

APPROVED

**CITY OF ANN ARBOR – PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES - TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2006**

**A - CALL TO ORDER**

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

**B - ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Satarino, Reneaud, Berla, Rodgers, Macomber, Offen, Berauer and Riseng, Cohen (arrived @ 4:22) (9)

Commissioners Absent: (0)

Ex-Officio Members Present: Johnson and Woods (2)

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aeschbach (1)

Staff Present: Miller, Kuras, Bemish, Dehring, Smith, Sicheneder, Fales, Crawford and Acquaviva

**K - CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS LAND ACQUISITION ISSUES** (*\*Moved from Agenda as Item K to be heard prior to public commentary*)

On a Roll Call Vote – **MOTION PASSED** – Unanimous – (*PAC went into closed session at 4:15, back at 4:25*)

**PUBLIC COMMENTARY OF AGENDA ITEMS** (3 Minutes per Speaker) (*\*Moved to be heard before Special Presentations*)

1. Harvey Kaplan – 3065 Hunting Valley Drive - Spoke about preserving Huron Hills Woodlands.
2. S. Dombey - 3030 Provincial, A2, MI 48104 - Spoke about an Accounting for the Golf Fund.
3. Nancy Kaplan – 3065 Hunting Valley Drive, A2, MI 48104 - Spoke about the Golf Fund and Parkland.
4. Steve Masten – 2323 Medford Road, A2, MI 48104 - Preserving Huron Hills Woodlands.
5. Ed Walsh – 3025 Foxcroft, A2, MI 48104 – Gold Fund & Huron Hills Woodlands.
6. Jerry Gray – 3080 Hunting Valley Drive, A2, MI 48104 – Golf Fun & Huron Hills Woodlands.

The Chair noted that a 'solution' is being worked out that does not involve the sale of parkland and the park millages and how each has its own restrictive language on the use of those funds.

**C - SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS** (*\*Moved to be heard after Public Commentary*)

- C - 1** Terry Calhoun on Disc Golf – Gave a Powerpoint presentation regarding Disc Golf and how popular the sport has become and encouraged the City of Ann Arbor to increase its Disc Golf Ranges. He spoke about the possible use of Bandemer Park for a new disc golf course.

**A - APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A-1** February 14, 2006 Regular Session

*Moved by Offen, Seconded by Berauer, "that the minutes of the February 14, 2006 Regular Session be accepted as presented."*

On a Voice Vote – **MOTION PASSED** - Unanimous

60 **B – OLD BUSINESS**

61  
62 **Add: B-1a** Chapter 42

63 **Named: B-1'a'**

64  
65 Jayne Miller spoke to PAC regarding Chapter 42. The last few meetings PAC walked through changes that affect  
66 the Greenbelt Advisory Commission, but that don't affect PAC. There are also changes included based on  
67 recommendations that PAC wanted incorporated, particularly regarding administrative expenses.

68  
69 Discussion regarding demolition, remediation and site clean-up costs to provide public access to the property, and  
70 where the costs for that would come from. The Greenbelt Advisory Commission did not recommend that this be  
71 financed from the Greenbelt Millage.

72  
73 Johnson, Woods and Macomber are opposed to using the Greenbelt money for buying and "cleaning up" the land  
74 when the property to be purchased is, for example, a contaminated site, etc.

75  
76 Berauer sympathizes keeping the Millage expenditures 'clean;' however, she feels that since the supply of  
77 available land inside the city is very scarce, using some Millage money to clean up a particular property as a  
78 condition of purchase is not misuseage.

79  
80 Riseng stated that she has never remembered a time when we ('PAC') have stated that we want funds  
81 (restoration or rehab) to be used for a particular project, but that they have always approved 'staff  
82 recommendations.'

