



PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes of May 21, 2002

Members Present:	C.Riseng J.Cohen J.Satarino S.Rapundalo	P.D'Anieri O.Jansson H.David	
Members Absent:	R.Curry	L.Langmore	
Ex-officio Members Present:	R.Johnson R.Olson	S.Aeschbach W.Woods	
Staff Present:	B.Lawrence J.Miller	A.Kuras T.Rynard	D.Borneman
Others Present:	Roger Fraser, City Administrator		

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by Chairperson Stephen Rapundalo.

SECRETARY CALLS ROLL

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

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

None at this time.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Acceptance of the minutes of Tuesday, April 16, 2002 moved by Janet Cohen, supported by John Satarino and approved unanimously by voice vote.

INTRODUCTION – Roger Fraser, City Administrator

Steve Rapundalo introduced Roger Fraser, City Administrator. Mr. Fraser commented that the Parks system is a valuable thing in any community. Mr. Rapundalo advised he had talked with Roger about the reorganization plan and the desire for a consultant to replace Gerry Clark, at some capacity, until a new person is hired. Mr. Fraser noted that he would have to explore this. There is a lot to do citywide and we need to take interim steps. He wants departments to look at their existing structure and rethink it. Mr. Rapundalo asked what his thoughts are on the department's reorganization plan. Mr. Fraser responded that the impacts of the retirement window have been dramatic. Some retirements create more stress and some we will celebrate their leaving. He wants to be careful on replacing someone. He met with some folks from the U of M last week who want to look at what the City is trying to accomplish in terms of leadership and how things should be accomplished on a day-to-day basis. We have a very traditional structure. In today's management thinking, there are a lot of things we can expect of employees that require a different type of management/supervision. There is more responsibility for the work teams. We would like to try this, maybe in the Parks Department. Janet Cohen stated she is concerned about staff morale; it can be very difficult to be in a state of uncertainty for any length of time. It

would be helpful to fill the deputy superintendent's role in that respect. Mr. Fraser shares her concern; it was made clear to him that there is a problem, particularly with AFSCME workers, who have been without a contract since last year. They are 10 months into the year without a contract and essentially stopped bargaining because negotiations are stuck on the City wanting a one-year contract. This is his first priority and he has brought a consultant in to help. He is reluctant to make quick decisions on filling certain department head positions and is not sure he wants to fill them all. Phil D'Anieri remarked that the Parks Department is in a unique position. A significant portion of operating costs are funded by the Maintenance and Repair millage. Presently, the overall funding from the General Fund and the millage will not meet the needs. PAC's recommendation to council is to increase the millage to help the day-to-day operations. Mr. Fraser commented that before we go to the community that we need more funds; we need to make sure we are getting the optimum performance from our resources. After we define the way to do business, he can respond to this better. He would like to maintain the status quo for another year and see how it goes. Mr. D'Anieri responded that PAC isn't a group of free-spenders and we can make the argument for the increased millage. We are seeing bigger structural expenses that won't be covered. As a group, our best guess is that there are definite structural issues. Mr. Fraser explained he was not talking about capital structures, but day-to-day operations. Mr. Rapundalo stated there is a separate millage for that.

Ron Olson introduced Terry Rynard, who started two weeks ago as Manager of Park Operations and Forestry. Ms. Rynard stated she is glad to be onboard, is enjoying it and it's clear to her we must make sure that every dime we spend is well-spent.

Steve Rapundalo asked that the consultant issue be added to Unfinished Business. All members present agreed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ITEM 4A – Update re: Process of Renewal of Maintenance and Repair Millage

