

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio  
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[www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](http://www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org)

**Date:** January 15, 2009  
**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Barbara J. Bonifas, CEO  
**Subject:** Camp Brookside

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**Background:** In 1962, as a result of the merger that formed the Appleseed Ridge Council, the Sidney and Shelby County Girl Scouts have the title to Girl Scout Camp Brookside to the Sidney Community Foundation with the following conditions:

- The Girl Scouts would have a 3 year lease for \$1.00, that was automatically renewable annually in March, unless either party gives notice in writing.
- The Sidney and Shelby Council Girl Scouts would maintain the camp in its current condition, but they also have the right to modify existing structures or to construct new structures.
- The Girl Scouts of Appleseed Ridge has provided all regular and capital maintenance to the camp since 1962.

#### **Camp Budget and Usage:**

- Girl Scout usage of the camp has declined 47% since 2003.
- Camp Brookside was occupied for 1866 camper days (number of participants x days at camp), 1586 of which were by Girl Scouts. This makes up about 2% of the council's total camp usage.
- The 2008 operating budget for Camp Brookside was \$20,341. In addition to the annual maintenance, a new roof is needed on the lodge.

**Current Status:** The Girl Scouts of Western Ohio have been contacted by two parties with potential offers for Camp Brookside. Since the Sidney Community Foundation owns the camp, they are the final decision-makers, but both parties have indicated that they want to be sensitive to the role of the Girl Scouts in this situation.

- **City of Sidney** – In May 2008, we were contacted by the city with an interest in purchasing Camp Brookside as an addition to Tawawa Park, which is adjacent to the camp. In December 2008, the city council made a formal offer to purchase the property, including a one-time donation of \$27,646 to the Girl Scouts of Western Ohio and priority usage of the property by Girl Scouts for five years. In this offer, Camp Brookside would become a public park and the lodge would not be maintained. (See Attached Letter.)
- **Shelby County Park District** – In December 2008, the Girl Scouts were contacted with a proposal that Shelby County Park District purchase the camp from the foundation using potential funding from a Clean Ohio Grant. This grant has not been secured and cannot be applied for until Fall 2009, delaying any potential purchase until January 2010. The park district has indicated that they would maintain the property as a Girl Scout camp.

## Girl Scout Property Recommendation

**Girl Scout Property Purpose:** Girl Scout property exists as a resource to support the delivery of Girl Scout program activities and experiences.

**Girl Scout Property Development Criteria:** (Adapted from Girl Scouts of the USA property guidelines.) Girl Scout properties will be maintained and developed based on the following criteria:

- To ensure the protection and safety of Girl Scouts.
- To support high quality Girl Scout program experiences.
- To maintain fiscal efficiency, maximizing program benefit for every council investment.
- To minimize liability to Girl Scouts of Western Ohio.
- To protect the property's future value and minimize future liabilities.
- To maximize access for members, including ensuring that members are given priority for camp use.

**Recommendation:** Based on the Girl Scout property development criteria, I recommend that the board adopt the following proposal:

1. Endorsement of the Property Management Criteria listed above.
2. Girl Scouts of Western Ohio will focus its property investments in council-owned property and restrict any investment in non-owned property to normal rental or related fees or short-term, limited investments to meet a specific programmatic need.
3. Girl Scouts of Western Ohio will notify the Sidney Community Foundation that:
  - a) Girl Scouts will continue to use Camp Brookside as a camp facility.
  - b) The Girl Scouts can no longer afford to continue to maintain the property.
  - c) We would support and would like to encourage the foundation to consider options that would enable continued Girl Scout use of the property as a camp facility, as has been proposed by the Shelby County Park District.
  - d) The Girl Scouts will convene or participate in a task group made up of stakeholders, including Girl Scout volunteers to bring this situation to a positive resolution.

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## **Our Mission**

*Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character,  
who make the world a better place.*



## City of Sidney

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**CERTIFIED MAIL**

December 10, 2008

Ms. Jane P. Krites, Executive Vice President  
Girl Scouts of Western Ohio  
4930 Cornell Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45242-1804

Dear Ms. Krites:

As per our most recent telephone conversation on or about October 29<sup>th</sup> during which you requested a formal proposal from the City of Sidney with regard to the acquisition of Camp Brookside, please consider this letter and the attached Five-Year plan for the property the requested proposal. Hopefully it will arrive in time for distribution so that it can be considered at your meeting in January.

