

**Cuyahoga Falls City Council**  
**Minutes of the Public & Industrial Improvements Committee**

**April 4, 2016**

**Members:** Jeff Iula, Chair  
Adam Miller  
Mary Nichols-Rhodes

Mr. Iula called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. All members were present.

The minutes from the March 21, 2016 meeting were approved as written.

**Legislation Discussed:**

Temp. Ord. A-15

**Discussion:**

**Temp. Ord. A-15**

An ordinance authorizing the Parks and Recreation Board to enter into a contract or contracts, according to law, for the construction of an access point for kayaks and canoes on the Cuyahoga River at River Front Park, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Stewart stated that there was a grant in the amount of \$116,203 awarded for this project. The first bid did not go well. A railing for a walkway had to be re-engineered. That was the only change made when it was rebid. At this time, the low bid is \$115,659.17, so it is under budget. This is at the Riverfront Park, right in front of Acme, on Bailey Road. It has a little gazebo. There's parking lot improvements, and then there's a handicapped-accessible walkway down to the river, and then a ramp that goes into the river.

Mr. Iula stated that this is straight grant for the whole project, so there will be no cost to the City. Mr. Iula asked Mr. Stewart where exactly this access point will be located. Mr. Stewart stated that the actual access point into the river would be just south of the restroom by about 50 or 60 feet. The walkway comes off of the parking lot behind the restroom and does a zig-zag. Part of the grant was that it has to be accessible, so there are three ramps that make their way and zig-zag down to the river. Mr. Iula asked if people coming with their kayaks or boats would have to park and carry them down to the river. Mr. Stewart stated that people would have to walk up and down. It should not be a problem, as most canoes or kayaks are made of a composite and very light.

Mr. Stewart stated that there are plans to make a take-out approximately 100 yards south of Portage Trail. It will come out off of the boardwalk there. As planned, there will be three access points on the river; one at Waterworks, at Riverfront Park and then at Portage Trail. Hopefully, both of these newer projects will be completed by the summer. Mr. Iula asked if this would enable people to travel up or down the river. Mr. Stewart stated that the idea of the access point at Riverfront Park is to allow people to exit the river before the rapids.

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People wishing to go down the rapids would enter at that point. Everyone will be encouraged to get out at the last take-out, which would be just south of Portage Trail before the Sheraton.

Mr. Iula asked about the building that has been under construction by the bridge at Oakpark. Mayor Walters stated that he has met a few times with the owner, Mr. Klaben. He does not have plans to operate it, but is improving the property in order to lease it. Looking across from the River Estates side, the rear access is really beautiful. Mr. Iula asked if boats would be going from there, also. Mayor Walters stated that because there is a trail there, it may be a possibility, but, at this time, the owner is undecided.

Mrs. Pyke asked if there was going to be any type of safeguard to keep people from going past the Sheraton. Mr. Stewart stated there are signs in place now and plans to put signs at Riverfront Park. Putting something across the river would be as much of a hazard as anything. There has been discussion about the possibility of having educational classes at some point. There are a couple of big signs now that direct people to the temporary take-out underneath the Portage Trail bridge. Mrs. Pyke stated that she would imagine that this is going to become very popular, and asked if, in the summer or times where there might be a peak in people down there kayaking and canoeing, would the City offer any type of assistance to the residents getting their canoes in and out. Mr. Stewart stated no, they would not. Mrs. Pyke asked if the City holds any liability with people on the river then coming into the parks. Mr. Stewart stated no, there is not. Safety measures can be suggested, but his understanding is that once you start supervising, that's where liability comes in. Mrs. Pyke stated that it was very exciting in that it was the goal, from the minute the dams came down, for people to be able to get out and enjoy the river.

Mr. Pallotta asked where the Outfitters place for rentals was going to be located. Mr. Stewart stated that the McLaughlin Group was brought in to do a study for the City and indicated that 90 percent of the people who kayak and canoe have their own equipment. Mr. Stewart stated that there was a gentleman that runs that Burning River Group that offers equipment and has talked about the possibility of trying to acquire some property in that area. Mr. Pallotta asked if there are any plans to join with groups like the Crooked River venture out of Kent. Mr. Stewart stated that they already used the City's facilities. They presently get out at Waterworks and plan on going to Riverfront once the project is completed.

Mr. Colavecchio asked Mr. Stewart what exactly was changed or eliminated from the original plan in order to reduce the amount of the bid. Mr. Stewart stated that the only change that was made was the railing. The railing was a high-grade, anodized aluminum. The specifications called for it to be manufactured in certain lengths. The only manufacturer with the ability to do that was out of state. When the railing was received, the grade of aluminum was overdone. Mr. Colavecchio asked if there was still a railing. Mr. Stewart stated that the railing they have now is very nice and more than enough to do the job. The bid price went from \$171,000 to \$115,000, and the only change was the railing.

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Mr. Iula asked Mr. Stewart if the river was owned by the City or was actually part of the Parks Department, especially in the Waterworks area. Mr. Stewart stated the City does not own the river. Mr. Maki, of 6<sup>th</sup> Street, stated that when the dams were removed, it was done by the State and that the State owns the river. Mr. Stewart stated that he believes the Ohio Department of National Resources sets the rules on the river. Mr. Balthis stated that he quickly researched who owns the streams in Ohio. The land underneath the stream is owned by the property owner, but the water, itself, is derived by common law and owned by the State.

Mr. Miller moved to bring out Temp. Ord. A-15 with a favorable recommendation, second by Ms. Nichols-Rhodes. Motion passed (3-0).

The meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.