



PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes of July 16, 2002

Members Present:	O.Jansson L.Langmore J.Satarino	P.D'Anieri S.Rapundalo J.D'Amour
Members Absent:	R.Curry J.Cohen	C.Riseng
Ex-officio Members Present:	S.Aeschbach	R.Olson
Ex-officio Members Absent:	W.Woods	R.Johnson
Staff Present:	B.Lawrence J.Miller	D.Borneman T.Rynard
Others Present:	None	

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:15 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 May 21 and June 28, 2002 moved by Owen Jansson, supported by Stephen Rapundalo and passed unanimously by voice vote.

MEMBERS AGREED TO REORDER THE AGENDA TO ADDRESS NEW BUSINESS FIRST

NEW BUSINESS

ITEM 5A – Resolution re: Skate Board Park Facility User Fee

Jayne Miller advised that the Skate Board facility opened in April of this year. The facility was unsupervised and they have found this doesn't work; kids were hopping the fence, skating in the pool area, etc. Supervision of the facility began in June and we want to charge

a fee to offset that expense. Staff need to be present to monitor the use and in case of an emergency situation. Phil D'Anieri asked if there is concern that as soon as it costs something that the use will go down. Ms. Miller responded that we have feedback that they don't want to pay, but that doesn't mean they won't. The fee is based on 2-days/week usage. Ron Olson added that children can also get a scholarship to use the skate park. Skateboarding is #10 in terms of numbers of injuries. James D'Amour moved the resolution, supported by John Satarino and approved unanimously by voice vote.

ITEM 5B – (Added to Agenda) - City Reorganization

Mr. Olson briefly explained the reorganization plan and what Roger Fraser, City Administrator, wants to achieve by this reorganization. He is teaming up departments with common bonds, to share resources so there would be greater opportunities for efficiencies. Roger Fraser is Interim Fire Chief for 90 days until a new one can be hired. There are four major areas, headed by Sue McCormick, Dan Oates, Larry Pickel and Ron Olson. This decision was not meant to dislevel the department. A new superintendent will be sought for the Parks Department. We also need to look at the positions that haven't been filled. The goal is to find a way to reduce about 5% of the operating expenses this year and next year. There are currently vacancies through the retirement window, attrition and improved processes. John Satarino asked what the timeline for this is. Mr. Olson responded that, in the general sense it will take a year or two to evolve and find its pace. Mr. Olson will move slowly and will still be working with the Parks Department. We will recruit for his replacement and PAC will be heavily involved with that. In 1989 and 1982, similar models came forth for reorganization but didn't stick. Owen Jansson asked if Ann Arbor expenditures are typical compared to other cities this size around the country. Mr. Olson responded that they are. Most Fire Department calls are not related to fires, rather accidents or other occurrences. Fire and Police have Act 312 Binding Arbitration, so if they don't like something the City is doing they can go to an Arbitration and the City has to go along with the decision there. There are 8 different unions currently in the City. Mr. D'Anieri stated that according to the Ann Arbor News today Mr. Olson will have a new title and new duties, but there will be an evolution to that. Mr. Olson stated there will be a head of the Parks Department. There are another 14 positions in the Parks Department that are in varying degrees of hiatus. They all can't NOT be filled. Phil D'Anieri added that the fact is that at some point the administrator or council will say Mr. Olson is not part of the Parks Department. Mr. Olson remarked that the model reorganization plan for the department called for a Landscape Architect to be hired, but we may consider expanding that to also deal with capital improvements, grants, etc.; more of what Gerry Clark did when he first hired into the department. The third planner may be changed to Capital Resources Coordinator. Mr. D'Anieri stated his only concern is given the situation, especially if positions won't be filled, division managers will have their hands more than full meeting everyday and emergency situations. Mr. Olson remarked that we need to spend time to figure out the leadership piece. John Satarino suggested that the first priority would be to hire someone for the superintendent position. Mr. Olson agreed and added that one of the first tasks is to think about the options and what the new leadership will mean. We may need a committee or committee-of-the-whole to determine this and present it to the city administrator. Responsibilities need to be identified and build it into today's expectations for a Parks Director. Linda Langmore suggested that maybe the way to start is to find out what, if any, of Mr. Olson's current responsibilities Larry Pickel will be doing. Mr. Olson responded that Mr. Pickel won't be the department head. The circles are just a concept, and some departments will not exist in the future. Steve Rapundalo stated we need to start with the job description and make sure it's up to date. John Satarino remarked that we should also work with division managers to see what each feels the role of the superintendent should be. We have to have a way to sustain the finance of the city.