It would be our intent by this letter to express the interest of the City of Sidney in acquisition of the 27.646 acres known as the Brookside Girl Scout Camp. As you know, the camp is currently bounded on two sides by Tawawa Civic Park. Tawawa Park has been owned by the City of Sidney since 1955, and currently contains approximately 192 acres.

It is important to remember that transfer of this property is at the sole discretion of the current property owner, the Community Foundation of Shelby County. After a preliminary discussion with the Community Foundation's Board of Directors, Community Foundation Executive Director Marian Spicer has expressed a willingness to accommodate whatever arrangement is worked out that recognizes the intent of the original gift.

Therefore, please be advised that, based on the negotiation of an acceptable transfer agreement, the City of Sidney would make a one-time "contribution" to the Girl Scouts of Western Ohio in the amount of approximately \$27,646. In addition, the City of Sidney would make a similar contribution to the Community Foundation of Shelby County. This contribution would be used to establish a fund, the interest from which could be used to support Girl Scout activities in Shelby County.

As I have offered previously, 1) the city would provide for access to Camp Brookside by the Girl Scouts for a period of five years for volunteers and girls in the Sidney area to use the property for local events, day camps, etc.; 2) the city would agree to the preservation (or enhancement) of the natural features of the site; 3) the city would provide for a permanent monument that would recognize both the "Girl Scout legacy" and those who originally donated the property; and, 4) the campground would become a part of the city park system and the city would in effect, "manage" (and own) the property.

We recognize that the timing of the details of this plan still need to be worked through. A response to this offer by your Board needs to be received by the City of Sidney no later than January 31, 2009 so that the funds can be encumbered within the 2009 City Budget. In light of continually deteriorating economic conditions, funding beyond that date cannot be assured.

You also need to know that within the past month, Marian Spicer, representing the Community Foundation and City Manager Steve Stilwell, representing the City of Sidney, were asked to meet with a group of Shelby County Girl Scout leaders. The meeting took place on November 12, 2008. At that meeting, the majority of the local leaders indicated that financial compensation was of little value. They simply wanted the Brookside Camp facility to continue to operate as it always had indefinitely.

Speaking on behalf of the City, the city manager was unable to guarantee such an arrangement should the City acquire the Camp. The Girl Scout leaders attending the meeting were asked to submit to the Foundation office by December 1<sup>st</sup> a list of "desires" for future camp usage if the City were to acquire the camp.

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, the requested Girl Scout "Brookside List" was submitted to the Community Foundation. As I understand it, this did not address the City's request. Rather it called for the continuation of the Brookside Camp as it has been in the past. If a change is necessary, they have requested that the camp be "given" to the Shelby County Park District. Because the local leaders did not address the issues as requested, the "list" was not shared with the City of Sidney and, accordingly, the City does not have first hand knowledge of what the local Girl Scout leaders' interests are.

Based upon my understanding of the November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting with the local Girl Scout leaders, it is apparent that the local Girl Scout leaders believe that there is a lack of communication with the "regional office." The City of Sidney is not interested in becoming involved with a "family" argument between the local and regional Girl Scout communities. As such, the City would like to see evidence of local Girl Scout support for the Brookside property exchange.

I recognize that this "proposal" is not as precise as you might have wanted. However, the only control you have over the property is through your lease with the Community Foundation. Both politically and emotionally, the primary interest in Camp Brookside lies within the Shelby County Girl Scout community.

If this is approved, we would move forward with crafting an agreement similar to the "Recreational License Agreement" you entered into with Butler County MetroParks. As always, we are more than willing to continue discussing the future of Camp Brookside. Please advise us as to the next step.

Sincerely,



Mike Barhorst  
Mayor

enc.

c: City Council  
S. Stilwell  
S. Osborn  
M. Spicer  
J. Fahnestock  
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