

MINUTES

PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION

4:00 p.m. – May 18, 2004

Time: Satarino called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

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

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Berla, Berauer, Cohen, Macomber, Reneaud, Riseng, Rodgers,
Satarino

Members Absent: None

Ex-Officio Members Present: Johnson, Henderson, Woods

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aeschbach

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

Others Present: Susan Baskett, 3 Trowbridge Court and Jon Strite, 1218 Van Dusen

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

None.

PUBLIC HEARING ON 3930 PLATT ROAD HOUSE

Susan Baskett, 3 Trowbridge Court, was sad to hear that the house would not be used by the Parks and Recreation Department anymore and asked why it had to be demolished and wondered if it could be sold for private use instead. She asked that if the house had to be demolished, if the City could offer the perennials on the site to the public.

Henderson said that in the past the City had looked at rehabilitating the house but did not have the required funds.

Kuras said the grant required the building to be open to public so they had to consider demolishing it because it would have taken too much money to rehabilitate the house to use for public access. She said a new building might be constructed in the future that would better fit what it would be used for.

Riseng asked if there were plans for the site after house was gone.

Kuras replied not yet.

Macomber asked if it would be possible to divide off and sell a lot to the public for construction of a home at that location.

Kuras replied that the grant would not allow that.

Woods said a meeting was held at the building recently and it was obvious it needed major renovations.

Macomber asked if neighbors could get access to the site's perennials.

Henderson said, through the public process, the City could make them available.

Woods thought that it should be arranged now since the perennials were currently blooming.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

a. Minutes of April 20, 2004 – Moved by Macomber, supported by Cohen, and passed as presented by voice vote.

ELECTION OF NEW CHAIR

Rodgers nominated Satarino, and was seconded by Riseng.

Riseng thought the process used for election made it difficult to determine who was interested in being chair or vice chair.

Satarino said he would step aside and allow the commission members to discuss who also was interested in being nominated. He stepped aside.

Henderson directed the discussion and asked who also was interested in being chair or vice chair.

Satarino replied that he was interested in being chair. He explained why. He said his primary interest was in acquisition.

Riseng requested that he get an email address so it would be easier to contact him.

Henderson asked if anyone was interested in being vice chair.

Woods noted that being vice chair or chair would enable that person to work more with City staff.

Berauer asked what the role of vice chair was.

Satarino thought the chair should make more use of vice chair, not just replacing the chair when the chair was not available at meetings.

Rodgers nominated Berauer.

Berauer said she would be willing to accept the nomination even though she was fairly new to the commission.

Riseng seconded Berauer's nomination.

Vote on Chair: Satarino was unanimously elected as chair.

Vote on Vice Chair: Berauer was unanimously elected as vice chair.

Riseng thought that former PAC member Philip D'Anieri's service should be recognized.

Woods noted that in the past, staff would prepare a plaque and it would be presented to the former PAC member at a meeting.

Henderson said that could be arranged for D'Anieri as well.

REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT MILLAGE PROJECT UPDATE

Karla noted that all finished projects were taken off the list.

Berla asked if the University of Michigan would participate in paying for a tunnel at the Arboretum.

Kuras said she would try to get the University involved.

Satarino asked if the tunnel would be constructed on University property.

Kuras replied yes.

CITY COUNCIL ITEMS UPDATE

Kuras said an architect was chosen to perform design work for the livery, picnic shelter and renovations to the restroom at the Argo Canoe Livery, and updating the Fuller Park restrooms.

Macomber asked what products were used for playgrounds.

Kuras replied that no treated wood was used; used recycled plastic, aluminum, and steel instead.

Berla asked what occurred with the City budget.

Woods said City Council recessed the meeting so on next Monday the City Council will discuss the City budget.

Berauer asked what City Council did with the PAC recommended amendments to the proposed greenbelt ordinance.

Johnson said one or two of PAC's proposed amendments were added, and many amendments were proposed by City Council. He said that, for the most part, City Council's decisions made early on were still supported.

Karla said the amended ordinance would be forwarded to PAC.

PROS PLAN UPDATE

Kuras said Johnson Hill was hired to do the parks plan. She said resolution would go to City Council to start the process.

Satarino asked what the cost of Johnson Hill's participation.

Kuras replied the cost would be \$60,000. She said Norm Cox would be looking at greenways so his input will be added and paid for as well.

Woods asked what the PROS process was.

Kuras said it was a big public input process, with the consultant as the guide to keep process on track. She said the staff committee would probably meet monthly to determine what needed to be updated in plan. She said public input would be received at public meetings, focus groups, and the school board. She said that in order to apply for grants from DNR, must have current plan. She said the telephone survey would be done after the consultant was on board and a meeting would occur with the consultant and staff.

