

MINUTES

PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION

4:00 p.m. – March 2, 2004

Time: D'Anieri called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

Place: Council Workroom, Second Floor, 100 North Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Berla, Berauer, D'Anieri, Macomber, Reneaud, Riseng, Satarino

Members Absent: Cohen, Rodgers

Ex-Officio Members Present: Johnson, Henderson

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Dishman, Woods

Staff Present: Bemish, Borneman, Clark, Dehring, Kuras, Miller, Rynard, St. John

PROPOSED 2004-2005 PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES BUDGET

Budget recommendations that were on the table for the City Council retreat on Saturday, March 6 were discussed. Service impacts were presented to PAC.

RESOLUTION REGARDING LOTS 118 AND 120 EVERGREENS SUBDIVISION

Miller said staff was trying to systemize the process of evaluation and approval of proposed park parcels and that PAC members' individual evaluations of proposed park parcels, along with staff's recommendations, was very important to City Council when it made its decision on whether to approve the purchase of parkland.

Miller said there were two resolutions because there were two separate parcels being considered to be added to the existing Evergreen Park.

Resolution regarding purchase of Lot 118 was moved by Riseng and supported by Berla.

Dehring said he had attended a public meeting with the neighbors. He said they wanted Lot 108 added to park as well. He said there was access to the park through the paper street right-of-way by foot traffic. He encouraged PAC to pursue purchasing Lot 108 in the future. He will be attending another public meeting with the neighborhood regarding how to develop the park. He said the improvements being discussed would be play

equipment, trail or pathway enhancements, and a bench or two. He said funds were available for development of the park.

Satarino asked staff to get more information about Lot 108 and the other parcel across from it (northeast corner of Valley and Parkwood) to find out if the property owners would be interested in selling them to add to the park.

A vote on the resolution to recommend City Council purchase Lot 118 – Passes
(unanimous)

Resolution regarding purchase of Lot 120 was moved by Berla and supported by Riseng.

A vote on the resolution to recommend City Council purchase Lot 120 – Passes
(unanimous)

ADJOURNMENT

D'Anieri declared the meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Attachment: Budget Impact Analysis Information

Jill St. John, Secretary
3/31/04

MINUTES

PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION

4:00 p.m. – March 16, 2004

Time: D'Anieri called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Place: Council Chamber, Second Floor, 100 North Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Berla, Berauer, D'Anieri, Macomber, Reneaud, Riseng, Rodgers, Satarino

Members Absent: Cohen

Ex-Officio Members Present: Johnson, Henderson

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aeschbach, Woods

Staff Present: Bairley, Borneman, Clark, Kuras, St. John

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

None.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of February 17, 2004 – Moved by Riseng, supported by Rodgers, and passed unanimously by voice vote.

INFORMATION ON OPEN MEETINGS ACT

Abigail Elias, Chief Assistant City Attorney, discussed the questions sent to her by the Park Advisory Commission. Question: How does open meetings act affect email usage? Elias replied that Commission members may not make any decision that is not done so in a public meeting, they may not do anything that seems to circumvent the open meetings act, they may not discuss items outside of a public meeting, such as over lunch, by telephone or email, with several Commission members where a decision or consensus is made so that when the public meeting is finally held, the vote is just a formality because the decision had already been made outside of the meeting. She said the open meetings act is intended to open up public decisions to the public. She said email should not be used to engage in a discussion with all PAC members. She said

email documents are FIOA-able, which means if the press or public asks for copies, they must be provided. She said an email should be treated as a telephone call, but no decisions should be made using email.

Question: Could someone confiscate your computer for a FIOA request? Elias replied no. She said a FIOA request is for documents only.

Question: Can you do a poll of some PAC members outside a meeting? Elias replied yes, but must not end up with a full PAC discussion and a decision being made outside of a public meeting. She said discussions and decisions should be made at public meetings. She said PAC would be allowed to get additional information from fellow PAC members and staff in order to help make a decision and that information should be given to all PAC members.

Satarino asked if more than a quorum of PAC members could go together in vans to visit sites. Elias replied that an information gathering session is ok, but no discussion or voting could occur.

