

Lancaster Board of Park Commissioners
Minutes of Meeting
January 7, 2026
12:00 pm

The Board of Park Commissioners met with Ms. Kristina Crites, Ms. Kari James, and Mr. Bob Lovell in attendance.

Attendance for the Lancaster Parks & Recreation Department were: Superintendent Steve Gayfield, Shae Goss, Ann Morrow, Amy Pennell, and Assistant Superintendent Jen Shamblin. Members of City Administration present were: City Council Member Larry Ailes (4th Ward), Assistant Law Director Mitch Harden, City Council Member Alayna Hoop (At-Large), Mayor Don McDaniel, and City Service Safety Director Carrie Woody.

Guests present were: Dave Comer.

1. Call to Order

- a. The meeting was called to order at 12:00pm by Ms. James.

2. Permission for Citizens and Guests to Address Board

- a. No guests were present.

3. Communications

- a. No communications received.

4. Approval of December's Meeting Minutes

- a. Mr. Lovell made a motion to approve December's minutes. Ms. Crites seconded. Ms. Crites abstained from the vote, which then passed unanimously and without further discussion.

5. Park Budget

- a. *Expense/Revenue Report*
 - i. Mr. Gayfield presented the Expense/Revenue Report, as well as the end of the year review for the budget. Following the review, questions and discussion, Mr. Lovell made the motion to approve and ratify payment of expenses of the Parks Department. Ms. Crites seconded. The motion passed unanimously and without further discussion.

6. New Business

- a. *Reorganization of Park Board*
 - i. Mr. Lovell made the motion for Ms. James to be President of the Board. Ms. Crites seconded. The motion passed unanimously and without further discussion.
 - ii. Ms. James made the motion for Mr. Lovell to be Vice President and to keep Ms. Keely Pearce as Secretary. Ms. Crites seconded. The motion passed unanimously and without further discussion.
- b. *Permission to withdraw from Ohio Operating Engineers Apprenticeship fund offer agreement*
 - i. Mr. Gayfield provided context for the agreement with the Ohio Operating Engineers (OOE) that has been in place since 2020 to do dirt work at Bowers Park. As he was directed by the Board to complete the project sooner, a bid

was won for the work by 2LMN. Mr. Gayfield requested permission to provide a 30-day written notice to OOE, notifying them of the withdrawal.

1. Following discussion, Mr. Lovell made the motion to approve the request to withdraw from OOE's Apprenticeship Fund Offer Agreement. Ms. James seconded. The motion passed unanimously and without further discussion.
- c. *Permission to request legislation for funding for final engineering design services*
 - i. Mr. Gayfield requested approval to go to City Council for the approval of the contract with EMH&T. He shared that, at the time of budget planning, he did not know the amount of money needed for the contract, but that there is plenty of funds in cash reserve from the unencumbered balance. Mr. Lovell made the motion to approve Mr. Gayfield's request to go to City Council and ask for approval of the contract with EMH&T. Ms. Crites seconded. The motion passed unanimously and without further discussion.
- d. *Resolutions (Exhibit A)*
 - i. All four resolutions were read for Park Board approval. Mr. Lovell made the motion to approve all four resolutions. Ms. Crites seconded. The motion passed unanimously and without further discussion.

7. Department Updates

- a. Departmental updates were presented (Exhibit B).

8. Old Business

- a. *Bowers Property Development*
 - i. Mr. Gayfield reiterated that we would be moving forward with 2LMN, once OOE has moved out of the Bowers Park property. He stated he would need to speak to Mr. Harden about the contract but would then hand the project over to Mr. Goss. At this time, there are no further action items.

9. Tabled Business

- a. *Discussion new Public Sites & Open Spaces language*
 - i. Mr. Harden indicated it is still in review and should remain tabled.
 - ii. Mr. Lovell indicated he would meet with the County Auditor about fees for March's meeting.
- b. *Discussion of new Park Financing options*
 - i. Mr. Gayfield indicated this should remain tabled.
- c. *Commuter Tax*
 - i. Mr. McDaniel briefly discussed the update on the Commuter Tax and the possibility of it being voted for abolishment. If so, that would impact the Parks Department. Mr. Gayfield indicated that the unencumbered carryover balance the Department currently has is not normal; he stated that it is the Department's practice to be frugal, in case of decreased revenue.

10. Next Meeting

- a. The Lancaster Board of Park Commissioners' next meeting is Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 12:00pm at the 2nd Floor of City Hall.

11. Adjournment

- a. Mr. Lovell made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Crites seconded. The motion passed unanimously and without further discussion.

Minutes respectfully taken by Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Shamblin
Minutes respectfully prepared and submitted by Keely E. Pearce, Secretary to the Board

PERMANENT RESOLUTION NO. 26-1

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE PARKS SUPERINTENDENT TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT VOUCHERS FOR PAYMENT OF PARKS EXPENSES AND TO ISSUE TIME REPORTS RELATED TO PARKS PERSONNEL AND TO COMPLETE 2026 BUDGET TRANSFERS AS NEEDED TO MAINTAIN THE PARKS AND RECREATION FUND.

