

**MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CLIFTON TOWN MEETING
MAY 5, 2008**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Clifton Town Meeting was called to order on May 5, 2008, at the Clifton Recreation Center, 320 McAlpin Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio, at 7:00 pm, by President Linda Goldenhar.

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

The following Trustees were present for the meeting: John Berten, George Bishop, Dick Druffel, Gary Eby, Bill Fant , Linda Goldenhar, David Keift, Malcolm Montgomery, Mary Schubauer-Berigan, Jim Segers, and Steve Slack. Bill Gordon joined the meeting in progress.

The presence of a quorum is duly noted.

REVIEW OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

A draft version of the minutes of the April, 2008, meeting had been previously circulated to the Board for review and comment. Upon motion made by Trustee Eby, seconded by President Goldenhar, the minutes of the April 7, 2008, meeting were unanimously approved by those Trustees voting.

REGULAR REPORTS

Recreation Center Report

Joe Goeldner presented the Recreation Center Report.

- The 4th annual Parents Recognition Dinner was a success with approximately 90 parents attending.
- The Recreation Center is planning for its Summer Day Camp program.
- On May 9, 2008, the Recreation Center will sponsor a Hooked On Fishing Not On Drugs event at Burnet Woods, between 2-6 pm.

Police Report

Cincinnati Police Detective Paul Meyer presented the police report. He was joined by Lt. Kern, Sgt. Volkerding and Officer Wharton. A report showing April, 2008, crime statistics for Clifton and nearby areas was made available for distribution.

Detective Meyer reported that during the month of March, 2008, crime was down in Clifton by 50% compared to March, 2007. He also reported a 30% reduction in crime for the month of April, 2008, compared to April, 2007. There has been an overall reduction in crime in Clifton by 20%, compared to the prior year.

Detective Meyer pointed out that there were no reported robberies in Clifton in April, 2008.

Detective Meyer reported on a rash of house burglaries on Amazon and Wood Avenues. The perpetrator usually gains entrance late at night through unlocked windows or doors. Usually the home is occupied or there are pets in the home. Detective Meyer stated that these incidents do not appear to be related to burglaries which have occurred in North Avondale. The police have received a tip from Crime-Stoppers that the perpetrator is driving a green Chrysler product, with rust primer and "yellow ribbon" insignia. The police are actively pursuing this investigation. In response to a question from Trustee Bishop Detective Meyer stated that the tipster could not give the age of the vehicle. Detective Meyer requested that all Clifton residents lock their doors at night.

Detective Meyer reported that thefts were slightly up; but that auto theft, and theft from autos are all down in Clifton.

In response to a question from Trustee Segers Detective Meyer stated his belief that crime was down in Clifton due, in part, to increased police patrols, the use of e-mail notification to residents, and the Light Up Clifton campaign.

Trustee Druffel commented that sending out e-mail notification to Clifton residents concerning the recent rash of house break-in on Amazon and Wood was very effective in getting the word out to the community. He encouraged the police department to continue this practice. Detective Meyer stated that the police would continue to use e-mail notification were possible.

Lt. Kern reported that District 5 is having an open house on May 16, 2008, between 11 am and 1pm and encouraged the Clifton community to visit District 5. Officer Wharton will send out additional information on the open house.

Lt. Kern reported that Clifton residents should see an increase in foot patrols in the Ludlow Business District during various times of the day and evening.

Lt. Kern reported that District 5 has obtained two "license plate reader" cars. He explained the capabilities of this equipment and its use of G.P.S. systems. He explained that while one use of the cars is to apprehend traffic offenders, the cars also have great value in the investigation of other, more serious crimes.

In response to a question from Trustee Bishop, Lt. Kern explained the circumstances and procedures under which the police department search vehicles.

In response to a question from community member George Roden, Detective Meyer stated that the police department has no opinion about the Park Board's plan to remove the fence surrounding the Rawson Woods Bird Preserve, near the intersection of Middleton and McAlpin.

In response to a question from community member Diane Young, Detective Meyer stated that while there is some criminal activity in Burnet Woods, it is his opinion that the park is safe and that crime is not prevalent. Lt. Kern also addressed this issue and agreed with Detective Meyer.

President Goldenhar thanked the officers for their report.

LUDLOW REVITALIZATION REPORT

Phil Herrick gave a report on the status of the Ludlow Revitalization Project.

