

CANTON PARK COMMISSION

BOARD MINUTES

MONTHLY MEETING

FEBRUARY 13, 2013

The Canton Board of Park Commissioners met in a regular meeting on Wednesday, February 13, 2013.

Present were; Mr. Andy Black - President, Mr. Wuyanbu Zutali - Vice-President, Mr. Terry Prater – Member, and Mr. Derek Gordon, Interim Assistant Park Director/Secretary. There were also several attendees at the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 4:02pm by President Black.

Meeting minutes from the January 9, 2013 regular meeting were reviewed by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Black motioned to approve all three sets of minutes. Commissioner Zutali seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Old Riverside Park Issues – The property has officially been transferred from the Canton Community Improvement Corporation to the City of Canton. Assistant Director Gordon anticipates that the Commission will be receiving a request from Service Director, Warren Price for the Park Commission to take responsibility for the property.
2. Adopt-A-Park Proposal – Assistant Director Gordon has scheduled a meeting with Commissioner Zutali, Union representatives, administration representatives, and the law department to discuss the guidelines of the program to assure that the volunteer work performed through this program does not conflict with the union contract.
3. Park Levy Update – Commissioner Black gave a short summary of the current status of the park levy. The levy initiative was approved by Canton City Council on Monday, February 11 and the initiative will be up for public consideration on the November 2013 ballot. Commissioner Black stated that a levy committee is developing specific subcommittees to address all of the levy needs and encouraged his fellow Commissioners to participate actively in the campaign.
4. Faith Family Church (Allen Avenue Southeast Playground) – Assistant Director Gordon notified the board that a final decision has not yet been made by the Faith Family Church Selection Committee as to which project they will be administering this year. We hope to have an answer soon and that they will select Allen Avenue.
5. 2013 Canton Marathon – Assistant Director Gordon notified the Commission of the recent information regarding the status of the Canton Marathon. He stated that the City has received information that the Canton Marathon will not be held in 2013, but the organizers of the Hall of Fame City Challenge still intend to hold a marathon on June 15, 2013. Assistant Director Gordon has met with the City administration, the race director, and the Ohio Department of Transportation about this matter. The race organizers have been notified that the Hall of Fame City Challenge must pay all of their outstanding fees from 2012, make a substantial deposit for the 2013 race, and have all race plans and logistics submitted to appropriate City departments and the Ohio Department of Transportation at least 90 days prior to the event. Assistant Director Gordon will keep the Commission apprised of developments as the planning process continues, as the new race route will increase the total mileage in the City limits.
6. Staffing and Personnel Issues – Commissioner Black requested to hold this issue until all the agenda items had been completed.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Recognition of Former Park Director, Doug Perry – Mr. Perry was presented a framed certificate of appreciation and a commemorative clock for his time served as Park Director.
2. Acceptance / Recognition of West Park Neighborhood Association Donation – Commissioner Black and Assistant Director Gordon attended a meeting in January to receive a \$400 check to Canton Parks for the purposes of improving the annual holiday light display in Stadium Park. Commissioner Black made a motion to formally accept the donation. Commissioner Zutali seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Commissioner Prater –Yes, Commissioner Zutali – Yes, Commissioner Black – Yes. Motion carried unanimously. Assistant Director Gordon was asked to compose a letter of appreciation from the Park Commission to the West Park Neighborhood Association for the generosity.
3. Colonial Heights Neighborhood Association Request for Sign Repair – A neighborhood welcome sign for the Colonial Heights Neighborhood Association located on Colonial Boulevard (park property) was damaged by a vandal. The Colonial Heights requested funding from the Park Commission to repair the sign. The Commissioners discussed that granting this request and accepting financial responsibility for this sign would set a precedent for the other neighborhood association signs posted throughout the City on park property. Assistant Director Gordon was asked to notify Colonial Heights that the Commission would not be providing funds for the repair and to develop a license agreement with the Canton Law Department and Canton Engineering Department to clarify the maintenance responsibilities for these types of signs in the future. Assistant Director Gordon will also work to acquire these agreements for all existing neighborhood association signs on boulevards.
4. Request to Civil Service to Declassify Park Director / Secretary Position – The Commission discussed the increased management flexibility and accountability provided to the Commission by making this request and making the Director position an at-will appointee of the Commission. Commissioner Black motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Zutali seconded. Roll call vote: Commissioner Prater –Yes, Commissioner Zutali – Yes, Commissioner Black – Yes. Motion carries unanimously.
5. Ohio Parks and Recreation Conference Registration Approval – Assistant Director Gordon was asked by the Commissioners to attend the 2013 Ohio Parks and Recreation Conference in Columbus from February 24-27. Assistant Director Gordon is requesting \$380.00 for registration costs and will utilize a city vehicle for transportation, fuel, and mileage. He will not seek reimbursement for housing or meals. Commissioner Black motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Zutali seconded. Roll call vote: Commissioner Prater –Yes, Commissioner Zutali – Yes, Commissioner Black – Yes. Motion carries unanimously.
6. Pro Football Hall of Fame Festival Requests – The Hall of Fame Festival has submitted the following requests to the Park Commission for festival activities.
 - Use of park property for balloon festival activities, specifically take-off, and landing zones for the weekend of July 19, 20 and 21
 - Use and delivery of picnic tables for the Ribs Burnoff held at the Stark County Fairgrounds on July 30.
 - Donation and delivery of five (5) tons of mulch for use during the Ribs Burnoff to be placed behind the concrete wall retaining the West side of the trackCommissioner Black motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Zutali seconded. Roll call vote: Commissioner Prater –Yes, Commissioner Zutali – Yes, Commissioner Black – Yes. Motion carries unanimously.
7. Crisis Intervention and Recovery Center (Westbrook Park Request)
 - Asst. Director Gordon stated that the Crisis and Recovery requested the use of West Brook Park on September 15th from 6:00pm until 8:00pm.Commissioner Black motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Zutali seconded. Roll call vote: Commissioner Prater –Yes, Commissioner Zutali – Yes, Commissioner Black – Yes. Motion carries unanimously.
8. Stark County Disc Golf Association (Spiker Park and Arboretum Park Request)

