

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
April 16, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Cincinnati Board of Park Commissioners was held on this day at 950 Eden Park Drive. Commissioners present: President Molly North, Vice President Kick Lee, Commissioner Susan Castellini, and Commissioner John Neyer. Commissioner Phyllis McCallum attended virtually. President North called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

Acknowledgement of Public Comments

President North acknowledged one in-person public comment regarding bow hunting and Daniel Drake Park. President North also acknowledged one public comment received via email regarding the Burnet Woods bandstand.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Approval of the March 16 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve the March 16, 2026, meeting minutes. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Election of Officers

Commissioner Neyer motioned to nominate President North to continue in her role as President of the Board of Park Commissioners. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote. Commissioner Neyer nominated Vice President Lee to continue in his role as Vice President. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote. Commissioner Neyer nominated Vice President Lee to continue in his role as the Park Board representative on the CRC Board. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

ACTION ITEM

Piatt Park Grant Opportunity

Katie Westbrook and Paula Boggs Muething of Cincinnati Center City Development Corp. (3CDC) shared a presentation on a potential revitalization of the North CBD area that 3CDC could initiate by applying for State of Ohio Transformational Mixed-Use Development (TMUD) Program dollars. Piatt Park falls within the plans for the area, and the TMUD program requires applicants to have control of any property submitted for consideration. 3CDC proposed a lease of Piatt Park to 3CDC to facilitate their ability to apply for TMUD, with the condition that 3CDC would then lease back Piatt Park to the City of Cincinnati during the TMUD application period to ensure the operations of Piatt Park continue uninterrupted. The City has the right to immediately terminate the agreement if TMUD funds are not awarded. If TMUD funds are awarded, 3CDC plans to work closely with the City, Parks, and the community to develop a plan for the revitalization of Piatt Park. Commissioner Castellini motioned to authorize the Director to recommend to the City administration a lease of Piatt Park to 3CDC as outlined. Commissioner Neyer seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATE

Skate Downtown Cincy Update

Morgan Rigaud of Skate Downtown Cincy shared an update on outreach, local and national recognition, training, and programming accomplished by Skate Downtown Cincy at the Sawyer Point rink, including the launch of an NHL STREET Hockey League and a new mural on the rink. Ms. Rigaud highlighted needed repairs to the rink and respectfully requested the Commissioners consider allocating funds to regrade and resurface the rink.

ACTION ITEMS

Sinton Campus IT Change Order

Travis Miller, Division Manager of Planning & Design, respectfully requested approval for a change order to KZF's contract for the design of Parks' Sinton Campus, to include telecommunication design and construction administration services. Vice President Lee motioned to approve the change order in an amount up to \$12,580. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Rapid Run Plumbing Repair Change Order

Division Manager Miller requested approval of a \$16,172 change order to complete repairs to the Rapid Run comfort station, to include the replacement of fixtures within the comfort station while the contractor is mobilized. Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve the change order as outlined. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATE

Planning & Design Update

Division Manager Miller provided updates on capital projects and maintenance including walkway repairs around the lake in Burnet Woods, repairs and improvements to the Burnet Woods bandstand, progress on refining Glenway Park ADA walkway design concepts, septic tank repair at the Mt. Airy Arboretum, and repairs to Everybody's Tree House. The Commissioners and Staff discussed concrete repairs at Lytle Park and methods of de-icing. Staff also provided an update on Smale Lot 23 improvements.

ACTION ITEM

FY27 Fund 430 – Private Endowment Budget Review and Approval

Commissioner John Neyer, in his role as the Board of Park Commissioners' representative on the Cincinnati Parks Investment Committee, shared a brief overview of the FY27 Fund 430 – Private Endowment Recommended Budget. Director Barron respectfully requested approval of the FY27 Fund 430 – Private Endowment operations budget in the amount of \$1,260,475. Commissioner Neyer motioned to approve the budget as outlined. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATE

HR Update

Director Barron shared an update on full time and part time employee numbers, job postings, and invited the Commissioners to attend the upcoming spring All Staff celebration on April 23. The Commissioners and Staff discussed anticipated seasonal hiring needs and budgeting.

