

## **SOUTH RUSSELL VILLAGE PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES APRIL 23, 2024**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Martha Bistriz, Ruth Cavanagh, Jery Canton, Gregg Gamm, Ted Kruse, Libby Sharkey, Greg Studen

**GUESTS:** Tim Alder, Jake Evans, Jack Oberman, Mayor Bill Koons

Ruth called the meeting to order at 6:30.

**BOY SCOUT EAGLE PROJECTS:** Ruth introduced Jake Evans and Jack Oberman who have planned Eagle Scout projects involving signage at South Russell Park.

Jake proposed installing signs which would illustrate the trails and distances of the trails in the park. He proposed installing three signs: one at the East Washington Street entrance, one at Bell Road near the playground and one at the passage between the two sides of the park. The maps would be made of metal. His proposal described a 3x5 foot display similar in size to the sign by the playground which has information about South Russell's underground railroad participation. It was suggested that a sign with trail distances and names would be better situated nearer a trail head or the kiosk rather than by the playground.

Jack Oberman proposed installing a sign, similar in size to the one describing South Russell's underground railroad participation, near the playground that would have information about the Interurban railroad that passed through what is now South Russell Park. It would indicate there is an Ohio historical marker at the site describing the history of the Interurban railway.

**DRAINAGE:** Tim Alder and his crew have installed better drainage south of the pavilion.

**BURN:** Greg Gamm and Bill Koons witnessed a field burn at the Burton wetland recently. Geauga Park District facilitated the burn. Bill has talked with Davy Tree about doing a burn at South Russell Park, it would cost \$10 k. We are not likely to do one soon. Davy Tree recommended doing a burn on the East Washington Street side of the park where there are fewer houses nearby and it would be easier to control. If a burn is done on the Bell Street side, it would take place in sections; four sections burned one at a time during different years. The purpose of the burn is to kill invasive species, promote the growth of native species, enrich the soil.

The burn would take place in the fall, after the bird population (especially the Bob-o-link) have left the area. Bill would let Matt Valencic (local ornithologist and Audubon member) know about the timing of the burn.

It was suggested feedback about a field burn be requested in the next newsletter.

**BATHROOM:** After much discussion about cost, the committee members agreed that the park needs a bathroom, not running water. The cost of \$125 k was suggested as the working figure for an adequate, appropriate facility. Greg Studen suggested it be “rustic but of good quality”. Tim added that a pump like the one installed at the cemetery be included so that the restroom could be periodically cleaned without having to bring in water. The cost of the well (not potable) will be approximately \$10k.

**FALL FESTIVAL:** The Cleveland Browns schedule has not been posted yet, so no date was chosen for the Fall Festival. Jerry reminded the committee that each one has their area of responsibility. Be prepared to move forward with securing entertainment like last year. Bill said that there have been concerns from the village insurance company regarding the safety of the hayrides and that some training and rules of riding will probably be added to the preparation of the event. Bill would also like to see more animals added to the entertainment options.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Bistriz

## **SOUTH RUSSELL VILLAGE PARK COMMITTEE MINUTES JUNE 18, 2024**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Martha Bistriz, Jerry Canton, Ruth Cavanagh, Gregg Gamm, Ted Kruse, Libby Sharkey. **Absent:** Greg Studen. **Guests:** Mayor Bill Koons, Tim Alder

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Ruth asked the mayor to speak first as he had another engagement.

**FALL FESTIVAL IDEA:** Bill proposed that Axe-Masters, a vendor that provides entertainment involving axe throwing for individuals 10 years and older, be investigated to add to the events at the Fall Festival. Libby had researched the company, and the cost is \$300/hour which prices them out of our budget.

The pavilion is 10 years old. It will have some routine work done on the interior ceiling beams as they are starting to sag.

**FIELD BURN:** Davey Tree provided an estimate of \$11k to facilitate a burn of part of the park land.

Geauga Park District will not charge to facilitate a burn at the park but would expect a monetary donation to be made to them. Bill would like the burn to be done before the Fall Festival.

**BUTTERFLY GARDEN:** Judy Harvey, who had the butterfly garden installed in memory of her husband and former South Russell mayor, has requested that the interior grass areas between the flower beds be paved in brick. Mrs. Harvey has offered to hire a company to do the brick work. The committee approved a brick interior. Additionally, she would like a brick path installed between the pavilion and the butterfly garden. The committee did not approve of installing a brick path. It was suggested that the South Russell Street crew that maintains the grass paths throughout the park, use the same very low setting on the mower to provide an almost putting -green-like pathway from the pavilion to the butterfly garden. Judy is interested in setting up an endowment, to pay for the maintenance of the garden area.

**HAYRIDES-** The state of Ohio now requires safety protocols for public hayrides. The drivers of the hay wagons must have some training and the riders will need to be advised of safety rules while riding. Ted asked if side rails will be necessary to have on the wagons. Bill will investigate the specifics.

The crosswalk with a pedestrian crossing signal which will run from just east of Alderwood road to the park parking lot on Bell Road, may be installed before the Fall Festival.