Regarding closed sessions, Elias noted that 2/3 vote of entire PAC would be needed to go into a closed session. She added that PAC must go into a closed session from an open meeting.

REPORT ON EMERALD ASH BORER

Paul Bairley briefly described what has happened with the Emerald Ash Borer problem. He said all ash trees in town are infected (Only 14 percent total trees in the City are Ash). He said there was no cure yet. He said research on how to kill the insect was way behind so a cure may be found too late. He said fund raising had been good but way short of what would be needed. He said an action plan had been enacted in 2002, but the problem was worse than anticipated, and the entire ash population will be dead within three years most likely.

Rodgers asked what had been learned from this problem.

Bairley replied that age diversity and species diversity was the key to preventing this from happening again.

Berauer asked what the timeline was for getting help from the state and federal government.

Bairley replied that the governor had to get information regarding the areas affected to federal government by end of May to get funding of up to 75 percent of the costs, but there was no guarantee funding would be available. He said 1,000 trees already had been removed and 10,000 more would need to be removed.

Satarino asked how the Emerald Ash Borer got here.

Bairley replied that raw lumber dunnage used in ships was most likely the cause and inspections were now required at both ends of shipments and quarantining of shipments was used as well.

Satarino asked if trees in nature areas should be removed.

Bairley said unless they were near a pathway, or could cause injury when they fall, they would be left to die. He said woodpeckers eat the larvae, but the trees are already too far along to benefit, but at least those eaten larvae will not mature.

Satarino asked if healthy trees were being taken down.

Bairley replied no.

Macomber asked if any assistance was available to citizens.

Bairley replied that restoration funding was only available to local units of governments in the quarantined areas. He said advice was available to citizens from governments. He said White, Green, Black, Blue Ash trees were affected. He said it would take 2-4 years to remove all infected trees and 5-8 years to replace them.

ART PROJECT AT LIBERTY PLAZA

Kuras stated that the proposal being presented today was an outgrowth of several years of effort by the community and a joint project of the DDA and the City for physical renovations, as well as programming (daily concerts).

Peter Pollack described a proposed art project to be located at the Liberty Plaza Park. He said that additional changes to the park would need to be made to accomplish this art project.

Joan Blos, a children's book writer, said she was involved with the Magic Carpet Mornings and that Liberty Plaza was important to her. She felt that the addition of art from children's books would enhance the park. She said the lower area of park would be used to display this art. She thought the art display would emphasize the connection of the park to the public library and would be a place to bring children to downtown Ann Arbor. She said this art would be available in any weather, in all seasons, and 24 hours a day. She said this project started with the Friends of Liberty Plaza, and has continued with the Magic Carpet Mornings, which brings 150 children into the park regularly.

Ira Lax said the Magic Carpet Mornings brought people with their children to the park on Wednesday mornings from July – August with story tellers/music makers. He said they had given away over 1,000 books the past summer. He said the selected pictures would be from children's books known the world over. He thought the art project would be taking the next step to making the park a family friendly place. He said the public library was very excited about this project.

Pollack said they would use the walls in the lower level of plaza to display artwork from classic children's books. He said they would try to get permission from the authors to display the artwork from their books. He said a jury would select several pieces of art and then contact the artist to see if he/she would give permission to display the art. He asked PAC for its support to allow them to proceed. He said the funds would be raised to install the artwork.

Macomber asked what mediums were being considered.

Pollack replied that all weather signs, fiberglass, and metal would be used. He said durability would be important.

Satarino asked if the changes to the park have increased its usage, are more children using it, and if it was now a neighborhood park.

Pollack replied that Magic Carpet Mornings, a cart with good food, tables being added, and the brightening of area has contributed to increased usage.

Kuras said Herb David has had increased requests to provide music at the park and this summer music from Herb David and others would be provided six days a week and she had seen more people using the park.

Pollack asked PAC for motion allowing them to continue to work on this project either at today's meeting or the next month's meeting.

D'Anieri thought more information was needed before making a motion of support. He wanted to hear from people who live in the area, use the park, property owners in area, and City staff.

Riseng disagreed. She thought they had put in enough time and effort and she supported the project.

