



**CITY OF ANN ARBOR – PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
May 18, 2010**

The regular meeting of the Park Advisory Commission was held on Tuesday, April 20, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. at the Washtenaw County Administration Building in the County Board of Commission Public Meeting Room, 220 N. Main St., Ann Arbor, Michigan.

I. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Chair J. Grand

II. Roll Call:

Members Present: (8) J. Grand, J. Lawter, S. Offen (arrived at the meeting at 4:17 p.m.), T. Berla, D. Barrett, G. Nystuen, D. Chapman, K. Levin

Ex-Officio Members Present: (2) M. Anglin, C. Taylor

Ex- Officio Members Absent: (0) None

Members Absent: (0) None

Staff Present: (7) Mayor John Heiftje, C. Smith, M. Warba, K. Gray, A. Kuras, D. Borneman, L. Bowen

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Commissioner Grand stated there would be a change to the agenda regarding an addition with Mayor Heiftje speaking to the Commission regarding the proposed Fuller Road Station. This presentation was placed under Special Presentations.

Commissioner Nystuen moved, supported by **Commissioner Berla** to approve the noted changes to the agenda.

The agenda was approved unanimously.

SPECIALPRESENTATIONS

Mayor John Heiftje spoke about the Fuller Road Station. Mayor Heiftje shared the various discussions he has had with local, state, and federal officials pertaining to alternative transportation and commuter rail. He shared that the City is applying for about \$40 million in federal funding for Fuller Station. He shared that he hoped the City as a whole could support the project.

D. Barrett asked when the next meetings are scheduled.

Mayor Heiftje stated later this year.

D. Barrett asks if the Norfolk Southern Company is interested in leasing the tracks or selling the tracks.

53 **Mayor Heiftje** stated Norfolk Southern Company has mentioned an interest in selling the
54 tracks and Amtrak has shown an interest in buying the tracks.

55
56 **D. Chapman** stated PAC was concerned about getting a better deal for the use of park
57 land.

58
59 **Mayor Heiftje** acknowledged that and shared that an agreement with the University had yet
60 to be finalized and a harder bargain was a possibility.

61
62 **T. Berla** expressed support for the idea of alternative transportation, but felt that PAC's role
63 in the process was unclear, and that the land designated for the improvement is park land
64 and PAC has the responsibility of looking out for park land.

65
66 **Mayor Heiftje** discussed the issue of selling park land as it related to Fuller station. The City
67 would not need voter approval for the project because park land is not being sold, but
68 leased and the City would own any structures built on it.

69
70 **G. Nystuen** expressed concern regarding the public not having had an opportunity to
71 express their views on the site selection, and that essentially at this stage the project feels
72 like a commuter lot for the University.

73
74 **Mayor Heiftje** stated Fuller is the only location that would work for this project.

75
76 **S. Offen** shared that the Planning Commission had recently made amendments to the code
77 that allow for a project like Fuller to be built on land zoned PL. Revenue would be
78 decreased, although the University would be parking more cars on City land.

79
80 **Mayor Heiftje** stated it would be helpful for a clause to be included in the Resolution to
81 speak to this issue; as for the rates, this issue has not been voted on at this time. The mayor
82 also mentioned working in partnership with AATA.

83
84 **J. Grand** asked if recent meeting with local, state, and federal officials had changed the
85 scope of the project, as initially PAC was presented with an inter-modal project that more
86 recently has taken on more of a parking structure feel.

87
88 **Mayor Heiftje** stated Senator Levin suggested Federal funding might be more readily
89 available if the project was sold as one phase.

90
91 **D. Barrett** shared with the Mayor the budget struggles that PAC has been dealing with and
92 the idea of lost revenue as a result of this project would be very difficult.

93
94 **Mayor Heiftje** shared with PAC items that had been restored to the Parks budget.

95
96 **T. Berla** expressed concern regarding the transparency of the process.

97
98 **Mayor Heiftje** stated revenues from the Fuller project would be ear marked for the Parks
99 budget.

100
101 **C. Smith** stated it had been helpful for the Mayor to be in attendance at this meeting to
102 explain the proposed project to the Park Advisory Commission; the Commission feels
103 revenue for the Parks is important and the prospect of losing revenue is a great concern for
104 the Commission.

105 **A - APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

106

107 **Commissioner Grand** asked for a motion to approve the current minutes.

108

109 **Commissioner Chapman** moved, supported by **Commissioner Berla** to approve
110 the minutes. The minutes of April 20, 2010 were approved unanimously.

