



# Hancock Park District

---

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

**Date:** Tuesday, April 13, 2021  
**Location:** Brugeman Lodge at Riverbend Recreation Area  
**Time:** 3:30 p.m.

### Roll Call

#### Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes dated March 9, 2021
2. Approval of Executive Session Minutes dated March 9, 2021

#### Financial Status

1. Review of the Financial Statement dated March 31, 2021, presented by Hancock Park District Director Gary Pruitt

#### Old Business

1. Request to approve Resolution 2021-07 of the Hancock Park District Board of Park Commissioners authorizing the submittal of an Ohio Department of Natural Resources NatureWorks grant application for Great Karg Well Historical Site Development

#### New Business

1. Wetland Restoration Concepts
2. Request to approve the concept for new state-of-the-art waterless restroom facilities at Riverbend Recreation Area and authorization to pursue grant funding to pay for all or a portion of the design and development costs
3. Request to approve Resolution 2021-10 regarding additional appropriation within the Auditor's Certification and Park Commissioners to appropriate in the General Fund in the amount of \$3,000.00 for fireplace and chimney repairs at multiple park locations
4. Request to approve the concept for the replacement and upgrade of the driveway, parking lot, and walkways and other improvements at Litzenberg Memorial Woods and authorization to pursue grant funding to pay for all or a portion of the design and development costs
5. Request to approve Resolution 2021-09 regarding the Hancock Park District Board of Park Commissioner's request for a grant from the Hancock Park District Blanchard River Greenway Trail Fund in the amount of \$12,825.00

#### Discussion

1. Hancock Park District Report

#### Public Input

#### Adjournment

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. in Brugeman Lodge at Riverbend Recreation Area

**HANCOCK PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
**Staff Report / Agenda Supplement**  
**April 13, 2021**

**Request to approve Resolution 2021-07 of the Hancock Park District Board of Park Commissioners authorizing the submittal of an Ohio Department of Natural Resources NatureWorks grant application for Great Karg Well Historical Site Development:** In October 2020, preliminary planning for three high priority park development projects began with concepts, probable cost estimates, and funding strategy. Projects include parking lot replacement and upgrade at Litzenberg Memorial Woods, new restroom facilities at Riverbend Recreation Area, and the development of the Great Karg Well Historical Site (GKWHS). The first project for the Board to consider is the development of GKWHS.

A request to approve Resolution 2021-07 was tabled at the March meeting. Since that meeting, there has been an ongoing discussion with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) about the Hancock Park District's eligibility to submit a NatureWorks grant application because it cannot show evidence of ownership of Great Karg Well Historical Site (the City of Findlay owns the land) and it does not have a lease agreement with the City of Findlay to manage and maintain Great Karg Well Historical Site. Authorization for the Hancock Park District to manage and maintain certain parks owned by the City of Findlay dates back to December 13, 1976 with the approval of Resolution 34-1976 by the Findlay City Council and the Hancock Park District Board of Park Commissioners. On June 21, 1978, the Hancock Park District received approval from the City of Findlay to manage and maintain Great Karg Well Historical Site.

The ODNR is considering the long-standing agreement per Resolution 34-1976, the mechanics of a joint application that would detail the City of Findlay as the landowner and the Hancock Park District as the financial agent, and if a contract could be executed with the City of Findlay and the Hancock Park District as a "Grantee." Another option is to pursue a lease from the City of Findlay for the management of Great Karg Well Historical Site. However, that topic has not been discussed.

Since the grant application is due by June 1, 2021 and because this issue remains fluid, approval to move forward with the submittal of a NatureWorks grant application is being requested contingent upon there being a way forward (i.e., joint application or lease), but with the understanding that in the absence of a NatureWorks grant application, other grants could be pursued.

