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7 **APPROVED**

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9 **CITY OF ANN ARBOR – PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION**
10 **MEETING MINUTES - TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2006**

11 **A - CALL TO ORDER**

12 Meeting was called to order at 4:13 p.m. by J. Satarino (Chair)

13 **B - ROLL CALL**

14 Commissioners Present: Satarino, Reneaud, Berla, Rodgers, Macomber, Offen, Berauer (4:14 p.m.) and Riseng
15 (4:17 p.m.) (9)

16 Commissioners Absent: Cohen

17 Ex-Officio Members Present: Johnson and Woods (arrived @4:26 p.m.) (2)

18 Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aeschbach (1)

19 Staff Present: Miller, Kuras, Bemish, Dehring, Smith and Acquaviva

20 **C - SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

21 Dawn Whitford of Ypsilanti and Steve Peck, President of the Miracle League of Michigan – A special baseball
22 league for children with disabilities.

23 The presenters wanted to introduce the Commission to the Miracle League to encourage the City or Private
24 entities to donate some land usage for the League to use for league play in Ann Arbor, and encouraging citizens
25 to volunteer for the program as 'buddies,' coaches and organizers.

26 **PUBLIC COMMENTARY OF AGENDA ITEMS**

27 None.

28 **A - APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

29 **E-1** January 17, 2006 Regular Session

30 Moved by Riseng, Seconded by Offen, "that the minutes of the January 17, 2006 Regular Session be accepted as
31 presented."

32 On a Voice Vote – **MOTION PASSED** - UNANIMOUS

33 **B – OLD BUSINESS**

34 **B-1** Land Acquisition Policy Issue Discussion –

35 J. Miller – Passed out information on and discussed Chapter 42 in relationship to PAC. It was originally written for
36 the Greenbelt Action Committee and Greenbelt District purchases. It is in the form of an ordinance due to state
37 laws that say if we're going to purchase with development rights, we must have an ordinance. It has no effect on
38 PAC. Our (PACS) purchases don't apply.

39 Woods – So you're saying that this only applies in the limited instances when PAC is looking to purchase land that
40 is outside of the City limits, but within the Greenbelt boundaries? (J. Miller - Yes).

41 Riseng – Does this Ordinance gives us permission to buy those properties, or only if the Greenbelt does not want
42 them. (J. Miller - It's both – Tells the process by which PAC would take over to take the lead on – in regard to

60 acquisitions that happen to fall within the Greenbelt District, that are straight acquisitions - we would continue to do
61 our fee simple purchases – Doing due diligence, wanting to see if people want to make a donation, etc.)

62
63 Satarino – Once Greenbelt says, “we’re not interested” in a particular property, we can then go ahead and apply
64 our normal process as we used to do? (J. Miller – Yes)

65
66 Berla – When I read this ordinance, it seemed the main purpose was to say that the City was granting itself
67 additional rights to do things that it previously couldn’t do, most notably the ‘development rights’ – which unless it
68 had an ordinance, it wouldn’t be a permitted action. Are you saying that the rules for purchasing property inside
69 the city versus outside the city are different? (J. Miller – They really are the same, the only issue that will come
70 up (being specific to acquisitions within the Greenbelt District) are things like a fee simple purchase for open
71 space that is within the Greenbelt District.

72
73 J. Miller – Cites section 3.75 in the ordinance and talks about administrative costs and accounting perspectives.
74 This is our standard guideline in terms of charges. It’s not inconsistent with what we did before.

75
76 Offen – Have the changes in this ordinance been approved already? (J. Miller) – No, this is proposed and shared
77 with this body and with GAC at their next meeting with the expectation that GAC would either recommend these
78 changes to move forward for City Council approval and then Council has to actually adopt them.

79
80 Berauer – Regarding the Administrative section, the Demolition and Remediation piece, is unclear the way it’s
81 written. (Suggests language change – will be considered for changes).

82
83 **B-2** PAC 12-Month Work Plan –

84
85 Satarino – Asked for input from PAC regarding what PAC should do for the next 12 months. He stated that the
86 expiring Parks Millages are of great importance, but will be dealt with on a separate basis as an agenda item in
87 the future.

88
89 Some ideas included replacement of the ash trees in city parks and invite the public for comment; the relationship
90 between RAC and Parks; an additional Disc Golf course; a Parks District between the City, the County and others;
91 maps for Parks (and trails); the changing face of A2 City parks; the Greenway Task Force; Community Gardens in
92 neighborhood parks; costs of Park services; Dog parks; Adopt-a-Park and 2008 Budget issues.

