

**GREENBELT ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION – JUNE 6, 2006**

Commissioner Mike Garfield officially called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber, 100 N. Fifth Ave, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS

Present: Commissioners Laura Rubin, Robert Johnson, Gilbert Omenn (4:45 p.m.), Sylvia Taylor, Jennifer Hall, Dan Ezekiel, Dale Lesser, Mike Garfield, 8;

Absent Commissioner Albert Berriz, 1.

City Staff Present: None.

Others: Peg Kohring, and Ginny Leikam, The Conservation Fund

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

JOHN SATARINO – PRESERVING FARMLAND

John Satarino addressed the Commission regarding preserving farmland. He said land that may not be suitable for farming, such as swamp land, should to be looked at more seriously as an alternative for land preservation. He added that opening the borders around the greenbelt would help to widen the area a bit. Mr. Satarino thanked the Commission for their efforts with preserving farmland in and around Ann Arbor.

JACK SMILEY – EXPANSION OF BOUNDARIES

Jack Smiley addressed the Commission regarding expanding the greenbelt boundaries. He said that the City could gain more by looking for partnerships and people who would be interested donating land. Mr. Smiley submitted a letter recommending that the boundary be expanded by 3 miles. (A copy of the letter is on file in the City Clerk's Office.)

READING AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

AGENDA APPROVED WITH CHANGES

Commissioner Ezekiel moved, seconded by Commissioner Lesser that the agenda be approved with the following changes:

Move: CLOSED SESSION (**Move to beginning of agenda.**)

Move: SPECIAL PRESENTATION (**Move to immediately after the Closed Session.**)

Move: Ann Arbor Township Presentation (**Moved up on the agenda.**)

On a voice vote, Chairman declared the motion carried.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MINUTES OF APRIL 4, 2007 APPROVED AS PRESENTED

Commissioner Taylor moved, seconded by Commissioner Rubin that the regular session minutes of April 4, 2007 be approved as presented. On a voice vote, Chairman declared the motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Commissioner Garfield learned that the Federal Farm Land gave out awards in Michigan and that all of the money being awarded is going to Washtenaw County. Half of that money is going to the Marcel Project. He congratulated The Conservation Fund on their efforts with that property.
- Commissioner Garfield announced that the following terms would end on June 30, 2007:

Commissioner Ezekiel
Commissioner Rubin
Commissioner Lesser

Commissioners Ezekiel and Rubin indicated that they would like to serve another term on the Commission.

(Commissioner Omenn arrived at 4:45 p.m.)

Commissioner Garfield thanked Commissioner Lesser for the work he has done for the Greenbelt Advisory Commission.

Commissioner Lesser explained that he has to leave the Commission because of other circumstances that have come up. He added that it's good to have people coming in with new ideas concepts to the Commission and that if staff would need him in any way in the future, he would still be around. He thanked the Commission for having him serve in this capacity.

Commissioner Garfield Announced that Tom Bloomer has shown an interest in becoming a member of the Greenbelt Advisory Commission and may be filling out an application.

- Commissioner Omenn expressed concern with the city attorney's response to discussing things in closed session. He said that there are ways to have documents presented and or used in open session. He asked for clarification regarding this matter.

Commissioner Garfield also requested guidance on this matter from the City Attorney's Office.

RECESS FOR CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Hall moved, seconded by Commissioner Lesser that the regular session of the Greenbelt Advisory Commission be recessed for a closed session to discuss pending land acquisition applications.

On roll call, the vote was as follows:

Yeas, Commissioners Ezekeil, Taylor, Hall, Johnson, Lesser, Omenn, Rubin, Garfield 8;

Nays, 0.

The Chairman declared the motion carried and the meeting recessed at 4:55 p.m.

Commissioner Hall moved, seconded by Commissioner Lesser that the regular session of Greenbelt Advisory Commission be reconvened.