83  
84 Satarino states that previous to the Greenbelt Millage being approved that PAC was able to use acquisition funds  
85 under their guidelines to do removals of buildings and site improvements, etc., so we weren't contemplating  
86 anything new or strange, we have done this in the past. It's a very narrow band when this might be useful for us.  
87 We do have to take the wise counsel that we're getting from our Council person members to PAC and we respect  
88 the fact that we don't want to confuse the public about the access of those funds for other than straight acquisition  
89 purposes.

90  
91 Offen – The restoration funds that would typically be available, isn't that budgeted out five years in advance when  
92 the Millage is past? My fear is that if we do this, that we would need to spend that money on a particular property,  
93 but when the time came to pay for it, that these funds are already 'spoken for.'

94  
95 J. Miller – It's the Rehab and Development Millage, which is the Capital Millage, where those projects are laid out.  
96 Within that, we have targets of opportunity funds available and sometimes we have projects depending on the  
97 varying issues at the time that don't get completed. From a Capital projects perspective, I think there are funds  
98 available. The event of not being able to pay for the needed demolition, etc. is highly unlikely and at the time you  
99 are looking at the acquisition of a property that if there is a need to deal with a demolition issue, we will be able to  
100 provide you with what funds are available from where and if those funds are available at the time of the  
101 acquisition.

102  
103 Satarino – We will accept this change unless there is opposition to it, and we hope that Council will understand our  
104 concerns.

105  
106 **Rename: (from B-1)**

107 **Now B-1'b'** Golf Fund (Fund 47)

108  
109 J. Miller – I believe everyone except for Sam (Offen) was on the Commission a year ago when we had these same  
110 conversations regarding the Golf Fund. There were reports provided to each of you. I have some extra copies if  
111 needed. I had staff do an analysis of the Golf Fund; the history, it's creation, history of the golf courses, the way  
112 they were previously funded, the history and trends of golf within the last ten to fifteen years and where the fund  
113 stood. There is also a report on funding and funding alternatives.

114  
115 There were two issues with the Golf fund. (#1.) The debt that the fund itself has and owes to other funds, and  
116 (#2.) The operating expenses. The operating expenses is the one that we have the most control over, and have  
117 spent the last six years getting our revenues and expenses in line with each other so that at the end of the fiscal  
118 year our goal is to be operating in the black, or at a minimum to have our expenses not exceed our revenues.

120 J. Miller – Explained that the golf courses were expanded in the area as demand was expected to increase, but it  
121 did not. Supply went up but demand stayed the same. Capital improvements were done to Leslie Park which  
122 included taking out bonds for the improvements and the loss of the use of the course while the improvements took  
123 place. Over 1.5 million dollars in revenue was lost due to this closure. At the same time, the city was facing  
124 financial challenges and we moved the two canoe liveryes, Vet's ice arena and Fuller swimming pool were moved  
125 from the general fund into the golf enterprise fund.  
126

127 The difference between the general fund and the enterprise fund is that you have to incur all of your annual  
128 operating expenses that you incur and pay debt depreciation, a municipal service charge back to the general fund,  
129 etc. You pay all of the same kinds of costs if you were a business. Those facilities were no longer able to operate  
130 within the general fund. Over the seven-year period that the facilities remained in the golf fund (before being  
131 moved back to the General fund again), the loss that the fund experienced was about \$100,000.00 dollars  
132 annually. Our debt is now at about \$900,000.00.  
133

134 J. Miller informed PAC that due to this analysis, possible solutions to eliminate this debt include; maintaining  
135 status quo, selling approximately 22 acres of golf property around Huron that is not part of the course but a buffer,  
136 and selling all of the front seven at Huron. We've reduced our expenses to a minimum and it is our goal to be at a  
137 net zero loss this year and next. At the end of the second year, if we can't operate in the black, we'll have to find  
138 alternatives. Some of those ideas include; acquiring liquor licenses to sell beer and wine at Leslie and Huron to  
139 bring in additional revenue and other funding options for capital improvements at those courses and our goal is to  
140 maintain those golf courses as golf courses. In addition, Leslie was deeded to the city so there are deed  
141 restrictions. It is not our intent to *not* have it be park property, but we have financial issues that we must deal with.  
142

