

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS OF MILL CREEK  
METROPARKS HELD MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of Mill Creek MetroParks was held on Monday, December 11, 2023.

The meeting opened at 6:00 p.m., with recitation of The Pledge of Allegiance.

Lee Frey, Board President welcomed staff and guests.

Roll Call was as follows:

Germaine Bennett;	Absent
Lee Frey;	Present
Tom Frost,	Present
Jeff Harvey;	Present
Paul Olivier;	Present

The Board was presented with the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 13, 2023. Lee Frey accepted the minutes into the record as written. Lee shared the schedule associated with the approval of meeting minutes.

Nick Morchak, Finance Director/Treasurer presented the Department Report for Finance and requested that disbursements #91380 - #91654 for a total of \$1,507,247.51, be approved. Lee Frey moved, at the request of the Finance Director, that the funds having been certified as on hand and duly appropriated, that disbursements #91380 - #91654 for a total of \$1,507,247.51, be approved. The motion was seconded by Tom Frost after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye:	Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier
Voting Nay:	None

Nick Morchak, Finance Director/Treasurer requested to decrease appropriations to Fund 701 – Replacement Reserve by \$4,425,000. Lee Frey moved, at the request of the Finance Director, that the request to decrease appropriations to Fund 701 – Replacement Reserve by \$4,425,000, be approved. The motion was seconded by Jeff Harvey after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye:	Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier
Voting Nay:	None

Nick Morchak, Finance Director/Treasurer presented and requested approval of the 2024 Temporary Budget. Lee Frey moved, at the request of the Finance Director, that the 2024 Temporary Budget be approved. The motion was seconded by Paul Olivier after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye:	Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier
Voting Nay:	None

Nick Morchak, Finance Director/Treasurer presented and requested that the 2024 Chemical and Fertilizer Bids be approved. Nick recommended using the lowest and best bids between all six (6) vendors and that the lowest price for each product between the six (6) vendors is highlighted on the Chemical & Fertilizer Master List. Lee Frey moved, at the request of the Finance Director, that the 2024 Chemical and Fertilizer Bids as submitted by the six (6) vendors be approved. The motion was seconded by Tom Frost after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier  
Voting Nay: None

Nick Morchak, Finance Director/Treasurer presented and requested that the 2024 Fuel and Gasoline Bid be approved. Nick recommended using 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Reed Oil Company). Lee Frey moved, at the request of the Finance Director, that the 2024 Fuel and Gasoline Bid as submitted by 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Reed Oil Company) be approved. The motion was seconded by Tom Frost after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier  
Voting Nay: None

Aaron Young, Executive Director thanked the MetroParks staff for a very successful 2023. From projects to programs and events 2023 was a banner year for the MetroParks.

Mark Wenick, Foundation President presented the 2023 Foundation Annual Report. A copy of the report was provided to the Board.

Randy Campana, Chief of Police presented and requested approval of the Mahoning County Joint Communications District Agreement. Lee Frey moved, at the request of the Chief of Police, that the Mahoning County Joint Communications District Agreement be approved. The cost for 2024 will be \$50,000 plus \$10,900 for radios. The motion was seconded by Paul Olivier after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier  
Voting Nay: None

Randy Campana, Chief of Police presented and requested approval of the Police Policy Updates. Lee Frey moved, at the request of the Chief of Police, that the Police Policy Updates be approved. The motion was seconded by Tom Frost after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier  
Voting Nay: None

Aaron Young, Executive Director presented and requested approval of the appointment of Tadarelle Lett to the Education Citizens Advisory Committee. Lee Frey moved, at the request of the Executive Director, that the appointment of Tadarelle Lett to the Education Citizens Advisory Committee be approved. The motion was seconded by Jeff Harvey after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier  
Voting Nay: None

Justin Rogers, Planning and Operations Director presented and requested approval of Resolution R-23-11 Authorizing the Executive Director to apply for Ohio's Urban Forestry Grant Program Funds. The maximum grant request is for \$50,000. Lee Frey moved at the request of the Planning and Operations Director that Resolution R-23-11 Authorizing the Executive Director to apply for Ohio's Urban Forestry Grant Program Funds be approved. The motion was seconded by Jeff Harvey, after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier  
Voting Nay: None

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING METROPARKS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO APPLY FOR  
OHIO'S URBAN FORESTRY GRANT PROGRAM FUNDS**

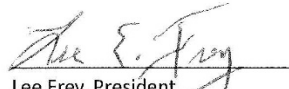
**WHEREAS**, the State of Ohio, through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources: Division of Forestry, administers financial assistance for urban forestry improvements, through Ohio's Urban Forestry Grant Program.