- Asst. Director Gordon stated that the Stark County Disc Golf Association requested the use of Parks on the afternoon of June 22nd.

Commissioner Black motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Zutali seconded. Roll call vote: Commissioner Prater –Yes, Commissioner Zutali – Yes, Commissioner Black – Yes. Motion carries unanimously.

9. NFL Grassroots Program (Project Rebuild Collaborative Grant) – Mrs. Joanna James from Project Rebuild Inc. is requesting the Park Commission’s support to apply for a grant from the NFL Grassroots Program. This matching grant for \$50,000 will utilize Project Rebuild student labor to build amenities (i.e. bathrooms, concession stands and/or bleachers) around an existing Canton Parks football field. Councilman Thomas West has requested that successful grant funds be used to develop a football field in the Nimisilla Park area. Assistant Director Gordon suggested exploring this option as well as other park locations to give Project Rebuild the best opportunity to make a successful application. He also stated that Canton Park’s crews will work closely with the students on any building projects to avoid Union job conflicts and to help boost the number of manpower hours needed for grant matching purposes. Commissioner Black motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Zutali seconded. Roll call vote: Commissioner Prater –Yes, Commissioner Zutali – Yes, Commissioner Black – Yes. Motion carries unanimously. Assistant Director Gordon will compose a letter of support on behalf of the Commission for Project Rebuild to include in the grant submission.
10. Mother Gooseland – Assistant Director Gordon informed the board that a tremendous amount of public support has been expressed to the Park offices to re-develop Mother Gooseland. Multiple individuals, businesses, and community organizations have pledged their financial and labor resources to help clean up the area. Assistant Director Gordon is working closely with the Canton Engineering Department, Stark Parks, Arts in Stark and other organizations to update the 2004 plan of the area developed by Stark Parks. U.S. Technologies, which currently owns part of the Mother Gooseland area is in the process of reviewing the legal documents prepared by the Canton Law Department to transfer the parcel back to the City of Canton. They are also interested in being a stakeholder in the redevelopment efforts. Assistant Director Gordon is hosting a walkthrough of the area for any interested parties on March 15 at 1:00pm. More information on the plans for the space will be available by that time and the Commission will be updated as the project continues.
11. Canton Garden Club – Assistant Director Gordon met with Mrs. Pat Smith, President of the Garden Club, to discuss the future vision of the Garden Center. In addition to spending Garden Club funds on aesthetic updates to the interior of the building, the Garden Club is interested in supporting the Park levy and collaborating with the Park Commission to promote the rental availability of the Center. They have offered to host a fundraiser dinner in September at the Garden Center and split the proceeds of the dinner between the Garden Center Fund and the Park Levy Campaign Fund. The Commission and Park Levy Committee will be asked to sell tickets and help serve meals. A date for the dinner will be confirmed by Assistant Director Gordon and Mrs. Smith.
12. Canton Lincoln Highway Station (Maintenance Request) – Director of Public Service, Warren Price, has requested that Canton Parks assume full maintenance responsibilities for the Canton Lincoln Highway Station. Assistant Director Gordon elaborated on the history of the facility and the fact that since its construction in the mid 2000’s no City department had assumed the maintenance responsibilities. Canton Parks and the Community Service Department have historically shared some of the mowing responsibilities with painting and other general maintenance falling to the Canton Building Maintenance Department on an as-needed basis. Other clean ups and a substantial grant obtained by Assistant Director Gordon, the Canton Engineering Department and Canton Community Development Department have served as infrequent improvement efforts at the site. Assistant Director Gordon also stated that he has continued to meet with representatives from the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR) who intend to increase train service to the station if the overall safety and maintenance of the station could be improved. Commissioner Black stated that he would like to support this request, but needs additional assurances that Canton Parks would also receive full oversight of station, with the exception of CVSR train scheduling, in return for maintenance responsibilities. Assistant Director Gordon stated he would seek clarification on this matter and the item was tabled until further information is obtained.

