



PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes of March 19, 2002

Members Present:	R.Curry L.Langmore J.Satarino S.Rapundalo	P.D'Anieri J.Cohen H.David O.Jansson
Members Absent:	C.Riseng	
Ex-officio Members Present:	R.Johnson G.Clark	S.Aeschbach W.Woods
Ex-officio Members Absent:	None	
Staff Present:	D.Borneman J.Miller	G.Fichter G.Hunt
Others Present:	None	

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

George Hunt, Foreperson in the Department's Park Operations Division and a resident of Ann Arbor until seven years ago addressed the commission regarding a few of his concerns as he prepares to retire shortly after having served the City of Ann Arbor slightly under 35 years. In 1990, Park Operations was approached by the Transportation Department, asking if we could take over the snow removal on bike paths and sidewalks. Up to that time, it was Transportations obligation and is part of their budget. After a brief negotiation, the Department agreed and Transportation would free us up to help them remove snow during snow emergencies. There are 54 miles of bike paths. This understanding broke down and Park Operations does both now. We don't have staff or budget to do either one of them well. Mr. Hunt stated that, as Arborist, he had to clean up brush out of street right-of-ways, because Transportation didn't have the equipment. The job followed him to Park Operations when he became foreman and somehow fell into the budget of the Parks Department. He wants to let PAC know this before he retires. There are other things the Park Operations Division does that aren't really part of their budget and these things need to be kept track of and the Parks Department should be reimbursed for them. Stephen Rapundalo asked if sidewalks include those adjacent to parks and other public right-of-ways. Mr. Hunt responded yes, and approximately half of the sidewalks belong to the bicycle system in town. The Division is also doing walkways on bridges. John Satarino asked if the Department is ever compensated for snow removal. Mr. Hunt responded we are not. Janet Cohen asked if the actual work is a combination of regular shift time and overtime and Mr. Hunt answered that it is. Mr. Rapundalo asked for other examples. Gary Fichter stated that pesticide

spraying along curbs is the biggest one. Mr. Hunt advised that staff in the Division are the only ones with the pesticide licensing. Gerry Clark added that we are trying to pass costs along to the homeowners for brush removal. Mr. Hunt remarked that the difficulty with that is there may be homeowner adjacent in the township. There are many maintenance items you don't see and those things can't go on if stealing hours from Parks Department staff to do Transportation work continues. Wendy Woods asked if there are other departments than transportation that Parks does their work. Gerry Clark responded that, in cleaning up after a storm, there is a fine line between bundled branches and loose branches, so the Department ends up picking up stuff that is not our responsibility. John Satarino asked the magnitude of the situation, in terms of hours that should be billed to Transportation. Mr. Hunt answered that half of the sidewalk snow removal would be Transportation's obligation. Gary Fichter remarked it is more maybe a third and depends on the weather and how frequently you get snow. Brush is more predictable. Mr. Hunt knows where to look for brush it and how frequently it needs to be done. Jayne Miller added that a lot of responsibilities have become institutionalized. Purchasing used to do the purchasing bids together, now Departments do them, and write up contracts also. Mr. Hunt remarked that, 34 years ago when he hired in as a temporary employee, the man who hired him was the Director of Personnel. When you hire a temporary employee now, you do it all, and Human Resources never sees anything until the end paperwork.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Acceptance of the minutes of February 19, 2002 moved by James D'Amour, supported by Linda Langmore. PAC secretary Dee Lumpkin noted that Linda Langmore was absent, not present, at February's meeting. Mr. D'Amour clarified his statement under his report referred to tile in the women's locker room lifting. Minutes approved, as amended, unanimously by voice vote.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ITEM 4A - Corporate Sponsorship Policy

Mr. Clark stated there are some people, who are involved with Huron River Day that are upset that Comcast is the corporate sponsor. Last year we had more attendance with their sponsorship. Their sponsorship is worth around \$25,000. They pick up almost all the cost of the event, so they are co-sponsor. Wendy Woods remarked that she got a lot of e-mails from people who are displeased with this sponsorship. Linda Langmore stated that partnering is the way to go in economically stressed times. Bob Johnson remarked that the current economic stress might be exaggerated. The City has a temporary problem with retirements. Huron River Day began as volunteer effort. Janet Cohen added that if founding members had a chance to plan it with corporate sponsors it would make a difference. Gerry Clark stated that the cash contribution from Comcast is for staffing and expenses. Ms. Cohen felt it might be a win-win thing, but we need to get people involved. Owen Jansson remarked that he has gotten used to the partnerships and doesn't feel the sponsorship diminishes the event. Mr. Jansson suggested to maybe tone down the advertising. Ms. Woods added that there is concern over the Comcast name there, instead of just listing the sponsors. Phil D'Anieri suggested two ways to deal with it; 1) put this in a policy that we are not going to accept title sponsorship, or 2) sponsorship would be subject to review of City Council. Jayne Miller advised the sponsorship is covering the expenses of the program/event, in her division, so we would need to bring in revenues to cover expenses. Commissioners like Mr. D'Anieri's suggestion for a compromise. Gerry Clark advised that he will come back with something that spells it out more accurately. Mr. Jansson asked that he make it more event-related than contribution-related. Ms. Langmore added that if someone has a history with working on a project, they should have the opportunity of working on the sponsorship agreement. There could also be in-kind support. Mr. Clark stated that we need to reach out more to the community and have businesses partners. The resolution was tabled to future meeting.