93
94 On a Voice Vote – **MOTION PASSED** - UNANIMOUS

95
96 **C – NEW BUSINESS**

97
98 **C-1** Millage Task Force Sub-Committee –

99
100 Satarino – Wants to fill PAC in on the progress of the Sub-Committee – Feels they’re at a critical point and trying
101 to bring the public in on this situation. We would like different focus groups, etc.

102
103 J. Miller – The communication plan included here (C-1) is the communication plan that we’ve developed around
104 the expiring of the two millages and the timelines.

105
106 Offen – Requested to advertise the communication information in the Michigan Daily as well as the A2 News and
107 A2 Observer.

108
109 Berauer – Feels it’s important to have at least one Commissioner and one A2 staff member involved and attending
110 meetings so that it sends a message to the public that PAC is really behind this.

111
112 J. Miller – February and March are laid out for the focus group and public meetings and public input. We will
113 provide factual information about the two millages we have that are currently going to expire. When we have the
114 May public meetings, we will then have more information to put together for City Council.

115
116 **C-2** Leslie Science Center Strategic Planning Task Force Update – Kirsten Levinsohn

117

118 J. Miller – The budget that Council adopted this year included an amendment for Leslie Science Center which
119 looks at strategic issues to look more long-term and self-supporting as a group. This strategic group that is
120 meeting on this issue has a deadline of March of 2007 to present a recommendation from the work that they've
121 done.

122
123 Levinsohn – We are looking at our future long range. In October we hired two Facilitators to help us with this
124 project; we then created a Strategic Planning Taskforce of 15 members, attempting to get representation from
125 different areas. Our next meeting on February 21 will have a 'logic model' – discussing different scenarios that we
126 may be considering.

127
128 At some point we will decide on one scenario, get some more info on that and keep pursuing that model. We're
129 also looking at "A.N.C.A.," the Association of Nature Center Administrators. One of the services they provide is
130 sending a group of nature center directors to your facility to look at your 'big' questions and try to help you focus
131 on different strategies. The cost of this service is in the range of \$3,000.00 to \$5,000.00. We need to find some
132 alternate funding sources if we're to carry on at the level we're currently at.

133
134 J. Satarino – There is a certain amount of financial stress, but is that caused by a growth or shrinking in
135 programs?

136
137 Levinsohn – We're at a juncture where we don't have enough staff to make it work out, and we don't have enough
138 revenue to hire staff, so there is financial stress in being 'sustainable' and to keep the staff that we have and
139 therefore are looking for alternative funding ideas.

140
141 **C-3 Park Rehabilitation and Development Millage (Fund "18") –**

142
143 J. Miller – The millage for Park Rehabilitation and Development runs through June 2007. We have been keeping
144 an eye on this millage from a "Fund Balance" perspective and we are projecting out through the end of the millage
145 and the projects that are planned to be done through the life of this millage. We're anticipating a \$2.6 Million dollar
146 fund balance at the end of June 2007, if we complete the projects that are on the docket right now, we are
147 proposing what to do with that fund balance. We placed a list of projects on the table to consider what to move
148 forward on. Staff recommendations were to move forward with these projects in this particular order to use the
149 fund balance (Listed below). All of the projects won't be done at once and then find out a year from now that we
150 have overspent the fund, but to strategically start working on these projects.

- 151
152
- 153 1. Reforestation in City Parks due to Emerald Ash Borer. (approximately \$366,000.00)
 - 154 2. Set aside \$500,000.00 of our fund balance for Emergency Non-Scheduled Capital Projects.
 - 155 3. Replacement of our Compressors at Buhr and Veteran's Ice Arena. (\$200,000.00)
 - 156 4. Series of improvements to the Veteran's Ice Area Roof – Interior ceiling and dehumidification system.
157 In 2002 we replaced the roof and repaired the perlins, but the amount of humidity was not addressed.
158 (\$300,000.00)
 - 159 5. Roof repairs on six of our facilities: Fuller, Mack and Buhr Pools; Leslie Park and Huron Hills golf
160 course clubhouses and the Senior Center. The roofs have exceeded their intended life span.
161 (\$246,000.00)
 - 162 6. Set aside (\$750,000.00) towards soccer fields and ultimate Frisbee.

163 This would be a 'planning' document to make sure we don't overspend our funds.

164
165 Berla – Shortly after the Ash Borer millage failed, we talked about diverting some funds from something else to
166 removal of trees. I believe it was putting rubberized surfaces in play areas being put off. Did that get done?