On a voice vote the Chairman declared the motion carried and the meeting reconvened at 6:02 p.m.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

ANN ARBOR TOWNSHIP SMALL FARM INITIATIVE

John Alison thanked the Commission for all that they are doing and that three applications were coming to the Commission for discussion. They are exploring a new initiative in the township. There is currently 500 acres of land that would fit in the program. The issue is matching funds. Mr. Allison said that they are always looking for additional partners in order to ensure maintenance on the site. Other alternatives have also been explored.

Peter Kotila, said that there is a real opportunity to bring different kinds of land into one.

The Commission asked questions of the presenters and said that it was a good initiative and look forward to getting more information on the initiative.

The Commission's next step is to amend the strategic plan; figuring out alternatives and concrete strategies for matching funds.

Motion #1 – Create a Small Farms Ad Hoc Sub Committee

Commissioner Hall moved seconded by Commissioner Ezekiel to create a Small Farms Ad Hoc Committee to explore small farms in the townships.

On a voice vote, the chairman declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

BOUNDARY DISCUSSION

Ginny Leikam explained the boundary extension to the Commission. She passed out maps showing the boundary extension and said that they are attempting to find out where there are opportunities for partnerships, where to form a block of a protected area.

Commissioner Johnson said that Option #2 (extending the Greenbelt Boundary out one mile in Scio, Webster, Pittsfield and Superior Townships) is the one he would seriously want to discuss.

Commissioner Hall liked Option #3 (keep boundaries as they currently are, but add language to Chapter 42 of the Ordinance to allow City Council to consider protecting land beyond the current boundary for “exceptional” properties) because it allows flexibility working around greenbelt on a case by case basis and having a line that does not have a line of confinement. This would give flexibility for now and the future.

Commissioner Ezekiel said that Option #2 was preferred by him. He added that the townships have asked the Commission to make the change; that particular townships have taken it upon themselves to raise a millage or find extensive private funds to put into farmland preservation.

Commissioner Taylor said that there is no reason to put a limit on one line. She wondered if City Council would want to keep changing boundary each time the line changes as the boundary probably wouldn't be right in five years.

Commissioner Rubin wondered if this would water down the original greenbelt, which is greenbelt around the city. She was not sure if leaving it wide open, is the charge of this Commission.

Commissioner Omenn said that he would like to incorporate all 3 options. Up to one mile, contiguous within the boundaries, allow for others that go beyond and reemphasize that our first interest are in the boundaries that we have now.

After further discussion Commission Garfield asked that the numbers regarding bonds be submitted to the Commission by the next meeting.

(Commissioner Rubin left at 6:51 p.m.)

Motion #2 – Move Forward with Option #2

Commissioner Ezekiel moved seconded by Commissioner Lesser, that the Commission move forward with Option #2. (extend the Greenbelt Boundary out one mile in those townships where there are significant public or private dollars (Scio to west, Webster to the west, Pittsfield to the south and Superior to the east.)

On a voice vote, the chairman declared the motion carried with one no vote by Commissioner Hall, and one abstention by Commissioner Taylor.

JULY MEETING DATE

The Commission agreed to hold the next regular session on July 9, 2007. The rest of the agenda items from this meeting would be discussed at the July 9 meeting.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Commissioner Garfield asked if Commissioner Rubin would chair the commission for the next year, she agreed. Commissioner Hall agreed to serve as vice chair.

Commissioner Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Ezekiel that Commissioner Hall to serve as vice chair and Commissioner Rubin serve as chairperson.

On a voice vote, the chairman declared the motion carried.

NEXT AGENDA ITEMS

The remaining items from the June 6, 2007 meeting will be added to the July 9, 2007 meeting.

REPORT FROM COMMISSION COMMITTEES

None.

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Johnson moved, seconded by Commissioner Omenn that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm. The next meeting is set for July 9, 2007 at 4:30pm in City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Mike Garfield, Chairman

Anissa R. King

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Recording Secretary