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APPROVED

**CITY OF ANN ARBOR – PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES - TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2006**

A - CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 4:14 p.m. by J. Satarino (Chair)

B - ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Satarino, Reneaud, Berla, Rodgers, Macomber, Offen, Berauer and Riseng, Cohen (arrived @ 4:17) (9)

Commissioners Absent: (0)

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

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aeschbach (1)

Staff Present: Kuras, Bemish, Dehring, Frenzel, Bergren, Smith and Acquaviva

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Intro 1 - Susan Pollay (Executive Director) and Adrian Arreola, (Project Manager) of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Amy Kuras, Park Planner for the City of Ann Arbor gave a presentation on rehabilitation plans for Sculpture Park. Ms. Kuras explained three possible project layouts that incorporate input from the general public as well as the city and the DDA. Public meetings were held at various locations and times to provide the public with an opportunity to participate in the project.

Questions from PAC included how the final project be financed (Funding sources would include use of various cash contributions for downtown parks - the fund would provide approximately \$50,000.00 with approximately \$300,000.00 to be funded by the DDA for a total of \$350,000.00 working budget).

PUBLIC COMMENTARY OF AGENDA ITEMS (3 Minutes per Speaker)

1. Tom Blackburn, 110 E. Davis, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 – (Item B-2) Disc Golf (in support of).
2. Matthew Cunningham of Plymouth, MI – (Item B-2) Disc Golf (in support of).

A - APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A-1 March 21, 2006 Regular Session

Moved by Riseng, Seconded by Offen, "that the minutes of the March 21, 2006 Regular Session be accepted as presented." – Motion **FAILED**

*****(Deferred to next meeting pending verification of lines 144-146 on the taped recording—also correct line 223)*****

Move – Item **C-6** after Item **A-1**

B-1b "Adopt-A-Park" Volunteer Program - Jason Frenzel — Program incorporates volunteers to plant and maintain various functions to fill in the gaps where the city no longer has the resources to maintain. The program has been launched through the Natural Area (NAP) program and NAP is planning a media campaign to help notify and recruit members of the public.

60 Council Member Woods asked about former programs such as Dicken Woods and how successful that endeavor
61 had been. Mr. Frenzel stated that Dicken Woods is one of their highest success stories. He continued to praise
62 their efforts. They were the 'pilot' group for a team approach to the stewardship aspect, which has been highly
63 successful.

64
65 **Amend Agenda = Move:**

66
67 **C-6 – Rename (B-1a) “Adopt-A-Garden”** – Mike Bergren gave a presentation on Public/Private
68 partnerships for maintaining city flowerbeds.

69
70 Due to cuts in the city budget, a great reduction and/or elimination of flower gardens or horticultural upkeep was
71 inevitable. We cannot support those any longer, and we can't expect our volunteers to buy flowers and install
72 them too, so we want to use “Adopt-a-Garden” – Another spin-off – for commercial interests. We were
73 approached by several businesses that would like to adopt a garden.

74
75 English Gardens would like to adopt Vet's park. They would buy, install and maintain the flowers; in exchange,
76 they want a small sign that says “Thank you for your sponsorship” – our city symbol, and the name of the business
77 and is mounted below it, not more than 18 inches high. We will make the signs in our sign shop. If we don't do
78 this, we will end up using roundup or mulching since we no longer have the funding source. Mr. Bergren
79 presented PAC with a suggested list of parks that could be candidates for the 'adopt-a-garden' program.

80
81 Questions from PAC included: Has the city developed a policy for integrated pest management? (Yes, we can
82 present them with a list of what is acceptable. The business is responsible for all aspects of care); Has the city
83 had a program like this in the past where private businesses are given recognition? (Yes – Fraley's on Main Street
84 at Depot used to do it). It is a donation to a city park, so it is probably tax deductible. It was suggested that the
85 sign be smaller, less intrusive. The businesses will be given a list of acceptable plantings. Public information via
86 CTN was suggested to inform the public regarding this pilot plan. Many citizens groups could also be interested.

87
88 **B-2 Disc Golf** – Jeff Dehring discussed the changes in Brown Park and the possibility of designating
89 Bandemer Park as the park that will be used for a 'temporary replacement' disc golf course while
90 Brown is under construction. There is one area that is left out of this current concept – NAP
91 protected. Routing this course through specific areas of Bandemer could help us address some
92 of the site issues that need to be dealt with at the same time (i.e. controlling or eliminating
93 invasive species, clean-up of undesirable materials that were dumped before we ever got here.)
94 This could also introduce new park users as well. We have money available for the clean-up and
95 we would like to make this a permanent disc-golf course.

96
97 *Questions concerning Bandemer park included: What would the course be made of? Wood, bricks place
98 Some PAC members are concerned with the encroachment and loss of the natural areas by mountain bikes and
99 disc golf. (Clearing and dirt paths will remain in tact, not interfering with new development).