111

112 **SPECIALPRESENTATIONS**

113

114 Urban Forestry Management Plan

115

116 **K. Gray** gave an overview regarding the Urban Forestry Management Plan. There will be
117 two public workshops. The first workshop will be held on May 20, 2010 at Tappan Middle
118 School. The second work shop will be held on June 1, 2010 at Forsythe Middle School; both
119 workshops will have the same format.

120

121 Following the workshops there will be a survey to gather additional information and public
122 feedback.

123

124 **C. Smith** stated over the last couple of years the public has been concerned regarding the
125 care of trees throughout the City.

126

127 **S. Offen** asked if the focus will be on City managed property only.

128

129 **K. Gray** stated the opinions of the public will determine if the spectrum will be broadened to
130 include other properties.

131

132 **S. Offen** asked about University of Michigan properties will be included.

133

134 **K. Gray** stated if the community suggests this that staff will reach out to the University.

135

136 **PUBLIC HEARING**

137

138 **B - UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

139

140 **C - NEW BUSINESS**

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142 **C-1** West Park Update – Public Art

143

144 **A. Kuras** explained the updates that are being done at West Park, including
145 the incorporation of public art.

146

147 **T. Pelletier** explained the public art that will be done at West Park. There will
148 be tree form metal sculptures with boulders incorporated into the seating area.

149

150 **C-2** PAC Resolution on the location and Leasing Agreements of the Proposed
151 Fuller Rd. Station

152

153 **J. Grand** explained discussions regarding the Resolution in depth to the
154 Commission. J. Grand also read the Resolution to the Commission.

155

156

Resolution on the Location and Leasing Agreement of the Proposed Fuller Road Station

Whereas, the Park Advisory Commission (PAC) has been briefed on numerous occasions about plans for the Fuller Road Station by project managers and City staff.

Whereas, PAC have yet to receive direction from the City Council to offer our opinion as an advisory body regarding the proposed Fuller Road Station.

Whereas, the City of Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan have jointly proposed building an approximately 1,020 car parking structure, which represents an increase of 770 parking spaces.

Whereas, the proposed Fuller Road Station will permit cars and buses to run on a 24 hour schedule, while currently the University is limited to parking cars between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday on the South Lot.

Whereas, the proposed Fuller Road Station may offer limited amenities that benefit the parks system or park users, such as the expansion of the adjacent athletic field; in balance, the proposed project does not benefit park users, nor does the construction of the Fuller Road Station adhere to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan, which proposes open space, additional athletic fields and a service park building, as well as development of a Border-to Border trail and nature areas along the Huron River.

Whereas, PAC has serious reservations about setting precedent for long-term leases or other agreements on parkland, particularly if said agreement does not directly benefit park users or the parks system.

Whereas, PAC has concerns regarding the safety of park users, pedestrians, and bicycle commuters with the introduction of additional curb cuts, bus, and automotive traffic that may result from construction and utilization of the Fuller Road Station.

Whereas, PAC questions the inclusion of a commuter bicycle station at the Fuller Road Station in terms of its distance to the Medical Center as well as the aforementioned safety concerns.

Whereas, the Parks and Recreation Department currently receives \$31, 057.00 (FY 2010) annually from the University of Michigan for 250 parking spots in the South Lot and is slated to receive only \$24,846.00 with a 3% yearly increase for 1,020 spots following completion of the proposed parking structure in 2012.

Whereas, it is unlikely that the University of Michigan will continue to lease the North Lots on Fuller Road following the completion of the proposed parking garage, resulting in an additional annual loss to the Parks budget of approximately \$38,495 (FY 2010).

Whereas, the potential loss of revenue (totaling \$44,706 in FY 2010 dollars) from the University of Michigan will result in the Parks and Recreation Department having to make additional cuts to an already stretched and shrinking budget.

Resolved, that PAC recommends that the City Council does not proceed in its approval of plans for the Fuller Road Station at the site where it is currently proposed.