167
168 J. Miller – That was Fund 6, which was the Repair and Restoration millage. All the staff prioritized lists, and that
169 wasn't a priority.

170
171 Offen – Money that is set aside for the Park Reforestation – will that cover all of the parks? Also, the Emergency
172 Reserve Funds have been placed on this list as high priority. Are you anticipating spending this money when the
173 millage ends, or will it stay in a Fund somewhere? Does this really constitute 'spending' the money by setting it
174 aside?

175
176

177 J. Miller – Our understanding is that not all of those trees need to be replaced since some were in natural areas.
178 As to setting aside the money for the Emergency Reserve, our buildings are 20, 30 and 40 years old, and we have
179 no ‘reserves’ set aside for funding should something happen and need repair or replacement. There is no
180 requirement within the millage that says that this money has to be spent by the close of the millage.

181
182 Woods – Regarding the Emergency Reserve Funds, according to the memo, we don’t currently have any funds
183 that have been designated to take care of emergency capital projects that could happen. It seems like it’s an
184 awfully large amount to set aside for something which we have not been setting aside funds for in the past. You’re
185 going to have to sell me on this. Can you help me understand some of these ‘non-emergency’ capital projects that
186 would come about that these funds would cover?

187
188 J. Miller – It could be everything from another facility where a roof collapse or a major HVAC system that goes
189 down that we don’t have the funds to replace, or we have a pool filtration system leak that might require a lot of
190 cutting through concrete to repair it, it could be a whole host of different things that could happen. I’m hoping that
191 a year from now we can come back and say “we didn’t need to use these funds,” so we can now reallocate those
192 funds for some other capital project.

193
194 Satarino – We used to have a category called “targets of opportunity,” and that was a little more optimistic way of
195 setting aside money, and one option of that could be considered ‘target of opportunity’ money in case something
196 very valuable came along that parks could help with.

197
198 Woods – What have we been doing, and our insurance doesn’t cover anything that might happen if there is a roof
199 collapse or something similar?

200
201 J. Miller – Because we have not had that, we would explore all of our other financial opportunities for funding.
202 Aside from the General Fund, if insurance were to cover a catastrophic disaster that happened, that would be the
203 first place that I recommend that we go. This is just setting aside funds to continue to operate that if we didn’t
204 have the funds, we wouldn’t.

205
206 Woods – My concern is, at a time when the public has told us “we’re really watching you and we’re concerned,”
207 and we’re asking for a millage to be renewed. While I understand having something set aside for a “rainy day,” I
208 think half a million dollars is a lot of money to do that with, and perhaps we need to be proactive and think about
209 whether there are some other projects that those funds might be used for.

210
211 J. Miller – I’m not sure \$500,000.00 is the right amount; we could reassess this after six or nine months and see
212 where we’re at. If we find that we haven’t needed those funds, then we come back with some alternatives and
213 lower the amount, etc. It was really as a protection for the Parks system so that we had resources available in the
214 event that some major event happened.

215
216 Berauer – Has Parks has ever had an ‘emergency fund’ before? Can’t we call it something else so that it’s not
217 implied that it’s only for emergency use? Would that be acceptable to people?

218
219 J. Miller – As Commissioner Satarino mentioned, we had the ‘target of opportunity’ fund.

220
221 Woods – I’d have to have someone refresh my memory about ‘targets of opportunity’ funds because I’m not
222 remembering those.

223
224 J. Miller – The “Targets of Opportunity” fund was if there were things we hadn’t anticipated when the millage was
225 passed, that neighborhood groups would be interested in something or a project came along that we hadn’t
226 expected, we could use those funds. I remember one of those projects that were designated for that was the
227 Farmer’s Market, the PROS Plan, Grant matches – things we hadn’t anticipated and set that money aside for.

228
229 Berauer – I’m afraid that if we call it an ‘emergency fund’ that if opportunities like those come up that we may want
230 to do, that we can’t do that because it’s ‘emergency’ money. I’d like to see more flexibility in it.

231
232 Offen – Were there any items that were close to making the cut but didn’t make the list of items you’ve presented
233 that you should tell us about?