Mr. Herrick reported that bids have been accepted on the "streetscape" portion of the project. Work is scheduled to begin in June, 2008. Due to budgetary constraints, the bundling of wires portion of the project has been eliminated, saving approximately \$70,000.00. The art work portion of the project, which involves 9 places of special art treatment is a high priority item and will remain.

Trustee Keift noted that the project will be performed in sections, with the least disruption to business activity as possible. The art work portion of the project will be performed last.

In response to questions from community member Jack Brand, Mr. Herrick gave a detailed explanation of parking spaces which will be gained and lost as a result of the project.

In response to questions from community member Daniel Ames, Mr. Herrick stated that the loading zone on Telford Avenue will be kept.

Mr. Herrick also explained that the Plaza portion of the project is running short on money. Based on an estimated cost of \$332,000.00, the Plaza project only has about \$115,000.00 remaining in the budget, thus leaving the project about \$217,000.00 over budget.

Mr. Herrick stated that he has made an initial grant request from the City of Cincinnati for an additional \$150,000.00, but he is unsure if the request will ultimately be granted. Mr. Herrick noted that a substantial amount of work will be necessary to follow up on the initial grant request.

Mr. Herrick stated that now that the initial work on the streetscape portion of the project has been completed, the current revitalization committee will not further pursue the Plaza portions of the project. Mr. Herrick suggested that a new committee be formed to follow up on the Plaza issues, as well as to complete the grant process which he had initiated.

Mr. Herrick explained, that among other things, the ongoing issue of chemical contamination at the proposed site of the Plaza; how the City proposes to address this issue; and the costs associated with it, are all holding up the Plaza project.

The revitalization committee was under the impression that the City intended to cover over the site with concrete. Now it appears that the City is considering a “trench and vent” method of remediation. It is assumed that the costs of addressing the contamination issue at the site will take away from funds for the actual construction of the Plaza.

Community member Eric Gruenstein asked if the Committee had reviewed potential sources of funding from the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) in connection with the site contamination issue. Mr. Herrick stated that the Committee had not explored this avenue. President Goldenhar stated that CTM would follow up with MSD to see if additional funding or assistance is available.

Trustee Slack asked if the \$332,000.00 cost estimate for the Plaza was for a bare bones Plaza. Mr. Herrick stated that it was bare bones. Mr. Herrick stated that certain stone chess tables which had previously been on Fountain Square, and which were now in City storage, could be made available for use on the Plaza.

Mr. Herrick displayed a “concept map” of the proposed Plaza which would contain lighting, electrical service and a water fountain. Currently, the status of the Plaza remains very much up in the air until soil contamination and funding issues can be resolved.

President Goldenhar thanked Mr. Herrick and other members of the committee for their hard work over many years, and with many obstacles.

CLIFTON COMMUNITY LLC REPORT

Trustee Druffel gave a brief history of the Clifton Community LLC. Clifton Town Meeting and the Clifton Business and Professional Association (CBPA) are members of the LLC. The LLC owns the property which was the site of the former Bender Optical building and the proposed site of the Plaza.

Trustee Druffel explained that before the building on the site was demolished, rent from the building was providing a revenue stream to the LLC to pay taxes and operating expenses. Since the building has been demolished there is no current revenue stream. The property taxes are currently in the range of \$7,000 per year.

In April, 2008, members of the CTM Executive Committee met with representatives of the CBPA to discuss petitioning Hamilton County authorities to reduce the property valuation, and thus the property taxes. Another meeting with the CBPA is scheduled for May 7th.

Trustee Druffel will report to the Board on further developments.

COMMUNITY PRIORITY REQUESTS (CPR) FUNDING

Jon Cramer gave a brief report on the status of the CPR funding request. A funding request has been made for gateway signage.

BURNETT WOODS REPORT

Michael George presented a report on upcoming events and activities in Burnet Woods.

Canoes will be available on the Burnet Woods lake on May 10th and May 17th and will be free of charge to park patrons.

The summer music series at Diggs Plaza will be held on May 17th, May 24th and June 7th.

The Summer Kick-off will be held in Burnet Woods on May 31st between 1-4 pm. There will be many activities for kids and adults.

On May 24th a Shakespeare in the Park event will be held at Burnet Woods with the play "Julius Caesar" being performed by the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company.

Mr. George left brochures giving additional information about activities in the parks.