209 Resolved, that if such plans are approved by Council, that the agreement with the University
210 of Michigan is renegotiated to include a significant increase in revenue allocated to the
211 Parks and Recreation Department. 100% of payments should come from the University of
212 Michigan. Revenue at the current FY 2010 rate of approximately \$125 per space would
213 result in an annual payment of between \$100,000 and \$127,500 to the Parks Department.¹
214

215 Prepared by: Julie Grand, Gwen Nystuen, and Sam Offen; Park Advisory Commission
216 Submitted by: Park Advisory Commission
217 Date: May 18, 2010
218

219 **T. Berla** moved to discuss the Resolution and stated he wanted the resolution
220 to support transparency in the process.
221

222 **J. Grand** expressed concern regarding the timeline to which the Commission
223 will need to make a recommendation.
224

225 **D. Barrett** asked for clarification from Councilmember's Taylor and Anglin on
226 the status of the project.
227

228 **C. Taylor** stated that the project is still in the planning stage as no site plan
229 has been approved, nor has funding been determined.
230

231 **S. Offen** suggested tabling the vote for the proposed Resolution and working
232 further on it.
233

234 **M. Anglin** stated the process was ever changing and that the City should be
235 asking the University for more money.
236

237 **K. Levin** expressed concern with the confusion left from the last presentation
238 regarding the transit.
239

240 **S. Offen** suggested specific language be included in the Resolution including
241 the desire for a clear project schedule and negotiating of a favorable return for
242 the use of the City's property from the University of Michigan.
243

244 **D. Barrett** asked if the terminology of "City owned asset" could be explained
245 further.
246

247 **C. Smith** stated if a structure is built on park land; it then would be City owned
248 property.
249

250 **J. Grand** spoke on the safety issues involved with the design of the proposed
251 Fuller Transit Station.
252

253 **C. Smith** stated there is currently one curb cut; as the design progresses there
254 could be a total of three curb cuts to accommodate the additional flow of
255 traffic.
256

257 **J. Grand** stated it is the responsibility of the Parks Advisory Commission to
258 provide recommendations on issues that affect the Parks system.

259 **K. Levin** suggested discussing this issue at the upcoming Land Acquisition
260 Commission meeting.

261
262 **C. Smith** stated he would speak with Ginny Trocchio regarding the agenda for
263 the June 2010 Land Acquisition meeting.

264
265 **G. Nystuen** moved, supported by K. Levin to table the above Resolution.

266
267 **Ayes: (8) J. Grand, J. Lawter, G. Nystuen, T. Berla,**
268 **D. Chapman, K. Levin, S. Offen, D. Barrett**

269
270 **Nays: (0) None.**

271
272 **Absent: (0) None.**

273
274 *On a voice vote – **Motion Passed** to table the above Resolution; to be*
275 *discussed at the next Land Acquisition Commission meeting; This Resolution*
276 *will also be discussed and voted on at the June 15, 2010 Park Advisory*
277 *Commission meeting.*

278
279 **C-3** Quarterly Financial Update

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281 **S. Offen** shared the quarterly financial update with the Commission.

282
283 **D - COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS**

284
285 **E - REPORT FROM PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER**

286
287 **C. Smith** stated the June 15, 2010 Park Advisory Commission meeting will be held at
288 CTN Studio located at 2805 S. Industrial Hwy. There will also be a reminder for the
289 additional meetings that will be held at the CTN studio in September 2010, and
290 December 2010.

291
292 The canoe passage is open; although presently the water level is too high to actually
293 rent canoes for river trips; the swimming pools will open on the weekend of May 29,
294 2010.

295
296 The Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Services in collaboration with the Center for
297 Independent Living received a grant which will fund an adaptive paddle sports program
298 held at Gallup Park on June 10, 2010 from 3:00 – 7:00 p.m.; this training will provide
299 support to provide staff the ability to better serve users with disabilities.

300
301 The Senior Center and Mack pool were reinstated in the FY2011 budget.

302
303 The Outreach position that is in the approved FY2011 budget will be posted shortly.

304
305 The Natural Area Preservation operating budget was approved.

306
307 The will be no parking at Allmendinger and Frisinger Parks; it was removed from the
308 budget.

311 F - REPORT FROM MANAGER OF FIELD OPERATIONS

312

313 G - REPORT FROM RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

314

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

317

318 I - PUBLIC COMMENTARY – GENERAL (3 Minutes per Speaker)

319

320 **Peter Pollack** spoke on the Fuller Road Station and urged the Commission to consider alternative
321 designs.

322

323 J - CLOSED SESSION TO DEAL WITH PRIVELEDGED CLIENT ATTORNEY INFORMATION

324

325 K - TRANSMITTALS

326

327 K-1 City Council Items Update

328

329 K-2 Park Project Update

330

331 K-3 City of Ann Arbor 2008 – 2013 Park Maintenance and Capital
332 Improvements Millage Status

333

334 There being no further business, **Commissioner Offen** moved, supported by
335 **Commissioner Levin** that the open meeting be adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

336

337

338