



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Parks & Recreation Board

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Jan Ross, Chair
Eric Miller, Vice Chair
Ken Shepherd, Secretary
Chrissy Kaminski
Harvey McCleskey
Kevin McGinn
Donna Simmons

Nichole Butler, Clerk

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

7:00 PM

Gahanna City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Ross called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. The Agenda was published on June 13, 2025.

B. ROLL CALL

Staff in Attendance: Stephania Ferrell, Director of Parks and Recreation;
Nichole Butler, Clerk

Present: 6 - Kevin McGinn, Eric Miller, Donna Simmons, Jan Ross, Ken Shepherd and
Harvey McCleskey

Absent: 1 - Chrissy Kaminski

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Shepherd, seconded by Miller, that the April 16, 2025 Minutes be approved as published. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - McGinn, Miller, Simmons, Ross, Shepherd and McCleskey

Absent: 1 - Kaminski

[2025-0131](#)

PR Board Minutes 4.16.25

D. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

Director Ferrell requested a fee waiver be added to new business for the Gahanna Lincoln High School marching band.

E. HEARING OF VISITORS

F. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS**G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS****GRIN Gardens**

Director Ferrell stated that back in February 2025, Brenda Johnston from Gahanna Residents In Need (GRIN) came to the Parks & Recreation Board with a request to partner with the City of Gahanna, to see how community gardens could be added to their program. Director Ferrell stated that GRIN worked with the Parks & Recreation Department to determine a location for the project. Ferrell stated that residents may notice the raised planters in the former location of the sunflower field along Granville Street which will be used for the purpose of growing fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs for those in the GRIN program. Ferrell noted that this will also serve educational purposes for the participants to learn how to care and grow their own produce and be self-sustaining if they have the space at home. Ferrell stated the department is happy to have the opportunity to partner with GRIN in this initiative for the community. Ross asked for clarification on the partnership. Ferrell stated that because the lot is City of Gahanna property, there was a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement to use the property. Ferrell noted that the operations and specifics of the program are handled by GRIN. McGinn commented that he is happy with the use of the space.

H. NEW BUSINESS**Academy Park Improvements**

Director Ferrell provided an update on the Academy Park Improvements project. Ferrell noted that the Academy Park improvements include replacing the parking lot, basketball court, playground, improvements to the trails and construction of a trail head. Ferrell shared a presentation that shows conceptual images that are still in draft form and do not indicate final design for the project. Ferrell noted that the provided images are to help progress thru the design process. Ferrell highlighted on the addition of roughly 85 parking spaces. Ferrell noted that there is a current challenge with the lack of parking. Ferrell noted that even with the expansion of the parking lot, there is still the ability to maintain green space which accommodates a full-size soccer field. Ferrell highlighted the turnaround at the south end of the parking lot. Ferrell stated the

project also includes relocation and replacement of the basketball courts which will promote a better flow of traffic for use of the trails and promote a more natural progression to go around the existing baseball fields. Simmons asked if the existing path thru the parking lot would remain. Ferrell stated that there will still be a path thru the center of the parking lot as it serves a purpose of safe travel for pedestrians from one end of the parking lot to the other. Simmons asked if the basketball courts would be moved. Ferrell stated they are slightly repositioned to better create a flow for the usage.

Director Ferrell presented a conceptual design for the playground and trail head improvements. Ferrell noted that thru a partnership with the Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation, the department was able to secure grant funding thru the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) NatureWorks Grant for nearly \$96,000 for the construction of the trail head. Ferrell stated in the planning process it became clear that it would be more cost effective to combine the trail head and shelter house into one location. Ferrell highlighted that the placement of the shelter not only promotes a better traffic flow for trail and park users but also provides a protection around the playground from the parking lot. Ferrell emphasized that the design is still in progress and final decisions have not been made on all aspects of the design.

Shepherd asked for a construction timeline from start to completion. Ferrell stated that the department knows that the disruption to any park is difficult, but the department will make sure that it is timed out in a best-case scenario situation for all park users. Ferrell noted that a construction schedule has not yet been determined. Ross asked if the grant from ODNR has time requirements for the completion of the project. Ferrell stated that the grant requires the trailhead to be completed at the end of 2025. The department is required to submit a report for project updates. The department will formally request an extension from ODNR for the updated target timeline. Miller asked if this request would be in the 2026 capital budget requests. Ferrell stated the department will be requesting for additional funds in 2026 to complete the project. McGinn asked if the bike station was included in this plan. Ferrell stated a bike repair station will be installed near the shelter, as well as additional signage for etiquette and a map of the trail system within the park. Ferrell noted that thru the Central Ohio Mountain Bike Organization (COMBO) the site has been identified as a good opportunity for Dirt School, a program to teach new users how to ride mountain bikes. Miller asked what the surface of the playground will be comprised of. Ferrell stated that it will be a mixture of playground mulch and poured surface. Ross asked what the size of the trailhead/shelter would be. Ferrell stated that is subject to change, but the current design is approximately 3500 square

feet. Simmons asked if the recycling and trash dumpsters would remain. Ferrell noted that they would remain and be moved to the north of the lot. Simmons asked if there were any plans for screening of these dumpsters. Ferrell states that there has been discussion of blinds for the dumpsters. Ferrell highlighted that the Project Manager, Catherine Eichel, is leading this project and has been doing a fantastic job. Ross expressed enthusiasm for how well attended the ribbon cutting for the mountain bike trail was. Ferrell thanked the Board on behalf of the staff for their attendance.