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Park Commissioners of the Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District, operating under Chapter 1545 of the Ohio Revised Code, intends to apply to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for Ohio's Urban Forestry Grant Program Funds.

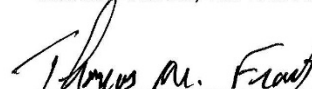
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the MetroParks Executive Director is hereby authorized to apply, on behalf of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District, to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for Ohio's Urban Forestry Grant Program Funds, and is authorized to enter into any agreements as may be necessary and appropriate for obtaining this financial assistance, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Park Commissioners of the Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District does agree to obligate the funds required to satisfactorily complete the proposed project and become eligible for reimbursement under the terms and conditions of Ohio's Urban Forestry Grant Program.

This Resolution passed this 12<sup>th</sup> day of December 2023.

  
Lee Frey, President

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Germaine Bennett, Vice President

  
Tom Frost, Commissioner

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Jeff Harvey, Commissioner

  
Paul Olivier, Commissioner

Justin Rogers, Planning and Operations Director presented and requested approval of Resolution R-23-12 Authorizing the Executive Director to apply for Federal Transportation Alternatives Program Grant Funds. The grant is an 80/20 match. Rehabilitation of the Slippery Rock Bridge is the intended project should the grant be awarded. Total project cost is \$480,000. The project is scheduled for 2025. Lee Frey moved at the request of the Planning and Operations Director that Resolution R-23-12 Authorizing the Executive Director to apply for Federal Transportation Alternatives Program Grant Funds be approved. The motion was seconded by Tom Frost, after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier  
Voting Nay: None

**R-23-12**

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING METROPARKS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO APPLY FOR  
FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) GRANT FUNDS**

A RESOLUTION ALLOWING THE MILL CREEK METROPARKS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS OF THE MILL CREEK METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT, TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) GRANT FUNDS PROGRAMMED BY THE EASTGATE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (Eastgate) TO IMPROVE SLIPPERY ROCK BRIDGE ON WEST GLACIER DRIVE IN MILL CREEK PARK.

**WHEREAS**, "Rehabilitation of Slippery Rock Bridge" in Mill Creek Park is a project that will preserve and improve upon an important and historic transportation facility that connects roadways, bicycle facilities and sidewalks/trails between the east and west sides of Mill Creek; and

**WHEREAS**, this facility embodies the historic aesthetic character of Mill Creek Park while functioning as a physical link for park patrons and visitors, local commuters, MetroParks' personnel, police, fire, and first responders; and

**WHEREAS**, Slippery Rock Bridge is in need of repair and rehabilitation to continue functioning as a viable transportation corridor, to maintain the physical character and attributes of this historic facility, and to improve upon the connectivity and accessibility of this important park facility.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Park Commissioners of the Mill Creek Metropolitan Park District, Mahoning County, State of Ohio:

**SECTION 1.** That the Executive Director of Mill Creek MetroParks, on behalf of the Board of Park Commissioners, is hereby authorized to apply for Federal Transportation Alternative (TAP) Funds programmed by the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments for the following rehabilitation project:

- (1) "Rehabilitation of Slippery Rock Bridge" in Mill Creek Park, City of Youngstown, Mahoning County, Ohio;
- (2) Rehabilitation of the existing, historic, Slippery Rock Bridge by repairing, restoring, and improving upon the existing infrastructure including sidewalks, handrails, bridge piers and abutments, bridge decking and approach pavements, pavement markings, appropriate plantings, and miscellaneous items of work;
- (3) Logical termini at the intersections of West Glacier Drive with West Park Drive to the west and Memorial Hill Drive/Robinson Hill Drive to the east, containing within the limits is the Slippery Rock Bridge and approach roadways;
- (4) Estimated Total Project Cost of \$480,000.00.