100
101 Some PAC members think that this is a productive use of park areas that are currently unusable. Another states
102 that this could be considered an intrusion on a 'quiet' park area that should be left as is. (The plan takes into
103 consideration to leave as much 'natural' area untouched as possible). Brown park (and access to the current disc
104 golf course) will be closed as of May 1, 2006, so a decision regarding this needs to be made. Should the course
105 be made permanent or temporary? (Costs appear to be the same for both – the costs were already approved and
106 identified on the Rehab and Development Millage).

107
108 Motion made by Offen, seconded by Berla, “to proceed with implementing a permanent disc golf course in
109 Bandemer Park, costs not to exceed \$20,000.00.” Riseng adds a friendly amendment – support this plan with the
110 understanding of looking at rerouting the path, as the entire area is wetland. Offen accepts the friendly
111 amendment. (Jeff Dehring will work within this guideline).

112
113 Berla suggests that PAC go out and watch disc golfers in action. There are currently areas where disc golfers and
114 other park users interact, and there haven't been any problems.

115
116 **VOTE** – Nays – (1) (Satarino), All others, Yea –(8) – *Motion Passes*

117
118 **B-3 Natural Area Preservation Criteria - (POSTPONED UNTIL MAY MEETING)**

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C – NEW BUSINESS

C-1 Millage Task Force Sub-Committee Update – **Public Meetings planned on May 11, May 17th and May 23rd. Public meetings about millage renewals and the future of ‘parks.’**

C-2 Park Tribute Policy – Jeff Dehring – States that there is currently no ‘established’ procedure for the parks department to deal with requests for ‘tribute’ plaques, benches, etc. “Policy” is currently a loosely used term for a program that has been used for many years (since 1989). Tom Raines was the manager of Parks Planning at that time, and oversaw the program.

The ability to accommodate the public is increasingly becoming difficult, as it is time consuming for staff and the parks are becoming ‘littered’ with memorial plaques on trees, benches and rocks. Gallup Park is the most requested park for placement, but staff reports that we are at our “threshold” for benches in Gallup Park. Mr. Dehring asked if PAC could form a task force to develop a policy for this. We think it is time we evaluate this program or policy to continue. It is a very sensitive issue for the public as they are usually gifts associated with a lost loved one. Mr. Dehring has suggested that parks come up with a brochure detailing what types of ‘gifts’ it needs and present the program that way. One suggestion was to provide heart defibrillators for each park for a lifesaving device that all the community can share in. It should also be noted that although these benches are paid for up front, there is no financing that provides for park staff to do any maintenance and up-keep on them in the following years.

Comments from PAC included: Suggestions that the public be included in the decision on this policy. Berla and Riseng –volunteered from PAC to be on the ‘task force.’ This could also be an opportunity for non-commission members to be enlisted to participate in a PAC sponsored group.

Johnson – I brought this up a few months ago as he received a letter from a constituent saying that “Gallup Park was beginning to look like a cemetery” from all the memorial plaques. This program probably costs the parks department money. Staff time, maintenance, etc., it probably doesn’t help parks at all, and the appearance is deleterious to the appearance of the parks. I think the idea of a moratorium is an excellent idea. We should consider very, very carefully what kind of memorial we permit. Many detract from the park experience for most people. Suggest we make a motion on a moratorium.

Woods – Often when someone is at the point where they want to contribute, they’re also fairly vulnerable, and we wouldn’t want them to go away saying that “I reached out to the city and they told me they didn’t want to do this...” As for the task force, if you could look at an “endowment fund” so that we could have funds to keep up the maintenance on those items that would be helpful. I appreciate all the work you have been doing on this.

Satarino – Suggests that their be a ‘waiting list’ in the absence of a policy instead of a motion for a moratorium.

Berla – Authorize staff to place a moratorium on further action on memorial plaque donations or gifts and authorize staff to continue with those they’ve already received and develop a procedure to guide staff on future procedure and policy.

Satarino – I would recommend that we run this by Park Management first rather than us making this directive to staff directly.

Christen Smith – We should ask those that want to do a donation for the period of time that it takes the task force to do their work to apply that toward other things that staff might need or put the money in escrow in the interim.

Riseng – Another friendly amendment. Form a task force of 6 members and return to PAC in ... three months with a recommendation.

Taken as a friendly amendment. Berauer seconded the resolution with the second friendly amendment.

Berla repeats the motion with the two added friendly amendments.

Woods – With all due respects, reminds PAC that they are an “Advisory Body” and that they cannot stop that policy, and that they don’t have the authority to do that. I don’t think it’s appropriate. I think we can recommend.

180 Satarino – Agrees. We’re skipping a step. This needs to be done through the Parks hierarchy.

181
182 Berauer – Wants to give another friendly amendment –

183
184 Macomber – wants on the committee.

185
186 Johnson – Friendly amendment - Pac support’s the staff recommendation.