143 T. Crawford (City Chief Financial Officer) – Mr. Crawford stated that handling the debt issue is something we need  
144 to deal with but if we can't get these to operate in the black, it's irrelevant. The golf fund has borrowed money  
145 from the General Fund to maintain its operations. It is a liability to the General Fund and was transferred back  
146 there because an enterprise fund is not permitted to have a negative balance. ["The Golf fund, has used - has in  
147 essence borrowed money from the General fund in order to maintain its operations, so, it's actually a liability to the  
148 general fund." ---- "During the time they were incurring losses, it was to cover their losses. An enterprise fund is  
149 not permitted to have a negative balance. So, the forgiveness of the debt, you know, anything like that, would  
150 basically just be an issue - the general fund would have to come up with the money to forgive the debt if that was  
151 an alternative that we chose]."  
152

153 Offen – Do we pay interest on this debt?  
154

155 J. Miller – Yes, we do. We pay the interests on the funds that are in the funds that accrue, so if we have a loss,  
156 we also are charged the level of interest that the other funds would accrue at that time.  
157

158 T. Crawford – All of the funds together invest their surplus funds. If those funds would have earned 3 percent,  
159 then that is what we charge the Golf fund, because they have basically 'borrowed' those funds from another fund.  
160 The interest rates are equal to whatever the city has earned on its investments.  
161

162 Macomber – A process question. Are you bringing this issue to us for a decision?  
163

164 J. Miller - We're presenting this forward on information sharing with PAC, as it has been an ongoing conversation  
165 with both PAC and the public.  
166

167 Rodgers – The other facilities have been left out of the enterprise fund for those years. Would there have been  
168 more cost to the General Fund, or less input to the General Fund?  
169

170 J. Miller – A number of issues. By those facilities being moved into the enterprise fund, the municipal service  
171 charge was increased because we had more operations and expenses within the Golf Fund. The expenses and  
172 revenues also associated with those facilities were also moved to the enterprise fund.  
173

174 T. Crawford – Regarding the municipal service charge, it works this way; The General Fund has a lot of the  
175 support activity – I.T., Accounting, H.R. – all these different resources that are used throughout the city. This  
176 municipal service charge is taking the funds, which receive real support from the organization and charging them  
177 for the services, just like the real world where a business is liable for all the costs it would incur.  
178

179 Johnson – Thanked J. Miller and T. Crawford for bringing forth this information with candor and clarity. He stated  
180 that it is an issue that we need to deal with and you’ve shown a great deal of integrity and care in bringing the  
181 facts before us and I appreciate that. During the 1990’s there were some bookkeeping that I regard as somewhat  
182 ‘questionable.’ If the liveries and the golf courses had been taken out of the golf fund and taken their debt with  
183 them, we wouldn’t have this problem – so in effect, the General Fund managed to ‘evade’ a hit. Council has to  
184 take that into account.

185 I don’t think that our General Fund has \$700,000.00 to give to the golf courses (even though that would be an  
186 appropriate thing to do), and I hope that you’ll be able to deal with the problem by cost cuts you’re making. The  
187 crucial thing about this is that it appears that the golf courses are under threat of being liquidated and we can  
188 solve a lot of the public’s problem by making it clear that that is not going to happen. It’s incumbent on Council to  
189 pass some sort of binding resolution or put a conservation easement on those properties to make sure that that  
190 will never happen.

191  
192 T. Crawford – I’d like to address some things that were brought up in public commentary. Any sale of land or  
193 property would have to come to Council to be voted upon, and addressing comments on ‘stealth’ or ‘backroom’  
194 discussions – staff does work on a lot of ‘ideas,’ but an ‘action’ like that cannot occur without a very public  
195 meeting. Another comment that was made referenced the financial statements. That is public information and is  
196 also included in our audit report. Because golf is a separate fund, the revenues, expenditures, cash flow, equity,  
197 etc. is all in that report. (J. Miller offered to email that information to anyone who requests it).

