

1 CITY OF ANN ARBOR – PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION  
2 MEETING MINUTES - TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2006  
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5 **A - CALL TO ORDER**  
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7 Meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m. by J. Satarino (Chair)  
8

9 **B - ROLL CALL**

10 Commissioners Present: Satarino, Berla, Macomber, Cohen, Nystuen and Offen (arr. 4:15) (6)  
11  
12

13 Commissioners Absent: Reneaud, Riseng and Berauer (3)  
14

15 Ex-Officio Members Present: Woods and Johnson (2)  
16

17 Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aeschbach (1)  
18

19 Staff Present: Miller, Smith, Naud, Hupy, Bowen, Dehring, Kuras and Acquaviva (8)  
20

21 **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

22  
23 **\*Amend agenda to hear Jayne Miller speak about the Park Millage Proposals (Move Item C-1 to be heard  
24 prior to Item B).**

25  
26 On a Voice Vote -Unanimous to amend the agenda as stated.  
27

28  
29 **PUBLIC COMMENTARY OF AGENDA ITEMS (3 Minutes per Speaker)**

30  
31 None.  
32

33 **A - APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

34  
35 **A-1 May 18, 2006 Regular Session – Accepted as Amended**

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37  
38 Moved by Berla, Seconded by Macomber that the minutes of May 18, 2006 Regular Session be accepted  
39 with the amended changes. (Line 145, begin new paragraph).  
40

41 *On a Voice Vote – **Motion Passed** - Unanimous*  
42

43 **\*AMEND AGENDA – MOVE ITEM C-1 to be heard prior to Item “B”**

44  
45 **C-1 Millage Update** – Jayne Miller gave an introductory statement regarding the millages. Parks has held  
46 several community discussion meetings to involve the public as well as a working session with City Council.  
47 Discussion among J. Satarino, R. Johnson and J. Miller was done recently to narrow down future funding for the  
48 Parks System.  
49

50 Various scenario's were mentioned, including breakdown of funds allocation, an annual budget review whereby  
51 the Park Advisory Commission makes a recommendation and City Council ultimately and annually approves the  
52 budget, no Municipal Service Charges against that millage, and that the millages may be subject to appropriate  
53 Information Technology and Fleet Services charges. The four funding levels presented to City Council were as  
54 follows: Maintaining the current total mil rate, with a rollback from Headlee; the second option was to do 1.0 Mills,  
55 the third option was 1.25 mils and the fourth was 1.5 mils.  
56

57 Satarino - We added another public meeting to discuss the proposals again next week on Monday, June 26<sup>th</sup>,  
58 2006 in City Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. There are many issues involved, so part of what we discussed was  
59 trying to come up with one or two proposals. There are so many options out there for people to discuss, that it

60 clouds the major issues. Are people willing to pay more in taxes for the current level of service? There are many  
61 similar questions like that.

62  
63 Johnson – Stated there have been millage meetings every two weeks for the past three or four months. We feel  
64 that these choices need to be narrowed down and presented to the residents. The current two millages that are  
65 soon to expire are a half mil each and they’ve both been cut down the Headlee Act considerably. If we just  
66 renewed them as they are, we would continue with the parks as they are, and I think that very few people feel that  
67 the current way that the parks are being maintained and the level of public safety is what we want.

68  
69 I suggest that PAC rule out ‘just continuing’ the present millages as is. The original millage was 1 Mil, and we’re  
70 increasing it slightly to 1.25 Mil. Since the millages were first proposed five years ago, there has been an increase  
71 in parkland and another increase soon since we’ve agreed to buy Columbus farms which is just outside and we’re  
72 going to install soccer fields there – we have increased land to care for. Even more expensive is capital  
73 construction within the parks system. There is reduced funding and increased demand.

74  
75 Satarino asked for comments from PAC. (Council member Johnson stated his position previous to this.)

76  
77 Offen has requested a spreadsheet of current data to compare what services, etc. can be obtained versus 1.25 mil  
78 - as opposed to 1.5 or 1.75 mil? J. Miller said that could be provided.

79  
80 Woods – We should reiterate to the homeowner what the millage will cost them. J. Miller said the average  
81 household would pay \$85.00 per year (based on a \$250,000.00 home).

82  
83 Berla – Mentioned that the mowing cycles on the parks went from every 14 days to every 21 days, and some of  
84 the routine tree maintenance all for essentially the same reasons – we didn’t have the money to cover it. Do we  
85 think that the 1.25 mils will allow us to address those things?

86  
87 J. Miller – Taking in what we know over the last six years, and our reductions in contributions from the general  
88 fund, emerald ash borer, just those two things alone have caused us to make ‘shifts’ across the parks system  
89 (such as the longer time between mowing cycles). I believe the 1.25 Mil will maintain our current level of service,  
90 plus make up for some of those longer mowing cycles, etc.

