



# PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes of January 15, 2001

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

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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**

None at this time.

## **WELCOME TO COBBLESTONE FARM – Nancy Burghardt**

Ms. Burghardt presented a history of the farm, its programs and services. Photos from the archives were passed around. After the Campbells moved out, the building was rapidly deteriorating. There are a lot of volunteers that do work at the farm now. Cobblestone was included in a book for highly significant buildings, historically. A committee is currently revising the farm's original preservation plan. The barn is a replica of the original barn and provides program space to take demand away from the farmhouse. The Farm Association has a small office here also. Other buildings include the horse barn, corncrib and chicken coop, carriage house, ice house and smoke house. Fencing is nearly complete. The long-term goal is to re-establish most or all of the out buildings. Mr. Rapundalo asked why there is such a low level of self-support. Ms. Burghardt explained that some programs make money and special events lose money but a special event is an opportunity for some to come to the farm and enjoy it. The Winter Carnival, spring event, 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Fall Harvest are all special events. There is an Open museum for drop-in tours, which is expected if you apply for any grants. There are also costs for organizing, recruiting and training volunteers. Catherine Riseng asked if there used to be a pond located here. Ms. Burghardt responded that the back parking lot used to be a wetland

and there was a seasonal pond by the orchard. Cobblestone encompasses 4-1/2 acres and the rest of the area is actually Buhr Park.

### **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Acceptance of the minutes of Tuesday, December 18, 2001, moved by John Satarino, supported by Stephen Rapundalo. PAC Secretary Dee Lumpkin noted the following attendance correction: Robert Johnson was absent, Wendy Woods was present. Minutes, with corrected attendance, passed unanimously by voice vote.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **ITEM 5A – FY 2002/03 Budget**

Gerry Clark noted an excerpt from the budget book is included in the packet and summarized the 15 pages. Meetings have been held almost every day at the Department Head level. The biggest concentration of effort will be on the General Fund portion of the budget. The \$6.7 million General Fund budget of the Parks Department is where we will concentrate our efforts. The Department's total budget is around \$16 million. A lot of facilities, Forestry and Park Operations are in the General Fund. We have not recently looked in depth at the revenue side. We need a range of reductions in the General Fund between 5-10% of our current budget, or \$330,000 to \$700,000. In past years, cuts were across the board but it is different this coming year. We will look at the merits of the programs and indicate cuts if needed. We have some city departments in the General Fund that will be short due to retirement payouts and other departments are trying to bail them out. We will try to save around \$100,000 in our current year's budget. There is a 30% increase in insurance and fringe benefits next FY year, more union settlements and the last batch of retirement payouts. We should turn in a budget the first week of February. This gives them a chance to look at the entire picture of the city. PAC will get a copy of this. We need to take a look at the basic business of Parks and Recreation and what isn't our basic business. The Budget Committee needs to know what 5% and 10% cuts would look like. Mr. Rapundalo added that nothing is sacred so we have to take a hard look at everything, including our relationship with the schools. John Satarino asked if there are additional cuts beyond next fiscal year. Mr. Clark responded that the city is in pretty good shape down the line in terms of funds. The long-term future is stable. Phil D'Anieri asked if it is possible to achieve some portion of the 5-10% in fees. Mr. Clark answered we could some but not a lot because we would price people out. We would like to achieve this through efficiencies and organizational change. The recreation facilities will be close to self-sufficient in 3-5 years. Mr. D'Anieri remarked that it doesn't seem outlandish to him to say we're in a certain financial situation and tell them either programs will be cut or fees will be increased. We must look at what users will be hurt. There will be the same amount of pain, but it's a question of who's feeling the pain. Mr. D'Anieri stated he is in favor of putting most of the pain on the users. Linda Langmore remarked that the committee looked at including some fee increases. Bill Lawrence added that we could charge for things that we don't, such as planting a tree in front of a residence. Jayne Miller stated she supervises 16 facilities directly and in order to make these facilities more efficient, she needs another level of supervision, because she can't do everything. The ice arena at Veterans Memorial is empty for two months when it could be used. Mr. Clark advised that the reorganization has been slowed down by hiring freezes, etc. John Satarino remarked that it makes you wonder if we should be getting into capital projects, such as the COPE project., which PAC needs to think hard and deep about. Also, fee increases will come up just before we ask for a millage renewal. Mr. Satarino stated he is worried about adding classrooms to a park and being able to maintain it. Steve Rapundalo commented that we have to recognize where the demands are from the public and make sure that we balance everything out. Revenue could come in because of it. Linda Langmore agreed Mr. Rapundalo, adding that in the recent past we have done a lot to purchase land but not a lot for new classrooms. Robert Johnson remarked that parkland is sacred and unless there is some exchange for other parkland he would not go along with it. You can't charge for a walk in the park. Costs and income are linked to property values. Staff medical and insurance expenses are

