BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
October 15, 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 John Neyer. Commissioner Susan Castellini and Commissioner Phyllis McCallum were not present. President North called the meeting to order at 9:10am.

Acknowledgement of Public Comments

There were no in-person public comments. President North acknowledged public comments received via email and discussed the rules and practices of posting the meeting agenda and packet to the Cincinnati Parks website in advance of the meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Approval of the September 17 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Neyer motioned to approve the September 17, 2026, meeting minutes. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Commissioner McCallum joined the meeting virtually at 9:13am.

ACTION ITEM

Glenway Park Renovation Implementation and Playground Installation

Division Manager of Planning & Design, Travis Miller, requested approval to proceed with a contract with Prus in the amount of $832,559.20 with an additional 10% contingency, for construction of a new entrance path at Glenway Park. Division Manager Miller also requested approval to proceed with a construction contract with PES in the amount of $272,060 with an additional 10% contingency, to install a new playground at Glenway Park. Vice President Lee motioned approval to proceed with both contracts as outlined. Commissioner Neyer seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATE

Planning & Design Update

Division Manager Miller gave an update on several in-progress and recently completed capital projects, including the Mt. Adams steps, Everybody's Treehouse, Owl's Nest Park, and Smale Lot 23.

ACTION ITEM

Capital Budget Transfer: Sinton Renovation

Parks Director Jason Barron requested approval to reallocate $1,067,052.26 from the Riverfront Parks Stabilization capital account to the Sinton Facility Renovation capital account. Parks Staff identified capital funding sources for the Sinton project based on estimates from the project architects, KZF Design, and determined that the Riverfront Stabilization account funding was not necessary for that project in the short term and would be better utilized on the Sinton project. Commissioner Neyer moved to approve the budget transfer. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATES

Monthly Finance / IT Division Highlights

Herta Fairbanks, Division Manager of Finance & IT, shared an update on the implementation of the new Cincinnati Financial System (CFS), which will necessitate a City-wide shutdown of CFS for the conversion and cause temporary delays in monthly financial reporting. Division Manager Fairbanks also shared updates on quarterly expenditures and the IT Department's work to improve Wi-Fi access at Parks facilities.

HR Update

Derrick Gentry, Supervising HR Analyst, reported on active recruitment efforts for multiple positions across Parks, as well as HR initiatives including safety training planning, new employee orientation improvements, development of leadership training programs, and the upcoming Fall All Staff on November 5.

ACTION ITEMS

Grants Application / Acceptance

Director Barron outlined three grant opportunities:

- From the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA): $15,000, to be used for measures to control the invasive Spotted Lanternfly population.
- From the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): $100,000, to be used for the restoration and enhancement of Lick Run Creek in California Woods.
- From the U.S. Forest Service (USFS): $500,000, to be used to support startup costs and early operation of the Cincinnati Biochar Project.

Commissioner Neyer motioned to approve the application for and acceptance of grants from the ODA, USFWS, and USFS. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Acceptance of In-Kind Contributions and Annual Endowment Distributions from the Cincinnati Parks Foundation

Director Barron requested approval to accept $53,490.85 of in-kind contributions for the third quarter of 2026, as well as $160,332 in permanent endowment distributions for FY27 from the Parks Foundation. Commissioner Neyer motioned to approve acceptance of the in-kind contributions and endowment distributions from the Parks Foundation. Commissioner McCallum seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director Barron presented the following updates:

- Krohn's Holiday Show, *A Spider's Gift*, runs from October 31 through January 3.
- Parks won best dressed at the City Manager's annual CMOlympics.
- Employees from AtriCure, KAO, and Bartlett Wealth Management contributed their time to group volunteer projects across Parks.
- The Cincinnati Conservation stewards are hosting fall and winter volunteer events to control invasive species throughout Parks.
- In partnership with the Parks Foundation, the American Heart Association (AHA), and the Cincinnati Health Department, Parks hosted World Restart a Heart Day at Bettman Nature Preserve, as part of a grant received from the AHA.
- Events throughout Parks in late October and early November.

OPEN COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION & COMMENTS

The Commissioners discussed a recent act of vandalism in California Woods involving damage to approximately 30-40 trees. Staff reported that there is ongoing assessment, but are hopeful that this was an isolated, one-time incident.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President North requested that the Board adjourn into Executive Session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §121.22(G), to discuss the appointment, employment, and compensation of a public employee or official. Vice President Lee motioned to adjourn into Executive Session. Commissioner Neyer seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board returned from Executive Session at 11:37am. President North adjourned the meeting at 11:38am.

