



Regular Meeting with Work Session May 20, 2024

Call to Order: The Board met in person in Council chambers at Richfield Village Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Anita Gantner, Board Chair.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Present: Anita Gantner, Mike Lyons, Steve McPeake, Holly Price, Mark Robeson, Mike Selig, Dave Wehner

Also in Attendance: Park Director John Piepsny, Administrative Coordinator Polly Wheeler, 13 other attendees, and attendees by Zoom

Work Session

1) Capital Expenditures

Mr. Piepsny reviewed his discussion with Jim Hardy regarding future projects. [Mr. Hardy is retained when needed for projects requiring bids.] Mr. Hardy has suggested that Mr. Piepsny talk to the board about the dollar limit for going out to a formal bid on projects. Mr. Hardy suggested raising the limit before going out to bid on the upcoming projects.

Mr. Lyons asked for clarification and mentioned the state requirement for the bid process. Mr. Piepsny reviewed the current RJRD policy for the board. Ms. Gantner said the board needs to know the state limit. She said the board will consider the topic at the next meeting.

Mr. Wehner asked who comes up with the original estimate for the bidding process. Mr. Piepsny responded that he asks contractors for a general estimate as a guideline.

2) American Tower cell tower lease

Ms. Gantner said that American Tower approached the board last year to lower the lease payment amount, but the board declined. The company contacted her again this year and was turned down again. Now they have requested an extra 1,000 square feet of space to accommodate the space required for subtenants and their equipment. Ms. Gantner asked the board if the extra space should be given to American Tower.

Mr. McPeake stated that he is not in favor of the increased space. He said that American Tower would be getting something for free. He also asked what is allowed in leased space. Mr. Lyons said that the board can give the company the space but ask for more money.

According to Ms. Gantner, the park's cut would be 10%. Mr. Lyons suggested that American Tower should be required to get their first tenant, and the board should increase the cut to 15%. He also said that the board can ask for a plan drawing of the proposed space. Ms. Gantner will take these changes back to American Tower.

3) Invasive Species Plan management

Mr. Piepsny asked the board to rescind the motion from September 5, 2019 regarding management of the invasive species plan. He prefers program management to be under the park's direction and indicated there would be no change in the cost, frequency or coverage of the plan. Ms. Wheeler read the motion from that date.

Ms. Gantner and Ms. Price asked for clarification of any changes. Mr. Piepsny replied that the agreement wouldn't change except that the ultimate authority would be with Chris Moore, who is licensed for use of the required chemicals.

Ms. Price asked if there is any insurance issue. Mr. Wehner said that this is covered in the regular plan as long as the supervising person's license is active.

4) Next draft of Friends MOU

Mr. Lyons presented the most recent draft of the revised MOU to the full board. He asked if any of the board members had read it and if they had any questions or comments. Mr. Selig commented that it is a step in the right direction.

Mr. Lyons reminded the board that this does not cover specific work agreements; those are champion proposals. He said the board should determine the benefit of each of the agreements and the relationship between them.

Mr. Robeson said that this draft is simpler in structure than the last MOU and is a good step. He, and others, want to read it in more detail.

5) Friends' Champion application for Garfield Hall

Ms. Gantner said that this is the time for the board to ask questions and get clarification as needed.

Ms. Price said that she read the application and wants clarification. Corey Ringle handed out a printed report to the board. Lynn Richardson said that it is the same report that was emailed and also includes an abstract of the process.

Ms. Price said that there are two options for accessibility, but she thought that it was reasonable to talk only about Phase I at this point. Ms. Richardson agreed and said that it is easy to put in a ramp, but it is harder to get up to the building.

Ms. Price reminded the Friends that the champion program represents turnkey projects and is not a collaborative process because the park is not a co-sponsor of structures in these instances. Increases and overruns are the responsibility of the structure champion. Ms. Price wants to provide a more regular schedule for the public to experience the hall. She would like to have days scheduled for showcasing the building.