198  
199 Berla – This report that says ‘sell land’ – it was a bad decision to put that in there in the first place, as the golf fund  
200 doesn’t own that land, it’s owned by the entire city. The first question is whether we should continue to operate  
201 these golf courses, and the second question is whether we are going to keep this land as parkland at all, which to  
202 me is not a question at all. I would never consider selling any of that land for any reason. What is on the table is:  
203 does it make sense for the city to operate golf courses? It would be helpful to have a report that answered that  
204 question.

205  
206 J. Miller – The whole analysis and report was done to provide a history about golf and the golf courses in Ann  
207 Arbor and to look at what our options are within the golf fund. It wasn’t to say ‘we’re going to sell property;’ it’s our  
208 job as staff when we are faced with challenges whether about a golf fund or any other kind of operation is to  
209 explore all of the options. That is all this report did or was intended to do. I am a Parks and Recreation  
210 professional – do I want to see these operations fail? Absolutely not. Do I want this property to be sold?  
211 Absolutely not, but we have operational issues that we have to deal with. Something else to consider is that even  
212 if this property were kept as parkland, what would the cost be to maintain it as parklands?

213  
214 T. Crawford – Selling a portion of the property would definitely fix the problem. You would get enough money from  
215 a sale of a portion of that property to go into your fund balance and the interest on that money alone would pay  
216 your operating deficit. This would end up being an endowment of sorts that would support this, and that is  
217 somewhat how this got considered. When we explored this, I made a few phone calls and found people who were  
218 interested in \$300,000.00 an acre for the parcel that is not being used as a golf course. A few acres of that is a lot  
219 of money to use as an endowment to make the golf course work, and that is how it worked its way in there as an  
220 option. If we’re not in the black in a year from now, we’re really at a crossroads, so this is a great time to discuss  
221 this. Another park may not be the answer, as a park costs us money to operate as well.

222  
223 J. Miller – The public sees this as parkland, but the fact is that all of that back nine at Huron Hills was totally paid  
224 for off of golf revenues – No General Fund money is involved. Whether the acquisition funds can pay for this to  
225 make it into parkland is something that can be considered.

226  
227 Riseng – Jayne, did you say that if those facilities hadn’t been added to the golf fund, the golf courses would have  
228 made a profit(J. Miller – It would have made a profit those years).

229  
230 Maybe they wouldn’t be in this situation if they hadn’t been moved – they would have their own endowment.  
231 (J. Miller – Instead of having a \$900,000.00 deficit, we would probably have a \$150,000.00 to \$200,000.00 deficit  
232 and we wouldn’t be in this situation and part of what you do with an enterprise fund is to build up a fund balance  
233 so that when times are tough, you have a cash reserve to ride through that).

234  
235 Woods – In defense of this report which was written and given to Jayne, I do think it’s important to allow staff to  
236 give us *all* the options, even if they have to put some bad words in there like ‘sell.’ Staff is here to give us the  
237 *options*, and then it’s up to the policy makers, those of us around the table and then Council to decide whether or  
238 not we’re going to do it, but we can’t make decisions if we don’t have all the options on the table, and I’m glad to

239 hear the other options. We briefly touched upon the liquor licenses - do we do that in any of our other facilities?  
240 (J. Miller – No)

241  
242 That would be a big policy jump forward (J. Miller – Yes, and a liquor license would have to come before Council  
243 first, and that is not a decision we can make as staff).

244  
245 T. Crawford – One comment on the issue. If we took Leslie Park and broke it down by people who know golf  
246 significantly better than I do would tell you that it would have significantly more demand if it had a driving range, a  
247 restaurant or a liquor license. When people go to play golf, they like to have a meal afterwards, they have events  
248 and meetings and a few drinks that is the nature of the competition that this course is up against. This is a real  
249 business issue that it can't compete with courses that have greater amenities.

