

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
January 15, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Cincinnati Board of Park Commissioners was held on this day at 950 Eden Park Drive. Commissioners present: Vice President Kick Lee, Commissioner Susan Castellini, and Commissioner John Neyer. Commissioner Phyllis McCallum attended virtually. President Molly North was not present. Vice President Lee called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

Acknowledgement of Public Comments

Vice President Lee acknowledged one in-person public comment regarding Miles-Edwards Park, as well as public comments received via email.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Approval of the December 18 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve the December 18, 2025, meeting minutes. Commissioner Neyer seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATE

Riverfront Event Fees and Charges

Deputy Director Jenny Mobley and Manager of Riverfront Parks & Special Events, Lou Sand, presented an overview of the fee structure and staffing for event rentals at the Riverfront Parks, mainly focused on Sawyer Point & Yeatman's Cove. Staff shared comparable market research and revenue projections based on a 17.6% increase of venue rental and staffing fees.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of Increased Event Fee Structure for Riverfront Parks

Staff respectfully requested the Board approve a proposed increase to the Riverfront Parks events and rentals fee structure, including the base rate for hourly rentals and additional staffing fees. Commissioner Neyer motioned to approve the proposed adjustments to the fee structure. Commissioner McCallum seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATE

Urban Forestry Update

Director Jason Barron shared a memo written by Garrett Dienno, Supervisor of Urban Forestry, regarding the cost of tree and sidewalk conflicts to the Urban Forestry Program. The memo described direct and indirect costs to the department caused by tree-sidewalk conflicts, and presented several approaches to mitigate these costs while preserving mature trees and their long-term environmental and economic benefits.

ACTION ITEM

Amendment to the 2027 Urban Forestry Assessment

Director Barron proposed an amendment to the FY28 Urban Forestry budget and work plan that was approved by the Commissioners in the December 2025 Board of Park Commissioners meeting. After reevaluating, Staff respectfully requested approval of an

additional \$150,000 for the tree planting contract, to support the installation of approximately 300 additional trees. Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve the amended FY28 Urban Forestry Budget and Work Plan. Commissioner Neyer seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATES

Planning & Design Update

Division Manager of Planning & Design, Travis Miller, provided updates on capital projects including Everybody's Treehouse and the Bike Skills Course at Mt. Airy Forest, Smale Lot 23, Parks' Sinton campus and Biochar facility, and Glenway Park planning and stakeholder engagement. The Commissioners and Staff discussed updates on Owl's Nest Park fundraising and planning.

Finance / IT Update

Herta Fairbanks, Division Manager of Finance & IT, shared updates on financial realignment efforts, preparation for the FY27 budget cycle, and IT's cost-cutting efforts.

HR Update

Director Barron gave an overview of full-time and part-time staffing, job postings, Safety-Related Collaborative Operations Training, and work to prepare for seasonal hiring.

ACTION ITEMS

Grants Application / Acceptance: Mt. Storm Property Land Acquisition

Staff respectfully requested the Board approve the application for and acceptance of funds from the Cincinnati Parks Foundation, to conduct an appraisal and cover other preliminary costs associated with exploring the viability of acquiring land adjacent to Mt. Storm Park. Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve the application for and acceptance of funds in an amount up to \$5,000. Commissioner Neyer seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Grants Application / Acceptance: Cincinnati Conservation Corps

Staff respectfully requested the Board approve the application for and acceptance of funds from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Education (OEEF), to support service-learning opportunities for teens and young adults focused in Mt. Airy Forest. The Commissioners and Staff discussed opportunities to encourage students seeking green careers. Commissioner Neyer motioned to approve the application for and acceptance of funds in an amount up to \$50,000. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director Barron presented the following updates:

- Krohn's spring show, Moonlight Menagerie, runs January 17 – April 19
- East District Staff worked to clean Twin Lakes under frigid conditions
- Groundwork Ohio River Valley donated 53 trees which were planted in Inwood Park by Staff and volunteers from UC and MadTree
- East District Laborer Rodney Simpson retired after 16 years and will be missed
- Volunteer opportunities and events in Parks throughout January and early February

Director Barron also provided an update on ongoing work with MSD to solve drainage issues at Miles-Edwards Park.

OPEN COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION & COMMENTS

Vice President Lee thanked Parks Staff and the Parks Foundation for their kindness, excitement, and dedication to their work.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice President Lee adjourned the meeting at 10:14am.

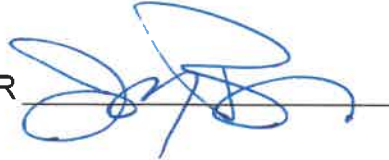
The next regular meeting date is Thursday, February 19, at 9:00am.