Ron Olson explained that a random survey went out, divided by precincts, proportionate to number of citizens in each regarding the renewal or increase of the present millage. Dave Borneman handed out updated survey results. The return percentage is a little over 10%. Ron Olson advised it would be better to have more of a return from his experience; it would be good if we could send out a reminder. Dave Borneman commented that if you take out the vacant residences, the return rate would be around 15%. James D'Amour stated he feels highly confident we can move ahead with the increase in the millage. The cost to an average household would be \$1.50 per month currently. We should probably push that number. Mr. Borneman added that we should maybe have a millage fact sheet addendum. Owen Jansson added that we want to make sure people know we're doing what we can with what we have now. We will need to answer how we've cut costs. The public probably feels that the knee jerk reaction is to increase the millage. Ron Olson advised that there are some areas where we still need to identify to improve efficiencies. We need to be very clear about , if we keep the millage where it's at, what would get done and what wouldn't. We are now charging non-resident fees. Bob Johnson suggested putting bullet points of what you need more money for. There is a chance there may be an opposition that says we don't need to buy more land to maintain. We must also remind them of the parks they have now and are using, that are supposed to be maintained out of this millage, not the General Fund. Ms. Cohen stated she thinks it would be a huge mistake to separate the parks, those funded from General Fund and those from the millage. The fact sheet needs to be simple. We need to be able to repair now, instead of costing us more if delayed, especially major repairs. The first public workshop is tonight. Mr. Borneman handed out a list of the groups who were notified to attend. June 4 there will be a special PAC meeting, 4:00 p.m. at the Gallup Livery (focus group meeting). There has not been a lot response to the invitation. A news release will go out to notify people. Ms. Cohen suggested it might be good to invite a representative of the U of M. Mr. Olson will invite Jim Kosteva. Mr. Rapundalo added that we need to send notices out to more neighborhood associations.

ITEM 4B - Update re: 2002/03 Budget

Mr. Olson stated that City Council adopted the budget with some amendments. They restored \$30,000 funding for Rec and Ed scholarships and \$26,400 for the SMART Program Youth Employment Mentoring. \$7,500 was restored for CAPP support, which had \$10,000 this FY. The SMART Program is worthy; the schools might not be able to pick it up, and so as not to lose it, it was restored. There will be a reduction in police staff by reducing traffic enforcement. The \$60,000 will come from the Parking Fund, part of the General Fund. So instead of having a \$10 million surplus this year, it will be less. The budget is balanced without using fund balance in the General Fund.

ITEM 4C - Discussion re: Consultant (added)

Mr. Rapundalo advised he would like to know what PAC members envision with regards to a consultant's responsibilities. Should we just have someone on retainer when issues arise? Mr. Satarino suggested that with the overall duties that Gerry Clark had, we may need a consultant, but we may have other needs. We have staff that can take over some of this load, if specific things come up. PAC could come up with goals for this person during the interim period. Perhaps we need some guidance on how to spend the acquisition millage most effectively. We may be missing some opportunities. Mr. Rapundalo stated he would like to get a sense from staff about how much calling there is for someone from outside to assist. Mr. Olson advised he met today with Kris Grant about the Airport/Traver land swap. Hiring a consultant for this wouldn't be that important for talking with them. There are other properties that are in varying degrees of looking at them for acquiring that a consultant or someone would be helpful to hire on a temporary basis, along with some other duties. There are options to deal with this temporarily. We need to work on agreements with outside groups, etc.. We will be looking at a lot of benchmarking and best practices, which will require a broad perspective analysis. Ms. Cohen asked if it would be quicker to replace the deputy if we didn't hire a consultant. Mr. Olson responded that if we have a consultant it wouldn't be as urgent. His role is to make sure that the department runs correctly. It will take a number of months to figure out how the city will go organizationally. Mr. Olson stated he thinks the deputy is a good thing, but the person will need strong competencies. Mr. Jansson commented that person could have a very broad portfolio. Mr. Olson explained that Gerry Clark was originally the Capital Resources Coordinator and then was given the position of Deputy on top of that by reorganizing. Had we not done that, we could have had a deputy plus the Capital Resources Coordinator today. He also worked in Planning for many years, so he had a lot of dimension in that also. The goal is to stabilize what we're doing in the department. Ms. Cohen remarked that PAC had a subcommittee dealing with this that felt it was in the best interest to recommend what we retain this position and asked if there are critical needs in the next six months because of this vacancy that could be avoided by hiring someone in the interim. Amy Kuras advised that there is no one handling the land acquisitions, grant issues and bike coordinator responsibilities so it's not getting done. Mr. Borneman's concern is mostly about land acquisitions. Mr. Olson stated that if we advance the deputy job, therein lies the stability. We can piece together the short term. Ms. Cohen felt she is hearing a mixed message. Mr. Olson explained it would take about three months to recruit and hire someone. The job description needs to be tightened up right now. Bob Johnson added that the real question is how soon can we post the position. Mr. Olson advised this could be posted in two weeks. Bill Lawrence remarked that Gerry's responsibilities didn't cross paths with Forestry, but it still hangs with what Mr. Fraser is going to do with Mr. Olson's position. Mr. Olson stated he suspects Mr. Fraser will go with the "team" effect, functioning together, which means sometimes department heads will be working on a bigger picture together. Mr. D'Amour asked what the time period would be to hire a temporary. Mr. Olson responded it would be the same time period it would take to hire a permanent deputy. We can hire a temporary person for 90 days without having to send out a RFP. Catherine Riseng stated she is concerned that a lot of the qualifications listed are what Gerry was doing, and that was maybe too much, so maybe we should focus on certain areas, such as planning and acquisition. Mr. Olson responded that we don't want to narrow it that much. Mr. Jansson added that when PAC supported Option 4, we conceived the broader responsibilities. Gerry wouldn't be available until September. Mr. Lawrence stated he doesn't

