

Allegheny County Council

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Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

5:00 PM

Conference Room I

Committee on Parks

John Palmiere - Chair

Members: Jim Ellenbogen, Michael Finnerty, Nick Futules, Cindy Kirk, Ed Kress, Bob Macey and Sue Means

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:09.

Invited Guests:

William D. McKain, CPA, Allegheny County Manager
Andy Baechle, Director, Allegheny County Parks Department
Caren Glotfelty, Executive Director, Allegheny County Parks Foundation

Mr. McKain was present from the Office of the County Manager.

Mr. Baechle was present from the Parks Department.

Ms. Cravotta was present from the Office of the Chief Executive.

Ms. Glotfelty was present from the Parks Foundation.

Mr. Barker and Mr. Szymanski were present from the Office of County Council.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 6 - John Palmiere, Michael Finnerty, Nick Futules, Cindy Kirk, Sue Means and Bob Macey

Members Absent: 2 - Jim Ellenbogen and Ed Kress

III. Approval of Minutes

[9511-16](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2015 meeting of the Committee on Parks.

A motion was made by Finnerty, seconded by Means, that this matter be Passed. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

IV. Agenda Items

Ordinances

[9391-16](#)

An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing the continued use of the house on Chipmunk Drive in the County's Harrison Hills Park as an Environmental Learning Center by the Friends of Harrison Hills Park.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill and Mr. Baechle summarized its provisions. Mr. Baechle noted that the environmental learning center has been operated by the Friends of Harrison Hills Park for about 10 years, and that the new lease term would run through May of 2018 with two one year optional extensions.

Ms. Means and Mr. McKain discussed the lease negotiation process.

A motion was made by Finnerty, seconded by Kirk, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

[9393-16](#)

An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing the use of real property in the County's South Park by the United States Table Tennis Association, d/b/a USA Table Tennis and the South Park Table Tennis Club.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill and Mr. Baechle summarized its provisions, noting that the new least term would be for three years, with two optional one year extensions, and that the rental rate would be \$200 per year.

Ms. Means expressed a desire to have the lease terms included in the authorization ordinance, and also suggested that there may be wisdom in having an overview of what each leaserates are for each of the parks properties.

Mr. Baechle noted that these terms were not listed in the past.

Mr. Finnerty and Mr. Baechle discussed the history of the Parks Department's decision to begin charging fees for the use of parks property.

The clerk and Mr. McKain discussed the reasons for not including the lease terms in the authorization ordinances.

Ms. Kirk and Mr. Baechle discussed the other uses to which the property at issue is put.

Ms. Means noted that the County may not know what the exact utility or other costs may be associated with this use.

A motion was made by Finnerty, seconded by Kirk, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

[9507-16](#)

An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing the use of real property in the County's South Park by the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, which includes the South Hills YMCA.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill and Mr. Baechle summarized its provisions, noting that the lease would be for a three year term, with two optional one year extensions.

In response to questions from Ms. Means, Mr. Baechle noted that the roller hockey league that uses the facility is now happy with the fee structure and has indicated that there is no scheduling conflict between the dek and roller hockey leagues.

The Chair thanked Mr. Baechle and Mr. McKain for their efforts in refining the fee structure and managing the schedule.

Ms. Means expressed a desire to see the inclusion of more specifics regarding the lease term in the authorization ordinance.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. McKain noted that he would not sign an agreement in the absence of acceptable insurance arrangements.

Ms. Means raised the issue of the Commonwealth's increased standards relating to volunteers who work with minors, and Mr. McKain indicated that the Law Department has been cognizant of those requirements, and that he would double check with them to be sure that there are no issues of concern relating to this property use.

A motion was made by Means, seconded by Futules, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Discussion Topic: Allegheny County Parks Foundation Update

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Glotfelty provided a very brief overview of the Foundation's recent activities, noting that the Foundation had recently received a grant of just over \$35,000 from the PNC Foundation to partner with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to create a survey of the natural assets and liabilities in Boyce Park, and to develop recommendations for future action by the Parks Department, including reforestation, activities to exclude deer from areas in which sensitive plant species are growing, improving the trail system and stormwater management near the ski lodge. Ms. Glotfelty noted that the Conservancy has already provided some funding, subject to a County match, for reforestation activities and that the County is already working on a stormwater management project. Ms. Glotfelty noted that the pilot at Boyce Park was successful enough that a similar project was requested for South Park, and that partial funding for that project was granted by the Heinz Endowments, and that the PNC Foundation was considering an application to make up the difference.

The Chair expressed a desire to have Ms. Glotfelty appear before the committee on a recurring basis to discuss the Foundation's activities in all of the County parks.

Mr. Futules and Ms. Glotfelty discussed the specifics of plant species that are particularly vulnerable to damage by deer, and the need for coordinating trail usage to prevent an overabundance of trail mileage within the parks.

In response to a question from Ms. Kirk, Ms. Glotfelty noted that the Parks Foundation regards North Park as a priority, and that a similar natural asset/liability survey for North Park would likely be undertaken in the near future.

Ms. Glotfelty discussed the potential for undertaking a visit to each of the parks by the committee and/or Council members.

In response to a question from Mr. Finnerty, Ms. Glotfelty discussed the challenges relating to obtaining funding from the Commonwealth for stormwater management in large paved areas like parking lots in the parks.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:56.