ATTEST:

PRESIDENT

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mollen Norton", written over a horizontal line.

DIRECTOR

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized loops and flourishes, written over a horizontal line.

[External Email] Public Comment January 2026

From Stich Bear <stichbear@gmail.com>

Date Tue 1/6/2026 7:35 AM

To Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>

Cc CityManagerEmail <citymanager@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Aftab, Mayor <mayor.aftab@cincinnati-oh.gov>; #COUNCIL <CityCouncil@cincinnati-oh.gov>

External Email Communication

Dear Parks Director and Commissioners,

I've written multiple letters to see if we could find solutions to the accessibility obstacles to our manmade structures in Burnet Woods.

Would someone please respond and let the Burnet Woods Advisory Council know if any discussions are happening?

It's been over 30 years since the ADA was signed and the small changes are very reasonable requests.

Can we at least get the conversation started or if discussion is happening behind the scenes, could you share that with us all so that I can stop writing to you about it?

If your answer is no, then please let us know that, too.

I wrote to Great Parks about some yellow paint that marked the edges of wooden pathways that had worn off on a forest trail for people with vision impairment, and they responded within 24 hours!

I've been asking the Director and Park Board for several YEARS now to discuss feasibility and solutions for our public park.

Is money the barrier?

It angers me to see money spent on unnecessary "wants" and pet projects while accessibility "needs" are ignored.