The minutes of the April 23 meeting were approved.

**RESTROOM:** South Russell council has decided to install the “Double Rocky Mountain” restroom facility design. It will cost \$111k to be installed. A well to provide water to clean the restroom as well as water the plants and flowers at the pavilion and surrounding area will be created.

**FALL FESTIVAL:** A request for volunteers from the community will be published in the village newsletters. Ruth will ask HOAs to ask their members to volunteer.

The committee approved the Haney Band to be part of the festival again this year. The cost is \$750 for three hours. Martha will ask if their repertoire could be expanded.

Libby will reserve the bounce houses, face painters, trolley (\$700) the same vendor as last year. She suggested replacing the magician with the bubble lady. There was discussion about having “Zoo to Go” or the same vendor that provided petting zoo animals last year. Pony rides will be part of the event.

Ted will oversee the hay wagons and apple cider again.

Danielle will order hot dogs, etc.

The ice cream vendor and kettle corn vendor will be asked to be there.

The committee approved the idea of asking That Hawaiian Guy barbeque to have their food truck at the festival. Martha will contact them. The committee approved Libby’s suggestion of adding the cotton candy vendor who participates in the Chagrin farmer’s market.

Bill oversees securing the Life Flight helicopter. Jerry oversees contacting the fire department and confirming their participation.

Ruth advised the committee that as of January 1, 2025, the pavilion and entire park(?) will prohibit alcohol on the premises.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Bistriz

## South Russell Village Parks Committee Minutes August 22, 2024 6:30 p.m.

**Members Present:** Martha Bistriz, Jerry Canton, Ruth Cavanagh, Greg Gamm, Ted Kruse, Greg Studen  
**Absent:** Libby Sharkey  
**Guest:** Bill Koons

Ruth called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

**FALL FESTIVAL:** Martha reported that the *Haney Band* is confirmed. She will ask them to send an invoice to Danielle. *That Hawaiian Guy barbeque* food truck will be at the festival on September 29. They cannot participate on October 6 if the first date is rained out. There is a great need for volunteers to monitor the bounce houses. Martha will contact the Chagrin Falls High School Interact Club advisor, as in the past, to ask for student volunteers. In addition, Bill Koons agreed to put a request for volunteers in the next South Russell newsletter online. Ruth has contacted some HOA presidents asking for volunteers.

Ted is in charge of hay wagons, the 20x40 tent and apple cider press. There are new protocols for hay wagon safety this year. The village must have insurance, and it appears that Ted also may need to have insurance for the event. Ted explained that the hay wagons do not have side rails. Another possibility would be using a mulch truck which has more of a side on it. This year there are new rules for safety including having all riders sign a waiver before they ride. In addition, the drivers this year are required to have some safety training.

Ruth read Libby's email. The trolley, petting zoo, bubble lady, face painters and two bounce houses are confirmed.

Greg Studen reported that Linda Gilbert from the Geauga Park District will be there.

**MISC.:** Bill shared that on Monday, September 30, Tim Alder will be retiring. To celebrate his service to the village and his retirement, there will be donuts at the village hall from 7:00-10:00 a.m. Lunch will be catered by Hungry Bee at 11:30 a.m. The committee members are invited to attend. A replacement for Tim has been hired. His name is also Tim.

Bill remarked on seeing a drone show at Orange (not sure where?) The event cost 10k. He suggested if the village transitions to a different event from the fall festival, we might consider a less expensive drone show event.

On September 10, from 5:00-6:00 p.m., the boy scouts will have an event with a rock wall for interested / potential scout members at the pavilion.

Next Spring, the acres that were not cut on the E. Washington street side of the park will have a controlled burn. The new wetland area behind the playground will be labeled as such since it is a work in progress and it is unclear as to what is happening there.

The minutes of the July parks committee meeting were approved.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Greg Studen recommended that a plan be agreed upon to commit to caring for the parkland as the "ecological meadow" it was preserved for and intended to be. A study has been done which outlines how to care for the land in this way. Greg suggested Pete McDonald and Paul Pira participate in the discussion. Bill set the date of October 21 at 6:30 for a meeting to discuss this topic. Bill Timmons was paid \$4100 this year to cut and take the hay off.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, September 12 at 6:30 p.m. At the pavilion.

The meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Martha Bistriz

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**From:** Cavanagh, Ruth  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 22, 2024 2:41 PM  
**To:** SRV fiscalofficer; SRV adminassist; Cavanagh, Ruth; Canton, Gerald; SRV streets; Greg Studen; Greg Gamm; Ted Kruse; Libby Sharkey; Martha Bistriz; SRV Mayor  
**Subject:** Parks Cmte 9/19/24

Sunshined, scheduled Parks Committee met at SRV Park, 6:30 pm, 9/19/24. Attendees were Canton, Cavanagh, Gamm, Studen, Sharkey, Tim Young, Newell Howard, Judy Harvey, Kellie Jarzembak. Absent: Martha Bistriz, Ted Kruse.

