



City of Ann Arbor

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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Meeting Minutes Park Advisory Commission

Tuesday, April 17, 2012

4:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street

CALL TO ORDER

J. Lawter called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Colin Smith called the roll.

Staff Present:

C. Smith, M. Warba, A. Kuras; 3

Present: 9 - David Barrett, Timothy Berla, John McCoy Lawter, Gwen Nystuen, Samuel Offen, Christopher Taylor, Douglas Chapman, Karen Levin, and Tim Doyle

Absent: 2 - Chair Julie Berson Grand, and Mike Anglin

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made that the Agenda be Approved with the amendment that Item C-2; 2012 Livery Operations and Argo Cascades, be postponed until the May 2012 meeting. On a voice vote, the Vice Chair declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY - (3 Minutes per Speaker)

George Gaston, 1217 Island Drive, Ann Arbor, spoke about the possibility of turning existing City Parks parking lots into 24 hour metered parking and taking back the parking lots that are currently leased to the U of M and collecting revenue from them, which could then in turn be used for operating the Park's system.

Eric Meves, 1796 Cambridge, spoke about Project Grow and their non-profit work in Ann Arbor.

Jeff Alson, 2685 Charter Place, Ann Arbor, spoke about the need for repairs to the tennis courts in Windemere Park, noting that there are a lot of tennis players in the area and they will get a lot of use in the future. He also thanked the Commissioners for their service to the City.

A APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A-1 [12-0546](#) Park Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes of March 20, 2012

A motion was made by Offen, seconded by Doyle, that the Minutes be Approved by the Commission and forwarded to the City Council. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

[12-0563](#) Millage Renewal Public Hearing

B UNFINISHED BUSINESS**C NEW BUSINESS**

C-1 [12-0549](#) West Park Fairgrounds Project

Scott Miller, Water Resources Commission, gave a brief overview of the drainage work that is being proposed for the Dexter Road and Miller Avenue area and through the Veterans Memorial Park. He said the main pipe which transports Allen Creek water showed last year that it was in disrepair and as a result work began last fall. He said they found that the pipe was beginning to rust and was sagging in two places and therefore holding water; one of the locations was close to the parking area in the Maple Village Shopping Center, and the other under Veteran's park in the northern parking lot, which is off Dexter Avenue. He explained that they are proposing to dig up the pipe in the two sagging areas and replacing it and the rest of the pipe they intend to coat it in concrete to hinder further rusting and deterioration. He said they feel their work will create minimal disruption to activities in the area, while the work in the park will be disruptive to the softball fields and the parking area. He said they are coordinating their work with the City and the ongoing road work in the area.

Miller said they are currently in the active design stage of the project and would like to bid the work in the summer and be ready for construction in August of 2012.

G. Nystuen asked how much of the parking lots would be disrupted.

Miller said the Veteran's Park repairs would be on a 175 foot-section of pipe, which would result in approximately 195 feet of disturbance and 15-20 feet wide excavation.

D. Barrett asked who would be the coordinator of activities between the City and Rec. and Ed and the Contractor. He also asked about current equipment stored in the parking area of the park.

C. Smith explained that he would be the coordinator between the various groups, adding that the project wouldn't start until the season's activities in the park are over, so disruption to activities will be very minimal.

M. Warba verified that current equipment in the park is authorized equipment that the Park's Dept. has allowed the road construction crew to store during their construction project which is on-going on Dexter Road.

D. Barrett asked about the estimated repair time for the pipe work and if the work would impact areas further down the stream.

Miller answered that they estimate the work to be completed within two months, if the weather cooperates and they don't have too much rain. He said their work won't have material impact as the water travels further east.

T. Berla asked if Rec. and Ed. had already cancelled their fall schedule.

C. Smith explained that they have decided to cancel their fall season which starts August 15, 2012.

T. Berla said that he felt it would be best to do the Park pipe repair first before moving on to the Maple Village parking area pipe repair just to be certain that the repairs would be done before the spring softball season opens up in 2013.

Miller said that he believed they could start wherever the area was available for them.

C. Smith commented that he believes they can have the coordination conversation since they will also need to coordinate the Dexter Road improvements with the Park's parking lot improvements and the detention pond in the southern area of the parking lot.

T. Berla asked if it would be helpful to have the skate park construction on-going at the same time as the proposed pipe work repair.

C. Smith explained that the skate park design work hasn't begun yet, so it would be difficult to tie in construction of these two projects.

Miller responded that they believe the pipe is currently under-utilized and could handle additional run-off water, which would be created from additional impervious surfaces.

C-2 [12-0550](#) 2012 Livery Operations and the Argo Cascades

Postponed to May PAC meeting.