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

ATTEST:

PRESIDENT _____ DIRECTOR _____

Outlook

[External Email] Public Comment October 2026

From Stich Bear <stichbear@gmail.com>
Date Tue 10/20/2026 8:02 AM
To Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>
Cc Aftab, Mayor <mayor.aftab@cincinnati-oh.gov>; CityManagerEmail <citymanager@cincinnati-oh.gov>

External Email Communication

Dear Park Commissioners and City Leaders,

Artificial turf destroys natural habitats and soil.

Artificial turf contributes to carbon emissions during manufacture and transport, while real grass absorbs CO2 and provides necessary habitat.

Artificial turf overheats in the summer and contributes to urban heat islands.

Artificial turf can contribute to flooding absorbing as much as less than 50% of the rain that falls on them.

Artificial turf pollutes our waterways, as over time the plastic breaks down into microplastics, which is washed into our drainage and discharged into rivers and the sea; it is neither biodegradable nor recyclable, and after the life cycle expires (typically up to about 15 years) it will go into a landfill where it will continue to pollute.

Artificial turf is an environmental nightmare, green in color only.

Every time you choose to install it, you may as well be saying: “I know we’re concerned about climate change, but we’re going to contribute to it by installing the product anyway”.

Please rethink its use.

Green Cincinnati should be an action, not just words.

Sincerely,

Shari Frost

Cincinnati Parks Volunteer and concerned citizen

Outlook

[External Email] FW: Public Comment November 19, 2026 Flaws in Cincinnati Parks' deer management

From mschafer1@zoomtown.com <mschafer1@zoomtown.com>
Date Wed 11/18/2026 10:17 AM
To Parks, Cincy <Cincy.Parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>

3 attachments (493 KB)
deer- May 4 2017 meeting updated.docx; calulating deer no per area .pdf; Cincinnati Parks November 19^J updated 2026 Presentation.docx;

External Email Communication

1. **Summary of discussions with former park supervisor, Mr. Jim Burkhardt – who invited us to work with him in 2017 to help Cincinnati Parks move away from the use of bow hunters .**
   Note: See requirements for VALID deer count numbers on p. 1. *How accurate do you think doing 1 limited survey very 2 years would be? Do each of these sites surveyed cover the recommended "1 square mile or 640 acres?" Are you wasting taxpayer dollars?*
   Note 2. After much study, the park supervisor, Jim Burkhardt, who took this over from a previous supervisor, and was over this park employee hunter's bow hunting program, disagreed with him and clearly stated to us that "**bow hunting is NOT appropriate for these small parks"** (this angered the park employee hunter and that anger was expressed on more than one occasion.)

   Needless to say, We were shocked by the completely opposite treatment from Jim Burkhardt's replacement. **Note 3,** neither this park employee hunter or this this new supervisor lived in Cincinnati or even in this county and therefore, had no direct experience of the "culture" of this city towards the treatment of animals.

2. **Calculating deer/sq.mile**: The number of deer WITHIN the area of a park is counted and then that number divided by the area of this park of interest. However, **the actual number of deer counted in each of these small parks were falsified.** How? The IR flyover counted deer OUTSIDE of these small parks on private properties as well as what was counted INSIDE each of these small parks. Then the 2 numbers were added together AND reported as the number of deer in that park – resulting in a false claim and a much higher number (Deer Cheat Sheet). **Our research indicated deer often lived on private properties OUTSIDE these small parks, and simply did not reside inside – are "edge dwellers". Cincinnati Parks had no legal right to draw these deer into these small parks to kill them – did so by baiting, and sometimes actually illegally hunted on the neighboring private properties.**

3. In an **Enquirer article, December 19, 2004**, which involved discussion of what to do about the growing deer population, Hamilton Conty Park District explicitly stated: "Bow hunting is NOT efficient at significantly reducing deer populations"? **So why was this method selected by Cincinnati Parks? (We do know, refer to meeting update article,**

Cincinnati Parks had no knowledge about immunocontraception or other nonlethal methos).