Ms. Richardson agreed that she wants people to enjoy the building. She suggested that a decent program could be implemented, similar to the program for Kirby's Mill.

Mr. Selig stated that dividing the project into phases makes it incomplete. He wants to see more detail for Phase II.

Ms. Ringle said that she would like to add a well and vehicular access; however, she said the Friends need to know the board's comfort level with upgrades to the entire area.

Mr. Wehner reminded the Friends that Appendix J [Champion program] of the Strategic Plan did not mention phases. He asked the Friends to comment on how that fits the program. Ms. Ringle mentioned the approach used in municipalities. She said the Friends do not want to overstep and put up roadblocks to approval of the plan.

Ms. Price asked if there is value in only providing stabilization, or if the value is only in the complete project. Mr. Selig suggested that the board may not be at the point to make a decision.

Ms. Richardson said that part of Richfield Heritage Preserve's appeal is that it holds the home of an inventor, and inventions intrigue people. Garfield Hall is an unusual place, with the oldest spring-loaded floor of which she is aware. It would help tell the inventor's story with formal and informal programming.

Mr. Selig said that Garfield Hall is one of his favorite structures, but he struggles with the business plan for it. He wants a complete picture of that plan. Ms. Richardson reminded the board that Garfield Hall was a priority structure in the Strategic Plan. The Friends want to fix the roof and the floor so that they don't continue to deteriorate.

Ms. Gantner stated that this is truly a stabilization project. She asked if that can fit within the Champion program. Mr. Lyons responded that there can't really be a long-term plan right now. He suggested that the stabilization could be done and then see if the building is viable. He said that this doesn't feel like a real champion proposal, but the board should allow stabilization to prevent further deterioration.

Mr. Robeson agreed that there is value in stabilizing the structure, since Garfield Hall makes the park more unique from an historical perspective. He suggested that this could be more of a work program.

Mr. Selig reiterated that a champion project is a complete project, while this is not. He still has reservations about additional work programs before the new MOU is in place. Ms. Price reminded the board that they do have the current MOU, which is still in effect. Mr. Lyons said that the MOU is a very general agreement. Work programs can help make it more effective, and the written agreement should contain what is currently in place.

Mr. Lyons asked what the board would want to do with Garfield Hall. Ms. Gantner agreed that this is an important question, made more complicated by the accessibility challenges. Mr. Wehner said that he wants to see an end-to-end project. Ms. Ringle offered that people are excited to see Garfield Hall, but a lot depends on how the board wants to use the space.

Ms. Price said that stabilization will help Garfield Hall and may garner additional interest in the park. She thanked the Friends for helping the board work through the process of the Champion Program. Ms. Gantner asked the board if the Friends should be asked to change their proposal to a stabilization work project. Mr. Lyons said he wants to see the area and specifically Garfield Hall. Ms. Gantner said that she won't call a special meeting for this purpose, but board members can request tours.

Comments from the floor

Karen Smik (Faith Lane) said that the current invasive species program is free to the park, since it is carried out by volunteers. She asked why the board would want to turn it over to a paid crew. Ms. Gantner stated that they are simply changing the management of the program to Mr. Piepsny and the maintenance supervisor, Chris Moore. Other parks have their invasive species program under the direction of the park, not a friends group. She thanked the Friends for all of their work in the park in the past.

Gary LaGuardia (North Royalton) asked how many champion plans have been submitted so far. Ms. Gantner reminded the audience that this is a comment session, not open for questions.

Sue Ann Philippbar (Humphrey Rd) commented on Phase I for Garfield Hall and asked the board to think about how it would look to donors if, in the future, a decision is made not to go further with Garfield Hall and it could possibly get demolished. She said that it should be made clear that the board is going down the path of stabilization and making a commitment to save Garfield Hall, eventually moving forward to a Phase II.

Pat Norris (Humphrey Rd) asked the board to make a motion to change Phase I of the Garfield Hall proposal to a stabilization plan and approve it to allow grant applications.