ACTION ITEM

Acceptance of QTR1 2026 In-Kind Contributions

Director Barron requested the Board approve the acceptance of in-kind contributions made by the Cincinnati Parks Foundation in QTR1 2026. Vice President Lee motioned to accept contributions in a total amount of \$62,387.50. Commissioner Neyer seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director Barron presented the following updates:

- The Krohn Butterfly Show, *Destination Monarch*, runs May 8 – August 9.
- The inaugural Bloom Zoom 5k at Sawyer Point was a huge success.
- Smale Riverfront Park was voted the 2nd best Riverwalk in the country in USA Today's annual reader's poll.
- Volunteer opportunities and events throughout Parks in late April and early May.

ADJOURNMENT

President North adjourned the meeting at 10:27am.

The next regular meeting date is Thursday, May 21, at 9:00am.

ATTEST:

PRESIDENT



DIRECTOR



[External Email] Public Comment: 16 April 2026

From Haglund, Lisa (haglunla) <HAGLUNLA@UCMAIL.UC.EDU>

Date Thu 4/2/2026 8:26 PM

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

Cc info@cincinnati-parksfoundation.org <info@cincinnati-parksfoundation.org>; Rachel Wells <info@burnetwoods.org>

 1 attachment (56 KB)

2026.4.1_BPAC_Bandstand_Accessibility_Letter.docx;

External Email Communication

Dear Commissioners,

With this letter, the Burnet Woods Park Advisory Council (BPAC) below presents a resolution it passed unanimously at its meeting of April 1, 2026, and with this letter requests an official response from the Cincinnati Park Board of Commissioners on the matter within a reasonable time period (e.g. one month from receipt of this letter).

Resolution on Request for Timely Address of Burnet Woods Bandstand Inaccessibility

Whereas, the Bandstand in Burnet Woods is a cherished public amenity that hosts countless formal and informal activities and programming throughout the year, and

Whereas, the Burnet Woods Bandstand steps don't have a railing, and

Whereas, the Burnet Woods Bandstand isn't accessible to those who use a mobility device, and

Whereas, the Burnet Woods Park Advisory Council believes that visitors and performers requiring mobility devices at Burnet Woods Bandstand activities deserve equal access to Bandstand facilities, and

Whereas, Cincinnati Parks Board of Commissioners is currently planning improvements to the Burnet Woods Bandstand, as reflected in its [3-year capital improvements plan](#),

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Burnet Woods Park Advisory Council requests the Cincinnati Park Board of Commissioners

1. Direct Parks Staff to install aesthetically appropriate handrails on the steps to the Burnet Woods Bandstand, and
2. Direct Parks Staff to commence a community-engaged design study to explore the possibility for aesthetically appropriate and functionally necessary universal accessibility improvement to the Bandstand.

We look forward to your official, timely, and positive reply to this letter,

Burnet Woods Park Advisory Council

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Burnet Woods Park Advisory Council

Cincinnati Park Board & Director April 16, 2026

I am Dr. Millie Schafer, Head of Cincinnati Urban Deer Advocates.

Most of you don't know us and we don't know you. We worked from 2014 to 2019 primarily with Jim Burkhardt, former supervisor over the park's deer program at his invitation

We are not your enemy. Your enemy is within. After 2019 under different leadership, it was clear our input was not welcomed. Extensive open records requests around **2021 showed a park employee complaining to bow hunters about 2 activists**, even gave them the Mt. Washington street where one lived. We have documented efforts to intimidate and harass us – with the support of certain park employees.

On January 17, on my way home, I decided to do a short drive through Drake Park, where there is an amazing overlook up by the pavilion. As I left, a pickup truck passed me – the driver was staring at me through the driver's side window. It was a white, older man, possibly with fluffy white or gray hair – **vaguely looked familiar**. I assumed it was someone assigned to patrol the park. I left the park, heading down Red Bank Road – behind me was the pickup. Suspected I was being followed, I did a sudden right turn onto a short dead-end street with a business parking lot – and simply drove around the park cars there and headed back to Red Bank. He did the same. Clearly being followed, I decided to drive directly cross Red Bank Road onto another dead-end street, made a sharp U turn and drove up to Red Bank Road – the driver was now directly across me, caught by surprise. He stopped. I bent down to look for my pocket camera. He turned on his head lights as I quickly focused it through the windshield onto his truck. He then turned down Red Bank.

This to be a 1999 Chevrolet Silverado – older pickups often used by bow hunters. I suspect he is one of your hunters. I request:

1. You determine if he is one of your bow hunters.
2. If so, appropriate action should be taken. I considered contacting the police but, frankly, we have worked to avoid all contact with bow hunters.
3. I request that you do let me know if he is one of your bow hunters (**don't want his name**) – It's no accident that these events occurred after Mr. Burkhardt was no longer in charge.





