

Parks tabs new member

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As the Erie MetroParks board prepares to name a new director, the board has lost a veteran member and gained a new one.

Fred Nottke, in his sixth year as a member of the board, stepped down early Friday. His term had been due to expire Dec. 31.

To replace Nottke for the remainder of the unexpired term, Common Pleas Judge Beverly McGookey appointed a Huron businessman, Kurt Landefeld.

McGookey said she will consider appointing Landefeld to serve a full three-year term when the new term begins Jan. 1, but said she also would be willing to consider other candidates.

The parks board has launched a search to replace Erie MetroPark's longtime director-secretary, Jon Granville. Granville resigned to accept a position serving as director of MetroParks of Butler County.



Register photo/ABIGAIL BOBROW

Common Pleas Judge Beverly McGookey swears in Huron businessman Kurt Landefeld to the Erie MetroParks board Friday at the Erie County Courthouse. He is replacing Fred Nottke who stepped down yesterday. Judge Roger Binette, left, and Tygh Tone are also in attendance.

Under a timetable the parks board adopted Wednesday, candidates for the director position will be interviewed in November, with the new leader coming on board in early January.

Landefeld, who turns 53 today, has lived in Huron for three years and owns a public relations firm. He is president of Landefeld Communications. He moved to Huron after living in Summit County.

"When we lived in Summit County, we lived inside a national park," Landefeld said.

He added that in his previous job he worked to help the Summit County parks system with two successful levy campaigns. He said he believes that experience could be helpful when Erie MetroParks puts another levy on the bottle.

Nottke, 64, lives in Berlin Township and was completing his second three-year term on the Erie MetroParks Board. He is a former farmer and banker who owns a painting and wallpapering business, Marley Bay Ltd.

Nottke said he enjoyed serving on the park board and working with all of its members, but believed it made sense to allow the new park board member to help choose the new director.

In addition, Erie MetroParks eventually will have to face the fact it needs additional revenues, and Landefeld's experience in park levy campaigns will be helpful, Nottke said.

One of the park board's major decisions in recent years came last year, when it shut down the swimming pool at Osborn Park. Voters had rejected a tax to build a new pool, and the parks board faced major costs to repair the old pool and keep it running.

Landefeld said the Summit County park system had swimming beaches.

"Personally, I'm in favor of trying to create swimming facilities, if we can afford it," he said.

McGookey runs the Probate Division at the courthouse.

As the probate judge, she could choose to name all three park board members herself. Instead, she has chosen to take turns appointing the three park board members with the other two Common Pleas judges, Tygh Tone and Roger Binette. Last year, Binette named Micah Vawters to the parks board.

"It gives more opportunity for different points of view," McGookey said Friday. "I'm happy to share the appointments with my fellow judges."