



# Hancock Park District

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## HANCOCK PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS Public Meeting Notice and Agenda

**Date:** Tuesday, November 14, 2023  
**Location:** Brugeman Lodge at Riverbend Recreation Area  
**Time:** 3:30 p.m.

### Roll Call

### Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes dated October 10, 2023

### Financial Status

1. Review of the Financial Statement dated October 31, 2023, presented by Hancock Park District Business Manager Vicky Stozich

### Old Business

### New Business

1. Request to approve the 2023 Property & Casualty Insurance Renewal
2. Request to approve the 2023 Community Park Improvement Program grants in the amount of \$200,305.97 and Resolution 2023-22 regarding additional appropriation within the Auditor's Certification and Park Commissioners to appropriate in the General Fund in the amount of \$104,305.97
3. Hancock Park District's Proposed 2024 Budget
4. Request to approve the Memorandum of Understanding and Resolution 2023-23 regarding the donation of 18.291-acre Cooper Pond from The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company to the Hancock Park District

### Discussion

1. Hancock Park District Report:
  - Director – Gary Pruitt
  - Park Operations Manager – Tyler Fredritz
  - Naturalist – Michelle Rumschlag

### Public Input

### Adjournment

Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 3:30 p.m. in Brugeman Lodge at Riverbend Recreation Area

Hancock Park District • 1424 East Main Cross Street, Findlay, Ohio 45840  
419-425-7275 • [www.hancockparks.com](http://www.hancockparks.com)

**HANCOCK PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
**Staff Report / Agenda Supplement**  
**November 14, 2023**

**Request to approve the 2023 Property & Casualty Insurance Renewal:** Ryan Pessell from Hitchings Insurance Agency will be at the meeting to present the plan and entertain questions from the Board (see Letter and Ohio Plan Package Proposal).

**Request to approve the 2023 Community Park Improvement Program grants in the amount of \$200,305.97 and Resolution 2023-22 regarding additional appropriation within the Auditor's Certification and Park Commissioners to appropriate in the General Fund in the amount of \$104,305.97:** A total of 20 projects were submitted for grant funding from 10 villages, City of Findlay, and City of Fostoria in the amount of \$286,019.52, including 12 (1<sup>st</sup> Priority) projects in the amount of \$200,305.97. The grant budget for 2023 is \$96,000.00.

There are three options for funding the 2023 grant requests:

1. Appropriate an additional \$104,305.97 and fund all 1<sup>st</sup> Priority Projects (\$96,000.00 + \$104,305.97 = \$200,305.97). This option is recommended. There is precedent for this: \$157,500.00 in 1998, \$192,984.00 in 2000, and \$219,863.00 in 2002.
2. Choose 1<sup>st</sup> Project Priorities for Village of Mt. Cory and Village of Arcadia; reduce the amount of 1<sup>st</sup> Priority Projects by at least 50% to create two-year grants for Village of Van Buren, Village of Jenera, Village of Arlington, Village of McComb, Village of Rawson, Village of Benton Ridge, Village of Vanlue, and City of Findlay (plus an additional reduction in the amount of \$1,751,311); and create three-year grants for City of Fostoria and Village of Mt. Blanchard to remain within the \$96,000.00 budget. This option hinders progress since only two projects will get completed next year.
3. Choose 1<sup>st</sup> Project Priorities for Village of Van Buren, Village of Mt. Cory, Village of Arcadia, Village of Jenera, and Village of Vanlue; choose 2<sup>nd</sup> Project Priorities for Village of Arlington, Village of McComb, and Village of Mt. Blanchard; choose the 3<sup>rd</sup> Project Priority for Village of Benton Ridge; and administer three-year grants for City of Findlay and City of Fostoria to remain within the \$96,000.00 budget. This option is the least equitable.

In the past, community park contacts/managers have been gracious about the Hancock Park District's desire to fund projects within the budget by administering two-year and three-year grants. However, Eric Metcalfe in Arcadia questioned that approach when his project to replace the basketball court became a three-year grant. His concern was not dismissed, but rather contemplated over the last three years. It took the Hancock Park District three years to fund a new basketball court for the Village of Arcadia, and there are more examples of projects taking two years or three years to complete because of the fixed budget amount and the multi-year grant process (see 2023 Grant Requests and Resolution 2023-22).

**Hancock Park District's Proposed 2024 Budget:** The 2024 budget proposes income and expenses in the amount of \$1,751,367.78. Approval of the budget will occur at the December meeting following a 30-day public review period (see 2024 Budget).

Staff Report / Agenda Supplement, November 14, 2023, continued – page 2

**Request to approve the Memorandum of Understanding and Resolution 2023-23 regarding the donation of 18.291-acre Cooper Pond from The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company to the Hancock Park District:** On September 14, 2022, Findlay Mayor Christina Muryn suggested that The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company contact the Hancock Park District regarding the donation of Cooper Pond. Mayor Muryn understood the value of Cooper Pond as an addition to Oakwoods Nature Preserve.

