

MetroParks names Dice new director-secretary

Stephen Dice brings experience and active management to job

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HURON

Experience and personality made Stephen Dice the man for the job.

Erie MetroParks board

members hired Dice, 56, of Hinckley as the new director-secretary for the park system. He will start work Monday.

Although details of Dice's employment remain to



be worked out, he's agreed to stay for five years. His salary will be \$67,000 a year.

"I don't consider myself a micromanager, but I'm a walk-around manager," said Dice, who attended the meeting and chatted afterward with parks officials and parks boosters, who stayed to sip punch, eat Christmas cookies and meet the new boss. "I don't like to be chained to a desk"

Dice said he'll soon be an Erie County resident.

"I'm going to move here, but I have to scope out the real estate," he said.

Dice until recently served as director of parks and conservation for Five Rivers MetroParks in Dayton, reporting to the deputy director. He resigned that post to deal with family matters. Before that, Dice had been director of park operations for Cleveland Metroparks, reporting to the executive director.

"I kind of grew up in it," Dice said. He explained his father worked

for the Department of Park and Recreation Resources at Michigan State University.

The parks board met at Osborn Park late Thursday afternoon, went into executive session for about half an hour, and then emerged to take action on hiring a parks director, making it clear that the decision was unanimous.

After the board's president, Tom Dusza, announced it was time for a motion, Micah Vawters moved that the board hire Dice. Vawters' motion was seconded by Kurt Landefeld and passed 3-0.

After the vote, board members cited Dice's experience and personality.

"His application was head and shoulders above everyone else," Vawters said. "He seems like he's really easy to work with. I just took to him immediately."

"He showed us some creativity, some different ways to approach issues in the district frankly we hadn't thought of," Landefeld said.

Dusza said he liked Dice's

experience in other metroparks systems and said Dice is "a very approachable guy."

"In the light of the last couple of weeks, he is going to be an incredible asset to us," Dusza said.

Last week, the Ohio Supreme Court stunned Erie MetroParks officials by ruling 6-0 that the parks system had taken away private property for its Huron River Greenway and ordered the parks system to begin proceedings to provide compensation. Parks officials shut the path down this week until they learn more about how to deal with the situation.

Dice replaces Jon Granville, who was making about \$68,000 when he left to become director of the park system in Butler County.

The new director said he'll likely need to worry about the budget almost immediately.

Dice said when he starts work Monday, he'll meet with interim director Gary Horn.

"He has a two-page list of things," Dice said.