WHEREAS, the Parks Superintendent (the "Superintendent") is authorized to pay Parks expenses on behalf of the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Lancaster, State of Ohio (the "Board) and issue time reports related to Parks personnel; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Ohio Constitution, the City of Lancaster's legislative authority, City Council, passed a budget for fiscal year 2026 in Permanent Resolution 130-24; and

WHEREAS, the Board acknowledges that even after the 2026 budget is established, contingencies will arise which will require the Parks and Recreation Department to utilize fund to fund transfers; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS FOR THE CITY OF LANCASTER, STATE OF OHIO:

SECTION 1. That the Superintendent or his designee shall be authorized to prepare and submit vouchers for payment of Parks expenses and to issue time reports related to Parks personnel.

SECTION 2. Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 5705.40, the Board acknowledges the need to pay for contingencies and hereby authorizes expenditures pursuant to said contingencies, as limited below, as long as it is for a lawful purpose which could not have reasonably been foreseen at the time of the adoption of the appropriation measure. Therefore, the Superintendent is hereby authorized to transfer monies between line items in the 2025 Parks budget as he determines necessary for said contingencies not to exceed ten percent (10%) of the department's total appropriations for planned expenses, with the exclusion of salary, benefits, or overtime line items.

SECTION 3. That this Resolution shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

SECTION 4. That this Resolution shall expire on December 31, 2026.

Passed: _____ after _____ reading. Vote: Yeas _____ Nays _____

Date Approved: _____

President of the Board

Secretary: _____

Offered by: _____

Second by: _____

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE PARKS SUPERINTENDENT TO COMPLETE INTERDEPARTMENTAL FUND TRANSFERS WITH OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE DAILY MANAGEMENT OF PARKS AND PARK PROPERTY FOR THE 2026 CALENDAR YEAR

WHEREAS, the Board of Park Commissioners (the "Board") has the statutory right to control and manage parks, playgrounds, and park property within the City of Lancaster, including all improvements thereon, and the acquisition, construction, repair, and maintenance thereof; and

WHEREAS, the Parks Superintendent (the "Superintendent"), who is a Board employee, may, from time to time, need to complete interdepartmental fund transfers with other City of Lancaster departments to procure necessary goods and services; and

WHEREAS, at the request of the City Auditor, an annual resolution allowing the Parks Superintendent to complete interdepartmental fund transfers with other City of Lancaster departments will facilitate the Board's needs and will be more convenient for the Parks Superintendent; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS FOR THE CITY OF LANCASTER, STATE OF OHIO:

SECTION 1. That the Superintendent is hereby authorized to complete interdepartmental fund transfers with other City departments for the purposes of the daily management of City parks and Park property.

SECTION 2. That this resolution shall not precede any Board authority or in any way preclude the Board from authorizing any purchase to be made by the Superintendent. The Board shall maintain full power and authority vested by law in controlling park finances and it shall continue to approve all expenditures by the Superintendent. The purpose of this resolution shall be to only authorize interdepartmental fund-to-fund transfers as requested by the City Auditor.

SECTION 3. That this Resolution shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

SECTION 4. That this Resolution shall expire on December 31, 2026.

Passed: _____ after 1 reading. Vote: Yeas _____ Nays _____

Approved: _____

President of the Board

Clerk: _____

Offered by: _____

Second by: _____

A RESOLUTION TO REQUIRE THE PARKS SUPERINTENDENT TO RESIDE WITHIN RISING PARK AND TO REQUIRE THE PARKS MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEES ASSIGNED TO ALLEY PARK AND OLIVEDALE PARK TO RESIDE WITHIN THOSE RESPECTIVE PARKS

WHEREAS, the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Lancaster, State of Ohio (the "Board") maintain residences located on the properties of Rising Park, Alley Park, and Olivedale Park; and

WHEREAS, in order to properly maintain Rising Park, Alley Park and Olivedale Park, and for security reasons, Parks staff is required to reside in those parks full time; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS FOR THE CITY OF LANCASTER, STATE OF OHIO:

SECTION 1. That the Parks Superintendent shall be required to reside in the residence at Rising Park with water, sewer, wellhead fees, gas, and electricity provided by the Board.

SECTION 2. That the Parks maintenance employee assigned to Alley Park shall be required to reside in the residence located at the entrance of Alley Park, with water, sewer, wellhead fees, gas, and electricity provided by the Board.

SECTION 3. That the Parks maintenance employee assigned to Olivedale Park shall be required to reside at the residence located at the entrance of Olivedale Park, with water, sewer, wellhead fees, gas, and electricity provided by the Board.