250  
251 **Move:**  
252 **H-1** History of the Greenbelt Strategic Planning Presentation – Mike Garfield

253  
254 Mike Garfield, Director of the Ecology center and Co-Director of the campaign to enact the Parks acquisition  
255 Millage in 1999 and the Parks and Greenbelt Millage in 2003 and am the current Chairperson for the Greenbelt  
256 Advisory Commission spoke about the Greenbelt's program background, progress and future plans. The  
257 Commission gave a slideshow presentation and answered questions from the Commission.

258  
259 **Move:**  
260 **C-2** Brown Park – Planned Closure for Drainage Improvements and Options for Interim Facilities

261  
262 Jeff Dehring – Reiterated the information regarding the Drain Commission and the closing of Brown Park that has  
263 been discussed with PAC previously. The disc golf course that was referred to earlier in this meeting will go  
264 through extensive renovations that are sorely needed while the park is down for the work the Drain Commission is  
265 doing.

266  
267 Mike Garfield - Brown Park was originally created as a regional flood control facility after the 1968 flood, so the  
268 pond and the floodplain around it is a storm water detention basin for very, very, very large storm. Part of this park  
269 has been leased to the city as a park for the last 25 or 30 years, but the state mandates and water quality  
270 requirements make it necessary to make some changes. Water quality improvements must be made throughout  
271 the Huron River area watershed and this is an opportunity to do so. The ability of the pond to capture sediment is  
272 done, the pond is full, so we need to convert this park into a facility that will treat much smaller storms. The re-  
273 routing of this flow will help reduce the amount of phosphorus.

274  
275 The park closing is necessary due to the large amount of equipment being used and the amount of sediment  
276 being removed. The work is scheduled to begin on May 1, 2006 through the spring of 2007.

277  
278 **Move:**  
279 **D-1** Resolution to rename Brown Park to Mary Beth Doyle Park.

280  
281 Satarino – Read portions of the three-page resolution and gave background on Ms. Doyle's efforts in  
282 environmental and ecological issues and the contributions she made for the city of Ann Arbor and the County of  
283 Washtenaw as well as the State of Michigan.

284  
285 Macomber – Mary Beth Doyle was a former co-worker, and I can't imagine anyone whose life is better celebrated  
286 than by naming a park after him or her than Mary Beth. (Commissioner Macomber thanked staff for their efforts).

287  
288 Johnson – I worked with Mary Beth on a few issues, and I think her death was tragic and I'm glad we're making  
289 this memorial to her.

290  
291 On a voice vote, **Resolution Passed – Unanimously**

292  
293 **B-2** Tree Removal and Replanting Plan

294  
295 Kay Sicheneder, City Forester – Gave PAC information regarding the city's plan for the replanting initiative  
296 regarding the ash trees being removed due to the Emerald Ash Borer disease.

297

298 Satarino – Regarding the replacement of the trees within the city parks, do we have an estimate as to how many  
299 of those will be replaced?  
300

301 Sicheneder – We don't know how many will be removed as we don't have an inventory of the affected trees.  
302 Many of the dead ash in the parks won't be removed as they don't need to be – those in a wooded area will act as  
303 natural habitat for wildlife. If we don't feel they would be a threat to life or property, they won't be removed. About  
304 half those affected will be replaced, and I'm guessing a few thousand.  
305 That replanting will be phased in over many years. We are working with the Park Planners to make sure we have  
306 the best plan for the replacement trees that will be planted.  
307

308 Riseng – We're aware that you have a program to allow people to volunteer to plant trees in their neighborhoods.  
309 Would you briefly go over that program for the public?  
310