see how the consultant would be the best bang for the buck. Due to the dynamics of the position, it won't work unless it's Gerry. Wendy Woods explained that Mr. Olson is in an awkward position because his boss has told him to hold off, yet we want things to move now. PAC should maybe send a letter to Mr. Fraser or memorandum to explain our concerns. There are some major projects coming that we will lose if someone isn't hired. Possibility things will get lost. Mr. Rapundalo advised we must decide on the responsibilities. Jayne Miller added that there were a number of positions lost over the last year and it plays a big part in the affect on our department. Planning isn't losing anyone, so stability isn't a concern. We have lost 19 out of 80 positions, plus attrition. Mr. Olson stated that he didn't know PAC had a resolution about what you wanted to happen with the reorganization. Mr. Rapundalo asked that all PAC members see the job description fro the deputy. Mr. Olson suggested meeting early next week as a sub-group to compose the job description and once we're organized we will send Mr. Fraser a memorandum.

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 5A - Resolution re: Senior Citizens Advisory Board

Jayne Miller explained that presently the board is not official. James D'Amour asked if the current board would be the new board. Ms. Miller responded it would not be; anyone that wants to be on it will need to apply. Approval of resolution moved by James D'Amour, supported by Catherine Riseng. Wendy Woods asked about two members being appointed from each ward. Ms. Miller explained that, because of the history of the center, there is a strong reputation of being an exclusive group. We are only serving 6% of the seniors in Ann Arbor so we are trying to get more of a cross-representation. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

ITEM 5B - Update re: Skate Park at Buhr Park

Jayne Miller reported the skate park opened in April. We worked closely with the neighbors before opening it. It started as an unsupervised skate park but we had folks doing things they should not have so now it is staffed and we have had no further complaints. It is free right now, but when we reopen we will charge a fee. We applied for but did not receive a grant for a permanent one Veterans Memorial Park.

ITEM 5C - Discussion re: Liberty Plaza Park

Amy Kuras stated someone approached her from Partners for Public Places regarding programming events and improvements, etc. to Liberty Plaza. The DDA, Parks and other resources will fund this.

ITEM 5D - Discussion re: Land Acquisition Millage Budget

Mr. Olson advised that he, John Satarino and Bob Johnson met a couple of weeks ago and talked about how things are charged to the millage. The handout sheet is a guideline of what is done with millage funds. The Municipal Service Charge wasn't included previously. The concern was that the cost coming out of the fund was disproportionate to what was happening in the fund. This reflects current and next FY budgets.

ITEM 5E – Discussion re: PAC Tour

The tour should include Traverwood and the Airport particularly. It was suggested that PAC members contact Dave Borneman to schedule a tour. In the future we will need another tour of potential site acquisitions.

No commission proposed business.

No RAC, School or Department reports.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.