PUBLIC RECORDS TRAFFIC RECORDS CENTER
VEHICLE HISTORY, ACCIDENTS, TITLE, STATE
REGISTERED STATES

POPULATION OF ABOUT 11 MILLION WITH COLUMBIA AS ITS CAPITAL CITY

YOUR SESSION EXPIRES AFTER A PERIOD OF INACTIVITY

CAR HISTORY REPORT REQUESTS TYPICALLY TAKE BETWEEN 5-7 MINUTES TO COMPLETE

WE FOUND HISTORY RECORDS

1999 CHEVROLET SILVERADO

1500

LICENSE PLATE: DH79TT

VIN: 1GCEK19T6XE205029

STYLE/BODY: PICKUP

COUNTRY OF ASSEMBLY: UNITED STATES (USA)

REFERENCE # 6154155

[CONTINUE TO DOWNLOAD](#)

HOW TO ACCESS PUBLIC RECORDS

1. **SEARCH LICENSE PLATE OR VIN:** ENTER THE LICENSE PLATE OR THE VIN NUMBER OF THE VEHICLE.
2. **CONFIRM PLATE OR VIN:** AFTER SEARCH IS COMPLETE, VERIFY AND CONFIRM THE PLATE NUMBER OR VIN IS CORRECT.
3. **REPORT IS GENERATED:** PLEASE ALLOW UP TO 3 MINUTES WHILE YOUR REPORT IS GENERATED.
4. **COMPLETE REQUEST:** FINALIZE YOUR CAR HISTORY REPORT REQUEST.
5. **RECEIVE YOUR CAR HISTORY REPORT:** ACCESS YOUR CAR HISTORY REPORT INSTANTLY ONLINE AND RECEIVE A COPY VIA EMAIL.
6. **REVIEW YOUR CAR HISTORY REPORT:** CAREFULLY REVIEW ALL SECTIONS OF YOUR REPORT. IF ANY INFORMATION IS MISSING, A RECORDS SPECIALIST WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST.

Year

1999

Make

CHEVROLET

Model

SK1

Mileage

45,189

Body Type

PICKUP TRUCK

Condition

GOOD

Mileage Brand

ACTUAL

VIN

1GCEK19T6XE205029

Title Number

3103898768

Issue Date

03/03/2003

Title Status

ACTIVE

For further assistance, contact the Title Section by telephone at (614) 752-7671 or
send us an e-mail

[External Email] Additional information to supplement CUDA April 16, 2026 Yellow card short presentation

From mschafer1@zoomtown.com <mschafer1@zoomtown.com>

Date Thu 4/16/2026 5:10 PM

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

 1 attachment (81 KB)

Jim Godby_ The Deer Hunter.html;

External Email Communication

Note: It is requested that these attachments also be given to each park board member and the director.

As I stated this morning, Cincinnati Park supervisor, **Jim Burkhardt**, who also was in charge of the deer management program, interacted with us from 2014-2018-9, at his invitation. Jim was the **ONLY** park employee who educated himself on urban deer management. He spent many hours, including conference meetings with professionals via phone, etc. His transfer in 2018 out of the position was a big mistake! Jim wanted to expand the urban deer birth control effort as he saw **1) bow hunting was failing 2) birth control was working in the Clifton Parks**. A city written forward plan for such programs was in place. So a draft of an extensive new research proposal was prepared, included a new deer vaccination shot, that prevents pregnancies in does for 5 years and more after 1 shot! However, when new park leadership took over in 2019, she simply “killed” it. False claims were then made as well

When the **2014 Park Board President, Mr. Otto Budig, Jr.**, paused the implementation of the parks’ plan for bow hunting in Clifton Parks at the request of a group of us, I remember a man simply got up and angrily stormed out of the park meeting. (I later learned that man was Jim Godby, who was under Mr. Burkhardt). As we moved humane alternate research proposals to bow hunting forward, I was asked to prepared and present one of the two proposals at a CTM meeting, Mr. Godby had his bow hunting friends strongly oppose these efforts. There was never a claim that bow hunting activities would improve ecology. In fact, it was strongly claimed that they wanted to be able to simply step into their back yards and kill deer! **(In discussions with people I’ve met, that is also happening to this day – illegally)**. It was many years later that I learned: **1) park employee hunter, Mr. Godby, “single-handedly” created the deer kill program and was praised highly by his then supervisor, Mr. Gamstetter (Attached), and 2) It was more years later, that we learned this park hunter did NOT live in or city or even in our county!**

Needless to say, this park hunter was very angry that we residents would not want this type of activity in our small neighborhood parks. As a professional researcher, facts, documented studies, etc., were presented to the park board for years that showed this approach would not work, pose safety issues, etc. **Those findings were the same as what the Miami University researchers published in 2024** after they did an in depth study of the **park bow hunting**

program – a failure! Only the Clifton birth control program stabilized and reduced the deer population significantly.