Thousands of Cincinnati residents have now expressed their opposition while signing a petition to stop this damn bow hunting! Even some hunters signed this and said this dangerous activity does not below in this city. We never completed the draft of the immunocontraception proposal due to the current resistance of the leadership in the Natural Resource Division – met new division leader in 2019- (working with technicians trained/associated with wildlife schools were going to be added- this successful approach was used by Bald Head in North Carolina). To date, park bow hunters are even killing some of the Clifton sterilized deer – which is illegal, as animals in ODNR research programs are NOT to be killed by hunters.

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

May 4, 2017

Meeting Agenda (questions raised in April 20, 2017 e-mail: May not have answer but hopefully can define what information needs to be obtained, etc.

I. *Where to do this birth control project?* Points to consider:

- Need to know the deer population in a given area- various methods
  1. Use of flyovers with infrared camera detection method.- usually done in March **one time** each year.

     How accurate? (article by Dr. Diefenbach, U.S. Geological Survey, etc) **3 replicate surveys** /year could detect a _> 20% decline in deer abundance with >80% probability (equivalent: 10 deer/mi^2 to 8 deer/mi^2.

     2 replicate surveys/year could detect a _> 50% decline in abundance

     6 replicate surveys/year could detect a _> 10% decline

     (too expensive to determine "bias" so this approach may not be feasible) Again **deer move!!**

     See conclusion on page 3.

     Consideration: Use of drone(s) could permit a more frequent survey of deer numbers in a targeted area. Results could be compared to the flyover approach currently in use. (pilot study). Also, game camera surveys conducted travel paths can be very useful. In regard to use of drones, Fire Department, according to Park official, would be contacted for "clearance", etc. Also, possible city approval as well. Thought an interesting idea, etc.

- "Surveys should cover as large an area as possible; preferably a deer's home range (**1 square mile or 640 acres).** (Penn State College of Ag Sci)
- Deer approachable and accessible – within 30 to 120 feet
- Location for darting needs to be a relatively safe area for the activity

- Significant number of deer at a site (if only 5 deer, wouldn't make for a strong research proposal)
- Comparative differences between the White Buffalo's Clifton research proposal ("research-lite) and the Tufts University research proposal (research-heavy) was discuss. It was mutually felt that a proposal could have a research level in between the 2 levels just described. It was also believed that a university sponsored proposal is not required. A community-based proposal (as implemented in other parts of the US) could build the expertise within the organization or group coming together to implement the approach – training etc. now available. (Mutual agreement on this)
- Park official stated: With the support of Cincinnati Parks, a proposal will be accepted – and he will support it. Only 2 research proposals have been submitted to the ODNR (State of Ohio Natural Resources) and both were accepted. Also, ODNR indicated that a lot of "rules" have not been set forth by them = flexible.
- **May have to create a research proposal that addresses more than one of our smaller parks as there are not high numbers of deer in them.** Note: **10 years ago, the deer in Mt. Airy were tame or semi-tame**. There was also plenty of deer and this site could have been a robust birth control research project. Due to aggressive hunting (sharpshooters and bowhunting) deer are now very skittish and have changed their behavior. Locals tell me they often seldom see one – and they miss the friendly visits that once use to be common place. (Then there are sad stories, deer running to their properties with arrows in them). **In short, Mt. Airy would now appear to be a difficult site to initiate a birth control research proposal. Literally – hundreds of bow hunters terrorized the Mt. Airy deer each year for 4 months or more! It appears bow hunting would have to cease for a time period first.**

  (quote from a long-time regular user of Mt. Airy). *"Wonderful! Keep it up! I prefer to see deer while I'm running in the parks but I never see them in Mt Airy because the hunting has conditioned them wisely to startle and avoid people. Thanks!* (Note: prior to the hunting, he regularly saw deer in Mt. Airy).

  Park official said that the Mt. Airy deer are now acting like deer in the wild (or, normal behavior for deer). However, he was reminded that these are urban deer, he agreed – not the deer running around in rural, rustic areas, etc. **(Urban deer simply become part of our communities and are considered tame/semi-tame deer).**

  Park official said that when they were discussing management options for the deer population, they had NO knowledge of "immunocontraception" or birth control.

