



## MINUTES – BOARD-STAFF RETREAT

Fairfield County Board of Park Commissioners

**Date:** Monday, April 11, 2022

**Time:** 12:00 p.m.

**Place:** Mambourg Park; 5531 Cincinnati-Zanesville Rd NE; Lancaster, OH 43130

### ATTENDEES

**Commissioners:**

Jeffrey Feyko, Chair  
Ami Williams, Vice Chair  
Jeffrey Johnson  
David Smith  
Sherry Orlando

**Director:**

Marcey Shafer

**Park Staff:**

Ginger Caito  
Kimber Caito  
Carol Abbott  
Chad Reed  
Chris Varga  
Alex Smith  
Tom Shisler  
Nora Steele  
Jack Campbell  
Miranda Cain

**Visitors:**

John Watts  
Bill Sitterley

# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

## ***Welcome***

Marcey Shafer opened the meeting at 12:10 PM. Marcey introduced Alex Smith, Carol Abbott, Miranda Cain, and John Watts to the board. Marcey also thanked the staff and the Board of Park Commissioners for taking time out of their day and coming to the retreat.

## ***Mission Statement***

Marcey Shafer talked about the Mission Statement to those present. The Mission Statement is as follows: The purpose of Fairfield County Park District (Fairfield County Parks) is “to protect and conserve natural and historical features of Fairfield County and inspire outdoor exploration.”

## ***Map of Locations***

Marcey Shafer discussed the map and talked about a possible partnership with Buckeye Lake for a bike trail. Marcey also talked about possible bike trail grants that might be available.

## ***Statistics***

- Total Acreage, 1,110 acres
- Total Properties, 25 (53 parcels)
- Miles of Trails, 7.16 miles
- Staff, 11 (9 fulltime)
- Volunteers, active, 49
- Historical Structures, 11
- Rental Properties, 4 (one ending soon)

## ***Organization Chart***

Marcey discussed the fact that this Organization Chart is not sustainable, but it is where we need our staff right now.

## ***Facility Rentals***

- Reservable, Fee
  - Johnson Covered Bridge
  - Hartman No. 2 Covered Bridge
  - Rock Mill Covered Bridge
  - Smeck Park Picnic Shelter
- Reservable or First-come Basis, No Fee
  - Cross Mound Picnic Shelter
  - Zeller Park Picnic Shelter
  - Sensory Trail Park Picnic Shelter
- Use to be Determined
  - Smeck Park Enclosed Shelter
  - Fetter-Hood Barn
- Not Reservable
  - Cruit House

## ***Finance***

Marcey Shafer and Ginger Caito explained the chart (showing finance categories) to Board members and staff. A discussion followed about opportunities to look at all revenue sources.

- Salary & Benefits
- Supplies
- Capital Outlay
- Contract Services & Supplies
- Budgets
- Revenue Sources
- Certificate of Resources

## ***Strengths***

Marcey discussed the following strengths. A discussion among Board members and staff followed.

- Staff Teamwork
- Variety of Properties & Staff Skillsets
- Partnerships
- Volunteer Program
- Media & Advertising
- High-quality Educational Programs
- Public Awareness
- Connecting the Public to Nature & History

## ***Opportunities***

Board and staff discussed the following opportunities. Stargazing possibilities at Rock Mill and Mambourg Park were also added to this list.

- More Trails & Recreational Opportunities
- Mark Park Boundaries
- Control Invasive Species
- Accessibility – Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Increase Educational Programming in Parks
- Interpretive Signage
- Improved Communication with Local Officials
- Establish Priorities

## ***Strategic Planning***

This meeting is a start to establish priorities. David Smith stated that the strategic plan will have to be flexible. Ami Williams stated that we have to work with a level of transparency. A discussion followed about reasons priorities must be established.

- Too Many Deferred Projects
- Reactive Instead of Proactive
- Direction and Timeline Needed

## ***Property Categories***

A brief discussion followed about each of the Property Categories.

- Recommended Divestments
- Showcase Properties
- Special Cases

## ***Recommended Divestments***

- Turkey Run Park (church and cemetery)  
Jeffrey Feyko stated that board members must visit properties before any decisions are made to divest. David Smith discussed what he observed when visiting the park. A discussion followed on how to divest of this property as well as if it had any significant historical value.
- Clearport Park (gridline schoolhouses)  
Jeffrey Feyko asked the size of this park – 1 acre with a blind turn out. Ami Williams asked about significant historical value – none known. Kimber Caito gave a brief history of the property. Ami Williams stated that we should plan on public meetings to divest to keep good relationships among neighbors. Jeffrey Feyko suggested that we should have a consultation with the State Preservation office like we did at Wagner Preserve. A discussion followed.
- Mount Zion Rd (two parcels)  
A discussion about how the property was obtained.
- NE Corner of Elder Rd & US-22  
A discussion followed as to how to divest this property. Marcey Shafer is to check with legal counsel.
- Lancaster Office (407 E Main St)  
A discussion followed as to how to divest this property. Marcey Shafer is to check with the county for other uses and with our legal counsel.