Postponed to the Park Advisory Commission

C-3 [12-0551](#) Windemere Tennis Courts

Amy Kuras gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Windemere Park and explained the needs for repairs to the tennis courts. She explained that soil borings done in 2010, showed a fair amount of organic soils and fill along with a high water-table. She presented various repair/replacements/removal options available to the Parks Dept.

Matt Warba explained previous repair efforts and commented that staff will need a little more time to gather more data on the water-table issue.

C. Smith added that staff would be bringing the issue back to the Commission in May or later when they have more specifics available in order to allow public comment and in-put on the issue.

G. Nystuen suggested that this might be a good time for staff to review the need for tennis courts as well as their distribution throughout the City.

D **COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS**

D-1 [12-0547](#) Millage Renewal

J. Lawter asked for additional comments of the proposed millage renewal. He noted that there are two more upcoming public meetings on the topic.

G. Nystuen commented that she is optimistic on the topic and said that she hasn't heard anything negative on the topic; rather, that people continue to be very supportive of the Parks efforts.

D-2 [12-0548](#)

FY2013 Budget Resolution

PUBLIC HEARING:

S. Offen read the resolution.

PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION RESOLUTION FOR THE FY 2013 BUDGET FOR PARK OPERATIONS

Whereas, a vibrant, extensive, and healthy parks system is part of every great town and city;

Whereas, Ann Arbor residents value their parks, natural areas and recreational facilities and support these amenities through their taxes;

Whereas, PAC commends Park Operations staff for their efforts to improve the quality and efficiency of parks maintenance;

And whereas, Park Operations has demonstrated that it can increase its level of service through increased efficiencies and filling open, budgeted vacancies, without increasing 2013 budgeted expenditures;

RESOLVED, That Park Operations restore its 14-day mowing cycle from its current 19-day cycle;

RESOLVED, That Park Operations increase seasonal staffing levels between April 15 and October 15 so that active recreation areas will be better maintained;

RESOLVED, That Park Operations establish three seasonal park steward/supervisor positions to be filled annually between May and September to increase staff presence in the parks for the benefit of improved maintenance and enforcement;

RESOLVED, That Park Operations increase seasonal staffing at the ice arenas to improve facility cleanliness.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

D. Barrett asked about the Park's Steward Supervisor positions and if the additional staff that would be patrolling the soccer fields would be a part of that position.

M. Warba explained that they would be addressed a number of issues that have been brought to staff's attention. He explained the proposed duties of the Park Steward positions, noting that they would also be patrolling the dog parks.

C. Smith reminded the Commission that the City is on the second year of their two-year budget; however, since City Council can only approve one year at a time, they will now be approving the second year of the budget cycle. He reiterated that the Park's proposed FY2013 budget has not changed since the plan was shared a year ago, and any additional services provided through the park operations will be accomplished within the existing expenditure budget.

T. Doyle felt uncomfortable regarding the wording of the restored mowing cycle in that he didn't want staff to feel pressured to achieve beyond their means. He said he would feel more comfortable with wording that infers an objective or adding the word 'average' to the resolution.

K. Levin commented that the mowing cycle had previously been on a 14-day cycle but had been increased due to budgetary restraints.

Commissioners asked if the trimming would also be included in the 14-day cycle.

M. Warba commented that due to weather conditions there will be times when they will need to mow more often than the 14-day cycle and other times when they won't be able to mow within that cycle, but their goal will be to meet the 14-day cycle. He said that trimming was also included in the 14-day cycle.

A motion was made by Offen, seconded by Doyle, that the Commission adopt the Park Advisory Resolution for the FY 2013 Proposed Budget for Park Operations. On a roll call, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Passed Unanimously.

Yeas: 8 - Barrett, RAC Rep. Berla, Lawter, Nystuen, Offen, Councilmember Taylor, Chapman, Levin, and Doyle

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 - Chair Berson Grand, and Councilmember Anglin

PUBLIC HEARING:

S. Offen stated that the Commission commends Colin Smith, Sumedh Bahl and Recreation Services staff for their excellent efforts in developing the budget, maintaining the budget and making PAC aware of the financial situation and how it relates to the needs. He said it has been a remarkable improvement from past years and has been of great assistance to his position as the Budget Chairperson, for which he was thankful.

The Commission agreed.