Drake Park: Has safe locations for darting – especially homeowner properties that run back a distance and directly abut the park property. Big **negative:** Bow hunting has terrorized the deer – given the reports received from locals and my own observations. Prior to bow hunting, regularly saw deer in the area and they didn't run. After bow hunting started, numerous reports of terrorized deer running across busy roads (including deer-vehicle accidents), etc. (and I no longer see them myself). Several weeks after bow hunting, reports indicate some deer are seen returning from other areas usually at night. These deer are not as terrorized as Mt. Airy deer – so **may be a possible site?** Also, property owners care about the deer and want the bow hunting stopped! (More about Drake Park in a separate communication).

Other Parks: "Each site may well have its own reproductive rate, sex ratio, mortality rate, and immigration/emigration" (Kirkpatridk). Can't generalize - but which ones have a significant number of deer?

Parks suggested for our consideration:

- **Drake (has possibilities),**
- **Mt. Echo**
- **Burnet Woods (said we might capture the Ludlow deer)**
- **Rapid Run.**
- **Drake Park was recently added to the bow hunting program and testing the ability to establish a humane birth control program after terrorizing the deer for over 4 months each year could be one of the research objectives. However,** illegal hunting or poaching was going on in Drake Park prior to this. The number of deer associated with Mt. Echo, Burnet Woods and Rapid Run are unknown and <u>there has been no legal hunting in these parks.</u> But, in general, the park people do NOT have good numbers in regard to the number of deer in any of our parks.

<u>Much to our surprise, it was stated via the park official, that bow hunting is NOT appropriate for these small parks. !!</u>

- **How do park people determine the number of deer per square mile? (adding "Outside" to Inside" numbers but not the outside area?). (We didn't discuss this but statement read and the reaction or look was "interesting". In short, Mr.Godby is making the number of deer per square mile higher than what it really is in the parks. I have their data and worked the "math".)**

"HOW MANY ANIMALS HAVE TO BE TREATED? What is the Goal? (20% reduction or s**tabilization** or a 50% slowing of the growth?)" (Kirkpatrick) Note: "For most ungulates, populations decline ***when more***

than 60% of females are treated with a contraceptive" (Garrott 1995 and Rutberg et al., 20014) HSUS August 12, 2015 Report.

Big surprise: The park official said that they have spoken with various people with the Ohio Department of Wildlife – and they were told that the "number of deer per square mile can vary widely". There is no ideal number! I stated that this should be explained to Jim Godby, hunter and park employee driving the deer killing program(s). Jim Godby has stated repeatedly that deer population needs to be 10-20 per square mile. (ODNR person told me personally that this is NOT correct). In short: "numbers is NOT an acceptable goal" (park official stated this to us as well).

- **The "P-Factor" (people, deer feeders, etc.)** Key to success. Explain how working with the community and getting their "buy-in" is critical to the success of the program. Park official was informed that since there is NOT community "buy-in" for the bow hunting program, it will never achieve its objectives as people are and will continue to try and deflect the deer away from the killing areas. Park official was told by deer killer Denicola (White Buffalo) running the deer sterilization program, that there were numerous deer feeders in that area. (He was informed that there are many deer feeders everywhere in this area and their support/cooperation are critical for a successful urban deer population management program. They know the deer!

II. **Ohio Department of Agriculture** – Role? Park official explained that since the harmless birth control has a "restricted pesticide" label, we would need some type of certification or approval from this department in order to use in. He said 50 of the park employees have such certification in order to use herbicides, etc. in the parks. (We will check into this- which may take some effort).

III. **Ohio Division of Wildlife** – Birth control research proposals (Brett did send a brief, broad, general view – no restrictions and flexible)

IV. **Cincinnati City Council -** How was this handled for the Clifton project. (we have volunteers communicating with some of these folks and we know the Cincinnati Humane Task Force prefers a humane birth control approach and some council members deferred to this group)

V. **Cincinnati Park Board – dealing with some new people**. ?
Suggestions on how to deal with them? (Hope we don't have to repeat the effort undertaken for the Clifton deer herd(s))

VI. EPA – will need to submit some paperwork (oversee PZP and other birth control products for wildlife). **I am willing to track down contacts there and what we would need to do.**

