

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

July 17, 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: President Molly North, Vice President Kick Lee, Commissioner Susan Castellini, Commissioner Phyllis McCallum, and Commissioner John Neyer. President North called the meeting to order at 9:02am.

Acknowledgement of Public Comments

There were no in-person public comments. President North acknowledged public comments received via email regarding the Burnet Woods dog park and bandstand, and the public comment process.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Approval of the June 20 Meeting Minutes

Vice President Lee motioned to approve the June 20, 2025, meeting minutes. Commissioner McCallum seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATES

Parks FY26 Performance Agreement

Director Jason Barron provided an overview of the City's Performance Management requirements for all departments, and how Parks is using Performance Management to evaluate and improve service. Director Barron shared results from FY25 and outlined Parks FY26 Performance Agreement, which includes Performance Measures and Strategic Department Projects. The Commissioners and Staff discussed challenges and opportunities presented by the City's Customer Service Request system, steps to implement a work order system, and agreed that Staff would report to the Board on the status of Performance Management quarterly.

Planning & Design Update

Director Barron provided an update on projects including the Burnet Woods dog park and efforts to beautify and improve other parts of Burnet Woods. President North stressed the importance of continuing to invest time and resources on improvements to Burnet Woods. Director Barron also updated the Board on the Smale Lot 23 project, the Mt. Airy bike skills course, Everybody's Treehouse repairs, the Ault Park playground, the Sinton East Operations Center and Biochar campus, the Sawyer Point playground, and general maintenance and repairs throughout Parks.

Riverfront Signage Improvements

Division Manager of Communications, Engagement and Volunteers, Rocky Merz, shared an overview of work to create an updated and cohesive signage plan throughout the Riverfront Parks (Smale, Sawyer Point & Yeatman's Cove, and T.M.B. International Friendship Park). This is a collaborative project with the organizers of the America's River Roots Festival, with the help of the Cincinnati Parks Foundation, that will create a unified signage plan for wayfinding on both sides of the river. The Commissioners and Staff discussed opportunities to use QR codes to keep signage information current.

Finance / IT Division Highlights

Division Manager of Finance and IT, Herta Fairbanks, shared updates on preparations for FY 26 and work to improve processes within Parks Finance, as well as ongoing efforts being made by the IT Department to identify and cut costs.

HR Update

Director Barron provided an overview of full-time staffing, including key new hires on the Riverfront and Urban Forestry teams. Director Barron shared successful efforts made by the Division of Natural Resources, led by Division Manager Crystal Courtney, to bring more tree work in-house in order to cut costs and improve service to citizens.

ACTION ITEMS

Grants Application / Acceptance

Director Barron requested Board approval to apply for and accept a grant from the Cincinnati Parks Foundation in an amount up to \$56,151, for Additional Security Details at the Riverfront parks, as well as a grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in the amount of \$1,500,000, for the Cincinnati Downtown Riverfront Marina. Commissioner McCallum motioned to approve application for and acceptance of the grant from the Cincinnati Parks Foundation. Commissioner Neyer seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote. Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve the application for and acceptance of funds if granted from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Acceptance of Q2 2025 In-Kind Contributions

Director Barron requested Board approval to retain Q2 2025 in-kind contributions from the Cincinnati Parks Foundation in the amount of \$88,027.25. Commissioner Neyer motioned to approve Q2 2025 in-kind contributions. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director Barron presented the following updates:

- With the help of the Parks Foundation and Forevergreen Landscaping, Parks staff was able to complete a major litter cleanup project at Jackson Hill.
- Events throughout July and early August in Parks, including a number of large weekend events at Sawyer Point & Yeatman's Cove.
- July is National Park and Recreation Month. This year's theme is "Build Together, Play Together."

ADJOURNMENT

President North adjourned the meeting at 10:43am.

The next regular meeting date is Thursday, August 21, 2025, at 9:00am.

ATTEST:

PRESIDENT



DIRECTOR



[External Email] Public Comment: 6/20/2025

From Bob Hyland <bobnhyland@gmail.com>

Date Thu 6/19/2025 10:05 AM

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

 1 attachment (6 MB)

BW_destruction.png;

External Email Communication

Dear Commissioners,



Both of these pictures were taken in Burnet Woods on the evening of June 18, 2025. Everyone can see the problem: **either you don't understand the urgency of urban forest and public health protection or you don't care. Both cases are disqualifying.**

For your children and grandchildren, please ask the Mayor to replace you with individuals who understand the gravity of the ecological crises we face, and who will bring an ethos to do the right thing in management of the 5000+ acres of public greenspace in Cincinnati, as opposed to the personal, expedient, and violent thing as you have chosen to do.

With all due respect,

Bob Hyland

*Please include images in public comment.

[External Email] Public Comment 7/17 - Burnet Woods Dog Park

From Cynthia Duval <cynthia_lough@hotmail.com>

Date Fri 6/27/2025 4:25 PM

To Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>; CityManagerEmail <citymanager@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Aftab, Mayor <mayor.aftab@cincinnati-oh.gov>

 1 attachment (202 KB)

IMG_0694.jpeg;

External Email Communication

Adding record of another event cancellation for Parks-aligned nonprofit Clifton Pop-Up Puppy Party. This is the second event cancelled of six scheduled for the year 2025. Cincinnati Parks is now dedicating more than \$100,000 per event to provide this group, that does not create any benefit to Burnet Woods, with an event venue the community does not want.

What an embarrassing, misrepresentative and wasteful decision made by this Park Board and Director.

