

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

July 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, and Commissioner Phyllis McCallum. Commissioner John Neyer attended virtually. Commissioner Susan Castellini was not present. President North called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

Acknowledgement of Public Comments

President North acknowledged one in-person public comment about bow hunting in Parks.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Approval of the June 18 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner McCallum motioned to approve the June 18, 2026, meeting minutes. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATE

Cincinnati Legends Putt House at Freedom Park

Jeffrey R. Anderson, owner of Jeffrey R. Anderson Real Estate and The Filson, presented a proposal to build and operate a miniature-golf course at Lot 18 at The Banks for a 3-year term. The Commissioners and Mr. Anderson discussed existing comparable models, potential operating hours, and the use of artificial turf. Commissioner North asked Parks staff to ensure the artificial turf did not contain PFAs

ACTION ITEMS

Acceptance of Lot 18 at The Banks from the Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County, Ohio

Pursuant to a longstanding Banks Cooperation Agreement between the City and Hamilton County, the City may take possession of Lot 18 at The Banks at such time as it is ready to take over operations and maintenance of the property for Parks purposes. Commissioner McCallum motioned to approve the City's acceptance of title to Lot 18. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Ault Park Discovery Trail Donation Acceptance

Blair Whitney, President of the Ault Park Advisory Council (APAC), gave an update on APAC's current strategic direction, namely a focus on nature education and bringing the arts to Ault Park. A key project in the works is The Discovery Trail, a collaborative effort with several partners to connect the newly renovated Ault Park playground to the existing trail network, with elements encouraging play, exploration, learning, and fun.

APAC generously offered a donation in an amount up to \$150,000 to complete the Ault Park Discovery Trail. Vice President Lee motioned to approve acceptance of the donation. Commissioner McCallum seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATES

Sinton Campus / Biochar Facility Update

Jason Barron, Director, and Travis Miller, Division Manager of Planning & Design, shared an update on progress to redesign Parks' 2.5-acre Sinton Campus. Director Barron gave an overview of KZF's design plans for the renovation, including a new auxiliary building that will house Parks' Biochar Production Facility. The Commissioners and Staff discussed the timeline and the importance of ensuring a competitive bidding process for construction.

ACTION ITEMS

Washington Park Irrigation

Division Manager Miller requested approval to proceed with a contract with Forevergreen for irrigation system repair and upgrades at Washington Park. Commissioner McCallum motioned approval to proceed with a contract in the amount of \$182,718.75, with an additional 10% for contingency. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Smale Cascade Repair and Recirculation Plan

Division Manager Miller requested approval to proceed with a contract with THP for consulting services to identify and present a plan to correct the cause of water leakage at the Smale Vine Street cascade. Commissioner McCallum motioned approval to proceed with a contract in the amount of \$52,220, with an additional 10% contingency. Commissioner Neyer seconded. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATES

Planning & Design Update

Division Manager Miller provided an update on renovation projects at Owl's Nest Park, Glenway Park, and Inwood Park.

Finance / IT Division Highlights

Herta Fairbanks, CFO, provided an update on the Finance Division's work to prepare for and begin the new fiscal year, and their work with City Budget, Accounts & Audits, and Law to consolidate funds to increase flexibility in the way they are used and managed. The IT Division has been working to improve Wi-Fi access for all Parks staff.

HR Update

Director Barron gave an overview of full-time and part-time staff numbers and vacancies, and highlighted HR's current focus on hiring and updating Parks' policy manual.

ACTION ITEMS

Grants Application / Acceptance

Director Barron and Kara Schirmer, Grant Writer, outlined four grant opportunities:

- Cincinnati Parks Foundation: 3's for Trees - \$9,500 to be used to support the planting and care of trees.
- Ohio Environmental Protection Agency:
 - OEEF: Cincinnati Conservation Corps - \$25,000 to be used for service-learning opportunities focused in Mt. Airy Forest for teens and young adults.
 - WRRSP: California Woods Stream Restoration - \$2,000,000 to be used for the restoration and enhancement of Lick Run Creek.
- OPWC: Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program - \$2,000,000 to be used for the acquisition of green space near Mt. Storm and / or the protection and enhancement of river and stream corridors in California Woods.

Commissioner McCallum motioned to approve the application for and acceptance of grant funds from the Parks Foundation, the Ohio EPA, and the Ohio Public Works Commission. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Donations Acceptance

Director Barron requested Board approval to accept donations from two funds held by The Greater Cincinnati Foundation:

- Joseph H. Vasey Fund - \$11,756.72 to fund maintenance of Mt. Airy's Green Garden
- The Park Board Volunteers Fund - \$7,421.76 to fund seasonal maintenance staff in Mt. Airy, Hinkle Gardens, and Ault Park.