Mr. George also reported that portions of the fence surrounding the Rawson Woods Bird Preserve will be removed by the Park Board. It is planned that those portions of the existing fence facing Middleton and McAlpin Avenues will be removed. Interior portions of the fence on the north and west side of the Preserve will not be removed.

Mr. George stated that reasons given by the Park Board for this decision were that the fence was unattractive and in need of repair; and that it is the general policy of the Park Board to not fence in parks.

Community member Kip Eagen, on behalf of several residents living nearby the Rawson Woods Bird Preserve, spoke in opposition to the planned removal of the fence. George Roden also spoke in opposition.

The residents noted that removing the fence would allow litter and other debris to blow into the Preserve. It was also noted that removing the fence would increase the probability of deer crossing to and from the preserve on the residential street, thus causing a traffic hazard. The residents expressed concern for the preservation of birds and other life forms, such as spiders, currently residing in the Preserve. There was also a concern expressed that the Preserve could serve as a hiding place for individuals engaged in criminal activities.

Community member Joe Schubauer-Berigan spoke in favor of removing the fence stating his opinion that park lands should be open to everyone in the community.

Trustee Gordon raised the question whether the fact that the property in question was a Bird Preserve distinguished the land from other public park lands.

Mr. George emphasized that he was not part of the decision making process and was merely reporting the plans to the Clifton community. He suggested that this issue be addressed to Mr. Steve Schuckman. President Goldenhar stated that she would invite Mr. Schuckman to the next meeting to discuss the issue.

President Goldenhar thanked Mr. George for his report.

DOG PARK DISCUSSION

Clifton resident Diane Young addressed the Board at length concerning the necessity and desirability of a Dog Park in Burnet Woods. Ms. Young was joined in the presentation by Clifton resident Dr. Eric Gruenstein. Other Clifton residents who supported the Dog Park proposal attended the meeting to show their support. Ms. Young presented a petition signed by Clifton residents in support of the Dog Park.

Ms. Young stated that she has made several attempts to contact the Park Board directly about a Dog Park in Burnet Woods and has not received a favorable reply. She is asking Clifton Town Meeting to support the residents' request.

Ms. Young and Dr. Gruenstein stated that they are proposing either a fenced in area in Burnet Woods, or else, a relaxation of the dog leash law during specified hours when the park sees little use, such as 6-8 am.

There was a general discussion concerning the feasibility of the plan, and where a dog park might be placed in Burnet Woods. It was suggested that CTM had previously looked into this issue and that former Board member Bruce Bernard should be contacted for additional information.

It was mentioned that while there was a planned Dog Park for Innwood Park, the project has not been funded.

Trustee Druffel stated that the Park Board has adopted a Master Plan for Burnet Woods but that the projects have not been funded. He suggested that possibly Uptown Consortium might be interested in backing a dog park in Burnet Woods as part of the Master Plan.

After additional discussion by interested community members and Trustees, Trustee Montgomery moved, seconded by Trustee Fant, as follows:

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE CONCEPT OF A DOG PARK IN CLIFTON

Whereas:

**Clifton Town Meeting strives to address the concerns of all Clifton residents;
and**

Many Clifton residents have dogs which they wish to let off leash;

and

Existing dog parks are not located nearby, making them inconvenient or impractical to use;

Be it resolved that:

Clifton Town Meeting supports the concept of a dog park in Clifton and wishes to make this known to the Board of Park Commissioners;

and

Clifton Town Meeting asks interested residents to work with its Parks and Recreation Committee to create specific proposals to accomplish this end, that they may be reviewed for approval by the Board of Trustees for submission to the Park Commissioners.

There was a general discussion of the motion, including the suggestion that other potential sites for a dog park be explored.

Trustee Berten proposed a friendly amendment that would eliminate the last full paragraph of the current motion. Trustee Montgomery accepted the friendly amendment.

As amended the motion reads:

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE CONCEPT OF A DOG PARK IN CLIFTON

Whereas:

**Clifton Town Meeting strives to address the concerns of all Clifton residents;
and**

Many Clifton residents have dogs which they wish to let off leash;

and

Existing dog parks are not located nearby, making them inconvenient or impractical to use;

Be it resolved that:

Clifton Town Meeting supports the concept of a dog park in Clifton and wishes to make this known to the Board of Park Commissioners.

President Goldenhar moved the question. The motion was unanimously approved by those Trustees voting, with two abstentions.