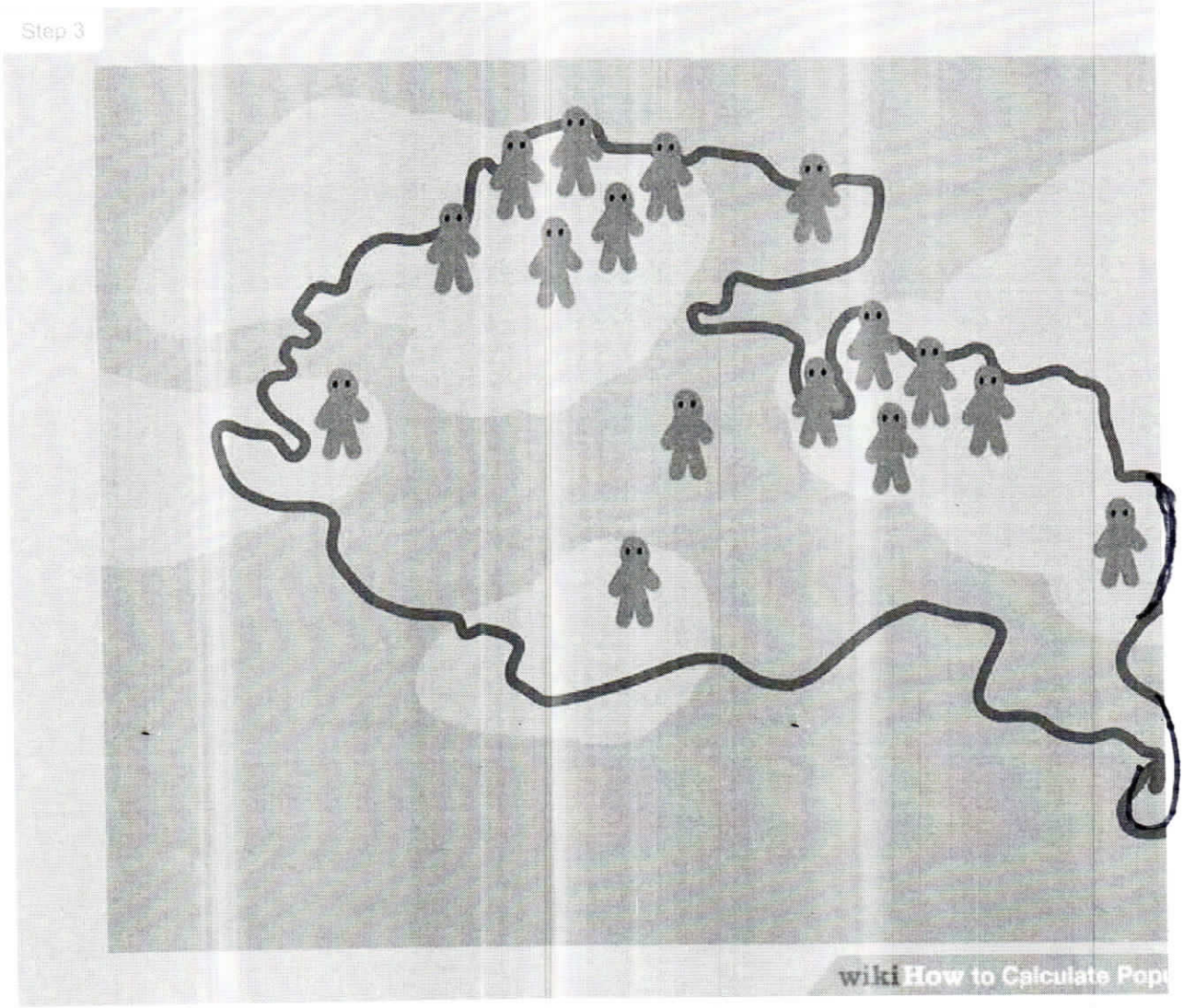
The park official stated in sharp contrast to these requirements for a birth control program, only a hunting license is required to kill them – according to ODNR. **In short,** there are certainly some "hoops" to jump through. Park people would submit any proposal from us to the law department of the city (IV) – not expected to be much of a challenge for clearance here.

Cincinnati Urban Deer Advocates (CUDA) **– was moving towards a referendum to shut down citywide the bow hunting program (a council member's office offered to help write the referendum) and only support humane management efforts. Therefore, since this would have been primarily a political effort, no 501(c)3 classification was sought. However, since we have received a positive response from park official(s) to work with us to develop a birth control research proposal, 2 CUDA volunteers, both experienced with 501(c)3 write ups, etc., are now going to move us in this direction – permits us to apply for grants, etc.**

Please Note: Since we are now re-directing our efforts, we will be watching to see if the killing increases – which could cause us to re-consider this labor-intensive endeavor. The hope is that a humane infrastructure will be developed that addresses deer population problems where they have been shown to exist in our city parks and preserves. We look forward to park volunteers assisting with this effort as well.

wikiHow
to do anything

Step 3



Be aware of the limitations.