Satarino thought the questions asked in telephone survey were important and with the upcoming issues and events, people should be asked what they think about these issues and events.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE LEASE AGREEMENT WITH COUNTY FOR FOREST PARK

Henderson said the City had entered into a lease agreement with the County in 1984 for \$1. She said the agreement needed to be renewed by City Council approving the proposed resolution.

Borneman said some maintenance of the park was done by the NAP. He said the park was seen as a nice natural area and the City would continue maintaining it in collaboration with Washtenaw County.

Woods asked the property's size.

Borneman guessed that it was 15-20 acres in size and was open to the public. He said there was an artesian well on site.

Macomber asked if the county should be asked to pay for some of the services NAP provides at the site.

Satarino asked what it cost the city to maintain the park.

Borneman replied that staff spends a couple of days per year working at the park.

Kuras added that the county constructed a boardwalk system in the park at no cost to the City.

Macomber did not want to pursue asking the county to pay for NAP's services.

The resolution to recommend to City Council the approval of a lease agreement with Washtenaw County for Forest Park was moved by Berla, supported by Rodgers, and passed by voice vote.

LAND ACQUISITION AND DONATIONS WITH
PARK PURCHASES PROCESS RECOMMENDATION

Henderson said the memorandum included in the packet gave PAC the information it requested at past meetings and that the forms were adjusted as well.

Satarino said that in the past, there had been concern that the amount of neighborhood donations might influence decisions about park acquisitions, so he thought the proposed changes to the site evaluation forms were favorable response to those concerns.

Cohen thought it would be difficult for PAC to apply the economic standard without having demographic knowledge of the neighborhood in question, but she thought that as long as it was considered as only one more thing to consider, it would be ok.

Berla strongly felt that when a monetary donation was considered, a contract of some sort between the donator(s) and the City was needed because currently a neighborhood could decide to change its mind about giving the donation even after the process to acquire the property was completed.

Satarino thought the process to donate money toward a park should be described in writing so the expectations on both sides are known.

Rodgers asked where on the form the evaluation of the socioeconomic data relating to neighborhoods would apply.

Berauer replied that under “19. Donation” was where the socioeconomic data would be used, but she did not think “Monetary Donation from a Lower Income Neighborhood” was what intended to be referenced there. She thought PAC wanted to know if a neighborhood was a low-income neighborhood and, therefore, unable to give a monetary donation. She thought the intent was to equalize the balance of high-income neighborhoods that may be able to provide a monetary donation and receive points for that donation and with a low-income neighborhood that may not be able to provide a monetary donation but also would receive points because they were a low-income neighborhood. She said this idea was modeled after a form used by the State.

Macomber asked if the socioeconomic status would only come into play if there were a donation involved. She said the proposed process would allow a parcel to get points solely for being in a low-income neighborhood without any donation involved, which she found troubling. She would rather donations and a neighborhood’s socioeconomic status be linked.

Cohen felt whether there was a donation was a low priority issue related to the whole process of selecting a parcel. She thought there were a lot of other factors that were much more important when selecting a parcel for acquisition. When a donation is involved in the purchase of a site, she felt that should be made clear to the public.

Macomber would like the socioeconomic and the donation aspects combined as one item.

Rodgers thought maybe PAC could consider it as one of the bonus points’ items.

Satarino liked his suggestion. He thought PAC did not want to put too much weight on this item in relation to the other items on the list. He asked if there was any specific recommendation from PAC on how to handle this.

Berla thought the total score computed should show how valuable a parcel was to add to the park system. He thought a second score should deal with the cost of the park and donations. He thought the scores should be kept separate.

Berauer said the items are separated into categories already, but the subtotals are ultimately added together. She said the cost items could be completely separate if PAC wanted to do that.

Satarino thought more discussion should occur and these options should be more fully considered.

Woods felt that PAC was trying to make sure it understood why it decided to purchase a site and that PAC’s decision would be easily understood by others, and transparent as to

the process that had been used. She now thought adding more evaluation factors may make it more complicated when evaluating a site so she also thought more time was needed to determine what items should be included on the site evaluation form.

Riseng thought benefits and costs should be kept together.

Johnson said City Council needed an explicate report on why PAC positively evaluated a park for purchase.

Reneaud asked if socioeconomic data was available to staff.

Henderson thought yes.

Macomber thought socioeconomic data should be considered separately, not used to offset a donation. She wondered if the total priority number on top right side of the evaluation sheet, taken from PROS plan, showed whether an area had enough parks.

Satarino thought PAC wanted to acknowledge the neighborhood surrounding a potential park, but the question was how to weigh it; whether it should be considered a line item or be a bonus item was at issue. He asked PAC where to go from there.

Rodgers wanted two different bonus points' areas, one for quality, and one for cost.

Satarino asked if PAC was in favor of continuing this discussion at another meeting. He asked if the subcommittee could also reconvene.

PAC and staff agreed to continue discussion at another meeting and for the subcommittee to reconvene.