The project cost estimate for the development of the Great Karg Well Historical Site is \$150,910.00 (not including contingency) and \$43,500.00 for design for a total of \$194,410.00. Originally, a funding option for this park development project included a reimbursable NatureWorks grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Because the grant is capped at \$121,850.00, three sources for the local match were being considered: Hancock Park District General Fund – approximately \$38,430.00 (plus contingency), Hancock Parks Foundation – approximately \$14,500.00, and the Roadwork Fund from the Metropark Program – approximately \$19,630.00. The other option is to fund park design and development with the Hancock Park District's general fund, Hancock Parks Foundation, and the Roadwork Fund.

The Hancock Park District's Strategic and Comprehensive Plan was approved and implemented in 2014. The result of a needs assessment showed that 67.5 percent of customers surveyed believed that the Hancock Park District should replace and upgrade existing facilities, modernize an aging park system, and improve service. Other results from the same survey question include the following: acquire land and expand the park system – 41.9%; maintain existing parks and facilities with minimal change and growth – 25%.

Great Karg Well Historical Site (GKWHS) is one of eight River Parks currently located along or near the Blanchard River Greenway and the Blanchard River Water Trail with a current or planned connection to the Blanchard River Greenway Trail. GKWHS is the only remaining River Park that is undeveloped.

Currently, the parking lot is too small, there is no safety railing along the overlook, and access to the Blanchard River is via an earthen slope. There are no signs to identify the site and no site amenities. The beach area has a lot of potential for river access, but improvements need to be made before that potential can be realized. A portion of the headwall is deteriorating. Therefore, it needs to be repaired.

The existing headwall serves as a retaining wall in the most practical sense. However, it is actually an integral part of the park's conceptual plan to provide outdoor recreation facilities and an overlook feature.

The new headwall would allow for an accessible walkway along the overlook with bench seating and the installation of a decorative railing for safety. As an outdoor recreation facility, the overlook would promote wildlife watching, picnicking, casual observation, and relaxation.

GKWHS is located in a residential area at the intersection of River Street and Liberty Street. It receives some use as a wayside and for outdoor recreation. However, before it can reach its full potential as a viable River Park location, safety concerns need to be alleviated and actual development needs to occur similar to what has occurred at other River Parks, including park improvements from 2016 to 2020.

GKWHS is one of two River Parks located west of Main Street and the only one to serve residents near the park. To serve residents in an equitable manner, the park should be developed with similar amenities as those found at other River Parks.

As part of the design, a route for the Blanchard River Greenway Trail would be identified and incorporated into the site plan so that when the time comes the trail could pass through in an appropriate way rather than as an afterthought. GKWHS is essentially in a gap between the trail. City land and county land are available for trail development. Future trail development would connect residents in the area to downtown Findlay and all other River Parks.

In 2020, the Blanchard River was designated as a state water trail by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. GKWHS is one of 11 river access sites along the 37.6-mile Blanchard River Water Trail. The Strategic and Comprehensive Plan identified the need for the following improvement as part of its Blanchard River Action Plan: *“Improve river access with more functional launch and landing facilities at . . . Great Karg Well Historical Site . . . and at other appropriate sites.”*

GKWHS has existed in an undeveloped and rather obscure state for over 40 years. In fact, other River Parks were also facing neglect as recent as 2014. However, with the development of a Strategic and Comprehensive Plan in November 2014, changes were made. Parks along the river were seen with different eyes and envisioned as something special. And with that, the Blanchard Corridor Recreation Program was developed.

The purpose of the Blanchard Corridor Recreation Program is to raise awareness about and promote year-round outdoor recreation opportunities resulting from the combination of four interconnected components: Blanchard River Greenway, Blanchard River Water Trail, River Parks, and the Blanchard River Greenway Trail. Together, they would create a well-known and high-profile outdoor recreation destination within the heart of Findlay. Developing GKWHS is an important part of that grand plan.

