

## MINUTES

### PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION

4:00 p.m. – January 20, 2004

Time: D'Anieri called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

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

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#### ROLL CALL

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Members Present: Berla, Berauer, D'Anieri, Macomber, Reneaud, Riseng, Rodgers, Satarino

Members Absent: Cohen

Ex-Officio Members Present: Johnson, Miller, Woods

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aeschbach

Staff Present: Bemish, Borneman, Dehring, Henderson, Kuras, Rynard, St. John

Others Present: Tom Ivacko, 1607 Waitham Drive, 741-9484

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#### PUBLIC COMMENTARY

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Tom Ivacko, 1607 Waitham Drive, member of Friends of Dicken Woods Steering Committee, briefly outlined what he said in a letter he sent PAC members regarding approximately \$40,000 in funds that had been collected by their committee to be used toward the purchase of Dicken Woods as parkland. He was hoping for direction from PAC regarding how this money could be used. He said if all or part of the money were to be used toward the purchase of the land for park use, they would want assurances that the Ann Arbor District Library would not build on the site, that it remain open space. He wondered if a conservation easement or deed restriction could be used to preserve the land as open space. He said they could also maintain the funds themselves, administering improvements and educational activities at Dicken Woods. He said he and Jim Boyd would be available to answer questions. (His letter is on file.)

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#### MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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Minutes of December 16, 2003 - Moved by Rodgers, supported by Satarino and passed unanimously by voice vote.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD DONATION FOR DICKEN WOODS

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Miller said the closing on the property was scheduled for February 13, 2004 and, after the closing, she would be meeting with the Ann Arbor District Library regarding its use of the site and the Friends of Dicken Woods neighborhood group regarding its donation. She said she had not yet had any discussions with either group as she wanted to wait until the closing had occurred.

Satarino thought the course of actions were proper and he was sorry the process had been inconvenient for the neighborhood. He thought it was appropriate for the money raised by neighborhood to go into the park acquisition fund.

Johnson stated that City Council, after some discussion, decided that, in general, accepting donations from citizens was a longstanding practice and should be continued. He said the resolution to approve the acquisition of the Dicken Woods site included that the donated funds would be reimbursed to land acquisition fund. Woods concurred.

Berla asked when the Friends of Dicken Woods had decided to make its contribution, what had the City agreed to do with the funds. He asked if the neighborhood group had an opinion on whether a part of the site should be designated for a library use.

Ivacko responded that the Friends of Dicken Woods wanted the site to remain open space with no library use.

Berauer was sorry to hear that some neighbors withdrew their donations based on Council's action regarding the use of the neighborhood's donation.

Riseng remembered PAC discussing that the donation would go toward other uses if not needed for acquiring the site.

Johnson asked staff to investigate if a conservation easement/deed restriction could be used.

Satarino asked if there was a way to restrict development of any natural area site by the City in the future.

Miller responded that unless there was a legal restriction placed on a City-owned site, 30 years from now the City could decide to allow development of that site.

Berla did not think conservation easements could be used by the City on City-owned parcels.

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#### RESOLUTION APPROVING FARMERS MARKET FEE INCREASES

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Miller said a multiple step process was used to determine that the market fees needed to be increased and by how much the fees should be increased. She said our market had one of the lowest fees in the country. She said that because the market was in an enterprise fund, it was required to be self-supporting. She noted that Karla Henderson was also available to answer questions.

Riseng asked what the farmers' responses were to the fee increase proposal.

Henderson said most realized it was time for a fee increase. She said most had questions regarding stall assignments, which was not related to the fee increase proposal.

Miller added that there were representatives on Market Commission who were vendors and they supported the fee increases.

Satarino asked for information on what was being planned regarding improvements to the market.

Henderson said it was explained to the vendors that the fee increase had nothing to do with future improvements to the market. She said the fee increases would just cover operating expenses and be more in line with other local markets.

Satarino asked where funds would come from for improvements to the market.

Henderson replied that they were looking at a variety of sources such as an enterprise fund, grants, and programs such as "buy a brick".

Resolution to establish FY 2004/2005 market fees was moved by Riseng, supported by Macomber, and passed unanimously.

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#### REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT MILLAGE PROJECT UPDATE

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Rodgers asked if "other funding sources" was a part of the "project budget" total.

Miller replied that the "other funding sources" figure was included in "project budget" total.

Berauer asked if the "other funding sources" could be more specifically identified.