Phil D'Anieri advised he is aware of an article that should be coming out in the AA News in a week or so. They are looking at unusual park properties we have and why we have them. Mr. Olson explained that some properties are part of a site plan and not something we actively went out to acquire.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

IITEM 4A – Update and Recommendation re: Maintenance and Repair Millage

Steve Rapundalo stated he would like to narrow down the discussion and see what we want to go for. Back in April PAC passed a resolution to increase the millage as a single rate increase to .6709 mil. Are we still prepared to go with this? PAC had also talked about having two ballot questions. There is now a third recommendation from staff to leave it as is. James D'Amour remarked that PAC did extensive review of this last winter and didn't come up with the increase out of nowhere but he is aware of the political affect. Mr. D'Amour would like the two-step plan. Phil D'Anieri stated it is apparent to him that city council would agree to the current rate of .4725 mil and that is probably the eventual outcome. PAC should think about the message we want to send to council and be honest about our recommendation. What the resolution can accomplish will highlight what can be done in the future. Steve Rapundalo agreed, but added it is a matter of how we package it. What if the increase is put on the ballot and it is defeated? Linda Langmore stated that consequences of no increase have to be clear. John Satarino asked if we have received comments from the department regarding this. Mr. Olson responded that he thinks the .6709, if proposed, one person would do everything he would do to defeat it because he thinks millages were being misused. Mr. Satarino asked if the department feels they can live with the current millage for the next 4 years, then why are we going for the increase? Mr. Olson responded there are some things that won't be done for sure, i.e., forestry and recreation facilities. A resolution was presented by Steve Rapundalo to rescind the previous resolution and recommend .4725 mil. Resolution moved by John Satarino, supported by Owen Jansson. One other way is to not rescind but amend the previous resolution to include the two-part option. Motion defeated 5-1. Mr. Satarino stated we have to remember and take into consideration the feelings of the public officials and some organizations and if the department feels they can get along for the next 4 years. Mr. Olson added that we can exempt it from the Headlee Act. Mr. Satarino remarked that the reality is there is a brick wall here and we have to work with this brick wall. He is disappointed in the lack of support that the Parks Department has gotten from the General Fund in the last few years. Mr. Olson stated we will probably not spend all the fund balance this year (\$200,000) and will come out with \$600,000 of fund balance. We have \$600,000 worth of expenditures. Dave Borneman remarked that just because this budget wasn't spent, doesn't mean that it couldn't have been spent. Mr. Rapundalo asked if there are sufficient needs to warrant the increase in the millage. Terry Rynard responded that there are. Eventually the fund balance will be gone. When the NE Area Park comes on line, we'll probably have to contract the entire maintenance of the park out. Nothing has changed in terms of needs. Leveraging the additional 10% cut in the next two years won't be easy. Mr. Rapundalo added that even with efficiencies there still will more than likely be some service cuts. Mr. Satarino stated he doesn't think we will get the higher rate passed through council. Parks has the ability to generate funds, unlike some departments that will be affected by this. Linda Langmore agreed and added what has changed is the political message we're getting from everyone. Council and the public have to know what the consequences are of not increasing the millage. Mr. Olson stated the question would come to show them that every single possible efficiency has been done if we go for the increase. The .4725 is a light increase, due to the elimination of the Headlee decrease. Ms. Langmore remarked that PAC is getting a strong message from Mr. Olson that there are more efficiencies in the department to be reached.

Mr. Rapundalo stated there will still be a small deferred list that won't get done. Council needs to make sure that the General Fund supports maintenance and repair as it should be. Motion by Steve Rapundalo that PAC amends the resolution and recommends to Mayor and Council a renewal rate of .4725 mills and additionally recommends that there is adequate General Fund support; that Council will assure the General Fund parks share will be adequate. Motion seconded by Owen Jansson. Mr. Jansson stated they should also recognize that there are things that won't be taken care of. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS - None at this time.

REPORT OF SUPT. OF PARKS AND RECREATION RON OLSON - No Report

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