



Regular RJRD Board Meeting June 23, 2025

Call To Order: The Board met at the Lodge at Richfield Heritage Preserve. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Anita Gantner, Board Chair.

Roll Call: Ms. Gantner, Mr. Lyons, Mr. McPeake, Ms. Price, Mr. Wehner.

Excused absences: Mr. Robeson, Mr. Selig

Also in attendance: Park Director John Piepsny, Village Council representative Sue Ann Philippar, Township Trustee Don Laubacher, RHP Volunteer Coordinator/Recreation Programmer Susan Czaplicki, Lauren O'Malley RHP Intern, and approximately 25 attendees.

REGULAR MEETING

Ms. Gantner announced that the Board would move items on the agenda. The Board deferred to HTZ so they could go first, and so they could leave after their presentation if they desire. The executive session would be moved to the end of the agenda.

Ms. Gantner introduced HTZ, and provided background regarding past successes with the group, including HTZ providing general contracting for RJRD, and the permits for Amity House. HTZ approached the park, and offered to create a conceptual design for renovations to North House and presented said conceptual design after their introduction.

HTZ reviewed floor plans for the house, explaining they were for spacing, not finishes. Design included functional space, a functional kitchen, four en-suite bedrooms and a finished basement. Ms. Price asked about whether the first floor could be ADA compliant. Mr. Lyons asked about the structural integrity of the building. HTZ said an engineer would need to be hired prior to any work. Discussion also included the potential for educational opportunities in a renovation. The Board thanked HTZ for their work. No further action was taken regarding the building.

Approval of Minutes

April 8, 2025, and May 19, 2025, minutes stand as approved.

Standing Committee Reports

- Governance
 - Mr. Lyons stated the committee had not met since the last meeting, and another meeting was not scheduled at the time of this report. Mr. Lyons stated that the committee had been discussing a draft of an agreement.
- Fundraising/Grant Writing

- Ms. Gantner stated for Mr. Selig that the Fundraising Committee had not held a meeting and gave possible dates for future meetings.

Administration Report

- Park Director Report
 - Mr. Piepsny introduced the RHP intern Lauren O'Malley
 - Lower Lake Bridge
 - Mr. Piepsny stated that the Ohio Operating Engineers (OOE) would start on the bridge sometime after July 4, for approximately 5 weeks, and the park would need to get a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers.
 - Ohio Operating Engineers
 - Pool, Piles, Porch
 - Mr. Piepsny mentioned that the OOE started poking holes in the bottom of the pool for it to drain. OOE plans to move the piles from behind Garfield into the pool to start filling it in. OOE will use the materials to fill in the pool and collapse the sides.
 - OOE will also remove the concrete slab porch behind Oviatt House.
 - Mr. Piepsny went through a few potential ideas for the leveled pool, such as a community garden, or an equipment storage yard.
 - Maintenance Tech.
 - Mr. Piepsny stated that the Maintenance Technician position is available and posted, and that there are a few potential candidates that will have to be reviewed in the future.
- SHPO Agreement (To replace upper lake bridge)
 - Mr. Piepsny stated Mr. Hanna will finalize an MOU to mitigate the adverse effects of removing the old bridge; a plaque honoring the old bridge when the new bridge is completed will be needed.
- Trails Grant Discussion
 - Mr. Piepsny stated that the Recreational Trails Program grant has not been awarded nor denied to the park; the extension of the driveway is not considered a trail, and it was recommended to pull the grant and resubmit it next year.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Wehner read a report on all cash inflow, outflow, and reported budget to actual standpoints. Mr. Wehner stated that we need a motion from the board to submit a cash-flow document to Summit County for an estimated tax rate.

MOTION: Mr. Wehner moved to allow the park's fiscal officer, Mr. Clymer, to submit the 2026 tax budget to the County Budget Commission; Mr. McPeake seconded.

Discussion: Ms. Price asked if Mr. Wehner will approve the budget before it is submitted; Mr. Wehner stated he reviewed the budget and is in agreement.