Berauer agreed for the need for more public input since it would be a permanent alteration to a public park.

Berla thought PAC could pass a resolution supporting the idea. He thought the only thing that could stop or alter the proposal was if someone voiced objections at a public hearing. He thought unless something happens to further the review of the proposal before the next meeting, postponing PAC's support to that next meeting did not make sense.

D'Anieri thought staff could contact citizens or organizations that might be interested in this proposal for their input prior to the next meeting.

Berla said he would support waiting until next month's meeting.

Satarino thought taking more time to think about it more broadly was a good idea.

DISCUSSION ON CITIZEN CONTACT WITH PAC

Henderson presented a proposed policy regarding citizen contact with PAC. She said she was working with the City's Information Technology Department to set up an email account just for correspondence to the PAC.

REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT MILLAGE PROJECT UPDATE

Satarino asked that staff take items off the list that had been completed.

CITY COUNCIL ITEMS UPDATE

No questions.

REPORT ON ARGO PARK PROJECT

Kuras reported that three public meetings were held about the project. She described what changes would occur at the park. She said an RFP would be sent out for the design of the new livery and picnic shelter restroom building. At the request of citizens, a third dock would be added to the site that was closer to the boat launch. She said she would work on the site plan as the third contract for the site. She said the parking lot would be gravel.

REPORT ON LESLIE SCIENCE CENTER REHABILITATION PROJECT

Kirsten Levinsohn, Supervisor of Leslie Science Center, Lisa Brush, and Jim Frey updated PAC on the site subcommittee's work. Levinsohn said there would be two meetings regarding the changes being proposed.

Satarino asked what the cost of the raptor facility would be.

Levinsohn replied that they were at an early stage and did not know yet if there would be raptor-viewing areas. She said the River Raisin Raptor Center was looking for a different site at which to care for the raptors and they would pay for upkeep, not the City.

Johnson asked if NAP helped with the educational programs.

Levinsohn replied yes, indirectly, with training. She said, on occasion NAP staff was hired for special events. She thought it was great that NAP was located at the Science Center. She did not want them to move.

Borneman said NAP might move to the maintenance facility, which would be located at the swift run facility on Ellsworth Road, but he would prefer to stay where they were now.

Johnson said PAC could make a resolution to support keeping NAP where it was located now.

D'Anieri said PAC could draft a resolution for its next meeting.

Henderson added that the maintenance facility building had not been built yet so input would be appreciated.

Berauer asked staff to inform PAC, at a future meeting, why the relocation of NAP was being considered.

LAND ACQUISITION AND DONATIONS WITH PARK PURCHASES PROCESS RECOMMENDATION

Henderson said she, Berauer and Cohen had worked as a subcommittee on how to handle monetary donations when evaluating a site for park acquisition. She said they added a monetary donation criteria (added as #19) to the Land Acquisition Site Evaluation Forms as one of the criteria used to determine if a site should be purchased as a park. She said what was not discussed was whether PAC wanted to give that criteria a rating 0 to 5 or just check it off if there had been a donation proposed. She said the forms currently used the rating system of 0 to 5. She said staff would also be required to perform an evaluation and give a report to PAC on their findings.

Berauer stated that the criteria of monetary donation was added as one of 20 criteria used to determine if a site should be purchased as a park. She said it being one of 20 criteria gives it similar weight as other criteria used to evaluate a site. She added that the source and amount of the monetary donation should be shown as well.

Berla thought when PAC considers a donation, a letter from the donator should be included stating what strings are attached for their donation.

Satarino thought a letter of explanation from PAC should be drafted for donations informing donators what is expected of them, such as access easements. He said since land donations occur sometimes, PAC should have policy for them too.

D'Anieri thought City Council wanted PAC to determine if it was acceptable to accept donations from citizens toward the purchase of parkland.

Berauer agreed and thought PAC should discuss whether it was acceptable to accept donations from citizens.

Johnson said City Council as a whole did not have an opinion, although some members have expressed concern regarding citizen donations toward parkland purchase.

Satarino hoped PAC would accept donations.

Berauer said the subcommittee wanted to encourage citizen involvement.

