

Allegheny County Council

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Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

4:00 PM

Conference Room I

Committee on Parks

*John Palmiere, Chair;
Patrick Catena, Nick Futules, Cindy Kirk, Bob Macey, Sue Means and Anita Prizio,
Members.*

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:06.

Invited Guests:

William D. McKain, CPA, Allegheny County Manager, or designee(s)
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. Glotfelty was present from the Parks Foundation.

Mr. Barker was present from the Office of County Council.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 4 - Cindy Kirk, Sue Means, Anita Prizio and John Palmiere

Members Absent: 3 - Patrick Catena, Nick Futules and Bob Macey

Members 2 - Tom Baker and Paul Klein

Non-Members:

III. Approval of Minutes

[10489-18](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2017 meeting of the Committee on Parks.

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

IV. Agenda Items

Ordinances

[10487-18](#)

An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing South Park BMX, Inc. to use a facility on East Park Drive in the County's South Park.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill and Mr. McKain and Mr. Baechle summarized its provisions. Mr. Baechle noted that the term of the conditional use is for 3 years, with a 2 year optional renewal. Mr. Baechle indicated that the track is ranked in the top 5 in the country, and South Park BMX has operated the track for about 40 years and contributes improvements to the track on a regular bases while maintaining all facilities inside the track.

In response to questions from Ms. Means, Mr. Baechle noted that the County's maintenance at the site is essentially limited to cutting the grass around the track's

perimeter, and that South Park BMX has all of the necessary insurance.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. McKain described the general parameters of leases of this nature.

In response to a question from Ms. Kirk, Mr. Baechle noted that work on the track itself generally performed by entities with specific expertise, and that improvements do not take work away from any County employees. Mr. McKain indicated that there is advance communication with the County's employees when improvements are made.

A motion was made by Kirk, seconded by Prizio, 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 came to the table and gave a brief overview of the projects recently undertaken and currently in process by the Foundation, highlighting, inter alia, the chimney swift habitat installation project, the installation of improved and standardized signage in Deer Lakes Park, the formulations of ecological assessment and action plans for Boyce, Hartwood Acres, Settler's Cabin and South Parks, the installation of new interpretive signage in Round Hill, North and South Parks, creation of connector trails in Settler's Cabin and South Parks, sculpture restoration in Hartwood Acres, the ongoing bench endowment program, mine runoff mitigation at Settler's Cabin Park, and the South Park Cascades restoration and concepts for the adaptive re-use of the Corrigan Drive pool.

The Chair noted that the County's relationship with the Foundation has continued to evolve and improve, and that he senses a genuine enthusiasm for the County Parks. Ms. Kirk and Ms. Glotfelty agreed.

Ms. Kirk suggested using the Council's social media presence to promote the County Parks, and the Chair indicated that he would be inclined to recommend highlighting the smaller parks first.

In response to a question from Ms. Kirk, Ms. Glotfelty discussed the composition and durability of the new standardized signs.

In response to a question from Ms. Krik, Ms. Glotfelty described the notion of creating a sculpture garden in Hartwood Acres, and what such a garden might look like.

In response to a question from Ms. Kirk, Ms. Glotfelty described the ecological assessment process and noted that she would like to create assessments for all nine County parks.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Glotfelty discussed the Foundation's efforts at surveying some of the Council members and other County parks stakeholders with regard to their knowledge of the Foundation and its activities.

Ms. Glotfelty asked if any of the members had any particular visions for the County parks in the next decade or so. The Chair suggested that maintaining effective public relations is a concern of his, and noted that he would like to see the Foundation generate materials to provide to the public regarding the parks and the Foundation's work. Ms. Glotfelty and the Chair discussed how things like the South Park ice rink ribbon cutting and 90th anniversary activities might serve that purpose. Ms. Kirk noted that she has seen a tendency for social media posts to lead to coverage by more traditional media

outlets. Mr. McKain noted that the County has hired a new photographer/videographer and a staff member to coordinate the County's social media activities, in part focusing on the County Parks through individualized Facebook pages for each park and other strategies involving emerging social media sources. Ms. Means noted that both the Post Gazette and Trib have smaller staffs than they used to, and that there probably is wisdom in making news about the parks as easily accessible as possible to those media outlets.

Mr. McKain and Ms. Glotfelty discussed the importance of coordinating the activities of the Foundation and the County.

Ms. Means expressed enthusiasm for several of the projects highlighted by Ms. Glotfelty in South Park, and suggested that establishing a new nature center in the park might be a wise idea.

Mr. Baker indicated that he would like to use the Special Committee on Marketing to help provide information regarding the County Parks to the public.

The Chair suggested that having some sort of a community day in the parks on a rotating basis from year to year in order to bolster public awareness. Ms. Glotfelty, Mr. McKain and Mr. Baechle noted some of the special events that currently take place in a few of the parks, and indicated that they would talk through the possibilities.

The Chair and Mr. Baechle discussed the upcoming winter hike, a 5-6 mile hike from the Harmony Trail to North Park on Sunday, February 4, as a means of promoting the use of the trails.

Ms. Kirk, Ms. Glotfelty and Mr. Baechle discussed the former water filtration facility in North Park, and Mr. Baechle noted that the site could be spectacular if re-done correctly.

Mr. Baker suggested that pursuing additional arrangements like the Over the Bar Cafe might make sense.

Ms. Kirk expressed appreciation for the Foundation's ability to secure funding for the parks and the Foundation. Ms. Glotfelty described some of the Foundation's fundraising activities for 2018.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:32.