



# PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes of August 20, 2002

Members Present: C.Riseng P.D'Anieri  
R.Curry J.Cohen  
J.Satarino H.David  
S.Rapundalo L.Langmore

Members Absent: O.Jansson

Ex-officio Members Present: R.Johnson S.Aeschbach  
R.Olson W.Woods

Staff Present: D.Borneman J.Dehring  
A.Kuras

Others Present:	Jean Steppe	1451 Coler Rd., AA	214-6430
	Jim Crosby	800 Sunset, AA	761-2789
	David Leroy	716 Sunset, AA	761-6142
	Dale Magee	621 Sunset, AA	663-0531
	Andrew McGowan	810 Princeton Ave.	995-0373
	Raymond Detter	1210 N. Division	668-7027

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**CALL TO ORDER** -The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Chairperson Stephen Rapundalo.

**SECRETARY CALLS ROLL** - The secretary called the roll, with results as shown above.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTARY**

David Leroy, President of the Greater Sunset Brook Neighborhood Association addressed the Commission to talk about a 7.6-acre piece of land that was to be Sunset Ridge development, in the center of the neighborhood, which was turned down by planning and council because of the development's impact on wetlands. They as neighbors want to see if they can have some impact on the use of the land. They surveyed 2/3 of the neighborhood to see if they want it turned into open space, an entrance to Bird Hills Park and a greenspace barrier on the southern side of M14. They would be willing to preserve the trees on their property to enhance the area. The neighborhood is supportive of it being parkland and could raise as much as 25% of the purchase price of this land. They want to partner with the City and bring this money to the table. 2/3 of the people who supported the petition are willing to pledge money. The developer is willing to sell the land, which they bought in 1999 for \$155,000 plus sewer assessments. They might sell it for \$500,000. Their Association feels it is their responsibility to take a role and make usefulness of the property. The property is very steep. They asked that this be placed on a formal PAC agenda. Steve Rapundalo advised that PAC will be discussing pieces of property at its Land Acquisition Committee meeting and this will be added if not on the list already. Mr Rapundalo remarked that PAC welcomes their enthusiasm and cooperation.

### **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Acceptance of the minutes of Tuesday, July 16, 2002 moved by John Satarino, supported by Catherine Riseng and passed unanimously by voice vote.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **ITEM 4A - MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR MILLAGE**

Ron Olson stated that council approved two resolutions: ballot and millage policy. DDA language was added. Robert Johnson stated his concern is how to explain it to people. The DDA gets taxed on new construction, including this millage, but the money will go to the DDA instead of the Parks Department. This happens with any millage but now the State requires that you tell the voters. James D'Amour remarked that Attachment A defines the guidelines and what PAC had wanted to had done is to establish a committee to make definitions of what this was going to be. This decision was reached a couple of days before, with no official voting member of PAC attending. Bob Johnson explained that PAC has been talking since February and the vote had to be last night and council had to have these definitions. Mr. Johnson apologized for not having someone else from PAC there. There was considerable discussion and what came out of it is representative of what PAC has been discussing over the last few months. Mr. Rapundalo remarked that if this had been told to PAC two weeks ago that it needed to be done, it would have been. Catherine Riseng remarked that the memo sent said basically the same thing, but it took a special interest group to get this through. Mr. Rapundalo asked Bob Johnson and Wendy Woods if they are bothered about what was negotiated that in the future there will be a perception that special interest groups can exact even more. Mr. Johnson responded that he is not comfortable with the term "special interest group." They are concerned citizens who represent more than themselves. The Chamber of Commerce also expressed their wishes. Mr. Rapundalo remarked that the Chamber didn't say they would torpedo the millage though. Wendy Woods added that she thinks a member of PAC should have been there but the reality is that the groups were asking for a lot more than what was finalized. Ms. Woods' hope is that this would not set a precedent in terms of "special interest" groups and we have all learned a lot from this process. Phil D'Anieri stated that the most important consideration is what is the best policy for the city. Everyone would answer it is a renewal of the millage at .4725 and a greater distinction between routine and non-routine maintenance. It is not unusual for groups to respond to what will be proposed. Mr. D'Anieri stated he is not concerned with the outcome that we have. PAC is an advisory body and we agree on so much and disagree on so little. By comparing the columns, it looks like there would be about a \$200,000 shortfall on the general fund side to accomplish what needs to be done by renewing the millage at its present level. Ron Olson stated that the park tree maintenance would be shifted over. Street trees (\$111,000). The municipal service charge was also deflated. The bottom line is, as we put this together and the budget is prepared for the following year, its structure will be completely realigned. There will be quarterly reports about what is getting done and the money spent. The City will be reducing its budget by 5% again next year, and it will be challenging. Linda Langmore stated she feels very undermined and is not dissatisfied but the process was terrible. Ms. Langmore added it makes her feel powerless and wasting her time on this commission. The process is what upset her and she doesn't want to be a rubber stamp commission. Mr. Johnson responded that no one was happy with the process, but feels some are underestimating PAC's contribution. The underlying basis for this came from PAC. The City's hand was forced by groups that said as it stands they wouldn't find it possible to support. Ms. Langmore stated it's very scary that one single group has that much power. Mr. D'Anieri commented that it is the nature of the beast and not the power of a group. Millages are hard to pass and when a group opposes it, it runs the risk of being defeated. It is a fact of the political process. We are ultimately an advisory commission, not the policy-making body. Mr. D'Anieri believes these realities should not be taken as such an affront. Ms. Langmore stated she realizes that these groups are part of the process but they should interact with us in a different way. Mr. Rapundalo added that what is most frustrating is when PAC tried to extend themselves to the Sierra Club, the tenor of the discussions was uncomfortable. Mr. Satarino stated that PAC hasn't tried to state its own case vs. what has been coming out in the Ann Arbor News. Owen Jansson wanted to do this on his own, and now PAC should get together and state what the real process was. Mr. Rapundalo added that these are guidelines, not set in stone, and we can make recommendations for minor changes. Ms. Riseng stated she would like to see a letter of support of the millage and the guidelines. Mr. Rapundalo will write a letter to the Sierra

