

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT

For Planning Commission Meeting of March 16, 2010

SUBJECT: Group D Park Rezoning Petitions:
Arbor Hills Nature Area (Project No. Z10-001)
Arbor Oaks Park (Project No. Z10-002)
Berkshire Creek Nature Area (Project No. Z10-006)
Bluffs Nature Area (Project No. Z10-003)
Glacier Highlands Park (Project No. Z10-004)
Kilburn Park (Project No. Z10-005)
Mallets Creek Nature Area (Project No. Z10-007)
Scheffler Park (Project No. Z10-008)

PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Arbor Hills Nature Area, Arbor Oaks Park, Berkshire Creek Nature Area, Bluffs Nature Area, Glacier Highlands Park, Kilburn Park, Mallets Creek Nature Area, and Scheffler Park petitions for Rezoning to PL (Public Land District).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the petitions be **approved** because the parcels are within the City's ultimate boundary and the proposed zoning classifications are consistent with the permitted uses and intent of the PL (Public Land) district.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Staff from the Planning and Development Services unit and the Parks and Recreation Services unit have worked jointly to identify properties currently owned and used by the City of Ann Arbor as parkland but are not within the City's jurisdiction and/or are not zoned PL Public Land District. Approximately 50 parks, or portions of parks, were identified as needing to be either annexed and zoned or rezoned. The majority of the subject parks have been owned by the City and have been in active (or passive) parkland use for many years, some even for decades.

The 50 or so parks in need of attention were divided into four groups for effective use of time and resources. This staff report addresses eight parks.

LOCATIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL PETITIONS

Arbor Hills Nature Area – This is a six-acre park located in the Arbor Hills development, north of Green Road in the northeast area of the City. Staff is petitioning to rezone it from PUD (Planned Unit Development District) to PL (Public Land District).

Arbor Oaks Park – This is a three-acre park located in the Arbor Oaks neighborhood, east of Stone School Road and north of Ellsworth Road in the south area of the City. Staff is petitioning for rezoning from R1C (Single-Family Dwelling District) to PL (Public Land District).

Berkshire Creek Nature Area – This is a five-acre nature area adjacent to the Berkshire Creek development, on the east side of South Huron Parkway north of Washtenaw Avenue. Staff is petitioning for rezoning from R4A (Multiple-Family Dwelling District) to PL (Public Land District).

Bluffs Nature Area – This 41-acre nature area is located on the east side of North Main Street between Huron View Boulevard and West Summit Street. The majority of Bluffs Nature Area was acquired in the 1990's. More recently, a one-acre portion was acquired by donation from the nursing home on Huron View Boulevard. Staff is petitioning for rezoning from R4A (Multiple-Family Dwelling District), AG (Agriculture District), C1 (Local Business District), and O (Office District) to PL (Public Land District).

Glacier Highlands Park – This is a 1.6-acre park in the Glacier Highlands neighborhood, east of Green Road and north of Glazier Way in the northeast area of the City. Staff is petitioning for rezoning from R1B (Single-Family Dwelling District) to PL (Public Land District).

Kilburn Park – This is a two-acre park also located in the Arbor Hills neighborhood, north of Green Road in the northeast area of the City. Staff is petitioning for rezoning PUD (Planned Unit Development District) to PL (Public Land District).

Mallets Creek Nature Area – This is a three-acre nature area adjacent to the Brentwood Square development, on the west side of South Huron Parkway and north of Washtenaw Avenue in the northeast area of the City. Staff is petitioning for rezoning from R4B (Multiple-Family Dwelling District) to PL (Public Land District).

Scheffler Park – This is a 5.5-acre park north of the Darlington Subdivision neighborhood, at the northeast corner of Edgewood Drive and South Huron Parkway. A 0.3-acre portion was recently acquired from 2345 South Huron Parkway, which staff is petitioning to rezone from O (Office District) to PL (Public Land District).

HISTORY AND PLANNING BACKGROUND

It has been the City's policy to zone publicly owned land PL since 1963 when the Zoning Ordinance was expanded from four or five zoning classifications to the 25 or so now used (one of which is the PL Public Land District classification). All land owned by the City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Ann Arbor Public Schools District, Ann Arbor District Library, and the University of Michigan is considered publicly owned and appropriate for PL designation. As with other zoning designations, the PL classification does not distinguish which public agency owns the underlying land or the specific land use.

Land owned by the City of Ann Arbor for public parks (parkland) is distinguished from other publicly owned land in at least one of three ways. Inclusion in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (the PROS Plan) is the primary way that parkland is identified and distinguished. The PROS Plan is an element of the City's master plan and is updated and adopted periodically. It contains the official list and map of all parkland within the City.

A second way that parkland is distinguished from other public lands is by City Council resolution. City Council approves all land purchases and accepts all land dedications by resolution. The resolution will typically state the service unit that has purchased or received the land and the reason it has been purchased or accepted. This is method serves to distinguish parkland that has been purchased or dedicated in between PROS Plan updates.

Finally, land may come with pre-existing deed restrictions that limit its use to parkland. Deed restrictions for public park use also serve to distinguish parkland from other public land that has been purchased or dedicated in between PROS Plan updates.

Prepared by Alexis DiLeo
Reviewed by Wendy Rampson
jsj/3/10/10

Attachments: Location Maps

c: Park and Recreation Services
City Assessor
Systems Planning