Commissioner McCallum motioned to accept the donations. Commissioner Neyer seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Director Barron requested Board approval to accept Q2 in-kind contributions from the Parks Foundation in the amount of \$214,583.64. Vice President Lee motioned to accept the in-kind contributions. Commissioner McCallum seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATES

Parks FY27 Performance Measures

Director Barron shared the results of Parks' FY26 Performance Measure reporting and the details of Parks FY27 Performance Agreement, in a presentation created for the City Manager's Office in collaboration with the Office of Performance and Data Analytics.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director Barron presented the following updates:

- 200 teenagers volunteered for International Youth Convention Volunteer Day on July 1, picking up litter and doing horticulture work at several parks.
- Parks partnered with the Mill Creek Alliance, the Carthage Civic League, and the Cincinnati Health Department to clear dumping locations along the Mill Creek Trail.
- Parks employees spent hours cleaning up graffiti at the Stanbery Park restrooms.
- 4th of July events successfully took place at several parks, including Eden and Ault.
- Events throughout Parks in late July and early August.

OPEN COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION & COMMENTS

Commissioner Neyer asked for clarification on what APAC considers "illegal parties," referenced in their presentation. Director Barron explained that these are often large, unpermitted parties taking place after park operating hours.

ADJOURNMENT

President North adjourned the meeting at 10:44am.

The next regular meeting date is Thursday, August 20, at 9:00am.

ATTEST:

PRESIDENT



DIRECTOR



[External Email] Public Comment July 2026

From Stich Bear <stichbear@gmail.com>
Date Sun 7/12/2026 9:07 AM
To Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>

External Email Communication

Dear Park Staff and Mount Airy Volunteers,

Thank you so very much for your hard work and commitment to creating inclusive spaces for community to gather.

Our little drum circle is in its 15th season and we so appreciate the work that has been done in the shelter area with the gravel around the grills and the securing of the picnic tables, it's been a wonderful space to utilize.

The ADA parking and ramp access has enabled our musicians who need these accommodations to participate.

Dear Park Commissioners and leadership,

Please prioritize accessibility to the bandstand in Burnet Woods.

Adding some designated ADA parking for use at Bandstand events, such as Wednesdays in the Woods, would be greatly appreciated.

Having a ramp access and handrail to our historic Bandstand would enhance the usefulness of one of the oldest structures in our magnificent Park system.

The community who loves and utilizes Burnet Woods is asking.

Sincerely,

Shari Frost

[External Email] Public Comment 7/16

From Cynthia Duval <cynthia_lough@hotmail.com>

Date Wed 7/15/2026 8:32 AM

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

External Email Communication

To the attention of Commissioners-

I would like to express my concern over the excessive fishing line that has been left dangling over Burnet Woods Lake from bad casts caught in the trees. This line left dangling is a mortal tangling hazard to the many birds which utilize the lake, which include both Blue and Green Heron, multiple types of hawks, and Barred Owls. There are no less than 12 dangling lines around the lake, some of which include bobbers dangling in the wind like bizzare christmas ornaments. Parks should have a steadier plan for their removal as this is a recurring problem that staff should be noticing in regular course of duty.

Additionally, after another July 4th leaving the Park shelters trashed with fireworks and party litter, I ask that Parks consider making the Park shelters in Burnet Woods reservation only. It is possible to require reservations without charging a fee so that the affordability is maintained, but a measure of accountability is added. Currently all of Burnet's shelters are first-come-first-served so that community members wanting to gather have to arrive excessively early to get the shelter. A reservation system benefit this aspect of community use as well and provide a metric of shelter usage to Parks at annual budget meetings.

Regards,
Cynthia Duval

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CINCINNATI URBAN DEER ADVOCATES (CUDA) Jul 16, 2026

To: Cincinnati Park Board & Director

From: Cincinnati Urban Deer Advocates (CUDA) *MPS*

Re: **Cincinnati deer Management.**

I am Dr. Millie Schafer, Executive Director of CUDA. By this time, I hope you read and digested the Miami University Research study of Cincinnati Parks' bow hunting program and the document which basically states similar findings and more. Despite given numerous scientific studies, this cruel, ineffective deer management effort, created and led for years by a park employee HUNTER, who didn't live in our city, continued to expand – even though there was **NO scientific studies justifying it**

There are only 2 Cincinnati valid deer management studies: **1) The Clifton deer birth control project. 2) the 2nd is this Miami University study. The aerial flyovers were not properly undertaken to yield a valid scientific result. There is no justification for what you are doing.**

The amazing number of false claims coming from certain park employees is shocking.

FACTS: The claim that deer levels must be between 10- 20 deer/sq mile for our parks embedded on neighborhoods is FALSE.. **“Ecologically, these urban areas are able to support much higher deer numbers” (ODNR Pub 5477)** .I actually took parks' data to Columbus several years ago and met the ODNR rep who strongly criticized that 10-20/sq. mile. He stated in urban areas, deer **could be 40-60/sq mile and be OK.** Urge attention to non-lethal approaches as well. **As Dr. Michael Tonkovich ODNR deer administrative stated: “Bow hunting in urban areas often not practical and not socially acceptable. ODNR owns survey shows 85% of people enjoy seeing deer and having them around. What really happened here was a recreational deer kill program created for a special interest group – while real forest concerns were ignored.**

In 2019, you were given an extensive draft of aa urban deer vaccination birth control program for numerous eastside parks – developed at the request of the previous park supervisor. Certain park employees killed it. So we did not move forward. We are not going away.