During an Executive Session, the consensus by the Board of Park Commissioners was that Cooper Pond would be an appropriate addition to and expansion of Oakwoods Nature Preserve. Preliminary plans about the maintenance, use, and management of Cooper Pond included the following:

1. Provide pedestrian access only and maintenance vehicle access only.
2. Provide a portable restroom facility.
3. Promote picnicking, hiking, fishing, and wildlife observation.
4. Provide more hiking and another destination.
5. Remove fence on the west side with hiking trail access from the west. Retain fence on the remaining three sides to discourage vehicle access, and overnight use and assembly.
6. Use the existing/former loop drive as a loop hiking trail around the pond.
7. Remove structures.
8. Reduce the manicured look. Naturalize the area. Blend it with Oakwoods Nature Preserve.

After a series of correspondence, a visit to Cooper Pond, and an assurance from the Hancock Park District that the Board of Park Commissioners was interested in the donation, The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company has essentially implied its official intent to donate Cooper Pond to the Hancock Park District. However, in an email dated October 31, 2023, a representative from The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company asked that the Hancock Park District review the DRAFT Memorandum of Understanding and provide confirmation from the Board of Park Commissioners that it has approved the donation and that no further approvals are required by the Board, hence the resolution, and said the paperwork and processing time to finalize the transfer will not happen until the first quarter of 2024.

The Hancock Park District should not sign the Memorandum of Understanding if it includes the confidentiality statement on page two. Everything the Hancock Park District does from this point forward regarding the donation of Cooper Pond should be made public (see Judgment Entry by Judge Kristen K. Johnson dated September 7, 2023, Memorandum of Understanding dated October 2023, and Resolution 2023-23 dated November 14, 2023).



Cooper Pond

**HANCOCK PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
**Meeting Minutes for November 14, 2023**

The November 14, 2023 meeting of the Hancock Park District Board of Park Commissioners was held at Riverbend Recreation Area's Brugeman Lodge.

Park Commissioners Present: Gary Hirschfeld, Scott Younger  
Park Commissioner Absent: Ed Ingold  
Staff Present: Gary Pruitt, Tyler Fredritz, Vicky Stozich, Michelle Rumschlag  
Guest: Ryan Pessell

The meeting was called to order by Gary Hirschfeld at 3:34 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Scott Younger with a second by Gary Hirschfeld to approve Meeting Minutes dated October 10, 2023. Motion carried by a 2-0 vote.

**FINANCIAL STATUS**

Income and expense reports year to date October 31, 2023 were reviewed by the Board.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Request to approve the 2023 Property & Casualty Insurance Renewal:** A motion was made by Scott Younger with a second by Gary Hirschfeld to approve the 2023 Property & Casualty Insurance Renewal with a 2.82% increase in the renewal premium. Motion carried by a 2-0 vote.

**Request to approve the 2023 Community Park Improvement Program grants in the amount of \$200,305.97 and Resolution 2023-22 regarding additional appropriation within the Auditor's Certification and Park Commissioners to appropriate in the General Fund in the amount of \$104,305.97:** A motion was made by Gary Hirschfeld with a second by Scott Younger to approve the 2023 Community Park Improvement Program grants in the amount of \$200,305.97 and Resolution 2023-22. Funding is for all 1<sup>st</sup> priority projects only. Motion carried by a 2-0 vote.

**Hancock Park District's Proposed 2024 Budget:** The budget is \$1,751,367.78. Merit pay rate increases are capped at 3%. The biggest difference between the proposed budget and previous budgets is no money allocated for vehicles (trucks) and twice the normal monetary allocation for park projects (General Parks Reserve). Two mower replacements are scheduled. All enclosed buildings at Litzenberg Memorial Woods are scheduled for painting. The consensus by the Board was to accept the budget as presented. The Budget will be approved by the Board at the December 12 meeting after a 30-day public review period.

**Request to approve the Memorandum of Understanding and Resolution 2023-23 regarding the donation of 18.291-acre Cooper Pond from The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company to the Hancock Park District:** A motion was made by Scott Younger with a second by Gary Hirschfeld to approve the Memorandum of Understanding and Resolution 2023-23. The confidentiality section in the Memorandum of Understanding was removed by The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company's legal department based on a recommendation from the Hancock Park District. Motion carried by a 2-0 vote.

**DISCUSSION**

**Hancock Park District Report:**

All required levy-related documents have been submitted to the Board of Elections. During a meeting with Mayor Muryn, it was reconfirmed that the Downtown Riverwalk Redevelopment Project should be part of the North River Development Project. Among other reasons, the City of Findlay would like to upgrade the lights. A donation of composite material for the boardwalk has been offered. And the timing is good with design in 2024 and development in 2025. Mayor Muryn will be our special guest at the Board meeting on March 12.

The winterization of mowers and the removal of docks will happen soon. Wood deck materials for Brugeman Bridge will be shipped soon. The bridge work is expected to begin in November. The trail will be closed with advance notice. Four park managers, the natural resource manager, and the park maintenance technician attended the Urban Forestry Conference.

There are a few weeks remaining for the Hike-It! Program. December 7 is the deadline to hike trails and become eligible for a medallion. There was an increase in participation. January and February public programs have been publicized. Planning and development for spring programs and summer camps are underway.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Meeting Minutes approved:

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Gary E. Hirschfeld, Chairperson

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Gary E. Pruitt, Director/Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date