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From: Cynthia Duval <cynthia_lough@hotmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2025 12:29 PM

To: Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>; citymanager@cincinnati-oh.gov <citymanager@cincinnati-oh.gov>; mayor.aftab@cincinnati-oh.gov <mayor.aftab@cincinnati-oh.gov>

Subject: Public Comment 5/15 - Burnet Woods Dog Park

Two awareness items to share with the Commissioners in this email regarding the proposed dog park in Burnet Woods.

1. The singular non-profit, Clifton Pop-Up Puppy Party, that Cincinnati Parks and Cincinnati Parks Foundation have aligned themselves with cancelled their April meetup. This was the first meetup of the year, and one of only 6 scheduled for 2025. This is significant as the nonprofit has cancelled events in prior years specifically for lack of volunteers and does not appear to have significant volunteer support to host events. The Commissioners may recall this group committed volunteerism to support the dog park and Commissioner McCallum noted she hoped that supporters of the dog park would start showing up. Their social media post and low engagement evidence that they don't even show up for their own events and cannot be relied on to volunteer at the proposed dog park. \$450,000 seems an extravagant expense for a group

that won't meet 6 times this year, can't prove commitment to their own organization in events and failed to hit fundraising goals for this project.

2. Messaging is being transmitted through local animal shelters not to bring their dogs to Burnet Woods because of the sewer overflow bacteria permeating the lower valley where parks Summer Camps are held, and directly across from the proposed dog park location. This doesn't bode well for messaging in the extended dog ownership community about the safety of Burnet Woods for health of dogs. Perhaps Parks should reconsider their focus on prioritizing an unnecessary and ill-sited development over public health.

Photos evidencing both points attached.

Cynthia Duval

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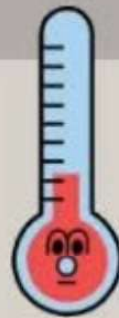


Clifton Plaza 3h



Clifton Pop Up Puppy Party - PUPP

6/23 gathering cancelled.
Ugh, it's too hot



@Clifton Plaza

[External Email] Public Comment July 2025

From Stich Bear <stichbear@gmail.com>

Date Fri 6/27/2025 11:26 AM

To Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Aftab, Mayor <mayor.aftab@cincinnati-oh.gov>; #COUNCIL <CityCouncil@cincinnati-oh.gov>

 4 attachments (14 MB)

IMG_1338.jpeg; IMG_1505.jpeg; IMG_1506.jpeg; IMG_1510.jpeg;

External Email Communication

Dear City leaders, Park director and Park Commissioners,
Maybe you've noticed the scorching temperatures we are experiencing here in Cincinnati?
I watched in horror as truckload after truckload of cooling storm mitigating SOIL was removed from Burnet Woods during a climate crisis.
Your decisions are literally helping to kill people, wildlife and habitat.
Replacing soil with concrete and gravel, creating yet another heat island on public land is inexcusable.
I demand restoration of the park entrance to Burnet Woods IMMEDIATELY! This cannot stand.
It should have never happened.
Sincerely,
Shari Cartmill Frost
A global citizen who cares about the future for all living things on planet earth

Include photos in public comment









[External Email] Public Dog Parks Public Comment

From Stich Bear <stichbear@gmail.com>

Date Fri 6/27/2025 1:19 PM

To BOH Clerk <BOH.CLERK@cincinnati-oh.gov>

Cc Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Aftab, Mayor <mayor.aftab@cincinnati-oh.gov>

External Email Communication

Dear Board of Health,

Is there any oversight of our Public Dog Parks from your department?

On June 26, 2025 I personally documented 33 piles of dog feces inside the Washington Park Dog Park.

Last summer I reported numbers as high as 88 in the same park.

The dog park is steps away from an outdoor food and drink establishment and also the children's fountain area.

Needless to say, the dog park is invested with flies.

Is there ANYTHING you can do to hold Cincinnati Parks accountable for their poor management of these public/animal health abuses?

Sincerely,

Shari Frost

[External Email] Public Comment July 2025

From Stich Bear <stichbear@gmail.com>

Date Wed 7/2/2025 7:30 AM

To Aftab, Mayor <mayor.aftab@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>

External Email Communication

It's Disability awareness month. I could use your help to address the problem with accessibility at the bandstand in Burnet Woods. I don't think it's unreasonable to ask Parks for a handrail and ramp. They've had over 30 years to comply with ADA. If they can spend half a million dollars on a dog park that most did not want, they can address this very real concern. We've had several community members who have fallen down the concrete stairs while at the bandstand. Those stairs really need a handrail.

Perhaps our historic preservation representatives could design something that would be both aesthetically pleasing and functional?

Sincerely,
Shari Frost



Outlook

[External Email] Public Comment 7/17

From Cynthia Duval <cynthia_lough@hotmail.com>

Date Tue 7/15/2025 4:14 PM

To Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>; #COUNCIL <citycouncil@cincinnati-oh.gov>

External Email Communication

Regarding posting of the Meeting Packet and Agenda
for the Park Board Meeting 7/17

As of 4:04PM on Tuesday 7/15, the Park Board Meeting and Agenda Packet has not yet been made available to public view. As the period to submit written public comment to the Board has been shortened to before noon on Wednesday prior to the meeting, this allows less than 24 hours (functionally, less than 12 hours) for the public to have access to review documents on public matters relating to public land and disbursement of public funds.

As such, it is requested that the Board table any proposed votes in this agenda to the August meeting in the interest of transparency, accountability and the public's right to be informed on public good holdings.

No action has been taken by the Board in the interest of making the Board's meeting accessible to the public in function and operation for in-person public comment despite the Board President's statement that that would be done in a prior meeting.

Cynthia Duval

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