Lynn Richardson (Bedford, Friends of RHP) said that work on Garfield Hall will bring in funds from Girl Scout alumni. She talked about strengthening the partnership between the Friends and the RJRD board. Ms. Richardson noted that she doesn't know what she would write differently to change the application to a stabilization work project application. Ms. Gantner and Mr. Lyons responded, asking that the process of stabilization be more extensively detailed.

Regular Meeting

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of April 22, 2024, regular meeting were tabled until the next meeting for a correction.

Standing Committee Reports

Governance: No further report beyond the MOU progress discussed in the work session.

Grants & Fundraising: Mr. Selig reported that the committee had a meeting just before this regular meeting. The committee discussed timelines for the NatureWorks grant and said they are getting quotes for replacement of the upper lake bridge. Any real work on the project is being delayed until it is known whether the state capital grant is received so that work on both can be coordinated. The committee identified projects for the next two-year cycle with the goal of aligning grant opportunities with needed projects. By the next meeting this should be more solidified so that grant application work can begin.

Administration Report:

Mr. Piepsny updated the board on the Goat Derby, reviewing the receipts and expenses. He said the event went very well with just over 700 attendees and a net income of over \$9,000.

Treasurer Report:

Mr. Wehner reported that there was \$444,000 in the bank at the end of April. There were \$2,000 in outstanding checks, plus a \$31,000 payment that was received incorrectly and needs to be paid to the

Village of Richfield, leaving \$411,000 in the bank account. \$159,000 is restricted to the bond fund, leaving \$252,000 for all other funds. There was \$19,000 in cash inflows, including \$3,000 from the Goat Derby payments in advance, \$3,000 miscellaneous, and \$13,000 for The Lodge.

Cash outflows were \$36,000, including \$10,000 for general contracts and expenses, \$10,000 for payroll, \$3,000 in commissions, \$2,000 for utilities, \$2,000 for various tech services, and the remainder for miscellaneous repairs and maintenance.

To date, 31% of budgeted expenditures have been spent, and revenue is 10% of the budget for the year. In The Lodge, \$24,000 has been spent and 29.5% of budgeted amount has been collected. Through April there was a deficit of \$47,600.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Ms. Gantner introduced Resolution 04-2024, a Resolution to rename The Lodge fund to Facility Rental Fund and expanding the use of The Lodge fund to include all district-owned buildings.

MOTION: Mr. McPeake moved to adopt Resolution 04-2024; Mr. Robeson seconded.

Discussion: Mr. Wehner stated that there should be more than one fund. Ms. Price asked where the funds go from shelter rentals. Mr. Wehner replied that they go to the general fund. He would rather determine major sources of income and break them out into separate funds.

Mr. Piepsny said that this resolution is a short-term solution for a mid-year change to accommodate Amity House rentals. In the new year there would be a more permanent solution. Mr. Lyons questioned the break-out of funds. Ms. Price asked, if this is a temporary measure, what would be the benefit of the change if the general fund is able to be broken out and tracked.

MOTION DEFEATED: Vote was taken by roll call: Mr. Robeson (Nay); Mr. Wehner (Nay); Ms. Price (Nay); Ms. Gantner (Nay); Mr. Selig (Nay); Mr. Lyons (Nay); Mr. McPeake (Nay).

Ms. Gantner introduced Resolution 05-2024, a Resolution amending the monthly compensation of the district fiscal officer from \$750 to \$1,000 per month, retroactively to January 1, 2024.

MOTION: Mr. Wehner moved to adopt Resolution 05-2024; Mr. Robeson seconded.

Discussion: Mr. Wehner stated that the fiscal officer's current pay is below market rate. It has been at this rate for several years. Ms. Price said that she does not remember any increase in salaries mentioned at budget time. Mr. Lyons asked if there is a willingness to withdraw the motion. Ms. Gantner asked if Mr. Wehner is willing to withdraw and defer to next month. Mr. Wehner declined, stating additional details would not significantly change the discussion.

