

Code: 517011

Subject: Jeff Lennartz

Date: 6/19/2008

Interviewer: Jed McKnight

Special Notes: West Creek & Ohio Canal Corridor/RRR Grant/interviewer's first interview

Minutes:

0 Jeff Lennartz; Development Engineer, born in Cleveland; raised outside of
Parma;

1 used the woods as a "playground"; buddies explored;

2 caught frogs and crayfish; explored alone

3 Current acting treasurer of West Creek Preservation Committee; Trustee; fiscal
responsibility; funding sources: grants

4 Stepped in when no one else would do it; funding: private sources and
memberships fund "discretionary funds"

5 In need of money that is not earmarked specifically which is biggest problem

6 Reason is that it is difficult to give money for no specific need

7 or to pay an electric bill; salary to dedicate their work to the project/funding and
money is needed for that

8 hired person to dedicate self to fund development

9 first time to volunteer self in area that he is not familiar with... accounting
Jenny Vasarhelyi called in 1997 to help with West Creek; previous experience

10 with Corridor Group & Sierra Club aware of the situation in Parma and Dave
Vasarhelyi

11 Vasarhelyi's are park employees; Dave had a similar situation of growing up in
Parma and having parents still living there at the time.

12 Involved with parks and environmental groups since the 1980's; Ohio Canal
Corridor and Sierra Club

13 OCC service petering out; Sierra Club

14 Sierra Club is a national, maybe international conservation group involved in
political activities

15 state and local chapters around the country; advocate of Sierra Club, National
Park Service; Earth Day

16:30 clean air, clean water; Sierra Club; role of liaison of National Park

17 Enjoyment of woods; recreational "therapy"; hikes with father and hiking club;
President Reagan's policies and personal background inspired him to get

18 involved; "American Flag/Mother Earth things"; Reagan saw little value in
conservation

19 Financial support, working on projects, ideas to get public to care

20 Father was "outdoorsy" as far as hiking

21 Hiking club with father;

22 Personally, walking in woods is his therapy; explorer; Studies local history;
undeveloped areas; urban development;

23 Curiosity: "what's around the next bend"; Corridor project because he knew
24 where the undeveloped areas were; Trespassing; need for protection,
25 connect trails to neighborhoods; appreciate local history; physical; self
26 education; adrenaline from trespassing
27 exciting to get others hooked; caught by landowners but played ignorant, never
28 return
29 Urban Development/Tremont: did not participate, but walks, studies, and talks
30 Professional and conservation lives are split;
31 is a good writer; Chemical knowledge and industry/ Union Carbide in the 1980's;
32 Sierra club gave him some ribbing
33 Awareness of pollution laws/regulations;
34 what industries can and can't do; understands activism; not used for his
35 understanding of two perspectives
36 Union Carbide disaster in India; major chemical spill....Isocyanade"
37 responsibility of regulating;
38 Hundreds, maybe thousands killed; scandal of disassociating itself from the
39 incident; beginning of the end of Union Carbide
40 Carbide put responsibility on India owners;
41 West Creek golf course and Mayor Reese of Parma in 1980's and was not
42 received/ then moved;
43 Got Jenny Vasarhelyi's call; Mayor's pushing for golf course again; Ohio Corridor
44 could do it
45 Skinner's Run (West Creek);
46 success: core of dedicated people; ungodly hours; able to work during day;
47 meeting and "hobnobbing" politicians; West Creek and OCC had similar
48 structure/ #1,#2,#3,#4's etc...
49 "Drivers" Dave Vasarhelyi was West Creek #1; Tom Yoblansky OCC #1; "death"
50 OCC was originally West Creek fiscal agent
51 mid 90's backed away from OCC: leaders need to be available during corporate
hours
milestone of West Creek Reservation
Goal: join Metro Parks; No "sunset clause";
Land Trust for urban conservation; employment needs: need money
did not publicize goal to join Metro Parks; could not meet criteria of Metro Parks
Hurdles were the Mayor of Parma, golf course developer, and indifferent
community
momentum of golf course and Parma administration; petitioning for local ballot
Dave and Jenny V. researched ballot process
Lennartz helped educate other members for the "canvassing" ; dividing streets
first levy failed; signs, phone surveys, door to door; levy initiative passed;
acquiring land

52 earlier no tax levy to designate or protect park; 1st success voters designated as
protected land-

53 recreational land the city owned; WKYC "tower city" ; high ground went up
against West Creek

54 acquired Gannett property; towers not good for housing; city bought after two
tries

55 1st victory was best; all are good; Gannett property was a turning point

56 knew land area played in 60's; it was disappearing; developers would snap it up;

57 credit Dave Vasarhelyi; passing the bond; process of buying; city actually
purchased; bond issue

58 bought one area; upset land owners that mall still possible

59 Gannett purchased in late 90's; lost bid on land near Pleasant Valley

60 Pipe dream: trying to connect to National Park; CEI already negotiating

61 approved Wolstein developer; Dave V. and Dave Linchak were negotiating the
purchase to block sale

62 purchased small strip of land (20 ft. wide) to connect Broadview to the creek;
Destroying wetlands; Army Corp "rubber stamp"

63 Giant Eagle; Trail network in tact; Brooklyn Heights Park

64 Beyond if, its when, when, when; Now involved in Big Creek Preservation;

65 Different constituents of groups; OCC deals with corporations and industry
West Creek deals with citizens; Big Creek different because it deals with Zoo,
businesses, and land; board; West Creek and Big Creek is back yard

66 Conservation groups are a big family; get involved in one and you know the
others

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