The Hancock Park District should proceed with the development of Great Karg Well Historical Site (with or without a grant) and manage and maintain those improvements for the following reasons:

1. The Hancock Park District asked for maintenance responsibility (and by extension, development and management responsibility) in 1978. The Hancock Park District has been technically responsible for the park for over 40 years. The neglect, undeveloped condition, and deterioration of the park has gone unchecked for too long. Something should be done about that.
2. The type of facilities being proposed (and the experiences afforded by those facilities) are consistent with the type of facilities being managed and maintained by the Hancock Park District at other River Parks throughout Findlay, such as access to the Blanchard River Water Trail for boating and fishing, a wayside attraction and picnicking area along the Blanchard River, and a trailhead for the Blanchard River Greenway Trail. The Hancock Park District is responsible for the management of the Blanchard River Water Trail and the Blanchard River Greenway Trail.
3. When developed, Great Karg Well Historical Site will be similar (in terms of facilities and experiences) to Eastpoint Area, Hancock Park District Administrative Offices, Waterfalls Area, Riverside Park Waterfront, Centennial Park, Civitan Park, and River Landings (i.e., River Parks) – all managed by the Hancock Park District. It makes sense for the Hancock Park District to oversee facilities that are similar in purpose and function and as part of a unit within the Hancock Park System (see Great Karg Well Historical Site Development Proposal).

**Wetland Restoration Concepts:** When the first round of H2Ohio funding was announced, the Hancock Park District already knew it wanted to transition agricultural land to a conservation area and expand Oakwoods Nature Preserve. Therefore, the timing was good for the H2Ohio grant.

Following the announcement of subsequent rounds of H2Ohio funding, potential wetland restoration projects were identified. They include wetland restoration on the south side of Litzenberg Memorial Woods (49 acres), a 7-acre natural succession area and a 9.5-acre portion of the 13-acre field near Goose Lake at Aeraland Recreation Area, a 10.5-acre area at Bright Conservation Area between the park entrance and TR 207, and a 4.5-acre meadow near the campground at Riverbend Recreation Area. Any one of these aforementioned projects would in essence transition an existing conservation area to wetlands. Hancock Park District Natural Resource Manager Chad Carroll will be at the meeting to present the proposals and answer questions (see Restoration Concepts).

**Request to approve the concept for new state-of-the-art waterless restroom facilities at Riverbend Recreation Area and authorization to pursue grant funding to pay for all or a portion of the design and development costs:** As a reminder, public input during the strategic planning process (which led to the development and approval of the Hancock Park District’s Strategic and Comprehensive Plan) favored an approach focused on improving current facilities. As a result, the Parks Action Plan in the Strategic and Comprehensive Plan says: “. . . it is necessary to assess the current infrastructure and modernize an aging park system. These parks should be subject to the replacement and upgrade of facilities . . .” Moreover, “All parks in the system warrant an upgrade. Maximizing the potential of parks in general by modernizing and maintaining facilities represents the overall objective of the Strategic and Comprehensive Plan.”

As part of the preliminary planning associated with new restroom facilities, a probable cost estimate of \$368,000.00 (not counting contingency) was identified. The cost estimate includes design and development associated with the replacement of three restroom facilities with new state-of-the-art waterless restroom facilities.

The alternative (for a mere fraction of the cost) is to retain the current restroom facilities by initiating a variety of repairs. Another alternative is to replace two restroom facilities at the Big Oaks Activity Area and the Oxbow Bend Activity Area, and retain and make repairs to the current restroom facility at the Meadows Activity Area (the newest and most modern of the restroom facilities). That would decrease the probable cost estimate to approximately \$280,000.00 (see Riverbend Recreation Area Restroom Facilities).



Proposed rendering by Romtec Company showing Brown County Rubble as the exterior stone.

