



PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes of February 19, 2002

Members Present:

C.Riseng	P.D'Anieri
L.Langmore	J.Cohen
J.Satarino	O.Jansson
S.Rapundalo	R.Curry
J. D'Amour	

Members Absent:

Ex-officio Members Present:

W.Woods	B.Johnson
S.Aeschbach	G.Clark

Ex-officio Members Absent:

None

Staff Present:

B.Lawrence	C.Smith
M.Warba	D.Borneman
A.Kuras	

Others Present:

Bob Coller	2260 Platt, Ann Arbor	971-6629
Glenda Stone	3618 Weeburn, Ann Arbor	973-5668

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.

WELCOME TO LESLIE PARK GOLF COURSE

Matta Warba, Golf Course Supervisor since 1989 and Matt Horning, Pro Shop Supervisor, handed out a summary of the history and budget information, a copy of which is attached and is included as a part of these minutes. The golf courses operate within Fund 047, Enterprise Fund. It is comprised of 5 business units, including instructional and championships, ski center, Huron Hills and Leslie Park Golf Courses. Instructional programs have increased in capacity 200% over the last 4 years or so. They typically serve more than 900 people each season. Mr. Warba explained there is a national trend that rounds of golf per course are decreasing slightly. On a national level, rounds are the same, but courses have increased. There are no banquet facilities at Leslie or Huron. Owen Jansson asked if the number of rounds played at Leslie in 1998 and 1999 were an anomaly. Mr. Warba explained it was due to the weather and the Tiger Woods effect. It was noted that the significant variation in expense from 1999 to 2000 was primarily an accounting issue, covering depreciation, the municipal service charge and bond payment. Mr. Horning added that they watch revenues and expenses on a monthly basis and adjust. The courses are 100% self-sufficient. Wendy Woods asked how the pilot project with the dogs and geese worked. Mr. Warba responded that the program is ongoing and the only negative was the long wait with paperwork. Had the dogs been here two weeks earlier they would have prevented

the one pair of geese from nesting. The intent is to keep geese away from where children and adults are. Overall, staff and golfers are very pleased with the program.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

Glenda Stone, who resides in the Turnberry Subdivision, addressed the Commission to make an appeal on behalf of Turnberry Park. Ms. Stone stated the park is abused by dog owners in the subdivision. It is a long narrow stretch of land, with 1/3 of it useable for recreation. Play equipment was installed two years ago. Ms. Stone explained that in SE Ann Arbor, approximately 30% of residents are dog owners and some of the owners don't pick up from their dogs. If 10%, or 8 dogs are not picked up after, there are 720 piles of feces per month. Some bring their dogs to the park on leash and release them or other times just drop them off from the car. Children shouldn't have to contend with these problems. Parasites live in the feces. Ms. Stone's proposed solution is to post a sign at the park entrance, as well as bags (dumpster already on-site), send a flyer reminding dog owners and enforcement via periodic patrols. There is no homeowners group. John Satarino remarked that this highlights a problem we're having all over in a lot of the parks. Gerry Clark advised the department has a standard park sign that we will install to "pick up after your dog." Most of neighborhood parks have the signs, Turnberry is fairly new and the sign helps with the enforcement. Mr. Rapundalo remarked this is an old problem in Sugarbush Park. As soon as the dogs get into the woods, they seem to go carte blanche. Ms. Woods suggested, in terms of the sign, to maybe include a sentence that feces cause disease. Signs are placed at the entrance of the park by the park identifier sign. Cards are continuing to be handed out to dog owners to remind them of the ordinance and disease issues. Mr. Clark stated we will get some cards to Turnberry residents. Ms. Stone advised she will need 273 flyers and cards. Ms. Woods added that we should let other associations and areas know these are available. James D'Amour remarked that he confronted a neighbor who said everyone does it at the park near where he lives. Catherine Riseng advised that Hunt Park is in very good shape. Signs are up and there are garbage cans for use so that seems to be working there.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Acceptance of the minutes of Tuesday, January 15, 2002 moved by John Satarino, supported by Janet Cohen and approved unanimously by voice vote.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ITEM 5A – Discussion re: FY 2002/03 Budget

Gerry Clark stated the budget is three weeks behind schedule. He just came from a meeting with department heads and Roger Fraser, the new City Administrator. A presentation is being put together from various departments that would save 5-10% from the general fund. There is a retreat tomorrow from 12:00 noon – 5:00 p.m. and Mr. Clark will know more about what we will need to cut after that. There is a list that amounts to a 10% cut, but he doesn't recommend that we use all those cuts. Mr. Clark will e-mail commissioners about the next subcommittee meeting.

