

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
November 20, 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, and Commissioner Phyllis McCallum. Commissioner Susan Castellini and Commissioner John Neyer attended virtually. President North called the meeting to order at 9:02am.

Acknowledgement of Public Comments

President North acknowledged public comments received via email regarding Burnet Woods signage and accessibility.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Approval of the October 16 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner McCallum motioned to approve the October 16, 2025, meeting minutes. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

ACTION ITEMS

Otto Armleder Lease Renewal

Parks Director, Jason Barron, provided background on the ownership and management of Otto Armleder Memorial Park. Since 2005, Great Parks of Hamilton County has operated the section of the park managed by Cincinnati Parks. The current lease is set to expire on December 31, 2025, and Great Parks is working with the City to exercise a five-year extension. Staff requested the Board approve the execution of a Lease and Operating Agreement to extend the current agreement with Great Parks for an additional 5-year term. Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve the execution of the lease. Commissioner McCallum seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Nature Education Fee Increases

Director Barron briefly recapped the analysis of Parks' Nature Education programming and summarized the proposed program fee increases presented at the October Board Meeting. Staff requested the Board approve the proposed Nature Education fee adjustments as outlined. Commissioner Neyer motioned to approve the adjustments. Commissioner McCallum seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Sinton Biochar Contract Update

Director Barron outlined the factors that contributed to a need for additional engineering support from KZF Design, to ensure the construction drawings for the Parks Operation Campus at Sinton have the level of detail needed to house the Parks' biochar project. Staff recommended approval of an additional \$21,009 award of work to KZF, to complete design of the construction drawings to include proper installation and alignment of all biochar production components. Vice President Lee motioned to approve the additional cost. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Sherman Recreation Area

Director Barron shared plans for a Gaslight Property development adjacent to the Sherman Recreation Area – a park space owned by Cincinnati Parks and managed by the

Cincinnati Recreation Commission. Gaslight has proposed using the Sherman Recreation Area to meet the stormwater needs of their project by installing a green-infrastructure bio-swale into an area of the property that is currently lawn. Parks Staff will work with Gaslight to develop and finalize the plans, and Gaslight will pay for the installation and work with City Law to develop a plan for annual funding for long-term maintenance. Staff requested the Board recommend approval of this modification to the physical design and layout of the park. Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve the change to the property. Commissioner McCallum seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATES

Planning & Design Update

Director Barron shared brief updates on the Ault Park Playground and Everybody's Treehouse at Mt. Airy Forest.

Finance / IT Update

Division Manager of Finance and IT, Herta Fairbanks, addressed a question from President North on Year-to-Date Expenses, specifically Professional Services and Utilities. Staff and the Commissioners discussed the City's process for managing utilities, as well as progress and next steps on the Parks Finance team's FY2026 financial realignment goals. President North requested an update on endowment fund balances.

HR Update

Director Barron gave an overview of full-time staffing, vacancies, and efforts to streamline part-time hiring, improve training and professional development opportunities, and update Parks' Policy Manual.

ACTION ITEM

Foundation Grant Application / Acceptance: Let's Grow Local

Director Barron shared details of the 2025 Let's Grow Local tree planting event in the West End. Staff requested the Board approve the application for and acceptance of grant funds made to the Cincinnati Parks Foundation to support this effort, in an amount up to \$2,500. Vice President Lee motioned to approve the application for and acceptance of the grant. Commissioner McCallum seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director Barron presented the following updates:

- Parks' Greenspace team led a winter planting installation at Fountain Square
- Over 300 volunteers planted trees, installed tree wells, mulched, and picked up litter at this year's Let's Grow Local event in the West End
- A ribbon cutting at the Mt. Airy Forest Bike Skills Course took place on October 31
- Parks' Fall All Staff celebration took place on October 23
- Upcoming events throughout Parks through early December

OPEN COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION & COMMENTS

Commissioner McCallum shared that she attended the winter CPAC meeting and noted how heartwarming it was to see so many enthusiastic volunteers, and thanked the Parks Foundation for their partnership on that project.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President North motioned to adjourn into Executive Session under Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G) to consider the appointment, employment, and compensation of a public employee. Vice President Lee motioned to adjourn to Executive Session. Commissioner McCallum seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

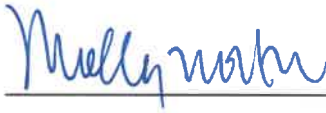
ADJOURNMENT

The Board returned from Executive Session at 11:18am. President North adjourned the meeting at 11:19am.

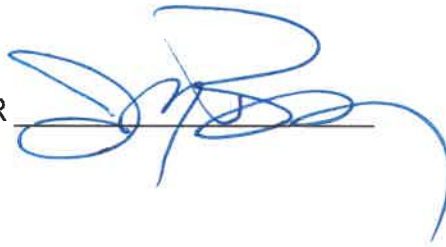
The next regular meeting date is Thursday, December 18, at 9:00am.

ATTEST:

PRESIDENT



DIRECTOR



[External Email] Public Comment Nov 2025

From Stich Bear <stichbear@gmail.com>
Date Sun 10/26/2025 9:53 AM
To Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>

External Email Communication

Greetings to you,

Writing to inform you that we have a missing sign in Burnet Woods at the base of the concrete slide. It's one of our new signs that warn the public of the possibility of raw sewage in the area.

Please also know that the construction of the dog park has added a great deal of storm water to the overtaxed system. The valley where the dog park now sits used to absorb the water. Now the water flows across the sidewalk and is depositing debris and mulch from the dog park along its path, accumulating in the new curb cut. I imagine this will become a sheet of ice across the sidewalk as winter approaches.

Please remedy this as soon as possible.

Shari Frost

Burnet Woods Volunteer

[External Email] Public Comment Nov 2025

From Stich Bear <stichbear@gmail.com>

Date Wed 11/12/2025 6:25 AM

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

Cc CityManagerEmail <citymanager@cincinnati-oh.gov>

External Email Communication

Dear Commissioners and Parks Director,

I am writing again to discuss accessibility in our City Parks.

Over the last few years I have repeatedly asked about how we can achieve accessibility in the Trailside Nature Center in Burnet Woods. As you know the lower level classrooms and library are not accessible for anyone unable to navigate stairs. Can we start a conversation about the feasibility and cost for replacing the staircase with an elevator?

This would also open up an opportunity to create accessibility in the lower valley shelter area.

As we're undertaking necessary maintenance on the historic Bandstand in Burnet Woods, now would be the perfect time to install a switchback ramp and handrails that would complement the historic structure. The loss of some of our majestic trees in that area has been heartbreaking, and hopefully the failed sewer lines that were discussed running from the bandstand comfort station didn't contribute to their demise. Grateful for those necessary repairs.

Before replacing those fallen trees, can we please have a conversation about what it would cost to make our Bandstand accessible and prioritize it?

The Richardson Monument is a beautiful place for Burnet Woods visitors situated directly across from UC. Having a permeable pathway to the site would make this favorite birding spot accessible.

Another observation. Our playground area has sidewalks designed to lead to wheelchair accessible picnic tables. Those tables get moved around by the public into non-accessible areas.

Would it be possible to permanently secure those to their intended locations?

The Burnet Woods dog park has circular curbs around tree plantings and a steep slope that prevent those with mobility challenges from accessing the entirety of the park to both protect and pick up after their pets. Moving the fence line to the flat area, and removing those curbs seems like it could solve the problem. Perhaps an ADA expert could be consulted to solve the issues.

Sincerely,

Shari Frost

Burnet Woods Volunteer