SECTION 4. That this resolution shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

Passed: _____ after 1 reading. Vote: Yeas _____ Nays _____

Approved: _____

President of the Board

Clerk: _____

Offered by: _____

Second by: _____

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PARKS SUPERINTENDENT TO APPLY FOR GRANTS

WHEREAS, the Parks Superintendent (the "Superintendent") is responsible for seeking, applying for, and complying with various federal, state, and local grants which are in the best interest of and align with the mission, purposes, and/or objectives of the Parks Department; now, therefore;

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS FOR THE CITY OF LANCASTER, STATE OF OHIO:

SECTION 1. That the Superintendent shall be authorized to seek out, apply for, and comply with any and all federal, state, and local grants which are in the best interest of and align with the mission, purpose, and/or objectives of the Parks Department.

SECTION 2. That this resolution shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

Passed: _____ after 1 reading. Vote: Yeas _____ Nays _____

Approved: _____

President of the Board

Clerk: _____

Offered by: _____

Second by: _____

Lancaster Board of Park Commissioners
Departmental Updates
Monthly Meeting
January 7, 2026
12:00 pm

Departmental Updates

Projects & Facilities

- Projects:
 - Bower's Park
 - Operating engineers' demobilization in progress
 - Completion of infield C excavation delayed due to weather
 - Elmwood
 - Existing playground demo'd and new playground was constructed
- Events:
 - Winterlights
 - Set up light features, facilitated parking, and removed features
 - Glasstown Countdown
 - Prepped downtown parks and provided crane truck/operators to raise Glasstown Countdown ball
 - Downtown
 - Removed downtown tree and holiday decorations
- Maintenance:
 - Alley Park lodge septic pumps replaced
 - Twin Lakes overflow drain clearance
 - Cenci Lake shore clearing
 - Light switch replacements in rear entrance of Community Building
 - Snow removal and salt spreading
 - HVAC and plumbing maintenance
 - Vehicle and equipment maintenance
 - Picnic table, park bench, and pool chair refurbishing
 - Weekly trash route

Programs & Events

- Elmwood Park Playground finished up
 - Met with playground co on Tuesday to have final walk-thru inspections
 - Met with concrete company to get layout/pricing for sidewalk
 - Final step will be to finalize grant follow ups and have a ribbon cutting in spring
- 2026 Park guide is printed and we will distribute around town and in businesses
 - The electronic copy has been uploaded to website and facebook
- Cornhole and Shuffleboard will start at Community Building
- Basketball continues weekly at Community Building
- Finalized year end reports and 2026 goals

- Sent rehire application to potential returning seasonal staff
 - Working with YMCA on getting lifeguard cert classes and in-service dates for staff
- Took my Certified Parks & Recreation Professional exam (CPRP)

Olivedale

- We had 98 attendees to play music bingo at our Christmas at Olivedale event.
- Olivedale members donated gift cards to the Fairfield County Guardianship Service Board.
- Donations to the Olivedale Giving Tree benefited Bottoms Up this year.
- We hosted 123 people at the New Years Eve, Eve dance.
- AARP volunteers will be back to help seniors with tax filing.
- Instead of Jan. Feb. trips, we will have our Wednesday Matinee with a different movie each week. \$2 buys popcorn and drink.
- We have scheduled our maintenance shut-down for the week of Feb. 9th. Work on the pool ceiling will result in the pool being drained. The pool will be down for 1 week. We will take one day that week to deep clean the other exercise rooms.

Outdoor Education & Events

- Offered a Night Photography Class by Kamal Kassouf with a sneak peek of snow-dusted Winterlights!
- Compared Tropical Rainforests to Ohio with the Mt. Pleasant 5th grade classes.
- Taught “Skunk InSTINKs” class to Creative Journeys.
- Winterlights had a successful start with about 2700 people in attendance on the first 2 nights. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate with the last 2 nights, and we were forced to cancel for the safety of volunteers, staff and visitors. Thank you to maintenance for all their hard work and to everyone that volunteered so we can offer this wonderful event each year! *We will put the "park" in sparkle again next year!*
- Gathered V-Teens and Nature Volunteer Network to discuss the year and upcoming opportunities.
- Hosted the Annual Bean Dinner at Alley Park.
- Continuing to deep clean habitats and decluttering of the office area to start the new year fresh!
- Preparing for and posting upcoming activities and events:
 - Preschoolers in the Park Winter Session starts on Friday, January 16th.
 - Homeschoolers/Remote Learners will begin on Tuesday, Feb. 3rd.
 - Wise Walkers Senior Hiking Series begins Wed., January 14th on the Bike Trail by OU-L at 9 am.
 - Exploring Our Parks Series - Meet in front parking lot at Alley Park for a Winter Hike from 2 – 4pm on Sunday, Jan. 18th.
 - Nature Volunteer Network Guest Speaker Series continues Tuesday, Jan. 27th from 6 – 7:30pm with John Watts presenting Drink Your Tea & Bird ID.
 - Poppy's Prediction to be held at the Downtown Gazebo on Monday, February 2nd at 7:30am.
 - Volunteers needed for the Maple Tapping Festival on Saturday, March 14th from 8 – 11am.

Notifications

Personnel – Congratulations to Jennifer Shamblin CPRP