Miller replied yes.

Satarino asked if not all the funds allocated toward a certain project were used, where those funds were placed.

Miller replied that the funds were either returned to the millage they came from to be used for other projects or they were moved to another project within that millage that

needed additional funds to be completed. She said the funds all stayed within that millage and they could not be moved to another millage.

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### CITY COUNCIL ITEMS UPDATE

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Dehring reported that the contract for construction at White Oak Park was awarded by City Council on January 5, 2004, but had not yet been added to the list.

No questions.

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### SPORTS FIELDS

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Rynard briefly explained the chart that outlined the field operations athletic field maintenance costs vs. revenue. She said all the baseball/softball fields were permitted to the Recreation and Education Department (Rec & Ed) of the Ann Arbor Public Schools District and they did the scheduling and, for access to those fields, the School District paid the City \$21,000 per year for 30 City fields and 11 School District fields. She said a lot of information needed to be collected from the Recreation and Education Department because once they reserve the fields in a lump sum; the City loses information on how many people are participating and how much was being collected from people who used the fields. She said the City gave the School District a permit to use all the fields for a 24-week period and the scheduling and user fees were collected by the Rec & Ed.

She said the other half of the chart described a City revenue potential to recover some of the City's maintenance costs by charging an hourly use rate at the fields.

Miller said at the regular City/School meeting last month, issues relating to the City's relationship with the School District regarding the fields and their costs, and the cost of Mack Pool, were put on the table and more meetings will be scheduled to discuss these issues further. Historically, she said the relationship between Rec & Ed and the Parks and Recreation Department had been that they both were supported by the general fund of each agency. She said within the last two to three years, Rec & Ed had become a self-supporting agency. As a result, she said the City had been squeezed more and more with the recent budget cuts, so the financial issues between Rec & Ed and the City parks system were going to be discussed with the upper management of the School District soon.

Satarino asked who would maintain the fields if the City did not.

Miller replied that from the City's perspective, the issue was that all the costs to run sports programs should be put on the table and the revenue that comes in associated with those programs should also be put on the table and an equal distribution of costs as

well as revenue should be shared by both Rec & Ed and the City. She said, currently, Rec & Ed recouped its costs, whereas the City did not come close to recouping its costs.

Satarino asked if ball fields at schools are maintained by the City.

Rynard replied that the 30 City and 11 School District fields were maintained by the City, except for mowing.

Berla asked what it would take to have the fields maintained well; more maintenance or less use, or both.

Rynard replied that more fields were required to be able to rest some fields when needed. She said when water is needed most, the river is low and cannot be used for irrigation. She noted that they have looked at several sites to drill a well, but have not found a good site yet.

Satarino asked if the revenues from the proposed new fields would cover the expenses.

Rynard replied that the new fields were anticipated to cost about \$8,800/field/year to maintain and, at a recovery rate of \$20/hour, they could be rested and the cost recovered but, currently, there were not enough fields to rest any fields.

Satarino asked if the ball fields were committed to Rec & Ed for the next season yet.

Miller replied that the field allocation had already been made for the next season. She said any recommendation of fee increases would go into effect July 1, 2004. She said in the past 2-3 years, the most progress had been made in negotiations with Rec & Ed. She said with the financial constraints the City faced, the current arrangement where there was not equity in the relationship with the School District could not continue. She said the upper management of the School District had become involved in the discussions, which was good.

Johnson felt the relationship between the City and the School District needed to be looked into related to recreation programs.

D'Anieri thought that the upper level management of both the City and the School District needed work on making changes.

Woods asked if the City also maintained the football fields.

Rynard replied no, just baseball and softball fields. She added that the City's fee charged to the School District had not changed in 10-15 years. She said, in the past, the City had not kept track of the City's maintenance costs, had not tied that cost to the fee charged to the School District, which then should have been tied to a user fee. She felt a more realistic fee should be charged the School District, plus a user fee charged to the ball field users.

Berla, also being a member of RAC, noted that Rec & Ed got the use of the ball fields from the School District, but no budget from the School District. He said, with the state

laws in effect, additional revenue was not available to Rec & Ed. He said the only new funding sources available to Rec & Ed would either be to form a new taxing authority, a recreation district, or to ask for an exception county-wide, which would effect the whole county. Since the softball program was participated by predominately Ann Arbor City residents, he thought this program being subsidized by the City for City residents was ok. He thought the focus should be on the actual benefits to the people in the community the programs provided, not which entity provided them.