ODNR is very clear: City residents need to decide how they want their deer managed! It is shocking that someone who didn't live here managed to exclude numerous neighborhoods (often didn't even tell them) from this process and various stakeholders .**To date, there is no expertise in urban deer management associated with Cincinnati Parks. WE also have the documentation for everything we have stated in regard to this ineffective, cruel deer kill program. There is a major lack of public transparency. When that happens, corruption simply occurs.**

Millie P. Schafer, PhD
Executive Director & Coordinator
Cincinnati Urban Deer Advocates (CUDA)
Cincinnati, Ohio
513-351-9957

The Big Rad Machine

Cincinnati's Local Cynic on all things Pop Culture.

Sunday, June 3, 2012

The Deer Hunter

Jim Godby looks like he could be a character off of NBC's comedy, "Parks and Recreation." Godby, 53, is in better shape than most 20-somethings. He has not only the cool and calm demeanor of a character like Ron Swanson, but his love of camping and being outside as well.



Jim Godby

Don't let his calm demeanor fool you however. When it comes to his position as the land/trails manager for the Cincinnati Park Board, Godby has the persistence and passion of a character like Leslie Knope. He stops at nothing to maintain the land and trails of the Cincinnati Parks.

The [park board](#) is a system that encompasses more than 10 percent of the city's land, including 1,000 miles of city streets, 70 neighborhood parks, 34 nature preserves, five nature centers, an arboretum and one of the largest public plant conservatories in the country. As the land/trails manager, Godby oversees much of this 10 percent but unfortunately his initiatives are always heard but not necessarily acted on.

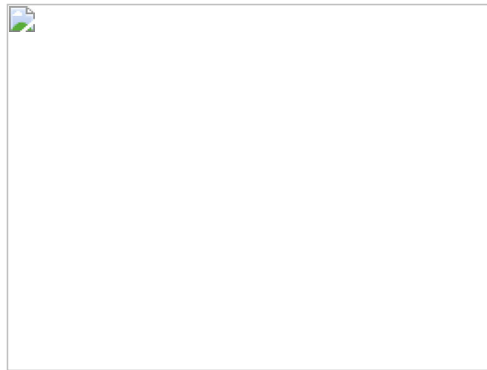
His supervisor, Dave Gamstetter, says that it's a by-product of Godby's job not always at the top of the Board's priority list.

"The bathrooms have to be cleaned, the grass has to be cut, the flowerbeds have to be nice, the trees have to be safe, the picnic tables need to be painted, the grills have to be cleaned, and the trash needs to be picked up. I'm not saying the trails shouldn't be a priority, but it's not as visible as those other things," Gamstetter says.

For almost two decades as the Land/Trails Manager, Godby has been what Gamstetter calls "a one-man show," bringing these once invisible and overlooked problems to light.

That includes one problem that both Godby and Gamstetter agree that has been Godby's biggest accomplishment. Godby took on problem of deer management in our Cincinnati parks almost single-handedly.

Since 1995, Jim Godby has made it his mission to get Cincinnati's deer population under control, a goal which is not easily attained considering the high reproduction rates of deer. Populations which can increase quickly if left unchecked. Population levels that "are recommended to be 15 – 20 deer per square mile - yet in Mt. Airy the population had reached 97 per square mile, and in California Woods 103 deer per square mile," according to the [park board's website](#). Though the deer's breeding habits were the least of Godby's problems at the beginning of his deer-controlling journey.



Operations Center of the Cincinnati Park Board

"It was probably 12 years before we could do anything with the deer," says Godby. "It was a matter of public perception...there was the 'Bambi' thing going on in the early to mid-90's, where it was like, 'Oh, it's so nice to have deer. Don't shoot the poor deer, they're so cute.'"

But during these "Bambi" years, the deer population steadily grew while Godby and his team anxiously stood by, waiting for the public perception to change. Then, over a decade later, it did.