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

New Business

- Insurance
 - Mr. Wehner stated that the annual insurance review was completed. Fees have increased approximately \$3,000 as a result of changes in valuation related to property (i.e., finished Amity House, improvements to other buildings).
- 501(c)3 Discussion
 - Ms. Gantner stated the park needs a non-profit entity dedicated to the park. Mr. McPeake fully supports the creation of a 501(c)3, citing the numerous grant opportunities available for budget and capital that could help the park. Mr. Wehner seconded his support of a new 501(c)3. Ms. Price agrees a new 501(c)3 would give the park more flexibility. Mr. Lyons stated that he is supportive of the idea.
 - Ms. Gantner asked about the process. Ms. McPeake stated an entity is created and then it applies for tax-exempt status. Discussion followed regarding the individuals to oversee the new 501(c)3. The Board was not in favor of having current RJRD Board members on the nonprofit board. Mr. Piepsny was tasked with presenting potential board members.
- Removal of Structure Policy
 - Ms. Price began the discussion regarding the why a policy for removing structures at the park could be beneficial. She outlined documentation of condition, due diligence of any restrictions and the like. Ms. Gantner stated that there have been issues in the past with structures coming down without notice. Ms. Gantner stated it would be beneficial for a policy to be created to inform the community at large about major structure changes. Discussion continued on specifics of the structure policy. Ms. Ganter concluded by stating that the Board will have to engage in further conversation on the topic.
- Overall Plan with the Park
 - Ms. Gantner stated that they would postpone the overall plan discussion as it is still in the development phase.
- Gate and Park Fence Discussion
 - Ms. Gantner stated there are many areas of the fence which are damaged. She sought feedback from the Board regarding their thoughts on its upkeep. Mr. Lyons asked about its original purpose and if it's still valid. Ms. Gantner said it was initially for the protection of the campers but that it has created a unique ecosystem within the Park because of the low deer population. It is a barrier for neighbors, and some have raised questions regarding its condition and adding gates. The Board tasked Mr. Piepsny with confirming the total length of the fence and maintenance cost. No further action was taken.

Mr. Wehner raised the issue of the supervision of volunteers who work in the park, and why such work needs to be supervised. He referenced a discussion from a previous Board meeting regarding black mold in the Kirby Garage, and that it had been stated no one should go into the building. Mr. Wehner stated the park's insurance has a rider for mold. It was recently discovered that a volunteer removed the moldy drywall from Kirby garage without the knowledge or permission of the RJRD Board or the Park Director. Mr. Wehner stated that this action created a liability for the park and, by extension, taxpayers. Mr. Wehner also stated that the park has

records indicating the building was locked. Mr. Lyons stated that the Board's position should have been respected.

Old Business

- Trail Signage
 - Mr. Piepsny stated that we added colors and distances to the map. Names and symbols are still being considered for the trails. Ms. Czaplicki stated that there was an Eagle Scout interested in doing signage for the trails, but that differing timelines cut that plan short. The strategic plan revealed the #1 reason people come to the park was for the trails. Mr. Piepsny hopes to present a plan for completion at the next meeting.

Announcements

- July 19th Music Festival
 - 5 bands will be playing from noon to 8pm. There will be a stage on the Amity house lawn, and Oviatt House will cook hot dogs and hamburgers.

Comments from the Floor

Ms. Ringle asked for clarification on the trail grant discussion.

Mr. Peterson inquired about installing a gate in the fence adjacent to his property.

Mr. Norris inquired if the board planned to conduct business after the executive session. Ms. Gantner responded yes.

MOTION: Mr. Wehner motioned to go into executive session to consider 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, unless the employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual requests a public hearing by division (G)(1) of section 121.22 of the Revised Code; seconded by Mr. Lyons.

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by roll call. Ms. Gantner (yea), Mr. Lyons (yea), Mr. McPeake (yea), Ms. Price (yea), Mr. Wehner (yea)

The Board entered executive session at 8:10pm.

MOTION: Mr. Wehner motioned to return from executive session at 8:40pm; seconded by Ms. Price.

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by roll call. Ms. Gantner (yea), Mr. Lyons (yea), Mr. McPeake (yea), Ms. Price (yea), Mr. Wehner (yea)

MOTION: Mr. Wehner motioned to hire Alex Aguilar at a mutually agreed upon date as maintenance technician under the supervision of the Park Director for \$17/hour; seconded by Mr. McPeake.

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by roll call. Ms. Gantner (yea), Mr. Lyons (yea), Mr. McPeake (yea), Ms. Price (yea), Mr. Wehner (yea)

Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Wehner motioned to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Lyons.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:42pm.

Submitted by:


John Piepsny, Park Director

Accepted by:


Anita Gantner, Board Chair