234

235 J. Miller – The things that were on our list were: Improvements to Vet’s park for lockers, landscaping, activities
236 room addition, a spray park at Fuller, Railroad underpass to connect the Huron River Greenway to Huron River
237 Drive and Barton park (\$2 Million), rubberized surfaces in playgrounds to replace wood chips (that was taken
238 away due to the funding for the ash trees), Brown Park bridge connection, to complete loop for work being done
239 by the Drain Commissioner’s office and something that has been on the Park Millage list that has not been
240 accomplished is a Skate Park, Boardwalk connection between the Argo dam and the Broadway bridge
241 (\$500,000.00). I’m sure there are others but they weren’t part of that conversation.
242

243 Macomber – It might be erroneous on my part, but when I read it I was thinking.....what if the new millage
244 doesn’t pass, that could be money that could tide us over until we could place it on the next ballot.
245

246 **D - COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS**

247
248 None.
249

250 **E – REPORT FROM INTERIM PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER**

251
252 J. Miller – Attended a Parks and Recreation symposium. One of the topics was creating a ‘Park District.” We
253 broke up into discussion groups and most of us all said we needed to look at ‘County wide,’ parks. There are
254 workgroups that formed out of this, and I’ll be hearing back from them. I’ll be working on the ‘governance group’
255 and if there are people on PAC who are interested in being involved in any conversations regarding a Parks
256 District, I’d like to get your names.
257

258 Also, at last weeks RAC meeting, Sarah Aeschbach had brought up concerns regarding an agreement with ball
259 field maintenance that the City was holding up. Christen and I spoke about it the next morning, and I was
260 surprised to hear this.
261

262 We had had a prior meeting with Stephen Postema, myself, the School district attorney, Sarah Aeschbach and
263 others back in December about this subject and others where there are crossover services needed. As a result of
264 that meeting, an agreement was made that anywhere there was a crossover in activities or our relationship, that
265 we would have a particular agreement regarding that activity that we would have a written agreement that would
266 lay out both the city and the schools responsibilities.
267

268 The agreement for the ball field issue was agreed to be taken care of by RAC’s attorney, and it is in RAC’s hands.
269

270 Berla – Because April first is when softball and baseball season begins, they’re really under the gun. Getting this
271 signed and sealed and done was a priority for us.
272

273 (J. Dehring gave an update on a conversation with the County Drain Commission and showed a map of the area
274 in Brown Park).
275

276 J. Dehring – We recently learned that the Commissioner’s recent request is that Brown Park be closed during this
277 construction. The land area is ‘technically’ the Drain Commissioner’s property. We have a use agreement for
278 recreational purposes. We only own a very small portion. Part of the disk golf course will be reconfigured and will
279 not allow for play. The parking lot will also be reconfigured to accommodate about twenty four cars.
280

281 (Various dialogue regarding the disk golf course took place among the Commission – a suggestion was to have a
282 temporary place for disk golfers while the construction is underway. A. Kuras suggested a nine hole course was
283 feasible at Bandemer park.)
284

285 A few of the Commission members expressed their concerns that before another disk golf course was constructed
286 that alternate park facilities should be looked at first (i.e., skating parks, dog parks, etc.)
287

288 Staff reported that both the PROS Plan and the Market Master plan were passed and adopted by City Council.
289 The airport soccer field site was discussed. City representatives have met with state representatives early this
290 year and in conjunction with the consultant are still discussing the viability of this soccer field at this location. We’ll
291 do a ‘needs assessment’ once we meet with soccer groups and interested parties this week.
292

293 A. Kuras – Non-Motorized system will be up for consideration with City Council this week. The Bandemer
294 underpass feasibility study is finished, the railroad will not grant the land until the concept design is finished and
295 we can't apply for grants for the designs until we own/lease the land.... Will discuss/revisit the funding issue later.
296

297 **F – REPORT FROM MANAGER OF FIELD OPERATIONS**

298
299 None.

300
301 **G – REPORT FROM RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION**

302
303 (Discussed under Interim Parks Manager Report).

304
305 **H – REPORTS FROM RELEVANT COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND/OR TASK FORCES**

306
307 Riseng – Environmental Commission - Natural Features revisions committee – they're disbanding but
308 reformulating under the Environmental Commission as a sub-committee.

309
310 **I – PUBLIC COMMENTARY – GENERAL (3 Minutes per Speaker)**

311
312 None.

313
314 **J – COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS**

315
316 **K – CLOSED/WORKING SESSION TO DEAL WITH LAND ACQUISITION ISSUES (If Applicable)**

317
318 **L - TRANSMITTALS**

319
320 **“Motion to Adjourn by Offen, Seconded by Berauer.”**

321
322 On a voice vote, - Motion Passes - Unanimous

323 Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

324
325 PAC Went to a Working Session Immediately following the above stated adjournment.

326
327 Submitted by: Brenda Acquaviva
328 Administrative Support Specialist V