"Now it's like, 'The damn thing ate my garden.' And, 'I ran into one on my way to work'... 'Kill them all!' It's just funny how it switched. A lot of people have done a flip-flop on the deer issue," Godby says.

With the public behind him, Jim could finally do his job. According to an interview with "The Cincinnati Enquirer" in 2009, Jim first looked at non-lethal ways to remove the deer such as relocation and deer contraception.

"We looked at relocation...and we learned it wasn't allowed by The Division of Wildlife," he says. Relocating deer is a complicated, stressful process; first they must either net or trap the deer and proceed to quarantine them. After that they find an area to place them, a process that Jim says is "so stressful, that 60 percent of them die within the first year."

Contraception, on the other hand, proves just as difficult.

"With contraception, it's a matter of being able to dart the female deer...while she is in heat," he continues, "and then coming back a month later to re-dart that deer." A process that is as long as it is painstaking.

Yet, even with these non-lethal removal plans unattainable, Jim found a way to incorporate the public, adding a recreation element to his plans for the deer removal, proverbially killing two birds or in this case deer, with one stone.

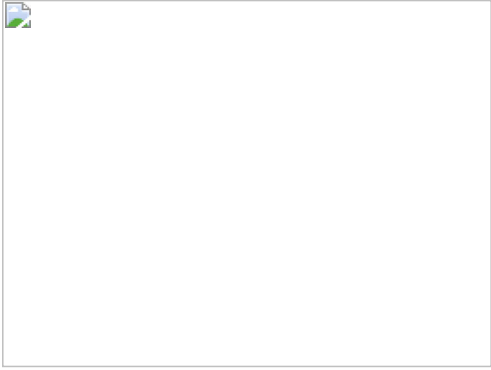
His plan allows for bow-hunters to hunt in certain designated zones of parks that are especially affected by the deer surplus; including Mt. Airy Forest, Alms Park, California Woods Nature Preserve, and the Magrath Preserve located. Yet, not just any joe-schmo with a crossbow can hunt there. Hunter's must go through a rigorous amount of training from not only the city and the state, but also a test by Godby himself, where the applicants must place "4 out of 5 arrows in a 10-inch diameter from 20 yards." A test that would challenge even the most skilled marksman.

To ensure public safety, Godby not only shuts down the parks during the hunts, but also puts a 30-yard "no-hunting buffer" in between hunting zones and any public highway or parking lot. He also has each hunter put a sticker on his or her car. The stickers note which zone hunters are in to not only ensure against hunting accidents, but also helps locate hunters if an incident does occur.

Since the bow hunting initiative was implemented in 2009, deer populations in Cincinnati parks have been reduced by almost a third yet are still toppling the healthy ratios with Mt. Airy Forest's deer population coming in at 67 per square mile and California Woods at 66. The bow-hunting program is one that has made tremendous strides, but still faces many challenges. Challenges that will be met but imploring more hunters every year until the deer population reaches a reasonable, healthy level.

In addition to the deer program, Godby spends his days at The Cincinnati Park Board's Operation Center, an oasis of well-kept greenery and shrubs on a street filled with paint-chipped houses, broken sidewalks and run-down buildings. From his office, he manages tree crews, answering e-mails, and managing the trails of the Cincinnati parks.

In his spare time, Godby volunteers with the non-profit organization, Green Umbrella, as co-leader of the land team with NKU Ecologist, Devin Schenk, who says Jim has an uncanny "ability to lead people and has the



Flowers beautifying the Avondale Road

enthusiasm to get things done. He's just a really good motivator."

His real passion however isn't with his work with Green Umbrella or sitting inside his office going over paperwork, but more working outside and helping people. "If I can get outside, I get outside," he says, "Yesterday was my Eagle Scout project hunt, which is a cool day because that's a day I get to go out and walk the trails."

Godby says that helping Eagle Scouts find projects has been one of the most rewarding parts of his job. He's helped with over 70 Eagle Scout projects since 2001. "It's fun to

go out with these young guys and give them a project and watch the excitement build."

"We generally get a lot of scouts from the Ault Park area, who wants to work in Ault Park. So we are going to take a trail someone constructed years ago in Ault Park and make it an official trail." A job that Godby will lead these Eagle Scout's on, having them construct bridges on this trail, making them safe for public use.

This type of leadership and heart has not only helped the Cincinnati Park Board become the place it is today but has allowed Godby to help countless others, like these Eagle Scouts, in our community, spreading his passion much farther than the 10 percent of land the park board maintains.

Posted by The Big Rad Machine at 8:06 PM



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