ITEM 5B – Discussion re: COPE Proposal

Gerry Clark stated he composed a letter to the DNR regarding the proposed project. COPE has a ticking clock and needs to find new quarters. Bob Collier, of COPE, stated they are secure in their present building until August of 2003, guaranteed by the county. Mr. Collier added there are a couple of points to clear up. First is the cost concern. COPE doesn't expect the City to underwrite their costs and they are not far enough down the road to look at details for building and maintenance. The City would pay only their share in terms of what is fair. Secondly, there are concerns about putting the building on park space. COPE is very sensitive about that and whatever would be done, needs to be designed and built to protect park land and buffer it from

the expressway. To the best of their knowledge, residents are in support of this and see the potential. The kids served are not disruptive and the atmosphere is conducive to kids learning. Some kids come from out-of-city areas but most are from this area. Last year COPE served 158 kids, maybe 60-70 kids at one time. Students earned 214 credits toward graduation last year, and would otherwise have been expelled from another school. John Satarino asked how the proportion was determined in terms of the use of the building. Mr. Collier responded that COPE doesn't use space on weekends, evenings, or most of the summer, so it worked out to about 75% use by the Parks and Recreation Department and 25% their use. Wendy Woods asked if their are figures on the number of students who attend that are from Ann Arbor. Mr. Collier advised about 1/3, but those that frequent Ann Arbor are around 75%. Gerry Clark added that now would be a good time to air concerns about the proposal and at some point PAC will need to formalize something. Robert Johnson asked if the split on cost would be 75% City/25% COPE on ongoing uses. Mr. Collier answered that COPE would pay more of the percentage of the cost of heat/light and would insure it. They're looking at the City staying at the cost they originally had to renovate the current building. COPE would pay the cost of the building minus the close to \$300,000 estimated to renovate the building. The total cost estimate is in the range of \$2.5 million for the project and they have been told it might be easier to tear down the existing building and start over again. COPE understands PAC's approval would be contingent of final costs. Mr. Satarino asked if this is a 30-year agreement. Mr. Collier responded that they haven't gotten to that yet and this would involve the attorney from the City, COPE, etc. COPE has spent around \$3,000 so far for design. Gerry Clark advised that the typical agreement would run 20 years, and would then be renegotiated and usually continues, but in the long term the building would revert to the City. Phil D'Anieri asked what set of pre-existing parks needs could be checked off with something like this. Mr. Clark answered senior services, outreach services and community center space, since Bryant has outgrown its space, would all be served. There is also an unknown future of demand because there will be more residents in that neighborhood. We have talked about reserving space for a gymnasium in the future. Mr. Clark added that, basically, there are a lot of positives in continuing the discussion with COPE. Bob Johnson asked why Bryant would be closed. Mr. Clark advised the location is disruptive to the neighborhood and they need more parking. The building might be leased to the neighborhood. Bryant is a loss to maintain and we have talked about a non-profit possibly running Bryant. Owen Jansson remarked, given the way estimates usually work, it seems if we went ahead with this, it wouldn't be long and we'd see we should just level the building so if costs increase, how much would the City pay and where would it come from. Mr. Clark responded that this is a target of opportunity, with funds in the Rehab and Development millage in its latter years, but we could advance some of that money to take care of this project. This millage produces around \$1.7 million per year and over the 6 years it will get spent. The City's expenses would be around 30%. Mr. Collier commented that COPE's philosophy was for the City to spend what they want to, and no more. Janet Cohen added she is concerned about the cost of department City staff. The Parks and Recreation will be losing managers and knowledgeable staff and may not have a superintendent or deputy when this comes through. It's helpful and useful but the core function is to maintain the park and make it acceptable to users. This will be very time-consuming for staff. Steve Rapundalo stated he appreciates all comments and feels that we need to take a step back and look at the PROS Plan, where there is a very inadequate amount of space for this type of recreation and we should look to see if this kind of initiative falls within this priority. We can't just stop the needs because of staff and we need to take advantage of partnerships, and not just Ann-Arbor based partnerships. Mr. Rapundalo added that he has yet to see that there is anything of a negative in terms of our goals and needs. Ms. Cohen remarked that there may be other organizations that might be ready to propose partnerships. Mr. Clark advised that the staffing would be a problem in the short-term, but in the long-term, staffing of the department will be good and will be a more efficient operation and slight decrease in staff. Ron Olson was very supportive of this project a year ago. Steve Rapundalo commented that if other entities might be interested, he would like to think that if this is brought to public attention, others could voice their interest. James D'Amour asked where we go from here. Mr. Satarino remarked that he has tried to look at it from different angles and he couldn't find anything in the PROS Plan that supported this kind of pursuit. The PROS Plan does mention combined entities working on shared facilities. At 9,000 sq. ft., \$6.00/sq. ft. for utilities