311 Sicheneder – This is a pilot program called "Tree Teams," and the idea is that we could use less staff to get the  
312 same number of trees replanted so that we can be more efficient. It also allows citizens to accomplish replanting  
313 quickly within their neighborhoods. We are still replanting in a systematic manner, so we'll be doing full streets at  
314 a time. A church or a neighborhood group could organize and come to us so that we can get the groups and the  
315 permits together and go out on a Saturday and plant about 20 trees. We'll need about 15 volunteers and two staff  
316 people. We will have to do prep prior to the replanting (dig the holes, deliver dirt, etc.). We are supplying the  
317 trees so that there is no expense to them, just their time.  
318

319 Macomber – So, at this time, the plan for replanting the ash trees, what is the percentage that are being replaced?  
320 What is the time frame for replacement?  
321

322 Sicheneder – One hundred percent on the streets and fifty percent in the parks. We are also working on having  
323 "Tree Teams" active for the park replanting as well. As to replacement time, I'm hoping for about a four year time  
324 period. It would normally take about 12 years just to take care of the ash, but that doesn't take care of any other  
325 trees that are dying.  
326

327 **B-3** Adopt-A-Park Volunteer Program (**\*\*Postponed to NEXT MEETING**)  
328

329 **B-4** PAC 12 Month Work Plan (**\*Moved after E-3**)  
330

331  
332 **C – NEW BUSINESS**  
333

334 **C-1** Millage Task Force Sub-Committee Update – (**\*\* Postponed to NEXT MEETING**)  
335  
336

337 **D - COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS**  
338

339 **D-1** Naming of Park in Memory of Mary Beth Doyle **\*(Moved prior to B-3 and B-4)**  
340

341 **E – REPORT FROM INTERIM PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER**  
342

343 **E-1** City Council Items Update - Christen Smith reviewed items with PAC  
344

345 **E-2** Park Project Update - Jeff Dehring reviewed park facility issues with PAC.  
346

347 **E-2a** Soccer Facility  
348

349 Dehring stated that regardless of the soccer facilities being built in Pittsfield Township, that citizens are still  
350 interested in additional fields and partnerships.  
351

352 **E-2b** Partnership with Washtenaw County for Dog Park – Christen Smith gave update.  
353

354 The Canine Social Club will be invited to be partners with us to participate in the Swift Run site.  
355

356 **E-3** Update – Wilber Road Bridge – Christen Smith  
357

358 This bridge needs replacement, and has historic value, but it is not in our main interest to maintain as a historic  
359 structure.

360 **B-4** PAC 12 Month Work Plan (*\* Moved to be heard after E-3*)

361  
362 Satarino – We were asked within the body of the packet to consider looking at the current memorial and gift  
363 process system that Parks has, they're requesting a few PAC members to join a small committee regarding this.  
364 This should go on our work plan coming up.

365 We'll also be assessing the relationship between the Park Planners and the development process, and how we  
366 classify Parks as they come up, and how quickly we're informed about these issues.

367  
368 **F – REPORT FROM MANAGER OF FIELD OPERATIONS**

369  
370 None.

371  
372 **G – REPORT FROM RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION**

373  
374  
375 **H – REPORTS FROM RELEVANT COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND/OR TASK FORCES**

376  
377 **H-1** History of the Greenbelt Strategic Planning Presentation – Mike Garfield  
378 (*\*Moved prior to C-2*)

379  
380 Riseng – Environmental Commission – None.

381  
382 **I – PUBLIC COMMENTARY – GENERAL (3 Minutes per Speaker)**

383  
384 None.

385  
386 **J – COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS**

387  
388 **K – CLOSED/WORKING SESSION TO DEAL WITH LAND ACQUISITION ISSUES (If Applicable)**  
389 (*\*Moved prior to Public Commentary at the beginning of the Agenda*).

390  
391 **L - TRANSMITTALS**

392  
393 **“Motion to Adjourn by Offen, Seconded by Berauer.”**

394  
395 On a voice vote, - Motion Passes - Unanimous

396 Meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

397  
398 Submitted by: Brenda Acquaviva  
399 Administrative Support Specialist V