Club and the Chamber and thank them for their input. Dave Borneman added that there were hundreds of people that responded to the survey and we need to thank them also. Mr. Olson advised he had a conversation with the Chamber and they are still not decided on this issue. Ms. Woods remarked that as hard as this process has been, it is just now starting. The hard work is before us. Janet Cohen remarked that if the department doesn't have a good way to track the budget, it needs a really good accountant, someone to do budget work. Mr. Olson responded that one thing that will help immensely is the new AMS accounting system, which will enable us to account for things better. Mr. Rapundalo thanked Dave Borneman, Jayne Miller, Terry Rynard, Amy Kuras, Jeff Dehring and Ron Olson for generating all the information they did.

#### **ITEM 4B - LIBERTY PLAZA PARK**

Amy Kuras introduced Andrew McGowan and Ray Detter, who are attending to talk about the improvement programs at Liberty Plaza. Mr. McGowan stated he has been working with Ms. Kuras and a large group of citizens to revitalize the park. In the past there has been a lot of problems at the plaza. He has been working with Herb David for the past year also to provide entertainment. A public meeting was held and some of the initial changes were the removal of the Porta John, bushes were trimmed and police increased their efforts. June 1 they had a second workshop, led by Susan Polley, to diagnose the space. The "Friends of Liberty Plaza" meet every month, with a couple of smaller groups working on the programming. Herb David has been organizing groups and the "Magic Carpet" mornings. Another issue is signage and Terry Rynard is working on redoing signs so they are not so negative. Lighting also needs to be improved and seating would prompt better usage of the park for eating and selling food. There has been talk of chess tables also. They are also working with CAPP to get a piece of permanent art or sculpture that might be interactive somehow. The Kempf House has a dangerous corner behind it that also needs to be looked at. Peter Pollack has a redesign plan but there has been no consensus on the plan. Success has been because stakeholders have had the vision. Ray Detter stated they have worked a lot to try to turn around this park around. The DDA and Parks Department could go together for the improvements, with Parks paying around \$50,000. Amy Kuras commented that any time there is any residential improvement or sites in the area she has earmarked money for Liberty Plaza and there is already around \$25,000. Linda Langmore suggested charitable donations. Phil D'Anieri stated the key to better things there, is the physical redesign of it. If the DDA is capturing revenue off three millages it seems they would agree to helping with this redesign in terms of support. John Satarino added that care and pruning needs to be done. Ms. Kuras stated they are doing that on a several times a week schedule, according to Terry Rynard. Mr. Detter commented there are areas in the park that are "blind" areas that need to be eliminated. Roy Curry asked about any arrests. Mr. Detter stated they involved drinking, drug dealing or possession. Catherine Riseng remarked that she frequents the area and there are changes and asked if small playground equipment has been considered. Ms. Kuras responded that it has been considered. Wendy Woods advised that the Mayor had been holding "Lunch with the Mayor" there also and it was successful.

