



**Lebanon Parks and Recreation Board / Shade Tree Commission / Miller Eco Park / Countryside YMCA  
Joint Meeting**

Board Meeting Minutes  
January 7, 2015

**Opening:**

A joint meeting between the Lebanon Parks and Recreation Board, Lebanon Shade Tree Commission, Miller Ecological Park Steering Committee, and the Countryside YMCA Nature Trail Committee was held at 7:00 p.m. on 1/7/2015 at the Lebanon City Building. The meeting was called to order by Deputy City Manager Scott Brunka.

**A. Approval of December Minutes: N/A**

**B. Agenda:**

**1. Clean Ohio Fund Grant and Natureworks Grant Project:** - S. Brunka provided an update on the status of the grant applications. The Clean Ohio Fund grants to purchase the property at 532 N. Broadway and the wooded area behind Colony Square Shopping Plaza have been approved and staff is working on scheduling a closing on the properties. The \$23,000 Natureworks Grant to rehabilitate 2 of the Harmon Park tennis courts, and also line them for pickle ball use, has also been approved. Construction on this project is scheduled for late Spring.

**2. Miller Eco Park Update:** - Jane Davis and Tim Huitger provided an update on the various activities underway in Miller Park. Fundraising continues for the proposed nature playscape area and associated water feature. There are a total of 5 Eagle Scout projects currently being planned for the park, and 2 of these are pedestrian bridges that will connect the West and East sides of the back 51 acres of the park. The trail on the East side has been completed. The City is pursuing a NFWF grant that would support planting native trees and prairie grass on the West side of this property, and enhancing an existing wetland. Art Johnson mentioned that Twin Creek Nursery may be able to provide prairie seed. Once this work is completed, a trail will be developed through this area as well. Mickie Marquis gave an update on the Butterfly Garden being installed by the Lebanon Garden Club in the park. Also, Jeff Napier gave an update on Urbancrest Church's potential interest in installing community gardens in Miller Park.

**3. City Trails Plan** – Scott provided an update on the effort to develop a regional trail plan that would connect the Lebanon – Countryside YMCA trail to future trails throughout both the City and Turtlecreek Township. The Lebanon – Turtlecreek Trails Initiative Committee has been formed by the Warren County Regional Planning Commission and will work on identifying and prioritizing trail alignment routes that will extend out to Otterbein, Armco Park, and other locations throughout the region. The first meeting of this planning group is scheduled for January 16<sup>th</sup>. A map was distributed that shows potential trail alignments in the northern portion of Lebanon that would connect to the existing trail, and everyone was asked to provide feedback regarding the map. It was discussed that the City could pursue Safe Route To Schools funding for some of the proposed trails that connect to the School property.

Reuben Smith and Mike Carroll provided an update on the efforts of the YMCA to improve and promote the existing Mulford Nature Trail on their property. The YMCA has undertaken efforts to remove honeysuckle, and expand nature programming, in this area. It was discussed that the Nature Trail is open to the public during normal YMCA operating hours, except for the summer months when summer camp utilizes the area.

Jeff Napier discussed preliminary plans to develop Mountain Bike / Cyclocross trails through the City-owned old landfill property off of Turtlecreek Road. The YMCA has also considered developing bike trails through the property that they own behind Home Depot. These two efforts need to be coordinated.

It was discussed that there needs to be an effort to comprehensively promote all of the hiking trails in Lebanon as many people are currently not aware that they exist.

**4. Red Hot Blues Run** – S. Brunka provided an update on the annual Red Hot Blues Run that is held during the Blues Festival. This running event is a major fundraiser for the Parks System. A sponsorship solicitation request letter was distributed to begin lining up sponsors for the 2015 event.

**5. City Tree Program** – An update was provided on the City’s annual tree program, which includes planting approximately 100 street / park trees each year and removing hazard trees. Additionally, the City has undertaken a 2-yr. effort to inventory all of the street trees. The City has been recognized as a Tree City for 24 years, and the Southwest Ohio Tree City Awards Ceremony will be held at Countryside YMCA in 2017. It was discussed that it would be nice to have a Notable Trees of Lebanon tour / brochure. Jim Ludwick presented the Lebanon tree inventory application that can be downloaded to smart phone devices. Hewett discussed the importance of having a presence on the City Show to promote trees and parks.

**6. Joint Promotion and Public Information Opportunities** – Discussion centered on how the various Boards and Committees can work together to promote the common interest in parks, nature, trees, and getting folks outdoors. Some of the suggestions made by various individuals were:

- a. Utilize the City Newsletter on a more regular basis to promote area parks and nature program offerings with the theme of getting people outdoors and taking advantage of what is available
- b. Utilize the City Show and Channel 6 programming to focus more on Lebanon / Warren County parks and nature programming and info. Have Channel 6 film on location at the parks and trails to give folks a better understanding of what is available.
- c. Make sure that each organization has links to other websites that promote outdoor opportunities and information in the area.
- d. Conduct photo contests (trees, parks) to get people out into the parks. Social Media can be used to promote this.
- e. Utilize the resources of the OCVN program to provide educational opportunities.
- d. Research and utilize the “Bio Blitz” concept (Amy – could you email out examples of this?)
- e. Work with Green Umbrella to better promote Warren County – get involved with the programming for the annual Meet Me Outdoors event held in the Fall of each year.

The group felt that it would be beneficial to bring all of the committees and groups represented at the meeting together on a more regular basis.