MOTION PASSED: Vote was taken by roll call: Mr. Wehner (Yea); Ms. Price (Yea); Ms. Gantner (Yea); Mr. Selig (Yea); Mr. Lyons (Yea); Mr. McPeake (Yea); Mr. Robeson (Yea).

Ms. Ganter introduced a new resolution, Resolution 06-2024, a Resolution authorizing the Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve to begin stabilization and restoration of Garfield Hall, consistent with the scope of work identified as Phase 1 of the Champion application submitted on May 20, 2024, under the direction of the park director.

MOTION: Mr. Selig moved to adopt Resolution 06-2024; Mr. McPeake seconded.

Discussion: Ms. Price asked why the project would be under the direction of the park director. Mr. Lyons asked why it should not be under his direction, so Ms. Price explained that she wants to avoid any changes in the scope of the project midstream by having a very clear direction for the project. Mr. Selig said that this allows the Friends to apply for a grant but buys time for the Friends to answer some of the questions from the board on the champion application. Mr. Lyons said that this is a proposal of a concept rather than a plan and is very light on detail, so it is best accomplished under the supervision of the park director.

Ms. Price asked to amend the resolution as follows: “with a full description within X days/months of adoption of the resolution”, so that it doesn’t become open-ended and has a definite scope. Further discussion followed about additional detail requested. The board settled on a re-evaluation after 90 days, with an update at each meeting until that time. Regarding the floor repair, Ms. Gantner said that the time to fix the springs is when the floor is done. A further discussion followed of grant, commitment and plan.

Resolution amended as follows: Resolution 06-2024, a Resolution authorizing the Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve to begin stabilization and restoration of Garfield Hall, consistent with the scope of work identified as Phase 1 of the Champion application submitted on May 20, 2024, under the direction of the park director, for 90 days, with updates at subsequent regular board meetings as to the plan for stabilization and restoration of the structure.

MOTION PASSED: Vote was taken by roll call: Ms. Price (Yea); Ms. Gantner (Yea); Mr. Selig (Yea); Mr. Lyons (Yea); Mr. McPeake (Yea); Mr. Robeson (Yea); Mr. Wehner (Yea).

Ms. Gantner revisited the topic of the invasive species maintenance plan.

MOTION: Ms. Price moved to rescind the earlier motion from October 28, 2019 to establish an invasive species management plan by the Friends, shifting the management of the program to RJRD, under the supervision of RJRD maintenance staff member Chris Moore; Mr. McPeake seconded.

Discussion: Mr. Lyons said that it makes sense to have staff oversee the effort, and Ms. Price agreed.

MOTION PASSED: Vote was taken by roll call: Ms. Gantner (Yea); Mr. Selig (Yea); Mr. Lyons (Yea); Mr. McPeake (Yea); Mr. Robeson (Yea); Mr. Wehner (Yea); Ms. Price (Yea).

Announcements:

The next regular board meeting will be on June 24.

The Amity House gift registry is live and online on the [RHP] website.

Bookings at Lodge are moving along, with 10 reservations in May and 17 to date.

Comments from the Floor:

Bobbie Beshara (W Streetsboro Rd) said that Amity looks great, and it's nice to see that it is going to be rented. She asked the board to consider a name change. Ms. Beshara also said that she appreciated all the discussion about the champion proposal, although the Friends do not have a choice now regarding stabilization, but she is glad that the board is saying what they want done in the park.

Corey Ringle (Hawthorne Dr) said that discussions about structure projects begin with a discussion of shared goals or directions. A Project Capital Needs Assessment follows, and then the choice is between renovation or full plans, which are usually a nine month process.

Online comment: I thought championing was "we turn over the final project".


Adjournment:

MOTION by: Mr. Lyons moved, seconded by Mr. Selig, to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION PASSED: Vote taken by voice, which was unanimously yea.

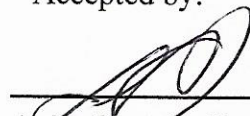
Meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Submitted by:



Polly Wheeler, Administrative Coordinator

Accepted by:



Anita Gantner, Board Chair