D'Anieri thought, since there was difference between the City and School District boundaries, City subsidies should be clearly defined. He thought the recreation programs should be self-supporting, with participants paying for them, with the exception of those who cannot afford pay for them, then scholarship programs would be used.

Berla added that scholarships are funded out of the fees charged to paying participants. He said the School Board's mission was to focus on K-12 education. He thought the City's role was to benefit all the citizens. He thought it made sense that the funds flowed from the City to Rec & Ed for recreational programs that benefit mostly adults.

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#### PAC OPERATIONAL ISSUES

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Miller prepared a memorandum responding to Berla's questions related to PAC operational issues. She felt that Questions 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 needed to be discussed by PAC because they were policy issues that PAC needed to make decisions on, not staff.

Regarding Question 1: Berla wondered if there was an historical reason why the PAC meetings were held at 4:00 p.m. He thought if the meetings were in the evening, more citizens would be available to attend the meetings.

Staff and some PAC members felt the 4:00 p.m. meeting start time was late enough in the workday where citizens could attend the meeting and the time was convenient for them as well.

Satarino thought to encourage more citizen involvement, PAC could hold meetings at night a couple times a year.

D'Anieri thought once every couple of months holding a night meeting was a good idea.

Riseng suggested that an open mike opportunity at end of each PAC meeting be added to the agenda so the public could provide comments.

Regarding Question 2: Berla thought the website was not easy to use. He also wanted PAC minutes placed on the website. He wanted to receive the minutes as soon as they were complete so he could forward them to RAC.

Since minutes are not considered official until they are approved at a public meeting by PAC, D'Anieri was uncomfortable having unapproved minutes available to RAC or on the website.

Riseng asked if PAC received RAC minutes as well.

Berla said RAC minutes are available on its website.

Riseng was satisfied that with Berla being a representative of RAC on PAC, he would bring forward important information from RAC to PAC when necessary so receiving RAC minutes was not necessary.

Woods added that video replays of PAC meetings were available too.

PAC decided that only approved minutes would be forwarded to RAC and the web page.

Regarding Question 5: Berla wanted an email address available on the website for citizens to use to direct questions to PAC or Parks and Recreation staff.

Miller replied that she would work with IT staff to set it up.

Riseng thought that was a good idea but was concerned about placing too much of a burden on staff's time.

Regarding Question 6: Berla asked if past minutes could be placed on the website.

Miller asked how far back in time to go.

D'Anieri thought the past two years of minutes sounded reasonable.

Miller said she would work with staff to add minutes to the website.

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#### 2004-2005 BUDGET

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Miller briefly described the multiple funding sources and expenditures of the Parks and Recreation budget. She noted that the greenbelt millage would replace the last year of the current park acquisition millage starting in July 2004.

Berla asked, after July 2004, if there would be two new funds, one for greenbelt properties acquisitions and one for City parkland acquisitions.

Miller said that had not been decided yet.

Johnson said the process would remain the same with PAC making recommendations regarding City park acquisitions and the Greenbelt Acquisition Commission making recommendations regarding greenbelt acquisitions to City Council.

Satarino stated that the greenbelt policy had not yet been spelled out so he suggested that it be addressed in the next LAC meeting, forwarding questions to City Council.

Johnson said the City Attorney was working on the ordinance language, so input was needed soon.

Miller said originally it was projected that the City would be facing a 6.37% reduction in the General Fund for the next fiscal year, but after talking with the state, the City would be facing an 8.1% budget reduction for the next fiscal year. She said staff had been asked to put together potential budget impacts of reductions or revenue increases from the services they provide and the impact of those cuts or revenue increases. She said various options would be presented to City Council at a retreat. Miller said she would present the budget impact statements to PAC at its next meeting and will ask for feedback from PAC to take back to City Council.

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REPORT FROM MANAGER OF PARKS AND RECREATON SERVICES

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None.

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REPORT FROM COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND RECREATION

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None.

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REPORT FROM RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

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None.

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Woods asked if updates from Leslie Science Center (LSC) would be coming occasionally.

Miller said Betty Wier, representative of the LSC, came to all PAC meetings but had already left, but she would ask Wier to provide updates to PAC periodically.

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ADJOURNMENT

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D'Anieri declared the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Jill St. John, Secretary  
2/10/04