187
188 Call the question –

189
190 “Recommend authorizing staff to place a moratorium on further action on memorial plaque donations or
191 gifts but to continue with those they’ve already received. A task force composed of three PAC members and 3
192 citizens will develop a procedure to guide staff by establishing a new policy for the future.

193
194 *Note: PAC task force members are: Berla, Riseng and Cohen.

195
196 **VOTE – UNANIMOUS - PASSED**

197
198 Satarino – Reminds the Commission to seek recognition from the chair when proposing questions and comments.

199
200

201 **D - COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS**

202
203 (6:30 – Reneaud leaves).

204
205 **E – REPORT FROM INTERIM PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER**

206
207 **E-1** City Council Items Update – Dog Park

208
209 Dehring – Swift Run Site –

210
211 Macomber – Not sure if everyone knows yet, but the Swift Run dog park has totally fallen through. We had
212 thought that the county was going to pay for the development and maintenance of the park, but they have since
213 backed out of the agreement. I would like to request that we place this back on the agenda as a topic for the next
214 meeting. This was a project that had good support, but had never come to us as we never received an actual
215 ‘plan.’ It’s a greatly needed service and I’d like to see us talk about options to either make that park a reality
216 through city development or some other means.

217
218 The Canine Social Club will be invited to be partners with us to participate in the Swift Run site.

219
220 Kuras - Fund Balance projects – all approved.

221
222 **E-2** Park Project Update - Jeff Dehring reviewed park facility issues with PAC.

223
224 Kuras – **Platt Road Site** - Reported that the house has been demolished. Before any uses are proposed, that will
225 be another public process.

226
227 Smith – Suggests we develop a new way to work on projects from beginning to completion. It will be helpful for us
228 and the community to know how we work through the system and move through projects.

229
230 Satarino – Pedestrian underpass to connect Bandemer and Barton parks. There is additional information that has
231 come up, and we can act on this at a later time. There are questions and comments out there that need to be
232 answered.

233
234 Riseng – Suggests that Ms. Kuras be able to speak about this subject, that not all of PAC thinks that this should
235 be put aside right now.

236
237 Kuras – We spent a year on a feasibility study, which we’ve presented twice; we looked at all of the options –
238 including going under the railroad (which was discounted by the engineering firm we hired).

239 They (the contractor – Carter/Burgess) said that the walkway could probably still be under water each time the
240 Huron River level would raise. Due to this, it was not ‘user friendly or accessibility.’
241

242 C. Smith – Would you step back and begin to discuss this project as to where it’s been and where we are now?
243

244 Kuras – The underpass is a part of the Huron River Greenway. This would allow the connection between
245 Bandemer Park going out towards Barton Park and connecting eventually with Dexter. It’s part of a larger ‘border
246 to border’ trail that we’re working on with the county. This link is one of the more difficult ones. Right now people
247 are trespassing over the railroad right-of-way, there is limited visibility with trains, and so this would allow us to go
248 under the railroad and make a connection to the Barton Bridge. From the county and the city’s perspective, we’ve
249 been looking at this for over a decade and it’s a very expensive link, but one that would allow us to continue the
250 greenway. My dilemma is that we have to have control of the property for grant purposes, and the railroad won’t
251 allow us to control that property until we give them a design. We need to get the engineering done to give them a
252 design so we can apply for grants.
253

254 Riseng – Asks if removing the dam might be a consideration.
255

256 Satarino – Read a prepared statement as to his objections on this project (copy not provided).
257

258 PAC members are not in agreement on their opinion of when this item should go forward. More discussion on this
259 topic will take place at future meetings.
260

261
262 **F – REPORT FROM MANAGER OF FIELD OPERATIONS**
263

264 None.
265

266 **G – REPORT FROM RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION**
267

268
269 **H – REPORTS FROM RELEVANT COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND/OR TASK FORCES**
270

271 **H-1** History of the Greenbelt Strategic Planning Presentation – Mike Garfield
272 (**Moved and heard prior to C-2*)
273

274 Berauer – Allen Creek Greenway – Expounded on the Meeting dates included in the flyer.
275

276 Riseng – Environmental Commission -
277

278 **I – PUBLIC COMMENTARY – GENERAL (3 Minutes per Speaker)**
279

280 None.
281

282 **J – COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS**
283

284 Bill Rodgers – Last meeting with PAC – Satarino and PAC thanked him for his service.
285

286 **J – Closed Session to Deal with Land Acquisition**
287

288 None.
289

290 **K - TRANSMITTALS**
291 **Flyer from Greenway**
292 **Calendar of Activities for April and May**
293

294 **“Motion to Adjourn by Berauer, Seconded by Macomber.”**
295

296 On a voice vote, - Motion Passes - Unanimous
297 Meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

298 Submitted by: Brenda Acquaviva, Administrative Support Specialist V