and maintenance plus custodian care, the annual expense would be around \$6,000 per month. How would enough revenue be generated to support this? Mr. Satarino stated we would have to be selling 40 or more hours per week to cover the costs of this. We're currently increasing fees and maybe decreasing services and have a millage coming up. The public may be getting the wrong idea of what we're trying to do. This just might be the wrong time, place and proposal. Steve Rapundalo commented that there are definite recreation demands, it's very hard to get space and he thinks a facility like this one would really help. Amy Kuras remarked that a long-term maintenance agreement would need to be spelled out. Mr. D'Anieri commented he feels staff, in a good faith effort, has pursued this because it is in line with the PROS Plan and would be inclined for PAC to lean on staff on this one. Mr. Collier commented that if PAC strongly thought it wasn't a good proposal, they would stop now, but if it's work further discussion, etc. that would allow their Board to look forward. Mr. Jansson stated that, programmatically it makes sense, particularly in that part of the City but financially right now it makes no sense. Catherine Riseng shared concern about the money, costs and maintenance issues, but agreed that this could be a good plus in an under-served area and would add a lot to that area of the town. Mr. Clark advised staff started looking into this a year ago and everything was positive, in the meantime a lot has changed but the proposal itself hasn't changed and it is the direction we want to go in for partnerships, working together to maximize resources. Mr. Clark's opinion was that it is in the best interest of the Department to go with this agreement. Mr. Collier remarked that the next step for them is to bring in the people to develop the plan and work out the agreement. COPE understands there is a transition and they are willing to delay a couple of months. Mr. Johnson commented that he continues to have a philosophical issue with this, where would it stop? Which partnerships are appropriate or not appropriate? Some guidelines need to be established. Mr. Jansson added there is a structure that's already there and on a corner separated from the rest of the park. Mr. Rapundalo stated there is no definition in the PROS Plan about types of partnerships because you don't know what will be coming and he doesn't feel we have enough detail but shouldn't cut it off at the pass right now. Wendy Woods added that this was kept vague in the PROS Plan purposely, and while she understands that the department is going through changes, she doesn't think we should necessarily put this partnership on hold. She would like to see this go further. There is a need in that area. There's also a possibility that the schools Recreation and Education could help. Steve Rapundalo moved that PAC supports further discussion by staff with regards to a shared facility with COPE, supported by James D'Amour. and passed with 7 ayes, 1 nay.

ITEM 5C – Resolution re: Reorganization of Department

Mr. Clark stated that the City Forester and Park Operations Manager position will be combined, there is a hold on one Mechanic position, a Park Ranger position is vacant, the Deputy would not be replaced, but the Manager of Park Planning and Development would be. Discussion continues for a Bicycle Coordinator. Wendy Woods asked, that with the elimination of a ranger, is the expectation that the Police Department will handle this. Mr. Clark answered not exactly because they won't handle gate closing or mail courier service. There is discussion about having a citywide courier service. Resolution moved by James D'Amour, supported by Phil D'Anieri. Wendy Woods asked if these changes may result in a 5% cut. Mr. Clark responded that in the first year there would be a \$115,000 reduction. Some positions would be upgraded, others would be lower salary. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