ITEM 4B - FY2002/03 Budget

Mr. Clark advised that it looks like we're fine with our reductions. The Schools Recreation and Education was the biggest hit of the actual cuts. The bottom line budget cut was around \$400,000. A lot of groups are affected by the cuts and if there is any room in the budget, we may be able to float some groups through September. Mr. Satarino asked how the municipal service charge is figured. Mr. Clark responded that it is a difficult formula and each Department has a different way of figuring it. The interest in the Acquisition Millage was used to cover Mr. Clark's salary and administrative costs and due to additional charges it no longer does. Ms. Woods advised that there is concern about fee increases due to citizen concern. Mack Pool is important to the seniors and they were looking at if the pool is closed beyond the repairs, what else is available in Ann Arbor. Many of them have been taxpayers for a long time and this is something they feel they have earned, and they have formed bonds. We need a process to get the word out on cuts proposed. Ms. Cohen remarked that sometimes we don't know who is effected by the decisions that are made. Mr. Clark advised that the impacts were discussed but not in detail. The items cuts had the least amount of impact on users and we are trying also to find alternatives for those customers/programs being eliminated.

ITEM 4C - Reorganization Plan

Mr. Clark advised we are moving ahead with the Recreation Facilities Division reorganization plan. There will be four supervisors directly under the Recreation Facilities Division Manager. We are starting the interview process for the combined Park Operations/ Forestry Manager position and may ask PAC members to help with the interview process, tours, etc. We had 40 applicants and are now down to 10. We are hoping to have someone onboard before Gary Fichter and Bill Lawrence retire. The new City Administrator doesn't know what his plans are yet. Ms. Cohen asked if PAC can request an audience with Mr. Fraser, City Administrator. Mr. D'Anieri asked if City Council wants to wait until the new administrator decides what he wants to do with staffing, in regards to the Superintendent's position. The budget includes 55% wages for the Superintendent and 100% for the Deputy Superintendent. Mr. Satarino remarked there is going to be a hole and we may wait so long it won't make any difference. Mr. Clark advised that the City can hire him as consultant, then the question is, what kind of things the Parks Department needs consulting for and it would have to go out for bid. Mr. Rapundalo asked if the reorganization plan needs City Council approval. Mr. Clark responded that it does not, but it needs approval of the City Administrator. Ms. Cohen stated we need a hard-hitting, 2-page summary of the reorganization plan to give to City Council. Mr. Clark will see if the new City Administrator can attend the next PAC meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 5A – Discussion re: Update on Park Acquisition

A brief synopsis of the status of parkland acquisitions was included in February's packet for the former Huron Parkway ROW east of Pontiac Trail, Traverwood Woods Property, Addition to Dolph Park, Lease of Norfolk and Southern ROW from Bandemer Park to Argo Dam, Easement from MICHCON/DTE for public access along the Huron River from Argo Dam to Broadway Park, Easement from Washtenaw County Road Commission at Gallup Park, Vivian Parcel on South Pond and the former Landfill Property south of Ellsworth Rd. Mr. D'Amour had concern over the Barton Dr. interchange. He sets on the Technical Advisory Committee for this and he is concerned about building such an interchange because Ann Arbor would have to pay for it. Mr. Clark stated that the appraiser looked at Traverwood Woods property and a piece by the Ann Arbor Airport. There is a possibility of a swap and small pay back. We will get the results of the appraisal in the next few days. It has been declared excess property. Mr. Clark received an e-

mail about a piece of parkland at Oakbridge Park, which the U of M would like to do a formal acceptance of due to a bookkeeping issue.

COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS

None

REPORT OF INTERIM SUPT. OF PARKS AND RECREATION – GERRY CLARK

Mr. Clark reported the facilities began the electronic registration process recently and it is very successful.

REPORT OF DIR. OF SCHOOLS/CITY REPRESENTATIVE SARA AESCHBACH

Ms. Aeschbach advised they now have full membership on RAC. RAC's April meeting was changed to the last week in March to discuss proposed cuts from the City. The State cut out the last year of funding for everyone's First Step Program, for which they initially had a 3-year grant so they will be looking for ways to keep that going. Mr. D'Amour added that they talked about an operational agreement subcommittee. Mr. Rapundalo advised there is a City/Schools meeting on April 11 and the subcommittee is an agenda item.

REPORT OF RAC REPRESENTATIVE – James D'Amour – No Report

PUBLIC COMMENTARY – None at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.