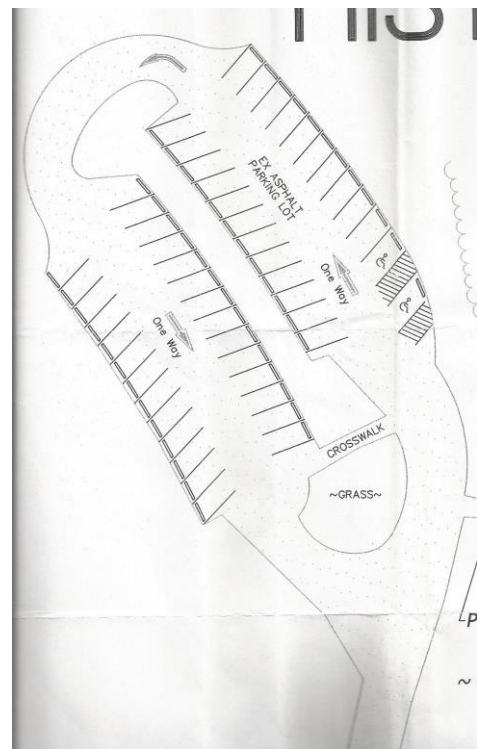
**Request to approve Resolution 2021-10 regarding additional appropriation within the Auditor’s certification and Park Commissioners to appropriate in the General Fund in the amount of \$3,000.00 for fireplace and chimney repairs at multiple park locations:** Routine maintenance of fireplaces and chimneys at Oakwoods Nature Preserve, Litzenberg Memorial Woods, and Riverbend Recreation Area identified the need for repairs to fireplaces and chimneys. Since repairs need to be made before fireplaces and chimneys can be used (for safety reasons and because program and rental facilities depend on the availability of fireplaces and chimneys) and the 2021 budget lacks the necessary flexibility and contingency funds, an additional appropriation is requested so that the work can proceed as soon as possible (see Resolution 2021-10).

**Request to approve the concept for the replacement and upgrade of the driveway, parking lot, and walkways and other improvements at Litzenberg Memorial Woods and authorization to pursue grant funding to pay for all or a portion of the design and development costs:** As part of the preliminary planning for this project, the probable cost estimate of \$500,000.00 for development (not including contingency) and \$82,000.00 for engineering was identified. This project is envisioned as a multifaceted improvement project involving the removal and replacement of the driveway and parking lot (with drainage system improvements), removal of asphalt walkways (to be replaced with concrete walkways that meet accessibility standards and provide accessible routes), removal and replacement of the accessible trail that leads into Litzenberg Woods (with a possible trail extension to special event activity sites), new site amenities (i.e., benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles, and recycle centers), storage building to hold items currently stored in the upper level of the McKinnis House and Wagon Shed so that program space can be maximized, and the possible paving of the overflow grass parking lot to maximize accessible parking.

The existing parking lot is deteriorating, especially along the driveway near the parking lot where drainage issues exist. It has created an ongoing maintenance challenge and raised a concern about how the driveway condition may affect customer service and visitation (not unlike the issues raised with the Big Oaks Activity Area parking lot before it was removed and replaced). Walkway design and deterioration has created a lack of accessibility to facilities, amenities, and activity sites. A parking lot with 50 parking spaces may not be enough to support visitation when the Activity Barn is rented, the shelter is rented, and programs are underway, and when general use also occurs. Moreover, a paved overflow parking lot would be useful when conducting traditional special events and when planning for future programs and special events.



Litzenberg Memorial Woods  
The arrow points to the overflow parking lot.



Litzenberg Memorial Woods  
Current layout with 50 parking spaces.

**Request to approve Resolution 2021-09 regarding the Hancock Park District Board of Park Commissioner’s request for a grant from the Hancock Park District Blanchard River Greenway Trail Fund in the amount of \$12,825.00:** The plan to stripe edge lines and center lines on the Blanchard River Greenway Trail was communicated to the City of Findlay and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). The City of Findlay supports the proposed striping project and has agreed to use the same striping plan for the next trail paving project located between Broad Avenue and River Street. The ODOT Safe Routes to School and Active Transportation Manager said the “attached example looks great” in reference to the striping concept below. Chapter 5 of the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities and references to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices were reviewed. Applicable sections were applied when identifying striping locations and specifications, and when identifying the need for signs and their locations.

