



City of Ann Arbor

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

Tuesday, September 18, 2012

4:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street

A CALL TO ORDER

Chair Grand called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

B ROLL CALL

Colin Smith called the roll.

Staff Present:

C. Smith, J. Straw, D. Borneman, N. Hutchinson; 4

Present: 10 - Timothy Berla, Chair Julie Berson Grand, John McCoy Lawter, Mike Anglin, Christopher Taylor, Karen Levin, Tim Doyle, Ingrid Ault, Alan Jackson, and Bob Galardi

C APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Galardi, seconded by Lawter, that the Agenda be Approved as presented. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

D PUBLIC COMMENTARY - (3 Minutes per Speaker)

Susan Miller, 205 Westover Avenue, spoke in support of the need for additional dog parks.

Harold Kirchen, 340 Eighth Street, spoke in support of dog parks.

Gwen Nysteu, 1016 Olivia Avenue, (supported the need for dog parks), member of Library Green Conservancy, spoke in support of open space in the Connecting William Street plan.

Eric Lipson, 1318 Rosewood Street, member of Library Green Conservancy, spoke in support of open green space in the downtown and specifically on the current library parking lot, and as a part of the Connecting William Street plan.

Natalie Fulkerson, 1553 Miller Avenue, spoke in support of the improvements proposed for Miller Park and about concerns for privacy with the removal of landscape screening from the neighboring Miller Park path which abuts their property.

Mary Hathaway, 1407 Wakefield Avenue, spoke in support of a park on the library lot and a pedestrian friendly path as a part of the Connecting William Street plan.

E APPROVAL OF MINUTES

E-1 12-1207 Park Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes of August 21, 2012

A motion was made by Doyle, seconded by Jackson, that the August 21, 2012 Meeting Minutes be Approved by the Commission and forwarded to the City Council and should be returned by 11/8/2012. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

F **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

F-1 12-1223 Miller Avenue Street Reconstruction and Parks

Nick Hutchinson, Project Management Engineer, gave a Power Point presentation on the Miller Avenue street reconstruction and parkland work.

Questions and Answers pursued between the Commission and Hutchinson.

C. Smith added that the identification of potential rain garden locations ties into the PROS Plan and it has been beneficial to be able to work with Hutchinson on these issues.

G **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

H **NEW BUSINESS**

I **COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS**

I-1 12-1224 Resolution Regarding Connecting William Street Project

Grand read the following draft resolution:

RESOLUTION TO CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES FOR OPEN SPACE IN THE PLANS FOR CONNECTING WILLIAM STREET

Whereas, the DDA has been charged by City Council to make recommendations regarding five City-owned lots through its Connecting William Street initiative;

Whereas, the PROS plan recommends that PAC work with the DDA to consider plans for downtown open space, including, but not limited to the Library Lane lot;

Whereas, the PROS plan reflects PAC's commitment to, "assure citizens a voice in the decision-making process of the park, recreation, and open space system, including acquisition, planning, and development";

Whereas, many community members have expressed a preference for a downtown park in this area;

Whereas, PAC recognizes the potential benefits of downtown density, the value of mixed-use interface with downtown open space, and the importance of creating a safe, attractive programmable space in the downtown;

Whereas, PAC is in agreement that the amount of open space currently proposed in the DDA's plans for Connecting William Street may be insufficient in relation to

expected gains in population;

Whereas, PAC is in agreement that there is more than one potential site for open space within at least three of the five City-owned properties;

Resolved, that PAC recommends additional input from City staff regarding the evaluation of locations for a downtown park, the best mix of amenities for the population expected to utilize a downtown park, and the costs of developing and maintaining a new addition to the Parks system.

Resolved, that PAC recommends that City Council refrain from adopting plans for the five City-owned lots prior to resolving the question of open space within the Connecting William Street area.

A motion was made by Berla, seconded by Lawter, that the Resolution to Consider Alternatives for Open Space in the Plans for Connecting William Street be approved.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Jackson asked if the resources were available to move forward with the proposed resolution.

C. Smith responded that it will be a multi-faceted approach, since it will be a multi departmental process in coming up with possible approaches.

Jackson commented that he was open to staff's input on the process.

Grand explained that the intention with the resolution at this time is to allow PAC and staff the time to have the necessary discussions and not make a hasty decision.

Berla said he was in favor of the resolution but felt PAC discussions should start with the need for a park in the downtown and asking City Council and staff to find a suitable location for a park. He commented that the density in the downtown area within the coming five years will be higher than it has ever been before. He felt it was important that possible park sites not be sold or developed so potential future parks become obsolete.

C. Smith offered to bring guidelines and comparative numbers of open space to the Commission, adding that the public survey results showed that there was an overwhelming request for additional open green space in the downtown area.

Grand, referring to the PROS plan, said that one of their charges as a Commission is to be planning for the future and trying to anticipate future needs within the City, and the resolution before them is in line with that charge.

Lawter said that he believes there will be a place for a park in the downtown area and the question will be more so regarding the necessary amenities of such a park and he was in favor of the resolution, with possibly adding stronger language as part of the resolved section.