91  
92 If we face more cuts from the general fund next January when the budget is discussed, then I think that part of the  
93 dialogue among this group will be “what do we do? Do we continue to do what we’ve done over the last six years,  
94 which is maintain our service level in terms of programs, the number of parks we keep open, but at a reduced  
95 maintenance level because we have millage funds, or is it time to make some really tough decisions about “do we  
96 make some service reductions, and will quality of services that we provide be what they should be?”

97  
98 Staff is working very hard and doing the best we can with the resources we have, but it’s not adequate. I don’t  
99 think the 1.0 Mil will be adequate either.

100  
101 Macomber – So what we’re deciding today will be taken to the next public meetings and stakeholder groups?  
102 (Yes). I’m more than comfortable with the 1.25 Mil. I think it’s a good idea for all the reasons that have been  
103 stated.

104  
105 Nystuen – I agree with Berla that people want to understand how much it costs to do things (like the mowing).  
106 What has changed that makes it so hard for us to maintain the service? They’ll want to know things like, is the  
107 Nap Program still funded? When you talk about capital projects, what capital projects are we talking about?

108  
109 PAC consensus - Staff will prepare paperwork based on the 1.25 Mil to present to the public and we will go from  
110 there.

111  
112 **B – UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

113  
114 **B-1** Huron River Border-to-Border Trail Update – T. Freeman, Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission

115  
116 Mr. Freeman explained the Border-to-Border trail project. He said that the County is trying to act as a ‘gap filler’ to help  
117 produce a continuous trail throughout Washtenaw County. In 1998 during one of the county millage renewals, the Parks  
118 and Recreation Commission made a pledge to spend ten million dollars over ten years on non-motorized trails in

119 Washtenaw County. In the beginning of that, they adopted the 'Border to Border' trail as the 'core' of that network of trails  
120 they were interested in investing in.

121  
122 The 'Border to Border' trail is a multi-use trail (bicyclists, pedestrians and other park recreation users) that would parallel  
123 the Huron River. Some of that trail is already done, and Ann Arbor (Gallup Park) is an example of that. Mr. Freeman  
124 presented a map of the area with site gaps they have identified by alphabetical order. Some areas have gaps due to  
125 difficulty in terrain. Our role in Washtenaw County is to fill those gaps. It was noted that it would be longer than two or  
126 three years before this trail could possibly be completed because some of the potential trail areas are owned by the  
127 Metro Parks Authority and/or are protected areas through the Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).

128  
129 PAC Thanked Mr. Freeman for his presentation.

130  
131  
132 **B-2 Argo Dam & Huron River Recreation Planning** –  
133

134 Craig Hupy, Systems Planning Manager and Matt Naud, Environmental Coordinator spoke about the Huron River  
135 and how we would manage it. As we know, there is a lot of interest in trails and Gallup Park is one of our heaviest  
136 used parks. We don't have a strong, integrated management plan for that resource. There are a number of  
137 efforts – the PROS plan takes a look at what we're doing about parkland along the Huron, but there are growing  
138 challenges and a good window of opportunity to take a look at the river overall.

139  
140 The Barton Boat Club is having problems there due to invasive species. There are four dams along the river.  
141 Those dams create impoundments and sediment over time with weeds both native and non and that creates a  
142 problem. The Boat club has used a natural strategy of using bow weevils to go after the Eurasian Milfoil; they've  
143 been looking to us to lower the dam at Barton, which may or may not have an effect of freezing the weeds in  
144 wintertime. We generate electricity at that dam, and we calculate that we might lose upwards of fifteen thousand  
145 dollars in electricity generation. It doesn't show any benefit to us as a city to do that.

146  
147 Argo has similar problems, it's filling in with sedimentation. It's used by the rowers and it's my understanding that  
148 they cut the tops of the plants - which is a bad idea because in the case of Eurasian Milfoil, they float downstream  
149 and create more Eurasian Milfoil. Geddes dam creates the pond there that rowers use, and Superior damn is in  
150 Ypsilanti and we generate electricity there (about a half million dollars worth combined per year). We are looking  
151 to PAC and the public to help us get ideas to manage these issues.

152  
153 Craig Hupy – Removal of Argo dam strictly from a maintenance and removal cost perspective would be this:  
154 leaving it in is cheaper to continue maintenance on it each year than to remove it. (Mr. Naud did note that there is  
155 significant federal money available for dam removal.)

156  
157 Comments from PAC were: Is dredging the weeds being done or planned to be done in the future (yes, eventually  
158 dredging will take place), how will this affect the rowers, how much to clean this up, what are ultimate costs and  
159 who has the legal authority regarding these sites?

160  
161 Naud - The "Huron River Management Plan Committee" will be constructed soon for data gathering and public  
162 meetings. Estimates are eighteen-months up to a two-year time frame for discussion.