Date: November 19, 2026

To: Cincinnati Park Board

From: Millie P. Schafer, PhD, Executive Director. Cincinnati Urban Deer Advocates

Subject: Flaws in Cincinnati Parks Deer Management Program

The attachments sent to you should enable you to at least ask some basic questions about this deer bow hunting program. As already stated, you have NO valid data that would justify this deer kill program. We can prove everything we have stated, and it took many hours of research and investigations to get to the TRUTH! Why was there no public reporting on this activity for at least 5 years? We obtained a lot of information using Public Records Request, walk-throughs of some small parks and interviewed some of the people living in these areas. **IT IS A FACT: That after engaging thousands of people for 2 years, you** do not have the support of Cincinnati residents – and a number of these folks are doing what they can to protect the deer – **they love them! Numerous objections and complaints have been ignored.**

We were also told by park leadership years ago that if the birth control pilot program in Clifton was successful, park leadership would move to expand this approach and phase out bow hunting. Sadly, the only current park board member who was also on the board at that time, has been very clear about a strong dislike of deer. This current board is not the cause of this cruel, ineffective, dangerous program. <u>You inherited it</u>. **Do you have the courage to act? "If you want different results, do NOT do the same thing." This deer program is not only seriously flawed, it is simply corrupt – and needs a major investigation.** We are willing to meet with members of this park board, if interested. We are NOT going away. As stated, previously, we were not your enemy. Your enemy is within Cincinnati Parks.

Outlook

[External Email] Public Comment 11/19

From Cynthia Duval <cynthia_lough@hotmail.com>
Date Wed 11/18/2026 11:35 AM
To Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>
Cc #COUNCIL <citycouncil@cincinnati-oh.gov>; CityManagerEmail <citymanager@cincinnati-oh.gov>; reds5050@reds.com <reds5050@reds.com>; RosieReds@reds.com <RosieReds@reds.com>

External Email Communication

Attn: Cincinnati Board of Parks Commissioners

I would like to express disappointment in the CBPC, the Reds Community Fund, and the Rosie Reds organizations in the push to install more synthetic turf in our public parks. The Commissioner's Board has received multiple resources over the last 5-years providing science-based research on the negative health impacts, particularly on children, of the base chemical components present in synthetic turf. Based on comment in prior meetings about the Reds Community Fund and Rosie Reds waiting until the 'turf issue' in Burnet Woods had passed, it is reasonable to assume they are aware of the reasons why synthetic turf is controversial to the point of being banned in several U.S. cities for use in public spaces. It is gross that they waited on their proposal to intentionally avoid discussion of public concern over the materials choice.

Additionally, The same fields these organizations are trying to unreasonably extend playing season on (in the Midwest!) through flooding and snow will become too hot to play on during the actual Summer season. Surface temperature readings were taken during the season on synthetic fields at LeBlond and provided to Commissioners showing infield temperatures reading well-beyond 100°. Synthetic turf temperatures at Inwood's playground hit 156° on a Summer afternoon. Again, measurement proof photos were taken on multiple sites, over multiple visits, and were provided to Commissioners and Councilmembers.

Frankly, it is weird and short-sighted, from a health and environmental mindset, that what parks agreed was NOT safe for dogs to play on IS safe for children. It is weird and short-sighted from a financial mindset that what Parks found to be too expensive for 5,000 square feet in one park is now affordable in another park - not recognizing the lifetime tether of expense being created to maintain and replace the field every 6-8 years, incurring hazardous waste disposal cost as well. The turf at Washington Park is disgusting and far past replacement.

The RCF and the Rosie Reds are commendable organizations that do a lot of good in the community; there is no question of good intention. However, this amplifies the disappointing trend they've taken to continue installing plastic fields in parks despite the overwhelming evidence on the long-term toxicity of synthetic turf.

Please commit the funds to better maintenance and an endowment for a natural field instead of once again plasticizing what children identify as outdoors/nature.

Cynthia Duval

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