Sincerely,

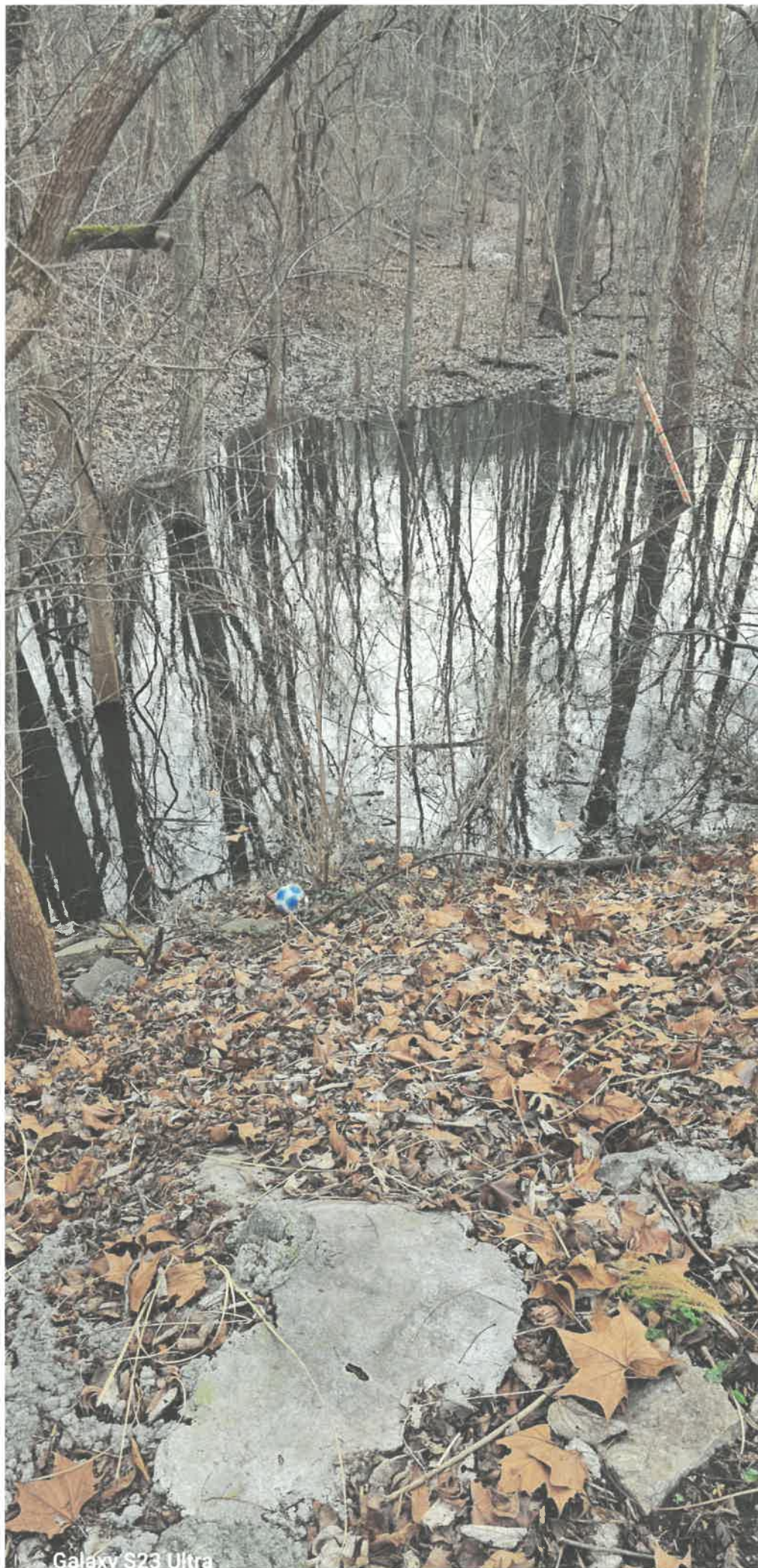
Shari Frost

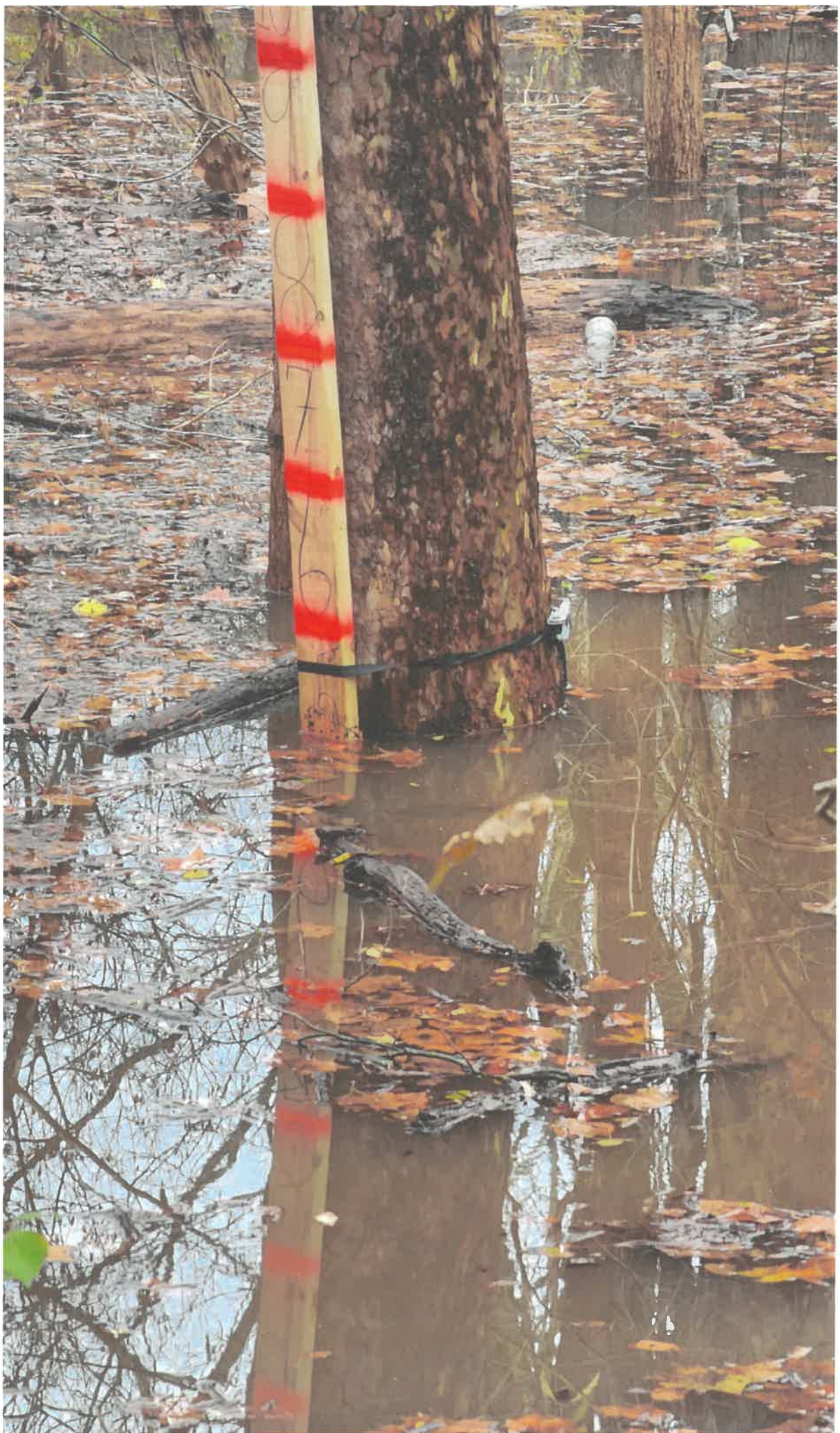
Burnet Woods volunteer



Galaxy S23 Ultra

1/13/26





1.25'
Rain
11-19-25