#### **ITEM 4C - PROCESS TO SEEK A NEW SUPERINTENDENT**

James D'Amour asked what the City Charter states and who hires the Superintendent. Mr. Olson responded that the City Administrator recommends the hiring to Council. Steve Rapundalo stated he talked to Roger Fraser and indicated PAC wanted to be very actively involved in the process. Mr. Fraser indicated to him that someone would be hired to do a search externally but PAC will have an opportunity to weigh in. Mr. Fraser did not give a timetable but indicated it is high on his list. Mr. D'Amour stated he feels PAC should have a large say in the job description and the mission of the position. There is no current job description so that needs to be part of the process. Mr. Rapundalo advised PAC should move quickly so that it preempts his going to the outside firm. James D'Amour moved a subcommittee be formed to draft a job description, supported by Steve Rapundalo. Mr. Satarino asked if this would be a six-month process. Mr. Olson responded he would like that cut in half to three or four months. Mr. D'Anieri suggested that rather than trying to schedule subcommittee meetings, we could do this by e-mail. PAC members present agreed and the motion was withdrawn.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **ITEM 5A – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE HURON RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL SIGN PROPOSAL**

Resolution moved by James D'Amour, supported by Catherine Riseng. Jeff Dehring stated the locations for the signs have not yet been determined. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

### **ITEM 5B - DISCUSSION RE: RECONSTRUCTION OF DIXBORO BRIDGE AT GALLUP PARK**

Ron Olson stated the Road Commission will need to go to Council and Council needs to act on it at their September 2, 2002 meeting. We need to maintain pedestrian access from Dixboro Rd. to Gallup and the Road Commission needs to accommodate this during construction. Jeff Dehring added that there was concern for safety during construction. The dirt lot on the east side would be used for staging so there would be no public parking. Janet Cohen added that there are a lot of people who use that area for fishing. Mr. Olson's recommendation is that we don't give them what they want unless the pedestrian access continues throughout the reconstruction.

### **ITEM 5C - PAC Work Plan**

Mr. Olson stated he is currently looking at the Planning Commission's Plan and will come back in September with some ideas, maybe invite groups to a public meeting to see what their priorities might be.

### **ITEM 5D – PROPOSED PROJECTS FOR POTENTIAL LAND ACQUISITION CONSULTANT**

John Satarino stated he had five different proposals that a consultant could possibly be hired to work on. We need to leverage the money we have, be dollar wise and have a strategy. A Land Acquisition Committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, September 3, 2002 at City Hall, 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS** – None at this time.

### **REPORT OF SUPT. OF PARKS AND RECREATION – RON OLSON**

Ron Olson read the resolution to be presented from PAC to Bill Lawrence for his years of service.

### **REPORT OF DIR. OF SCHOOLS/CITY REPRESENTATIVE SARA AESCHBACH**

Ms. Aeschbach reported that the Early Childhood Millage failed and won't be on the November ballot. They are currently exploring spinning off Rec and Ed from the school district. The School Board is considering a new high school. Steve Rapundalo asked if PAC will have input on the spin-off or is it something PAC will see. Ms. Aeschbach responded that it will be a public document but won't include anything about a City position. This needs to go to the School Board the last week of September. If PAC wants to take a position, they could write a piece to put in it. RAC will be reviewing the document. If Rec and Ed stays in the school district, it will be as it is now. If it becomes independent it would be a non-profit organization. The big question is whether the City would continue their relationship and allow City facilities to be used for programs. Mr. Rapundalo advised PAC would like to see the report and at least voice opinion. Mr. D'Anieri added that every year Rec and Ed has funds budgeted to them from the City through the Parks Dept. Mr. Rapundalo stated that RAC can do what they must, then Mr. D'Amour can come back to PAC with a report.

**REPORT OF RAC REPRESENTATIVE – JAMES D'AMOUR – No report.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTARY – None at this time.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.