Striping is part of a larger plan to make improvements aimed at raising awareness of and appreciation for the trail, promoting trail use, improving the quality of the trail experience, identifying the organization responsible for managing and maintaining the trail, and upgrading and modernizing the trail. In addition to striping, wayfinding and directional signs will be installed at trailheads and at other strategic locations along the trail. Message centers with large trail maps will be installed at River Park locations (see Resolution 2021-09).



Trail Striping Concept for the Blanchard River Greenway Trail



Standard Wayfinding Sign

**HANCOCK PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
**Meeting Minutes for April 13, 2021**

The April 13, 2021 meeting of the Hancock Park District Board of Park Commissioners was held at Riverbend Recreation Area's Brugeman Lodge.

Park Commissioners Present: Scott Younger, Ed Ingold, Gary Hirschfeld  
HPD Staff Present: Gary Pruitt, Chad Carroll, Angela Kaiser  
Guests Present: Scott Butterworth

The meeting was called to order by Gary Hirschfeld at 3:32 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Ed Ingold with a second by Scott Younger to approve the March 9, 2021 meeting minutes. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Scott Younger with a second by Ed Ingold to approve the March 9, 2021 Executive Session minutes. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

**FINANCIAL STATUS**

Income and expense reports year to date March 31, 2021 were presented to the Board by Hancock Park District Director Gary Pruitt.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Request to approve Resolution 2021-07 of the Hancock Park District Board of Park Commissioners authorizing the submittal of an Ohio Department of Natural Resources NatureWorks grant application for Great Karg Well Historical Site Development:** A motion was made by Ed Ingold with a second by Scott Younger to approve Resolution 2021-07. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Wetland Restoration Concepts:** A motion was made by Ed Ingold with a second by Gary Hirschfeld to approve wetland restoration concepts at Litzenberg Memorial Woods, Aeraland Recreation Area (lower 7-acre section only), and Bright Conservation Area. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

**Request to approve the concept for new state-of-the-art waterless restroom facilities at Riverbend Recreation Area and authorization to pursue grant funding to pay for all or a portion of the design and development costs:** A motion was made by Ed Ingold with a second by Gary Hirschfeld to approve the concept for new state-of-the-art waterless restroom facilities with Brown County Rubble exterior at Riverbend Recreation Area and to authorize the pursuit of grant funding to pay for all or a portion of the design and development costs. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

**Hancock Park District Board of Park Commissioners**  
**Meeting Minutes – April 13, 2021 – Page 2 of 2**

**Request to approve Resolution 2021-10 regarding additional appropriation within the Auditor's certification and Park Commissioners to appropriate in the general fund in the amount of \$3,000.00**

**for fireplace and chimney repairs at multiple park locations:** A motion was made by Ed Ingold with a second by Scott Younger to approve Resolution 2021-10. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

**Request to approve the concept for the replacement and upgrade of the driveway, parking lot, and walkways and other improvements at Litzenberg Memorial Woods and authorization to pursue grant funding to pay for all or a portion of the design and development costs:** A motion was made by Scott Younger with a second by Ed Ingold to approve the concept for the replacement and upgrade of the driveway, parking lot, and walkways and other improvements at Litzenberg Memorial Woods and to authorize the pursuit of grant funding to pay for all or a portion of the design and development costs. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

**Request to approve Resolution 2021-09 regarding the Hancock Park District Board of Park Commissioner's request for a grant from the Hancock Park District Blanchard River Greenway Trail Fund in the amount of \$12,825.00:** A motion was made by Ed Ingold with a second by Scott Younger to approve Resolution 2021-09. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Hancock Park District Report:**

Seasonal staff hiring is underway. The Natural Resource Intern position has been filled. Two out of three Park Laborer positions have been filled. Interviews are pending for the Program Intern, Park Laborer, Waterfront Manager, and Waterfront Aides.

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

Meeting Minutes approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary E. Hirschfeld, Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary E. Pruitt, Director/Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date