## ***Showcase Properties***

- Stebelton Park at Rock Mill  
A discussion followed on the following topics
  - Needs: Erosion Repair, More Property to Expand, Master Plan, Education Plan, Restroom and Water, Interpretive and Road Signage, Staff-Volunteer Committee were all discussed.
  - Concerns: Jumpers and Security Issues, Parking, Long-term Lease on the House, and Maintenance and Restoration were all discussed among the board members and staff.
  - Additional Possibilities: Obtaining the barn on a long-term lease was also discussed as an additional possibility.

- Smeck Park
 

A discussion followed on some of the following topics

  - Needs: Overflow parking, Education Plan (Cruit House, Fetter-Hood Barn), All-abilities playground, Pond Restoration, Restrooms (Summer 2022), Fetter-Hood Barn Foundation wrapping and rail safety, connect to Bibler Lock, Stover Windmill Repair, FCATC Staff Committee.
  - Concerns: Enclosed Shelter (rental of?) Trail Drainage, Field Tiles, Horseback riders
  - Additional Possibilities: Fetter-Hood Barn & Baltimore Farmers Market
  
- Mambourg Park
 

A discussion followed on the following topics

  - Needs: Expand Parking lot, Nature Center Exhibits (in progress), Education Plan for Nature Center (hours? staffing?), Restrooms, Accessible Trail, Picnic Shelter, Trail Wayfinding Signage (in progress)
  - Concerns: Dirt Pile, Downed Hazard Trees
  - Additional Possibilities: Pond Observation Deck
  - Other: David Smith said it was a pretty park; Carol Abbott discussed Invasive removal; Marcey Shafer stated the theme of the park is 'how to get back to nature', specifically backyard nature.
  
- Lockville Canal Park
 

A discussion followed on the following topics:

  - Needs: Trail Construction (beginning stages), Interpretive Signage (in progress), Restrooms (portable vs permanent)
  - Concerns: Vandalism, Paraphernalia & General Safety, ATV Users and trespassing, Property Boundaries, Repairs needed to Lock 12
  - Additional Possibilities: Renting Picnic Shelter, not bridge, Natural Lighting in Covered Bridge, Construct Change Bridge
  
- Two Glaciers Park: A discussion followed on the following topics:
  - Needs: Wetland & Prairie Restoration (in progress), Trail & boardwalk Design and Construction, Interpretive Signage, Connecting Property, Restrooms, Parking Areas
  - Concerns: Rental House & Outbuildings, ATV Users, Trespassers, Vandalism, Illegal Hunting & Deer Stands, Property Boundaries, Neighbor Relationships
  - Additional Possibilities: Sledding Hill, Archery Range, Kayak Launch
  - Other: Marcey Shafer stated that exciting things are happening at Two Glaciers Park. It is her dream to be able to connect the two bridges. This is on the radar of the Nature Conservancy. There was then a discussion about the wetland mitigation and the need to include access in the plan. Carol Abbott discussed the park's history. The name, Two Glaciers Park, was chosen because the property is located at the terminus of the southeasterly flow of the last great glaciers to cover Ohio – the Wisconsinian and the Illinoian.

- Stoney Hill Park  
A discussion followed on the following topics:
  - Concerns: Cabin, use of, Trespassers, Vandalism, Sledding Hill location, Invasive Plant Species, Archeological Survey, Property Boundaries
  - Additional Possibilities: Youth fishing
  - Other: A discussion followed about allowing dogs in the park, youth fishing, the need to address what to do with the cabin, exploring with legal counsel about a salvage bid to the cabin/log house (A suggestion was to use the area for a restroom), and the need for gates at both ends of the road.
  
- Wagner Preserve: A discussion followed on the following topics:
  - Needs: Wetland & Prairie Restoration (in progress), Buildings Removal (in progress), Trail & boardwalk Design & Construction, Interpretive Signage, Restrooms, Parking Areas, connect to Land Lab, Social Media Campaign, Educational Campaign.
  - Concerns: Trash & dumping on OH-158, Barns (demolition?), Trespassers, Vandalism
  - Additional Possibilities: Connect to Smeck Park
  - Other: A discussion followed about the expense of connecting to the Land Lab. Ami Williams suggested it could be a Capital State Project and we should loop in our State Senator and State Representative. The Real Estate Committee will discuss this.