ITEM 5D – Maintenance and Repair Millage

Mr. Clark advised we have to have a millage program by June to Council so we have a lot of work to do. He is getting some pressure to reduce the millage and hasn't had time to put a lot of effort into the millage renewal issue. Steve Rapundalo added that we need to make the millage usage clearer. Catherine Riseng asked if Dave Borneman has changes he would recommend to this millage. Mr. Borneman responded that he hasn't done a lot of work on it and would personally like to ask for an increase but we need to build a strong case for it. Phil D'Anieri stated we need to rationalize what maintenance and repair items there are and why it makes sense to remain in

the millage. Mr. Clark added that there are a lot of the day-to-day operations in this millage. Bill Lawrence commented that the fact is there won't be enough General Funds to continue the department as it is now and the millage is the only alternative so he can't see lowering it if we want to operate at the same level of service or better. Janet Cohen asked who informs the public about what this is all about and was advised that a group, usually People for Parks, does this. We can't use millage money to promote the millage and if we're changing the title, we need to get the word out. We should have a public hearing maybe in May about this at the PAC meeting. Wendy Woods suggested it would be good for the commission to talk about a dog park again. Mr. Borneman agreed and added it would be wise to put some money in the budget for a dog park. Mr. Johnson agreed with Mr. Borneman's suggestion and asked why we would build a boathouse and not a dog park. Mr. Clark advised that the rowing clubs helped with the boathouse. Roy Curry asked if there is a timeline associated with NE Area Park and the large building standing there. Amy Kuras advised that the barn won't be moved because it would be too expensive to maintain and we will instead get cash from the developer to build a shelter. The master plan is to get the building out of there. Mr. Curry asked if there is an effort to be made to keep residents abreast of what the plans are. Ms. Kuras advised there were a series of public meetings, the county addresses this on their website and it is in the brochure. This is an issue of the Maintenance and Repair millage also.

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 6A – Resolution re: Grant Applications

Mr. Clark advised we are increasing the City's match to give us more points because the competition is greater. Wendy Woods remarked that the City has a lobbyist, Kirk Profitt, who could help us. Mr. Rapundalo remarked that PAC had discussed devising some parameters for allowing different uses of a park area. He got a letter from a citizen, apparently pollution has kept moving from Gelman and is in the city now and wells are being discussed. Gerry Clark added that Gelman is under court order to put wells in. At West Park there is one in the parking lot, the other is in Miller Park, and will be done behind the park sign. The DEQ said we had to do this. Gelman will have to restore to as good condition as they found it. \$300.00 per year was given to take care of it. Gelman provides insurance and holds the City harmless if something happens. It is a 2" well with a cap on it so can mow over it. There are quite a few scattered around the city. When done with them they have to pull them out, but they say they need to keep them for around 20 years. Mr. Satarino asked about the bridge over Argo Dam and was told it is a piece of the greenway system that is lacking right now. The recreational value of the pond outweighs removal of the dam. Mr. Satarino asked if the AA Railroad connection is to be built and was advised that it is. Resolution moved by Catherine Riseng, supported by Owen Jansson and passed unanimously by voice vote.

COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS

None at this time.

REPORT OF SUPT. OF PARKS AND RECREATION – GERRY CLARK

Mr. Clark reported he met with the City/Schools Committee and discussed Community Recreation and Education issues. The decision was made to set up a task force and have discussion of the overall picture of recreation (PAC, RAC, Board of Education and Council). James D'Amour asked about Mack Pool and the question of whether the schools are paying enough. Mr. Clark responded this is still under discussion.

REPORT OF DIR. OF SCHOOLS/CITY REPRESENTATIVE SARA AESCHBACH – No Report

REPORT OF RAC REPRESENTATIVE – JAMES D'AMOUR

Mr. D'Amour, new RAC representative, stated he will take the discussion to RAC about COPE and needs to see what their position would be on that. There are some questions about treadmill belts that are worn out at Veterans Park and the Mack Pool water is still cold in the showers. Mr. Clark advised that Mack will be undergoing capital improvements, most of which will be behind the walls, etc.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY – None at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.