Galardi said there will be an additional public meeting in October with recommendations from the Committee to follow. He suggested that all five locations [instead of three] be included in the last Whereas statement of the resolution, as possible park locations.

Doyle explained that through their discussions the Ashley location had been discounted because they felt it was moving in the wrong direction from the downtown

area and connecting the University population with the downtown shouldn't be forgotten in the process.

C. Smith cautioned the Commission saying in order for a park to be successful they need to consider what will be around it, in terms of density, so as not to end up with an impractical, unused park. He asked the Commission to consider other possible locations that would be outside of the five mentioned lots.

Grand said that neighboring development might be needed to help pay for the park and that the question of open space needs to be resolved before adopting the plan. She felt that the Commission had insufficient information at this time to make further recommendations, but felt that the proposed open space was not adequate.

General discussion pursued regarding possible amendments to the resolution language.

Grand read the friendly amendments with the final draft as follows:

RESOLUTION TO CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES FOR OPEN SPACE IN THE PLANS FOR CONNECTING WILLIAM STREET

Whereas, the DDA has been charged by City Council to make recommendations regarding five City-owned lots through its Connecting William Street initiative;

Whereas, the PROS plan recommends that PAC work with the DDA to consider plans for downtown open space, including, but not limited to the Library Lane lot;

Whereas, the PROS plan reflects PAC's commitment to, "assure citizens a voice in the decision-making process of the park, recreation, and open space system, including acquisition, planning, and development";

Whereas, many community members have expressed a preference for a downtown park in this area;

Whereas, PAC recognizes the potential benefits of downtown density, the value of mixed-use interface with downtown open space, and the importance of creating a safe, attractive programmable space in the downtown;

Whereas, PAC is in agreement that the amount of open space currently proposed in the DDA's plans for Connecting William Street is insufficient;

Whereas, PAC is in agreement that there is more than one potential site for open space within the City-owned properties under consideration;

Resolved, that PAC recommends additional evaluation of locations for a downtown park, the best mix of amenities for the population expected to utilize a downtown park, and the costs of developing and maintaining a new addition to the Parks system.

Resolved, that PAC recommends that City Council refrain from adopting plans for the five City-owned lots prior to resolving the question of open space within the Connecting William Street area.

Friendly Amendments made by the Commission as noted in the final resolution. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

Yeas: 6 - RAC Rep. Berla, Chair Berson Grand, Lawter, Levin, Doyle, and Jackson

Nays: 2 - Ault, and Galardi

J REPORTS FROM PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER

C. Smith reported that they have started the streambank stabilization project at Leslie Golf Course and with the help of NAP they have been relocating the turtles from one pond to another.

C. Smith reported that the City has heard back from the MDEQ on the white water permit requests, noting that at this point it doesn't look very positive. He said the federal agency, EPA, had issued an objection letter to the DEQ, and staff has been meeting with MDEQ officials in an attempt to better understand the process involved. He noted that he will share more information as it becomes available.

K REPORTS FROM MANAGER OF FIELD OPERATIONS

L REPORTS FROM RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

Berla noted that he would be attending the RAC meeting this afternoon.

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

M-1 12-1225 Report on Additional Off-Leash Dog Facilities in the City of Ann Arbor Parks System

C. Smith gave the staff report as prepared by Amy Kuras, Park Planner.

Lawter suggested that the Commission move their efforts and energy to looking at a more traditional fenced-in dog park. He said they will continue working with staff in looking for suitable locations and will report back to the Commission in the coming months.

C. Smith said the cost of installing a fence for a dog-park would be minimal. He said the park supervisor's presence in the dog parks are available to educate the park users, and staff has seen a marked decrease in violations at the parks since the park supervisors began their educational work.

Lawter commented that volunteers who are on-board with NAP have also been a great resource.

Ault asked if staff is looking at one or more dog parks. She requested that future maps of potential dog-park locations would include Swift Run as well as Olsen Park.

C. Smith said they will need to try to determine how many dog-parks are desired and which locations in the City would be suitable.

N PUBLIC COMMENTARY - GENERAL (3 Minutes per Speaker)

O CLOSED SESSION

P **TRANSMITTALS**

- P-1** **12-1204** City Council Items Update
Received and Filed
- P-2** **12-1205** Park Project Update
Received and Filed
- P-3** **12-1206** City of Ann Arbor 2008-2013 Park Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage Status
Received and Filed

Q **ADJOURNMENT**

Grand informed the Commission that this was Commissioner Chapman's last meeting. She recognized and thanked Doug Chapman for his dedication and service as a member to PAC.

Chapman thanked PAC and the public for the opportunity to serve on the Commission.

A motion was made by Galardi, seconded by Levin, that the Meeting be Adjourned at 6:01 p.m. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

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- *Video on Demand: Replay public meetings at your convenience online at www.a2gov.org/government/city_administration/communicationsoffice/ctn/Pages/Vid eoOnDemand.aspx*
- *Cable: Watch CTN Channel 16 public meeting programming via Comcast Cable channel 16.*

The complete record of this meeting is available in video format at www.a2gov.org/ctn, on "The Meeting Place" page (<http://www.a2gov.org/livemeetings>), or is available for a nominal fee by contacting CTN at (734) 794-6150.