### ***Partner Properties***

- Wahkeena Nature Preserve  
Marcey Shafer stated that this is a showcase property that we don't own. A discussion followed.
  
- Coyote Run  
Marcey Shafer discussed a possibility of helping with boardwalks to help our visitors get to the vernal pools. There are plenty of program opportunities. A discussion followed about the house.

### ***Special Cases***

A discussion followed on the topics below:

- Bibler Lock & Towpath  
Failing aqueduct, wastewater plant contamination (Village of Baltimore is aware). Ami Williams stated that we need to put pressure on EPA to move them to action to get the wastewater cleaned up. We need to loop in our Legal Counsel to help us. David Smith stated that the village should want to be proactive.
  
- Sensory Trail Park  
Ownership, possible SWCD partnership. There was a discussion about improvements that have been done. Sherry Orlando asked questions about possible costs, could it be a partnership with

Soil & Water and the Commissioners? Ami Williams suggested a longer-term lease.

- **Arney Run Park**  
New kiosk, replace Mink Hollow bridge roof, repairs to bridge abutments, possible partnership with DNAP. There was a discussion about the trail next door. Bill Sitterley stated the property boundaries need fixed. The discussion will be moved to the Real Estate Committee.
- **John's Trail (aka Amanda Bile Path)**  
Midwest wants to move and extend the trail, possible shelter partnership, need more bike trails in general. There was discussion about using this as an opportunity to better represent ourselves. The obvious key to bike trails is partnerships.
- **Misty Valley Park**  
Removal of structures, rental house repairs, unclear future use (possible land lab or seed bank), challenges regarding access. Marcey Shafer gave an update on the pre-bid meeting regarding salvage of the bridges and log-framed house on the property. A discussion followed. Ami Williams said that who are potential partners should be a question to ask.
- **Hansel Park**  
Existing master plan may be unattainable, cabin, purpose and repairs, house, purpose and maintenance, use of barn?, move entrance, disc golf association partnership?, humane society partnership? Possible off-leash pet areas. A discussion followed about the master plan being so big and how we can make the barn available to the public. Tom Shisler discussed what repairs were needed for the log cabin. Sherry Orlando liked the idea of a partnership with the Humane Society. A discussion then followed about partnerships and funding sources.
- **Cross Mound Park**  
Ongoing security issues including threats, ATV use, shelter repair or replacement?, little community support, Cross Mound difficult to see. A discussion followed about easy creek access, security, and community interest.
- **Flight of the Hawk Park**  
Generally unpleasant atmosphere, inappropriate use of parking lot, park unused. Flight of the Hawk is one site on the Ohio Art Corridor. Tom Shisler gave history on how we acquired the park. Bill Sitterley suggested we move sculptures to other parks and give the park to the State for a Park and Ride. Ami Williams to reach out to the creator of the statues about moving the statues. Sherry Orlando suggested we move the caboose there and put a playground in.
- **Stonewall Cemetery Park**  
Must be locked to prevent vandalism to tombstones, low visitation, programs only possible if shuttle offered. A discussion followed. Bill Sitterley stated that legally it could be given to Hocking Township.

- Wigwam  
Communication challenges, questions regarding public access. A discussion followed. Real Estate Committee will review this.
- Zeller Park  
29+ acres, PASA (Pickerington Area Soccer Association) lease expired, quality of Maintenance required by lease, picnic shelter reservation issues without PASA schedule, frequent flooding, illegal activities and evidence of drug use, neighbor relationships, potential for trails and/or natural play areas, recreation opportunities (pickleball, disc golf, water access). A discussion followed. The discussion will continue with the Real Estate Committee.

**Opportunities for Growth**

Nothing was discussed.

**Attendance**

2019-2022 (Smeck Park, Lockville Canal Park & Wahkeena Nature Preserve)

Upon the motion of Commissioner, Jeffrey Johnson, seconded by Commissioner, Ami Williams, the minutes have been adopted on May 9, 2022.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain
Jeffrey Feyko	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ami Williams	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jeffrey Johnson	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
David Smith	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sherry Orlando	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY**

It is hereby certified that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of a resolution action upon by Fairfield County Board of Park Commissioners for Fairfield County Park District on the date noted above.

  
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 Ginger Caito, Secretary  
 Fairfield County Board of Park Commissioners