RESOLUTION TO NAME NEWLY ACQUIRED PARKS –
WOODBURY ACCESS PARCEL TO IROQUOIS PARK AND
SUNSET BROOKS PARCELS TO SUNSET BROOKS PARK

Borneman suggested to name the Sunset Brooks parcels Sunset Brooks Nature Area instead of Sunset Brooks Park.

PAC agreed.

The resolution was amended to change "park" to "nature area" regarding the Sunset Brooks parcels.

The amended resolution was moved by Berauer, supported by Berla, and passed unanimously by a voice vote.

DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL PAC MEETINGS

Rodgers thought PAC needed to set up an additional meeting to discuss priorities.

Berauer agreed.

Woods stated that since PAC was discussing meeting times, she had a conflict with the first Tuesday LAC meetings; the Energy Commission met at that same time so she was not able to attend the LAC meetings. She wondered if the first Tuesday LAC meeting time could be changed.

Berauer said she would support moving the LAC meetings to later in the evening.

Cohen also had a conflict with the current LAC meeting time, but late evening meetings did not work well for her either. Regarding setting up an additional meeting to discuss PAC priorities, she thought that if small groups from PAC met separately and then reported back to the full PAC, it would work easier than trying to find a time when all could meet outside the current meeting schedule.

Satarino thought maybe on the weekend PAC could hold an additional meeting.

Henderson thought maybe a retreat where an agenda on what needed to be discussed could be arranged. She wondered if PAC wanted to add another meeting regularly, meeting quarterly or monthly.

Cohen asked that PAC agendas be arranged such that important items were placed at beginning of the meeting.

Satarino thought that was a good idea.

Woods suggested that an item could be added after public commentary called "action items" that PAC would act on.

Satarino asked Rodgers to email PAC regarding dates they all were available for an additional meeting.

SWIFT RUN UPDATE

Henderson said staff had started to talk with the County, Township and City of Saline regarding the sports field complex. She said they were looking at various options with the community. She was not sure if the sports field complex would be placed at Swift Run because of the natural habitat and there had been requests for a dog park at the corner of Platt and Ellsworth and a natural area for birds was proposed. She said once the PUD was approved by the Township for the maintenance facility at Swift Run, then we will be able to look at what land is available for the recreation component.

Macomber thought the land by airport made more sense for soccer fields because it would require less preparation to be able to use the land as soccer fields. She asked what the timeframe was to make that decision.

Henderson said next month staff would travel to see the sports fields in Midland and then would work with the County, Township and City of Saline to work out how to cover the costs and responsibility for the maintenance of the sports fields.

Cohen asked what types of discussions had occurred regarding financial contributions from other entities.

Henderson said that discussions had occurred that if the City provided the land, then the County or City of Saline would be responsible for the maintenance of the fields, but nothing had been decided yet.

Macomber thanked staff for its effort on this issue.

REPORT FROM MANAGER OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

Henderson said the reorganization of the City was passed by City Council at its May 17 meeting.

Woods said the components of the four service areas had been decided but some components could move from one service area to another.

Johnson thought the organizational charts should have been added to the resolution for more explanation.

Henderson added that more information would be given to PAC next week regarding the golf course situation that was mentioned in the Ann Arbor News.

REPORT FROM COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND RECREATION

None.

REPORT FROM RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

Berla said RAC discussed what it thought the impact would be if the City billed for the full cost of the maintenance the City provided (\$200,000 per year). He said RAC determined an additional \$15 to \$30 per participant would need to be added, which would be a significant increase to the users of the programs, especially youth softball and baseball. He said RAC recommended to City Council that RAC reimburse the City

for costs at a rate of 80 percent of the costs for adult recreation and 50 percent for youth recreation, which would still represent a significant fee increase to users. He said RAC had just received an invoice from the City for \$200,000 based on the usage in the past year, but it said it was for usage in the upcoming year.

Rynard said an invoice was sent before the RAC meeting occurred and was then discussed at that meeting. She and Sara Aeschbach decided that staff would work together regarding a pricing policy similar to what RAC suggested (80%/50%).

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

John Strite, 1218 Van Dusen, wanted to discuss soccer fields and active recreation space. He said he had been a coach and participant for 25 years. He said we had to start someplace because we need a facility now. He said we could not rest the existing fields so they get worn out. He felt it was time for the addition of a significant soccer facility. He said it may still be used too much, but it was greatly needed. He thought cost of the development of a site should be considered before whether it impacts a bird species.

Riseng said the Bobolink was a declining species because grasslands were declining.

COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS

None.

CLOSED SESSION TO DEAL WITH LAND ACQUISITION ISSUES

Moved by Riseng, supported by Berauer, that PAC hold a closed session to discuss land acquisition issues, and passed by voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Satarino declared the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Jill St. John, Secretary
6/16/04