163  
164 (*\* Council Member Woods departs – 5:20 p.m.*)

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166  
167 **C – NEW BUSINESS**

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169 **C-1 Millage Update – (***MOVED prior to B – UNFINISHED BUSINESS***)**

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171  
172 **C-2 Project Updates -**

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174  
175       ▪ Swift Run Park – Status of City-County Partnership of Dog Park – B. Macomber

176  
177 Macomber stated there was a public meeting at Bryant Elementary with approximately sixty people attending.  
178 Nearly all of them were in favor of the dog park. The county had some drawings to display as a possible design

179 for the park. They will take some of the feedback from the meeting and revise their design and bring it back to  
180 PAC for feedback and recommendation to City Council.  
181

182 Jeff Dehring stated that the Dog Park could open by September of this year if everything can be approved. The  
183 largest cost expected in the coming months will be fencing. There will be a collaborative effort for maintenance  
184 and upkeep. We have enough direction that we can have a plan and a public hearing at the next PAC meeting.  
185 There will also be adjustments needed to the leash law that City Council must approve.  
186

187 (*\*Council Member Johnson departs – 5:40 p.m.*)  
188

189 **ADD: Greenview Park –**

190  
191 Jeff Dehring – This property is owned by the school district and we use the space for park purposes. At the  
192 northern edge of Greenview park at the intersection of Glenleven and Woodland, there is a small parcel of land  
193 (basically an extension of Glenleven) that would extend what is called “Pioneer Woods,” and we’re investigating  
194 the potential of putting play equipment there, and the school district has indicated that they don’t want to develop  
195 any additional park amenities on school property, so we’re investigating that possibility since this would be city  
196 owned land.  
197

198 **ADD: Evergreen Park –**

199  
200 Jeff Dehring – This was at City Council to award a contract to begin construction for a neighborhood park. A few  
201 residents came out indicating that they wanted to have additional say. We have a meeting scheduled for next  
202 Wednesday to go back to the neighborhood and share the plans that we’ve developed based on input from the  
203 public that attended the meetings.  
204

205 **▪ Brookside Park –**

206  
207 Amy Kuras – Brookside is another project that we’re doing because of the neighborhood – they wanted a play  
208 area there. We held a public meeting there last week, a couple of people there were very much against it, so it  
209 took us by surprise, thinking that this would just be a meeting where we would sit down and design a playground  
210 together. Because of that, we’re going to go back out, prepare a few other concepts and another questionnaire  
211 and hold another public meeting. The park is located at Stone School and Bayliss. Objections came mostly from  
212 people who live adjacent to the park. They’re worried about what is going to happen with a play area there, in  
213 particular, people actually driving to the park as a destination, which isn’t normally the case for a little park like  
214 that. That next meeting is July 13 in the park at 7:00 p.m.  
215

216  
217 **C-3 Donation/Gift Task Force – T Berla/C Rising**

218  
219 Berla – We had a meeting. Christen had collected some information on websites about how other communities  
220 had donation/gift programs. Some were so detailed that you could go to the site, go to a park, look around the  
221 park and say “that’s what I want to donate.” It then lists items and you would decide what was appropriate. We’ve  
222 more or less agreed that we want to have a program that directs people to make donations or gifts for what the  
223 park system wants and needs and not so much driven by individual site choices.  
224

225 There is another distinction between someone who wants to “give a gift” as opposed to someone whose main  
226 interest is to place a memorial there. What are our values regarding that? Catherine and I disagreed on one  
227 issue. If someone wants to buy a memorial, then I want them to pay a lot – cost of installation, staff time, the cost  
228 of maintaining it for ten years and additional funds. Catherine felt that that only allowed people who were well to  
229 do to be able to afford that. We haven’t come to a resolution on that, but it was a good discussion.  
230

231  
232 **D - COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS**

233  
234 None.

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236 **E - REPORT FROM PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER**

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238 **E-1 City Council Items Update**

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240           **E-2**       Park Project Update  
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243   **F - REPORT FROM MANAGER OF FIELD OPERATIONS**  
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245   **G - REPORT FROM RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION** (Meetings Suspended for the Summer)  
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247   **H - REPORTS FROM RELEVANT COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND/OR TASK FORCES**  
248  
249   **I - PUBLIC COMMENTARY – GENERAL** (3 Minutes per Speaker)  
250  
251   **J - CLOSED SESSION TO DEAL WITH LAND ACQUISITION ISSUES** (If Applicable)  
252  
253           On a Roll Call Vote – Unanimous to go to Closed Session – 6:00 p.m.  
254           – Reconvened at 6:28 p.m.  
255           – \*(Note: B. Macomber departed after closed session and prior to return to regular session).  
256  
257   **K - TRANSMITTALS**  
258  
259   **K- 1** Community Conversations Announcement  
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261   **K-2** Parks and Recreation Events for July  
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263  
264   On a voice vote, - **Motion Passes - Unanimous**  
265   Meeting adjourned at 6:29 p.m.  
266   Submitted by: Brenda Acquaviva, Administrative Support Specialist V