



## FRIENDS of Medina County Parks

# 2023 Annual Report

The annual membership meeting of Friends of Medina County Parks was held on Wednesday, June 26, 2024. Members gathered at the Ohio State University Extension office on Medina Road adjacent to the Brown-Trump Homestead. Twenty-eight members were in attendance. Business conducted at the meeting included the following action item.

Three current members of the board of trustees were elected to an additional three-year term on the board. Hub Marquis, Robin Arona, and John Watkins will serve from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2027. Hub currently serves as president of the board, and John was elected to serve as secretary at the board's reorganization meeting in July.

Highlights of the activities of Friends of Medina County Parks were outlined in a report presented at the meeting. The board formed an organizational review committee to review the operations and procedures and develop recommendations for improvements moving forward. The committee was comprised of three trustees and three community leaders, park district staff, community leaders including Attorney Easton Saltsman, Becky Shotwell, and Bert Humpal. Trustees included Hub Marquis, Bob Thompson (chairman of the committee), and John Watkins. Park District Development Coordinator Natalie Peacock was also a member of the committee. Park District Director and Trustee Nathan Eppink and Treasurer Tom James also participated in an advisory capacity. A formal report was presented to the Board of Trustees at its September meeting.

A number of recommendations from the committee have already been implemented including requesting that the park board appoint a liaison to attend trustee meetings, creating additional operational policies, establishing an Executive Committee (president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer) to meet at needed between-trustee meetings, and approving a recommended change to the bylaws requiring a vote of sixty-five percent (65%) of the members to dissolve the organization (rather than a simple majority). The board will continue to work on the implementation of additional recommendations in the coming year.

The Review Committee also recommended a review of the management of assets going forward. The Investment Committee requested proposals from a number of firms and foundations regarding management of investments. After a review of the proposals and an extensive interview with the top responder, the committee recommended that the board of trustees associate with the Cleveland Foundation. The board approved an agree-

ment with the Foundation for management of long-term investment funds. The board also voted to continue its relationship with Westfield Bank for the management of short-term funds.

The completion of the covered bridge at Granger Wetlands capped a long-term fund raising project for that site. Friends held a special preview opportunity for donors to the project a week before the site opened to the public.

Support for the park district involved a number of additional projects in the past year including:

- Funding for picnic shelters to be installed at Sharon Nature Preserve, Holmesbrook Park, and Blue Bell Valley Nature Preserve at a cost of \$65,168 from the George Ayers Memorial Fund
- A grant of up to \$50,000 from the Michael Bennett Memorial Fund for accessible fishing access at Rivendell Nature Preserve
- A grant of \$33,656 for accessible fishing access at Holmesbrook Park
- Grants totaling \$194,000 for improvements at Brown-Trump Homestead from the Brown-Trump Homestead Funds
- Providing \$2,622 to support programs

The trustees met nine times since the last annual meeting, and the Executive Committee met five times with the first meeting held in December of 2023.

Two bus tours of Medina County parks were held for Friends members-only highlighting recent additions to the park district. Quarterly newsletters were mailed to members along with program schedules for the park district.



*Accessible fishing access at Holmesbrook Park*

# 2023 FOTP Financial Report

The 2023 Financial Report for Friends of Medina County Parks was presented by Treasurer Tom James. Highlights of the report included the following:

Membership on January 1 was 701 and on December 31 was 721.

General Income for the year was \$18,945.36.

Of that, income from memberships totaled \$13,810.

General Expenses totaled \$16,936.66 including:

- Postage
- Printing
- Legal Fees
- Bookkeeping/Membership Fees
- Program Sponsorship
- Liability Insurance
- Park District Promotion



*The summer concert series at The Lodge at Allardale was sponsored by FOTP.*



*FOTP sponsored The Steve Free Band concert in June at Buffalo Creek Retreat.*

A major gift was received from the Gienke Estate totaling \$1,122,447.24. Of that amount, \$1,000,000 was directed to the Endowment Fund, and the balance was split between the Granger Wetlands Project and non-restricted funds for trustee-approved projects.

A total of \$200,424.98 was expended for the covered bridge at Granger Wetlands Wildlife Sanctuary. That number includes individual gifts, an Endowment Fund gift, and funding from the Gienke Estate.

The Endowment Fund beginning balance was \$239,665.78, and the ending balance was \$1,381,150.41. Annual spending from this account is restricted to no more than five percent average balance of the account for the past twelve months. The fund continues to grow through regular individual gifts.

Non-restricted funds totaled \$21,348.87 on January 31 and stood at \$107,967.13 on December 31. These funds can be used at the discretion of the trustees.

The donation of the Brown-Trump Homestead included long-term funding to care for and improve the property. The total amount of funds available for the site was \$2,761,614.66. Of that amount, \$1,880,477.20 is set aside for long-term management of the property.

The board of trustees thanks members and other donors for making a significant impact on the ability of Friends to support the mission of the park district. As funding grows, more great things are on the horizon.



*The Recovery Farm at Brown-Trump Homestead donated over 3,000 lbs. of produce to Medina County through Feeding Medina County and several produce stands.*