Riseng thought, in general, it was a good proposal. Her concern was with neighborhoods where donations were not possible. She thought maybe other ways citizens could contribute should be included on the criteria list, such as upkeep of the park.

Berla thought donations should be placed in another location on the form. He thought donations had two impacts: made the park cost less and showed the commitment of the community. He thought citizens volunteering to keep up a park was good but could end up costing the City in terms of staff time monitoring and coordinating with the citizens. He thought what the citizens input would be, whether it was money or time, should be placed separately from the other considerations used to evaluate the purchase of parkland.

Berauer suggested that another category could be added regarding donations, whether they are monetary, citizen's time or grants.

Kuras said neighborhood involvement does take a lot of City staff time in organizing and coordinating their involvement.

Macomber did not have a problem with donations being one of 20 criteria items on the evaluation list.

Rodgers would like to keep the evaluation of parks separate from the cost of parks.

Berauer asked staff to take Criteria 11, 16 and donations off the criteria list.

D'Anieri was extremely uncomfortable in accepting monetary donations, so he wanted to keep it on list as one of 20 items used to determine if land should be purchased as a park so it carried equal weight with the other criteria.

DISCUSSION ON NAMING RECENTLY ACQUIRED PARK PROPERTY

Henderson provided the resolution from 1986 that describes the process of naming parks to be used as a guide by PAC.

UPDATE OF PROS PLAN PROCESS

Kuras reported that progress had been made. She said the consultant had input on what questions staff wanted asked of citizens in the questionnaire. She said the draft of questionnaire was due in April. She said the telephone survey would be done in April/May. She said on April 6, the proposals were due from potential consultants to guide the PROS plan update. She thought 7 or 8 proposals would be received. She said if any PAC members wanted to participate in the consultant selection, they were welcome to do so.

REPORT FROM MANAGER OF PARKS AND RECREATON SERVICES

Henderson said discussions with the Ann Arbor District Library had occurred regarding long range planning. She said the Library was not interested in the Dicken Woods site.

She said there had been a meeting with Randy Trent from the Ann Arbor Public Schools regarding setting up meetings regarding City/School-type projects to see if there were things that can be done to benefit both parties.

She said the second public meeting regarding the Swift Run Service Center was held on March 3 and the majority who attended was interested in seeing a dog park, bird watching, and soccer fields located at the site. Berla asked what the next steps would be. She replied that the pros and cons of a sports complex was being developed and meetings with the user groups were being planned and PAC would be kept up to date. She said the PUD would move forward, concentrating on the MRF and maintenance building portion of the site, with the active recreation areas identified on the plan, but not until later would the active recreation areas be worked out in more detail. Satarino thought the City should work with the township regarding the township's land south of this site and what it planned to use it for. She said there would be a meeting with the township and county this Friday regarding this site and another site at Platt and Bemis that the county proposes for a sports complex.

She said on March 6, a parks facilities tour for PAC occurred. She said a PAC orientation was held on February 19 and March 10.

She said there would be a public hearing regarding the Dolph North Grant on June 16 at SEMCOG in Detroit. She encouraged PAC members to attend. Johnson said he would be attending the public hearing.

She said an email had been received from the Mayor's assistant regarding the greenbelt, which was expected to go to City Council on April 6, with a second reading on April 19. She said she asked if PAC could receive the resolution prior to it going to City Council.

REPORT FROM COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND RECREATION

None.

REPORT FROM RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

Berla reported that they reviewed the budget information provided by the City. He said RAC questioned whether the dollar amounts were accurate regarding costs.

REPORT FROM ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Riseng reported that the Environmental Commission recently had a working session regarding what it should be working on. She said some of the things being discussed were land application of sewage sludge and the precautionary principle—used in Europe a lot – which proposes that you do not use something unless it was harmless, instead of using something until it was determined to be harmful.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

None.

COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS

Riseng asked staff to check if PAC members could be allowed stickers to park at City Hall, as finding parking spaces at the meeting time was difficult.

CLOSED SESSION TO DEAL WITH LAND ACQUISITION ISSUES

None.

ADJOURNMENT

D'Anieri declared the meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Jill St. John, Secretary
4/5/04