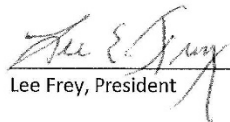
**SECTION 2.** That Mill Creek MetroParks acknowledges and understands the Eastgate "Funding Policy Guidelines" and confirms to the best of its knowledge that the information contained in

the project application is accurate, that it intends to diligently pursue that project, and that a local share is required in the amount of (\$96,000.00) to match federal funds.

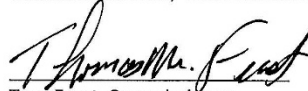
**SECTION 3.** That it is hereby found and determined that all formal actions of the Board of Park Commissioners concerning and relating to the passage of this Resolution were taken in an open meeting of this Board and that all deliberations of this Board and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal action were meeting open to the public and in compliance with the law.

**SECTION 4.** This Resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety convenience and welfare of the patrons, personnel and visitors of Mill Creek Park, for the reason that it is to apply for this funding within the next thirty (30) days, and provided that it receives the approval of a majority of the members of the Board, shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval; otherwise to be in full force and effect from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

This Resolution passed this 12<sup>th</sup> day of December 2023.

  
Lee Frey, President

Germaine Bennett, Vice President

  
Tom Frost, Commissioner

Jeff Harvey, Commissioner

  
Paul Olivier, Commissioner

Justin Rogers, Planning and Operations Director presented an update on the 2023 Capital Improvement Projects that were completed or nearly completed in 2023. A copy of the presentation will be made available for viewing and/or download on the MetroParks website.

Chris Litton, Development Director presented the MetroParks Foundation deposit report for the period of November 1-30, 2023, at a total of \$8,097.00. Lee Frey moved at the request of the Director of Development to accept the deposit report for the period of November 1-30, 2023, at a total of \$8,097.00. The motion was seconded by Paul Olivier, after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier

Voting Nay: None

Public Comments to the Board: (see sign-in sheet)

- Jim Houck presented a check on behalf of Friends of Fellows Riverside Gardens as part of the existing Davis Endowment held with Friends that offsets the costs of operating and improving the Gardens.
- Lana Van Auker read a prepared statement regarding her displeasure with the deer management plan. She asked how much money is spent on poisons used in the Park? She mentioned the deer that are injured at Sawmill Creek Preserve. She referenced fertility control as a management option.

- Mike Drabison recapped their remembrance beginning of the deer management issues and plan. Mike referenced the type of count and how it was done. Mike asked for a copy the management plan.
- Chris Flack provided the Executive Director with petitions for the removal of the Executive Director and read a prepared statement to the Board. The read content recapped their position on Executive Director Young's decisions and how they have impacted the Park. Topics included the number of staff, degradation of Fellows Riverside Gardens, the Ford Nature Center is a shell of what it used to be, the Police Department is also at lower levels.
- Janet Bernard continued to read the prepared statement that was begun under the previous individual. The numerous lawsuits are a result of Young's doing. The polarization of the community is the result his leadership. The Director can warm up to the MLO Bros for their negative opinions. A stack of petitions signed by 2500 individuals was presented to the Board for the termination of Mr. Young. Petitions were provided to Mr. Young in witness of the Board.
- Candace Larocca declined to comment after signing in to speak.
- Jerry Serbel says he no longer loves the Park. He is afraid to go into the Park. He loves the deer. He thinks the Park should feed the deer. The Lily Pond is a tar pit.
- Celeste Sinistro thanked all for coming. She noted that private land was taken for the development of Fellows Riverside Gardens. She commented that earlier this month a large light was spotted in the air and then a spotlighting vehicle was used during the targeted removal. She contacted the MetroParks Chief inquiring about what was going on. She read a prepared statement on prayers for the deer that are hit on the highway.

Commissioner Comments:

- Lee asked for administration to determine the total costs of fertilizer that was purchased in 2022 and that it is shared with the Board at the next meeting.
- Tom shared that all of the venison that was harvested as a result of the targeted removals was provided to the Second Harvest Food Bank.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 8, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., in McMahon Hall at the MetroParks Farm.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:07 p.m.

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Presiding Officer

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Secretary