



PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes June 17, 2003

Members Present:	C.Riseng R.Curry J.Satarino J.Cohen	J.D'Amour P.D'Anieri O.Jansson
Members Absent:	S.Rapundalo	L.Langmore
Ex-officio Members Present:	R.Olson	W..Woods
Ex-officio Members Absent:	R.Johnson	S.Aeschbach
Staff Present:	J.Dehring K.Bemish A.Kuras	J.Miller T.Rynard D.Borneman

Others Present:

Joe Datema	224 N. 4 th Ave. Apt. A, Ann Arbor	657-0208
John Hilton	701 N. 4 th Ave., Ann Arbor	663-8756
Peter and Patricia Steiner	502 Heritage Dr.	665-6378
Sue Miskel	507 Heritage Dr.	747-8636
James and Leigh Ann Boyd	2136 Stephen Terrace	662-8348
Tamera Hart-Johnson	1434 Woodland Dr.	332-5996
Bob Grese	1512 Charlton St.	663-4047
Erik and Hannah Stalhandske	2140 Stephen Terrace	769-1498
Thomas Ivacko	1607 Waltham Dr.	741-9484
Cecile Lamb	1606 Dicken Dr.	662-6083
Carol Ziegler	2117 Carol Dr.	662-3303
Deborah Norboiten	2304 Kent St.	663-3190
Stephanie Hunter	1601 Dicken Dr.	668-6059
Mary Unterburger	1325 S. Maple #103	663-4428
Elizabeth Loesch	2153 Stephen Terrace	623-4428
Viela Brett-Goch	2132 Stephen Terrace	995-9378
Erik Sheagren	1732 Waverly Rd.	668-1619
Elizabeth Riggs	Huron River Watershed Council	769-5123

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Vice Chairperson Phil D'Anieri.

SECRETARY CALLS ROLL

The secretary called the roll, with results as shown above.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

Joe Datema of 224 N. Fourth Ave., addressed the commission regarding Kerrytown beautification. He is working with Bob Elton, Bob Grese and others and presented a proposal they feel would greatly benefit the City of Ann Arbor. The proposal involves purchase of two vacant gas stations for park use; one is located at the corner of Main and Summit and the other at the corner of Detroit and Division. This would replace eyesores at the entrance to downtown. There is a lot going on with the Broadway Bridge construction, the Lowertown proposal, Farmers Market improvements and a commuter line through AMTRAK. This area is one of few areas people come from all around to enjoy.

John Hilton of 701 N. Fourth Ave. addressed the commission regarding the two gas station properties and possible acquisition of them, stating that they realize this is not a good time to ask the City for money, but they are thinking in the long-term as something to address. These parcels have been vacant for a long time and there has been a great deal of other development in the area. This would be an aesthetic boom to the downtown area and the City would benefit from cleaning up the sites. There are opportunities to get help to clean up areas like this. A packet of information was passed out. This proposal, along with a petition was brought to PAC in 2000 and nothing has happened. This was discussed at the Kerrytown Association meeting and is a priority. They have letters indicating strong support for the purchase. They see no sign of a developer coming in to purchase them. Kerrytown takes care of its parks with volunteers and will organize to take care of these as well. Bob Grese, Director of the Nichols Arboretum, added that students did various design concepts; some possible, some that are not. Some designs incorporate natural gardens. They presented a range of options for potential design.

Ray Dieter, Chair of the Downtown Development Authority, and lives in the Old 4th Ward, stated that the two gas station properties are looked at as a disgrace to the City. They were under consideration for purchase with passage of the millage in 1999. Purchase and improvement of the lots would complement the entire downtown area and he urges PAC to consider this pocket park.

Bob Elton of 860 Edward St., also commenting on the gas stations, indicated he served on PAC previously and these were under consideration then. At the time there were many reasons the purchase could not move forward but many of these reasons may now be surmountable and the purchase should be a priority today.

Eric Stalhandske of 2140 Stephen Terrace addressed the commission on the proposed purchase of Dicken Woods property. The Friends of Dicken Woods would like PAC to table its final decision for now and give a thoughtful decision. He met with Chris Kolb, who supports the purchase and will try to identify State funding. Peter Allen is looking to decrease the price of purchasing this and the Diocese says the City would have the first option to purchase. It is not the prettiest sight but is a valuable asset and will meet an underserved area. The Master Plan states that wetlands, slopes, etc. provide residents with physical and spiritual benefits. It is important to provide children with open areas to

play and there are none in the area. The PROS plan addresses this also. In the West Area they have two parks, both 1-acre in size. This purchase would be a natural respite. The area connects with a 200' natural setback, approximately 5 acres, donated by the condominium developer. They would like to link with Hanson Park. They are fundraising currently and have an excellent value cost per acre. They expect they will be able to contribute at least 10% of the purchase price, if not more. They have a 10-year plan to do semi-annual cleanup there. The church wants to work with them. The parcel is contiguous to Dicken School and could be used for environmental learning and would enhance the visible edges of the City. 100's of cars traverse there into the City. They are looking for support from the City.

Tom Ivacko of 1607 Waltham Dr., spoke in regards to the Dicken Woods proposal, stating that Section C of the PROS, Goal 8, indicates preserving natural, fertile areas that impact the Huron River to improve river quality so that it may become swimmable. This includes creek protection, reducing impervious surface, and improving Malletts Creek. It refers to functional resources for water retention, wild plant preserves and wildlife reserves, natural areas and protecting. They have contacted people for support and have positive responses, including the Superintendent of Schools and the Huron River Watershed Council and expect one from the Sierra Club and Chris Kolb. Commissioner Riseng asked how much of a delay they want on PAC's decision. Erik Stalhandske responded they would like two months so that they can host a naturalist coming in to assess the property.

