

Friends of Hyland

January 23, 2024

Hennepin County Commissioners

Jeffrey Lunde
Irene Fernando
Marion Greene
Angela Conley

Debbie Goettel
Ella Eliason
Kevin Anderson

Dear Commissioners,

Please confirm that you received this letter, and please enter this letter into your next board meeting and the public record for topics concerning Three Rivers Park District.

We would like to alert you to a recently formed citizen group that is advocating for safety, fairness, fiduciary responsibility and transparency at Hyland Hills Ski Area, a public facility operated by Three Rivers Park District. Please see the attached overview for more details.

More specifically, we are asking for the following:

- Industry standard safety measures be implemented at Hyland Hills Ski Area.
- An end to discrimination of thousands of children who have been marginalized for 20-25 years.
- An end to taxpayer subsidization of a private interest group (Team Gilboa) because favors are being given exclusively to a privileged group.
 - **Please Note:** Chair John Gibbs and Vice Chair Jennifer DeJournett have children who participated in Team Gilboa. Also, Former Chair John Gunyou had a child on Team Gilboa.
- An end to retaliatory actions toward whistleblowers for the concerns above.

Because the Board of Commissioners is not responding to our questions and requests, we are now asking you Commissioners to **please ask them to respond to the questions, justify their actions and reform to uphold their own TRPD policies for DEI, Safety and fiduciary responsibility.**

- It has been over *eight months* and they have not answered one of our questions.
- As you are aware, two of the TRPD commissioners, **Jan Guenther and Jesse Winkler. are appointed by Hennepin County Commissioners.**
- Our requests are **very simple to implement with minimal cost.** The positive impact would be huge with fewer injuries (especially for children who makeup the majority of incidents), all patrons being treated equitably, and the public not being forced to fund an elite private ski program that serves a small number of patrons.
- This **cavalier regard for safety and injustices** have been enabled for too long and it's been mentioned repeatedly to TRPD over the past 10-15 years. It's time for reform.
- Enterprise Operations or not, **publicly owned assets should be equitably shared by all and private groups should not be allowed to profit off them** – regardless of 501(c)3 status. And, especially when it harms the public.

Detailed information and evidence of our concerns can be found at <https://friendsofhyland.com/>.

We can be reached at FriendsofHyland@Yahoo.com and look forward to your responses.

Thank you.

Friends of Hyland

Contact Information

Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners, Superintendent and Hyland Hills Oversight

*** Indicates Commissioners who have children who participated in Team Gilboa*

<p>John.Gibbs@ThreeRiversParks.org, Jennifer.DeJournett@ThreeRiversParks.org, Marge.Bead@ThreeRiversParks.org, Erin.Kolb@ThreeRiversParks.org, Louise.Segreto@ThreeRiversParks.org, Jesse.Winkler@ThreeRiversParks.org, Jan.Guenther@ThreeRiversParks.org, BCarlson@threeriversparks.org, jeff.may@threeriversparks.org,</p>	<p>** Board Chair ** Board Vice Chair Board Member Board Member Board Member Board Member – Appointed by HC Board Member – Appointed by HC Superintendent of TRPD Director of Enterprise Ops – Oversees Hyland</p>
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<https://www.threeriversparks.org/page/board-commissioners>



Friends of Hyland - Overview

Friends of Hyland is a Citizen Action group formed in May, 2023, expressing concerns about Hyland Hills Ski and Snowboard Area in Bloomington. Hyland Hills is a publicly owned ski area operated by Three Rivers Park District (TRPD); a taxpayer funded government agency *established by the MN State Legislature in 1957*.

Friends of Hyland seeks positive changes in important areas of safety, equity, fiduciary responsibility, retaliation and accountability at Hyland Hills.

Our primary concerns are the following:

- * People – mostly children, our most vulnerable – are getting severely injured unnecessarily due to lack of ski-industry standard safety procedures and overcrowding.
- * Flagrant favors have been commonplace for 20-25 years at Hyland Hills. Over 1,000 children are marginalized each year because TRPD is bestowing these favors to a small and privileged group, at the expense of the majority of children who do not receive equitable access of facilities.
- * Taxpayer subsidies of these favors over this same period amount to an estimated \$6.6 – 10.2 million.
- * Park systems are established to provide enjoyment of public resources for everyone, regardless of socio-economic background, not to subsidize special interest groups. Privately run programs should not monopolize, charge for, or profit from, taxpayer owned assets, regardless of 501(c)3 status.
- * When people have spoken up about these concerns in the past, many have been retaliated against with job loss, loss of reputation, and unfair treatment of teams they represent. This and perceived threats of *retaliation* prevent more people from speaking up, thus *enabling the safety hazards, subsidies and injustices to persist*.

Friends of Hyland communicated concerns to the Board of Commissioners and suggested resolutions. We asked for justification for the continued favoritism shown to one private ski program, Team Gilboa. *The solutions are simple to implement with minimal cost.*

After eight months, we have received no answers, no justification and no reform from the Commissioners. *The problems persist each year.* Friends of Hyland requests are aligned with TRPD policies that govern the park system. However, TRPD is not upholding these policies. These matters have been raised repeatedly for at least 15 years by many concerned patrons and citizens.

Friends of Hyland is now seeking assistance from MN state agencies and state/county representation. We appreciate support to encourage TRPD Commissioners to reform and uphold DEI policy, safety operations, and fiduciary responsibilities.

TRPD Leadership

Elected Commissioners

Chair John Gibbs
Vice Chair Jennifer DeJournett
Marge Beard
Louise Segreto
Erin Kolb

Commissioners Appointed by Hennepin County

Jesse Winkler
Jan Guenther



FriendsofHyland.com

Park District Superintendent - Boe Carlson