

**Minutes of the September 22, 2017 meeting of the Development Committee, a Mill Creek MetroParks Board Advisory Committee (held at 4 p.m. at the MetroParks Farm)**

In attendance: Murray Davis, Paul Hagman, Richard Scarsella, Robert Toman, Janet Yaniglos; and from MetroParks staff, Chris Litton. Absent: Andy Detesco and Terrance Esarco.

Minutes of the previously emailed May 1, 2017 meeting were approved.

The Chair proposed this possible motion and asked for discussion, pro and con: *"The Mill Creek MetroParks Development Advisory Committee approves the report pertaining to the merger of the Mill Creek MetroParks Foundation and the Friends of Fellows Riverside Gardens to form the Volney Rogers Conservancy."*

Paul Hagman briefly reviewed the concept of the Conservancy as a nonprofit public entity, built on membership and private organization support, and on combining the Foundation and Friends into an efficient fundraising organization in support of the MetroParks. The Conservancy task force, which includes community representatives, has worked for nearly two years to forge the operating principles, discussing them with several MetroParks Commissioners in numerous meetings. Because of objections raised by the MetroParks director to a preliminary document, the task force decided to clarify that six deal points were essential for incorporation into any proposal. (See the attached memorandum's deal points on membership, volunteers, board composition, the Foundation, primary partner, and existing agreement.) In response to a question regarding a change to the Foundation, Paul stated that the Foundation's bylaws, which have been amended six times over the years, can be amended to allow the merger to occur.

Chris Litton shared copies of a draft Collaborative Agreement, developed by Atty Ted Roberts, Aaron Young and himself, after meeting with Commissioners Fry and Shipka on the Commissioners' interest in an alternative proposal. Paul Hagman stated that the proposed alternative negated the concepts of a conservancy, returning the Foundation to a repository status and ignoring the importance of engaging volunteers as a most effective practice in fundraising. He expressed concern that the months of collaboration from the community task force were ignored.

Richard Scarsella stated that his perusal of the MetroParks proposal showed it to be a worthwhile alternative, commenting that the park should be the driving engine for fundraising. He stated that it would not be appropriate for members of the task force who are on the Advisory Committee to vote on the issue. Chairman Davis suggested that a mediator be considered as a way to address the two proposals. The discussion concluded with no formal motion on the matter.

The Chair also proposed this possible motion: *"Frank Scarsella will assume Chairmanship of the Mill Creek MetroParks Development Advisory Committee as of January 1, 2018."* Richard Scarsella suggested that it would be more appropriate to determine officers at a reorganization meeting closer to the start of the new year. The committee agreed to hold that meeting on December 1 at 4pm.

Chris Litton then provided the committee with an update of Development Office efforts since his arrival several months ago. \$85,000 has been received in tributes and memorials. Chris has simplified the lengthy process of donations for memorials to nine steps, and will be working with directors to develop opportunities for memorials for Ford Nature Center. He mentioned several promising opportunities: the idea of a Trail Endowment from a potential donor; a \$200,000 commitment from a youth hockey foundation to establish a community ice rink, with fencing, bleachers, lighting and a scoreboard as part of the project. Chris also stated that plans for the renovation of Ford Nature Center will be released soon, with a project construction cost of roughly \$3 million.

The Chair thanked Chris Litton for his informative update. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Respectfully submitted, Janet Yaniglos