going up a lot this year. Council is facing this involuntary realignment of money. Owen Jansson stated PAC needs to think how we get the biggest bang for the buck; he was very positive toward the COPE proposal, but is now thinking more like Mr. Satarino. Janet Cohen remarked that at the November meeting she asked about getting a better sense of the range of programs and who they serve and how much is spent on the program. It seems there are a lot of smaller programs out there and she would like to see a list of these. Linda Langmore indicated the Budget Committee has this list and will get it to her. One suggestion was to increase the fee differential between resident/non-resident. Another suggestion was a fee to use all the facilities whenever you want. Steve Rapundalo commented that we don't want to make fees so high that you cut people out of the programs. Ms. Langmore stated that the COPE proposal at first sounded like a win-win situation, but it now sounds like there are more expectations from the city. Gerry Clark advised that costs are evolving so it looks like more but we would have about 75% of the usage of the building. John Satarino added that PAC should also look at underutilized facilities and the cuts in personnel as it relates to the COPE proposal. They are considering adding office space and classrooms for COPE. Most senior activities are morning and afternoon, then they are done. This will cost money to maintain. A lot of the proposed users are already subsidized by the department. Mr. Satarino stated he would consider the proposal if COPE is willing to put up the money for the structure. Gerry Clark commented we are still trying to spend \$3 million a year on capital improvements. Northeast Area Park will serve the whole northeast side of Ann Arbor and will generate some revenue, but not a lot. The Ann Arbor park system is still growing for at least the next 10 years, then it may be fairly fixed. Not everything a parks system does can generate money. Phil D'Anieri suggested that we include possible fee increases, along with possible cuts for the budget. The next budget meeting for PAC was scheduled for Thursday, January 24, 4:30 to 6:00 in the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room at City Hall. Janet Cohen asked if PAC has to make a decision about COPE for this coming budget. Mr. Clark responded not necessarily, but PAC needs to let COPE know if we're not interested.

#### **ITEM 5B - Swimming Pools Fees Revision**

Mr. Clark stated that Councilmember Mike Reid had questions about the fees, which were answered, and the fees will remain the same and go back to council as approved by PAC. Mr. Reid was worried about the 30% increase in pool fees. Cemetery fees were previously approved by PAC but never went to Council. We are close to doubling the cemetery fees. Mr. Clark advised that the Parks Department has a perpetual care fund, which we will need to use to take care of the cemetery. Resolution moved by Owen Jansson, supported by John Satarino and approved unanimously by voice vote.

#### **ITEM 5C – Reorganization**

Mr. Clark reported that Bill Beckner will have the final report, with options, to him this Friday. Within two weeks after received, Mr. Clark would like to have a meeting. The options have been narrowed down to two. Mr. Beckner has backfilled the report with data. The hiring freeze is hurting us right now. We have 16 positions that are vacant or will be vacant within the next 30 days. We have identified a dozen critical positions, some facility supervisor positions and Mr. Clark's position is also a critical hire. The combined position of Forestry and Park Operations is critical. There are a lot of stress and morale problems in the city with staff. The reorganization committee will meet February 7, 4:30 p.m., at City Hall. Steve Rapundalo advised that the City/Schools budget committee is meeting this Friday morning at 9:00 a.m. at the Balas III Building, until 10:30 a.m.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **ITEM 6A - Resolution re: Maintenance and Repair Millage Renewal**

Phil D'Anieri asked if this is a statement to say we want to renew the millage. Gerry Clark answered that it is. We are also considering restructuring the millage to be more understood. Steve Rapundalo commented that he would feel more comfortable with something that gave council the information that we will probably be asking for an increase in the millage. Mr. Clark stated this would be a "G" Item, for their information only. Owen Jansson inquired if this will cause people to ask if there's a way to take more General Funds and put them into this millage. Mr. Clark indicated he will do a cover memorandum to explain the resolution in more detail. Mr. Rapundalo asked that he put in the memo that PAC would like to have a work session with council. Robert Johnson remarked that when the Parks and Recreation budget was discussed last year it was very vague, so this will actually make things clearer. Resolution moved by Catherine Riseng, supported by Linda Langmore and passed unanimously by voice vote. The resolution will also be grammatically corrected.

### **COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS - None**

### **REPORT OF SUPT. OF PARKS AND RECREATION – Gerry Clark - No Report**

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

Ms. Aeschbach reported that the schools are dealing with the same budget issues that the City is and are looking at more than a \$5 million cut in their budget next year. The Superintendent of Schools is interested in the city and schools continuing working together.

RAC appointments are held up in the Mayor's office. Nominees were made a month or so ago. There are no city appointed reps presently. Jodi Lynn was an Olympic torch runner in Ann Arbor.

### **REPORT OF RAC REPRESENTATIVE – No Report**

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

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD AT LESLIE PARK GOLF COURSE**