Newell Howard encouraged the flying of the POW/MIA flag as part of the Park and Village properties.

Judy Harvey described her experience of visiting Auburn's Jarz Creek Monarch Festival the previous week, run by Kellie Jarzembak & family. As an 'extra' to Harvey's Butterfly garden, which is thriving, Kellie could set up her 12X12 pop-up tent at the Fall Festival, allow several people at a time entrance, and the opportunity to encounter butterflies. Respectful behavior is expected from those entering the tent.

Other: Young & Service Dept will erect the FF Banners Monday. Harvey pointed out an older Girl Scout garden, near Butterfly garden, in neglect. Young felt it could be cleaned up & made attractive. Studen stated there will be a Geauga Parks representative. Cavanagh stated she hoped to have the SRV History Trifolds available.

Starkey has spent a considerable amount of time ensuring that past participants will set up again this year. Expected are the Trolley (Gurney to Park & back), Face painters, Petting zoo, bubble artist, Haney String band and Bouncy houses. Hotdogs and drinks to be provided by the Village. Several food trucks will also be on site.

Cavanagh stated she had been contacted by 6 adults offering their time to help events run smoothly. It is appreciated.

Canton described to committee the liability insurance strictures imposed for the Festival. Because of these, Ted Kruse is unable to participate as he has done, so generously for nearly 2 decades. There will be no hayrides, no cider making. Entire committee expressed gratitude for all that Ted, and the entire Kruse family, have done. Donation of tractors, wagons, expensive fuel, cider mill and sweet cider were very significant to the hometown feeling engendered every September.

Fingers are crossed for no rain on 9/29/24.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ruth Cavanagh

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone  
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## SOUTH RUSSELL VILLAGE PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES OCTOBER 21, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Martha Bistriz, Ruth Cavanagh, Gregg Gamm, Greg Studen

Absent: Ted Kruse and Libby Sharkey

GUESTS: Mayor Bill Koons, Kelly Estes and Carrie Schloss from the ad hoc for safe bicycle and pedestrian transport committee, Pete MacDonald, from the Western Land Conservancy, Kaitlin Petrow, a resident of South Russell, Rich Washington, a landscape architect from CT Consultants and Tim Young, the South Russell Street commissioner

The meeting was brought to order at 6:30. Mayor Koons asked the people present to introduce themselves and share why they were attending this meeting. He then explained the plan to do a 10 acre burn on part of the E. Washington Street side of the park next Spring. That location was chosen because there is only one house nearby. The Geauga Park District will facilitate the burn. Their personnel have coordinated field burns in other parks in the area. This will take place in March or April 2025. Prior to the burn, Tim will mow double wide paths as a buffer for the burn.

Pete explained that South Russell park is comprised of 87 acres. Seventy-seven acres are under strict easement restrictions. Ten acres on the E. Washington St. side of the park has looser easement restrictions and has a "governmental use" allowance. Funding for the purchase of the park land came from Clean Ohio funds. Currently, the field may be cut and the cuttings taken off anytime after August 1. The land is protected habitat for the Bobolink. Bill Timmons has been haying the field and taking the grasses to use for animal bedding. He is paid approximately \$4000. Pete further explained that other parks have land management plans in place which include periodically burning sections and rotating that activity from year to year. He said that early successional habitat is rare and a good thing. He also offered that US Fish and Wildlife has funding available for purchasing flower/pollinator seeds. It takes about three years for sections of colorful blooming pollinators to establish themselves. Rich suggested that annuals seed could be added to the mix.

There was a discussion of whether or not to mow the fields. The idea of rotating sections of the fields to be mowed or burned on a rotational basis was suggested. Greg Studen recommended making a park land management plan.

Pete shared that Paul Pirot (sp?) is the local expert on burning sections of field in order to give native species a head start and allow new growth. In addition pollinators and annual flowering plant species could be planted such as purple cone flowers, bee balm, cosmos to add color and expand the variety of pollinators. Pete explained that not using a tractor and gasoline to cut the field would be a cost benefit.

It was agreed that goals be set for the park land management. One idea was to have a section of the park not be cut and let it go back to woodland. Another idea was to plant designated stands of trees to add shade and visual interest.



Ruth let everyone know that notice about the planned burn in the Spring, will go out to South Russell residents prior to the burn. Often the date of the burn is determined only a couple of days ahead due to weather. There was a concern that the burn would possibly kill small animal species and ground nesting birds. Greg G. explained that the burn is very slow allowing for some animals to get out ahead of it. There will be some casualties unfortunately but with mowing there are probably more.

Ruth asked for directions as to next steps.

Bill said they would begin to refine a master plan at the next council meeting.

It was noted that wind is an issue near the pavilion. Trees could be planted strategically near there to help mitigate that.

Pete will let us know more about the timing on the US Fish and Wildlife funds that may be available to help the village purchase seeds.

Greg Studen recommended a concrete land management plan for 2025 be formalized.

Another meeting to continue this discussion will be set for after Thanksgiving.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Bistriz