S. Offen read the resolution.

PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION RESOLUTION ON THE FY 2013 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

Whereas, a vibrant, extensive, and healthy parks system is part of every great town and city;

Whereas, Ann Arbor residents value their parks, natural areas and recreational facilities and support these amenities through their taxes;

Whereas, the Parks Advisory Commission (PAC) commends staff for their efforts to include PAC members in the budget process as much as possible, and in producing an overall fair and reasonable budget draft that follows PAC's recommended budget priorities to sustain facilities and activities for all residents, but especially children, low income residents, and seniors, particularly where these services are not otherwise available;

RESOLVED, That PAC recommends that City Council approve the Administrator's recommended budget for Parks and Recreation Services developed by staff highlighting the following items and noting the following changes from the 2012 budget:

- 1. Continue to reduce energy usage expense in 2013 to reflect the benefit of infrastructure energy improvements at various recreational facilities such as Cobblestone Farm and Mack Pool,*
- 2. Continue to reduce materials and supplies in 2013 necessary to maintain various facilities as a result of recent improvements,*
- 3. Continue to reduce water usage expense in 2013 to better reflect actual usage,*
- 4. Continue to optimize staff software use in 2013 and eliminate unnecessary software installations where appropriate,*
- 5. Increase revenue in 2013 by initiating additional programming at the Argo Cascades,*
- 6. Increase revenue in 2013 by increasing fees for swimming admission.*

A motion was made by Offen, seconded by Doyle, that the Commission adopt the Park Advisory Resolution for the FY 2013 Proposed Budget for Parks and Recreation Services. On a roll call, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Passed Unanimously.

Yeas: 8 - Barrett, RAC Rep. Berla, Lawter, Nystuen, Offen, Councilmember Taylor, Chapman, Levin, and Doyle

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 - Chair Berson Grand, and Councilmember Anglin

E REPORTS FROM PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER

C. Smith reported that staff is currently at Argo Cascades doing testing. He said that the 1st predicted scheduled trip from the Cascades to Gallup is May 5th, with a grand opening to follow later in the year.

C. Smith reported that the RFP for the Skate Park designer will go out for bid tomorrow, with hopes of having a designer on board within a couple of months.

Commissioners asked about the financial arrangements for the Skate Park.

C. Smith responded that there are three main funding sources, one being a matching grant from the State of Michigan for \$ 300,000.00, and the match coming from Washtenaw County Parks and Recreations Commission and the remaining funds coming from money raised by the friends of the Skate Park. He clarified that there is no allocated funding from the City for the Skate Park beyond staff time involved, and the donated land for the park.

The Commission asked if the designer will be paid from the main funding sources identified and who would be overseeing the project.

C. Smith answered that the City is working with a committee, with the City overseeing the process through the City's purchasing division and guidelines. He explained that the committee will make a recommendation for the design of the park, and that will come before PAC for their review before moving on to City Council for their approval.

A. Kuras added that they would like to have a member from PAC to be a part of the committee.

C. Smith reported that they had asked D. Barrett to be the PAC representative to the committee.

G. Nystuen asked if the parking lot and pathways around the skate park would also be redone.

A. Kuras stated that the parking lot off Dexter Ave would be redone as part of the on-going work on Dexter Ave. She said they have decided to wait on the walking path until after the skate park design has been approved in order to make the pathways connecting to the skate park the most practical.

C. Smith reported that he has been working with Project Grow's Executive Director to draft an agreement that outlines the relationship between the two groups, and the use of City park land for their efforts, noting that in the past there was an operating agreement, through which the City provided funding assistance to Project Grow, in the amount of \$ 7,000.00. He said when an agreement has been formulated he will share it with PAC.

The Commission asked if there is anything PAC can do to help assist Project Grow locate more available land for public gardens.

A. Kuras commented that they have worked with Project Grow over the years in assisting them meet their needs as well as identifying parks that would be suitable for garden space.

The Commission thanked Eric Meves for sharing helpful information on their efforts.

C. Smith reported that the department is in Part II of the hiring process for a Market Manager, and will be conducting second interviews this week.

F REPORTS FROM MANAGER OF FIELD OPERATIONS

G REPORTS FROM RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

H REPORTS FROM RELEVANT COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND/OR TASK FORCES

John Lawter reported that the Dog Subcommittee had held a meeting with City representatives in response to the issues of off-leashed dogs, noting that there is a need for additional off-leash options. He said they are also looking at other alternatives to traditional dog parks, where there would be off-leash hours available when other activities are not going on.

I PUBLIC COMMENTARY - GENERAL (3 Minutes per Speaker)

J **CLOSED SESSION****K** **TRANSMITTALS****K-1** [12-0564](#) City Council Items Update**Received and Filed****K-2** [12-0565](#) Parks Project Update**Received and Filed****K-3** [12-0566](#) City of Ann Arbor 2008 - 2013 Park Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage Status**Received and Filed****L** **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Doyle, seconded by Levin, that the meeting be Adjourned. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

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