Patricia Steiner of 502 Heritage, w/Sue Miskel, addressed the commission stating she represents an Association that consists of 15 households. There is a parcel adjacent to Ruthven Nature Area, #0125200028, which is 2.5 acres and is privately owned. It was purchased in July 1997 and has an assessed value of just over \$100,000. The site has attracted Johnson Building Group, who told them he contemplated building 18 units on this site. The Association believes this would make it a high-density use. The land is fragile and they would like to see it added to Ruthven Nature Area. There is currently no easy access to Ruthven Nature Area. They would be happy to work with PAC and would like to know how to proceed from here.

James Boyd also addressed the commission regarding Dicken Woods, stating that it is an oasis in a well-developed area. They have deer in the woods a lot. Mr. Boyd read a letter from the Schools' Superintendent supporting the purchase by the City for park purposes. It could be used for an environmental education program to enrich the school curriculum. Leigh Ann Boyd stated she used to live in Waldenwoods Condos. There is nowhere to jog and the last thing you want to do after coming home is drive to a park. Her group jogged through the woods and it would be nice to have a fitness trail. The community is growing, with more condos. She sees moms with strollers walking on the path. It is utilized by a lot of people.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF MAY 20, 2003

Acceptance of minutes moved by Roy Curry and supported by Catherine Riseng. John Satarino advised to include his statement that any fee increases, which are general fund-related does not necessarily mean that the department will realize the increases as part of its budget. Increases in fees are important to keep up with increasing costs, but we may not get it back. Minutes approved, as amended, by voice vote.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF JUNE 5, 2003.

Acceptance of minutes moved by John Satarino, supported by Owen Jansson and passed unanimously by voice vote.

MOLIN/MORRIS AWARD

Ron Olson explained that the award originated a number of years ago, with the passing of Peg Molin, along with Leslie Morris who was one of the instigators of the PAC, formed in 1983 and also served on City Council. Candidates awarded in the past have participated in the Parks and Recreation Department in various degrees. Owen Jansson nominated Virginia Johansen for the award, supported by James D'Amour. John Satarino stated all three candidates are outstanding but agrees with Mr. Jansson and supports Virginia Johansen receiving the award. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote. Mr. Olson indicated that traditionally there is a reception prior to a council meeting, ½ hour before. This will be scheduled at a later date.

RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY PHIL D'ANIERI REGARDING PAC REVIEW OF PROPOSED PROJECTS AND POLICY

Phil D'Anieri advised he would like an informal discussion of the resolution. He tried to carve out an explicit role of PAC in reviewing major changes in the parks and he would also like the public to provide input. This criteria is a first attempt. There a couple of projects going to council that PAC has not seen. Mr. D'Anieri proposed leaving the resolution in a draft stage and have a few members sit down with some staff and go over it. Catherine Riseng agreed with this strategy. John Satarino noted that there was some initial confusion with the recent Bandemer project and it would be good policy to avoid this situation in the future. Recent articles in the Ann Arbor News by Judy McGovern were mentioned. Wendy Woods stated that because the Parks Department is going to be spread out, it will be important for PAC to keep track of millages and we may want to look at the minimum amount to bring to PAC and consider making that even lower. Owen Jansson remarked he has the opposite reaction to Wendy Woods and would actually want to raise the minimum to protect against micro-management. Ms. Woods advised that City Council looks at anything over \$25,000. Mr. Jansson responded that he feels council sometimes micro-manages also. A sub-committee was formed, consisting of John Satarino, Owen Jansson, Phil D'Anieri and staff to review the resolution.

APPOINT PAC REPRESENTATIVE TO ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Stephen Rapundalo stated he was the designated representative and his term on PAC is ending so we need someone to replace him. John Satarino nominated Catherine Riseng, supported by Owen Jansson and passed unanimously by voice vote.

John Satarino asked if PAC needs to respond, as a group, to the Ann Arbor News article that called PAC an anti-development group. Mr. D'Anieri indicated that PAC should respond to at least get PAC's point of view out there. Wendy Woods agreed and

suggested also sending the response to the Observer and other places. Citizens are pretty savvy and can read between the lines.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

Elizabeth Riggs, of the Huron Watershed Council, addressed the Commission regarding the Argo Dam. Ms. Riggs stated that the Huron is one of the most heavily damned rivers. They are seeking to build community support for removal of the Argo Dam. In 1995, the Michigan DNR gave its OK for the dam's removal. This would improve water quality. They have contracted with a firm to analyze sediment. The most significant finding is there appears to be no major contamination of the sediments. 50 acres of land could be reclaimed by the City's Parks and Recreation Department, with a value of \$3,000,000.00. They have identified steps they will take, i.e., this presentation at PAC and at the Environmental Commission meeting and a fair/open house. The Watershed Council and City Council would do a design charrette, working with students doing a 1-year study surrounding the decision to remove the dam. Ultimately, the City will be making the final decision. James D'Amour asked if they had heard anything from the rowing groups that use the pond. Ms. Riggs responded that they have and they have concerns as a recreation user group. The open house is scheduled for July 17, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Ms. Riggs indicated that funding for the removal is abundant for this right now on State and Federal levels.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Owen Jansson, supported by Roy Curry and passed unanimously by voice vote.

The PAC meeting convened to a closed session of the Land Acquisition Committee for the purpose of discussion of land acquisition negotiations.