best practices to minimize liability, and the park staff needs to authorize and supervise volunteers. Mr. Wehner also commented that the park's insurance does not cover equipment that is not owned by the park, or injury to volunteers using equipment not owned by the park.

Mr. Selig asked if the volunteer agreement should include a clause stating that volunteers using their own equipment not owned by RJRD are liable. Mr. Wehner stated we should consult with legal. Ms. Gantner stated there will be further investigation.

The Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve presentation

Ms. Ringle, president of the Friends group, gave a presentation on potential projects.

- Work on Kirby's Mill: Ms. Price inquired what the friends could do on their own without contractors. Mr. Selig had questions regarding the tie rods. Discussion regarding the swinging bridge by the mill, Mr. Selig inquired about the cost for the bridge replacement. Ms. Gantner inquired about safety concerns on the bridge discussion regarding contacting the RJRD insurance agent regarding liability on the bridge. Mr. Lyons requested drawings of the current bridge. Mr. Robeson inquired about an estimated timeline to completion to replace in kind.
- Kirby Driveway Bridge: Ms. Ringle described a bridge that would allow vehicles. Mr. Selig felt this was not a project they would support. Other projects in the park were better suited for fundraising efforts.
- High Lea – Ms. Ringle stated they would collaborate with a structural engineer to replace the wood and install a metal roof. Those projects would be done with volunteers. Ms. Gantner stated High Lea sounds like a good project to take on. Mr. Wehner said he was still unclear if we should use contractors for High Lea.

MOTION: Mr. Selig moved to authorize the Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve to engage a structural engineer or similar to assess the High Lea structure for repair and report back. Mr. Wehner seconded.

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

Oviatt House – Quarterly Presentation

Tricia Steiner, Oviatt House President, gave a quarterly report and update on Oviatt House.

Oviatt House – WasteWater Treatment Plant Discussion

Ms. Steiner stated that a well is their preferred option for water and that for septic they would like to connect to the Park's WasteWater Treatment Plant. Discussion followed. Mr. Wehner said any projects would need the proper property owner approval (the Park, not Oviatt House). Mr. Piepsny stated the organization would need to list RJRD as additional insured on the contract. Ms. Price clarified that nothing can begin until the EPA gives its approval.

MOTION: Mr. Lyons moved to approve the proposal to connect Oviatt House to the wastewater treatment plant, and move forward with Summit Excavating, subject to RJRD's approval and oversight, and that the land is returned to its original condition. Mr. McPeake seconded.

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

Old Business

Fence Discussion

Ms. Gantner discussed the historical cost of materials for fence repair and future fence damage. The past fence repairs cost up to \$50,000 the first year, with an additional \$18,000 in subsequent years. Discussion regarding pros and cons followed.

Wayfair signage

Ms. Gantner read a quote for the signage. Mr. Piepsny discussed five main trails, the colors, and the need for the names and symbols of each trail. Ms. Price suggested postponing further discussion due to time, and Ms. Gantner requested that Mr. Piepsny send trail information to the board.

Mr. Lyons asked about the ODNR memorandum which was in the Board package. Mr. Piepsny indicated it was not final, but the Board will have the opportunity to approve.

Announcements – Bad JuJu acoustic show September 21, 2025.

Comments from the Floor

Ms. Ringle commented that Garfield was on its way to completion

Mr. Pederson inquired about his request to add a pedestrian gate to his property

Ms. Duncan asked about the bridge being closed. Ms. Price discussed the current status and that we are awaiting feedback from the Army Corp of Engineers.

Ms. Laguardia commented about the High Lea project and supervision

Mr. Cross asked why the park needed a new 501(c)(3). Ms. Gantner stated this would put the park in a better position to apply for larger grants, including infrastructure projects, and it would ask less of the community.

Executive Session

MOTION: Mr. Wehner moved to go into executive session for the sole purpose of considering the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion or compensation of a public employee or official. at 9:40 PM, seconded by Mr. McPeake.

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

Executive Session started at 7:55 PM.

The board came out of executive session at 9:58 PM.

MOTION: Ms. Price moved to amend the authorization to hire Steve Sprunger from September to July 29, 2015; Mr. Wehner seconded.

MOTION PASSED: Ms. Gantner (yea), Ms. Price (yea), Mr. Robeson (yea), Mr. McPeake (yea), Mr. Selig (yea), Mr. Wehner (yea), Mr. Lyons (yea)

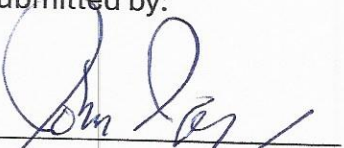
Adjournment

MOTION: to adjourn made by Ms. Price, Ms. Gantner seconded.

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

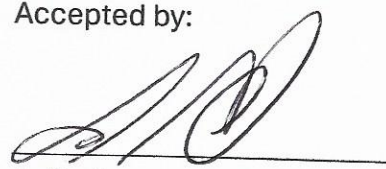
Meeting adjourned at 9:59 PM.

Submitted by:



John Piepsny, Park Director

Accepted by:



Anita Gantner, Board Chair