13. Ohio House Bill 5 (Notice from Mayor Healy) – Mayor Healy has sent a letter to all appointing authorities and elected officials warning them about the potential impact of Ohio House Bill 5 on local government finances.
14. Goose Control Program – Assistant Director Gordon informed the Commission that he is pursuing two methods to control the goose population. The first method is a long range grass maintenance program in conjunction with Stark Parks that allows for specific plantings, grass species, and landscaping to deter geese from landing and loitering in open park spaces. The second method is a device known as the Denier, which uses laser technologies that is unappealing to goose vision and alters their sleep patterns. This ultimately forces them to find another area to feed and sleep. Assistant Director Gordon has researched the product and spoken with another park district in Pennsylvania that has experienced great success with the product. Canton Parks will be purchasing a small number of these devices and will have 30 days to test their effectiveness before determining whether or not to return them for a full refund.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Election of Park Commission President – Commissioner Prater motioned to elect Commissioner Black for President of the Park Commission for the 2013 calendar year. Commissioner Zutali seconded. Roll call vote: Commissioner Prater –Yes, Commissioner Zutali – Yes, Commissioner Black – Abstain. Motion carries.
2. Election of Park Commission Vice President – Commissioner Black motioned to elect Commissioner Zutali for Vice President of the Park Commission for the 2013 calendar year. Commissioner Prater seconded. Roll call vote: Commissioner Prater –Yes, Commissioner Zutali – Abstain, Commissioner Black – Yes. Motion carries.

Commissioner Black motioned to enter into Executive Session at 5:23pm for the purposes of discussing personnel matters pertaining to the rehiring of retired employees. Commissioner Zutali seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Commissioner Prater –Yes, Commissioner Zutali – Yes, Commissioner Black – Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Black made a motion to exit Executive Session at 5:37pm. Member Prater seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Commissioner Prater –Yes, Commissioner Black – Yes. Motion carries.

Commissioner Zutali left the meeting at 5:38pm

Commissioner Black motioned to approve the amended version of the Park Director job description. Commissioner Prater seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Commissioner Black – Yes, Commissioner Prater – Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Black motioned to approve the Office Manager job description. Commissioner Prater seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Commissioner Black – Yes, Commissioner Prater – Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Black motioned to post the position of Park Director for 30 days pending the approval of the request to Civil Service to declassify the position. Commissioner Prater seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Commissioner Black – Yes, Commissioner Prater – Yes. Motion carried unanimously. Assistant Director Gordon was asked to facilitate this process with Human Resources to see the job is sufficiently posted.

Meeting adjourns at 5:44pm

Next Park Commission Meeting to be held at 4:00pm on Wednesday, March 13, 2013 at the Canton Garden Center.

Andy Black, President

Derek Gordon, Assistant Director