

April 10, 2017

Attendees:

Mr. Genske  
Mrs. O'Brien

Joan Heppert, Recording

Regular Meeting  
of the  
Russell Township Park Commission  
  
West Woods Visitor Center

Call to Order:

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

2017-38 Move to approve and sign the minutes from 3/14/17 as presented was moved by Linda O'Brien and seconded by Dave Genske.

Vote: Dave Genske Y, Linda O'Brien Y

Linda O'Brien gave property updates. The Modroo property has had no updates for the driveway location, culverts and the like due to weather constraints. No decisions have been made at this point. In regards to the Fairmont property, the fencing was taken down. The salvageable rails are currently being stored at the Uplands shed for future needs. The Dines property has had the deer stand and feeder removed, along with the property owner signs that were misstating the property ownership.

Mr. Genske announced that 4/10/14 would be his last meeting as a commissioner. He wanted to thank and recognize Linda O'Brien and Charlie Butters for their dedication and stated it was a pleasure working with them. Mr. Genske came on the part board in June 2016. The Modroo property was finalized in December 2016. He expressed his displeasure from the public at every turn and was hoping things would calm down once the property was purchased. Mr. Genske stated on record that not once in his time as commissioner was he ever coerced, coached, asked to change his opinion or to push an agenda by Judge Grendell. Dave's wishes going forward are for the community, the township trustees and the park commissioners to work together for the benefit of the community. Mrs. O'Brien thanked Mr. Genske for his time, talents and his treasures and stated he will be missed.

Mrs. O'Brien mentioned that Olivia Pecharka, our volunteer from the high school will be graduating this year. Olivia has managed the park board website and has done an excellent job. She will be recognized on April 24 by the board of education, and the park board would like to thank her for her contributions and wish her all the best as she continues her education at the University of Findlay.

2017-39 Move to have one check signor for park board expenses until there are additional commissioners appointed was moved by Linda O'Brien and seconded by Dave Genske.

Vote: Dave Genske Y, Linda O'Brien Y

2017-40 Move to void checks #996 and #998 was moved by Linda O'Brien and seconded by Dave Genske.

Vote: Dave Genske Y, Linda O'Brien Y

2017-41 Move to approve and sign checks 997, 999, 1000 (FNB) and # 151 (MB) dated 4/10/17 was moved by Linda O'Brien and seconded by Dave Genske.

Vote: Dave Genske Y, Linda O'Brien Y

Public Comment:

- Martha Demsey requested that the board allow public comments at all meetings and move the meeting location back to the town hall. Mrs. O'Brien informed that due to a time delay when the park board meetings are scheduled, flexibility is needed to accommodate in case of a schedule change. The township trustees were not able to accommodate schedule changes. Martha also stated that the Russell residents want their green space and don't want park property sold. Mr. Genske and Mrs. O'Brien stated it was never said that they had interest in selling any park property.

- Jerry Stefancin stated that when voting on a tax levy for the parks, it should be conserved forever. Jerry want to keep all property as green space. His preference is for passive parks.
- Judge Grendell thanked Charlie Butters and Dave Genske for serving on the park board and they did so honestly, honorable and with dedication under the most challenging of circumstances that you can have. Judge Grendell noted that Russell Township has more park land than any other township in the State of Ohio. He went on to explain about state law and said that once that property goes to the park board, it can be sold. The property has to have his final approval on the sale and Judge Grendell stated that he will not approve any sale of park property in Russell Township or Chester Township, or the county. To recap, the sale of any park property is at the discretion of the commissioners and must have the final approval from Judge Grendell. “Rest easy, there won’t be any Russell Township park property sold while I am the Probate Judge”.
- Charlie Butters explained that he went to the Russell Township trustees with a meeting schedule in early 2016. A need came about for a special meeting and it was held and Charlie received a letter stating that the park board did not have permission to use the key without the Township trustee’s permission. If the public wants the meetings back at the Town Hall they should approach the trustees. The second point Charlie made was in regards to his working with the Boy Scouts. His main objective was to get the kids outdoors and away from technology. Russell has all this park land only access to two parcels. Charlie referred to the bylaws of the park district stating that the land is for recreation use, to provide access for the tax payers. The Russell Uplands preserve was opened up due to a grant. Charlie wanted the park land accessible to everyone.
- Howard Shanker mentioned that the main goal going back with the park board was to protect the water. They wanted to buy as much property as fast as possible and use as passive parks. Under Russell Township is an aquifer and occasionally there are test wells drilled to make sure this is protected.
- Eileen Fisco thanked everyone for the discussions. She did not understand all the viewpoints and hopes this unity continues going forward. She stated that it was a wonderful meeting and was grateful for the discussions.
- Martha Dempsey mentioned a survey going forward with the Modroo property to find out what the community would like. Mr. Genske stated that the survey that was done earlier on the Modroo property only represented ~300 people, not the 5,000 residents of Russell Township. Martha mentioned that her opinion of the previous survey is that the people wanted green space and noted that the population is aging in Russell. Linda O’Brien address the “Monkey” survey that was previously done and acknowledged that it is valueless. One person can go on there 20 times, and there is no credibility Linda stated. Mrs. O’Brien suggested a “hard” survey that could be tied back to a resident or residence. Martha encouraged the survey and stated that it was part of the commissioners job since they hold a position of power. Mrs. O’Brien noted “this is not a position of power. If anything we are trying to be leaders of an organization to give back to our community. It’s not about power.”
- Deborah Gyllstrom stated her concerns about the commissioners making decisions behind the scenes. For example in regards to the parking at the Modroo property. Mrs. O’Brien clarified that there were no meetings with the county engineers office so there is nothing to share on that. Deborah was happy that information will be gathered and then public input would be received before making any final decisions.

2017-42 Move to close the meeting was moved by Linda O’Brien and seconded by Dave Genske.  
The meeting was closed again at 7:47 p.m.

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Commissioner

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Commissioner

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Commissioner

5/8/17 Next Regular Meeting