President Goldenhar commented that since Mr. Steve Schuckman is being asked to attend the next meeting in connection with the Rawson Woods Bird Preserve fence issue; he will also be asked to comment on the dog park issue at the next meeting.

MT. STORM PARK - I-75 EXPANSION ISSUES

Mr. David Gamstetter from the Cincinnati Park Board gave a presentation concerning the impact of proposed I-75 construction on Mt. Storm Park.

Mr. Gamstetter, with the aid of aerial maps, indicated three primary areas at the foot of Mt. Storm Park hill adjacent to I-75 construction which the Park Board had identified as needing special protection. These areas were selected based on several factors, including native plants and tree stands in these areas.

The Park Board is in the process of negotiating with the Ohio Department of Transportation over the impact of I-75 expansion on Mt. Storm Park. These discussions involve issues concerning the replacement of trees with native species; replanting the hillside with native prairie mix, and that top soil will be saved and replaced in the Park to a depth of 6 to 8 inches.

Trustee Slack questioned Mr. Gamstetter concerning the height of retaining walls at the "toe" of the Mt. Storm Park hill. Trustee Slack also asked if it was still the case that the Ohio Department of Transportation would be removing approximately 570,000 cubic yards of soil from Mt. Storm Park in conjunction with the I-75 project. Mr. Gamstetter stated that it was his understanding that was still the case.

Mr. Gamstetter answered additional questions from Clifton residents in attendance at the meeting.

Mr. Gamstetter also stated that the Park Board is looking at the impact on Clifton and neighboring communities on the I-75 interchange construction which is taking place in connection with widening the Interstate.

President Goldenhar thanked Mr. Gamstetter for his presentation.

MEMBERSHIP

Trustee Schubauer-Berigan reported that there had been 551 membership renewals out of approximately 800 memberships. She plans to send out reminder letters to those members who had not yet renewed. Trustee Schubauer-Berigan reported that approximately \$5,000.00 in membership dues had been received.

WEBSITE

Trustee Fant reported that the website is running fine; and that he would report to the Board on an as needed basis concerning website issues.

TREASURERS REPORT

The Treasurer's report for April, 2008, had been previously circulated to the Board for review and comment. Trustee Gordon answered questions raised by the Trustees concerning the report. Upon motion made by Trustee Schubauer-Berigan, seconded by President Goldenhar, the April, 2008, Treasurer's report was unanimously approved, with Trustee Gordon abstaining.

FUND RAISING

Esquire Theater Event

President Goldenhar reported that after discussions with Gary Goldman, operator of the Esquire Theater, a CTM sponsored fund raising event would be held there either on June 1st or June 8th.

Trustee Schubauer-Berigan reported that it was hoped that the film "Raiders of the Lost Ark: The Adaptation" would be available to be shown. This film is a cult hit, and would be "family friendly". It is hoped that there would be two showings, a matinee and an evening showing.

The Committee is attempting to contact the distributor of the film to make arrangements for showing.

President Goldenhar reported that the Esquire event would be coupled with an event at the Ludlow Garage that same evening.

Street Scapes

Trustee Segers reported that Clifton resident Scott Crawford has expressed an interest in joining the Street Scapes Committee.

The Committee is working to obtain corporate sponsorships as well as enhanced media coverage of the event.

Trustee Segers stated that he would give a more detailed report at the next meeting.

Clifton House Tour

It was reported that we are still seeking committee chairs for the Clifton House Tour committee.

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

Committee chair Jack Brand reported that the annual Memorial Day Parade was scheduled for May 26th. The parade will start at the intersection of McAlpin and Middleton and proceed up Middleton and Lafayette to Mt. Storm Park. Paraders should gather at 10:30am with a 11:00 am parade start time.

Mr. Brand stated that there will be food and music at Mt. Storm Park in connection with the Parade.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next meeting will be held on Monday June 2, 2008, at the Clifton Recreation Center, at 7:00 pm.
- The Board will determine whether the July, 2008, meeting, presently scheduled for July 7, 2008, will be rescheduled to another date due to its proximity to the Independence Day weekend. Appropriate notices will be placed on the CTM website and sent to CTM members via the listserv.
- Betsy Black announced that there were brochures from the League of Women Voters available in the meeting room. These items are also available at the Clifton Branch of the Public Library.

There being no further business before the Board, upon motion made by President Goldenhar, seconded by Trustee Eby, the meeting was adjourned upon unanimous consent at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted: Gary Eby, Secretary