[2025-0142](#)

PR Board Presentation- Academy Park Improvements

Fee Waiver- Orchestra

Butler stated that Kevin Dengel, from the Gahanna schools orchestra program, requested a fee waiver for use of the shelter at Hannah Park for the middle school family event on May 16, 2026 for the 4 pm to 8 pm time slot. Butler noted that this request is like requests from Mr. Dengel in the past for orchestra. Ross asked if this request was too early for others to have a chance to rent. Butler stated that reservations open 365 days in advance of the date needed so there has been several weeks for those who wished to utilize this date and time to book it.

[2025-0130](#)

Memo: GJPS Fee waiver Request- Dengel

A motion was made by shepherd second by McGinn to approve the fee waiver for the GJPS Orchestra program. The motion carried the following vote:

Yes: 6 - McGinn, Miller, Simmons, Ross, Shepherd and McCleskey

Absent: 1 - Kaminski

GLHS Band Fee Waiver-Cebriak

Butler stated that Rob Cebriak requested a fee waiver for the use of Friendship Park on October 25, 2025, from 4:00 Pm to 8:00 PM for a band gathering and campfire. Butler states this same request has come in each year for the last 4 years.

A motion was made by Miller second by McCleskey to approve the fee waiver for the GLHS Marching Band. The motion carried the following vote:

Yes: 6 - McGinn, Miller, Simmons, Ross, Shepherd and McCleskey

Absent: 1 - Kaminski

Staffing Updates

Director Ferrell provided an update on the department staffing. Ferrell

highlighted that as part of the 2025 staffing requests, the department requested to add a Parks Manager, and Zac Guthrie was promoted into that position from the Parks and Facilities Superintendent position. Ferrell noted that with the vacancy created with Guthrie's promotion, there was a need to backfill the Superintendent position. Shunnye Dunlap was promoted from a Maintenance Worker II to the Parks and Facilities Superintendent position. Ferrell noted that with Dunlap's promotion, another vacancy was created a Maintenance Worker II. An internal candidate, Eric Langdon, was promoted into the position from a Maintenance Worker I. Ferrell stated that Nathaniel Hartsock joined the team as the Arbor/Horticulture Foreman. Ferrell stated that Chris Skidmore, Recreation Supervisor for Youth and Family programming, resigned as of Friday June 13, 2025, for a promotion in Cincinnati. Ferrell also noted that Amy Money Penny, who serves as the Recreation Coordinator for Youth and Family programs, is going to be moving to a position within the Gahanna Division of Police but will serve as interim Supervisor for the remainder of summer camps for the 2025 season or until the vacancy is filled.

I. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ferrell highlighted the Gahanna Market that is scheduled to take place on Wednesday June 25, 2025 from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Creekside Plaza. Ferrell noted that on Gahanna.gov you can view information on all city special events thanks to the marketing team as well as Chelsea Heppert.

Ross asked how the last Aquatics Master Plan Meeting went. Ferrell stated that there is some additional information that needs to be included in the draft report before the final report will be presented.

McCleskey asked if there is a concern for the use of electronic bicycles on the trails and if there has been any coordination with the Gahanna Police regarding enforcement of those permitted uses. Ferrell stated that in the ordinance on multi-use trails, class 1 and class 2 E-bikes are allowed on the multi-use trails. Ferrell stated that class 3 e-bikes are not permitted. Ferrell noted that a class 1 has been identified as a reasonable accommodation for use on the mountain bike trail.

[2025-0132](#)

PR Directors Report May 2025

J. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Bicycle & Trail Advisory Committee (BTAC)

Miller stated they have not met however they were pleased with the turn out of the ribbon cutting on the mountain bike trail and that the committee

passed out bicycle helmets.

ii. Gahanna Active Senior Advisory Committee (GASAC)

Simmons stated they met on May 20, 2025. Simmons stated that one additional board member was elected on June 1, 2025. Simmons stated the next meeting is scheduled for July 15, 2025 at the senior center at 3:00 PM. Simmons noted that the membership is very active and always busy, and are excited for their space at 825 Tech Center Drive. Ferrell highlighted the work of Annette Baxter and Lauren Gregory who oversee the activities at the Senior Center, and how well they do programming and understanding the wants and needs of the seniors.

iii. Natural Resources Advisory Committee (NRAC)

None

K. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT

Shepherd commended the artists that were part of the bright blocks that were painted at the Creekside Blues and Jazz Festival.

Simmons stated that she visited 5 of the Gahanna parks before the meeting and wanted to commend Director Ferrell and her team for the beauty of the parks themselves and the great work they do. Ferrell stated that Guthrie has done a phenomenal job of setting an expectation with his staff of maintaining a high standard of care and this is reflected in the parks. McGinn encouraged those who have an idea or concern to connect with each other and share ideas to help get things done, and that you don't know if someone else shares your idea to help move a project forward.

iii. Veteran's Advisory Committee

L. ADJOURNMENT