



City of Ann Arbor

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

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

4:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street

A CALL TO ORDER

B ROLL CALL

Staff Present:

C. Smith, J. Straw, A. Kuras and D. Rohr

Present: 10 - Chair Julie Berson Grand, Mike Anglin, Christopher Taylor, Karen Levin, Ingrid Ault, Alan Jackson, Bob Galardi, Melissa Stults, Graydon Krapohl, and Jennifer Geer

C APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Stults, seconded by Jackson, that the Agenda be Approved as Amended. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

D PUBLIC COMMENTARY - (3 Minutes per Speaker)

E APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approved

E1 13-1281 Park Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes of September 7, 2013

Attachments: PAC 9-17-13 Final Meeting Minutes

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

F SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

F1 13-1282 Upper Malletts Stormwater Conveyance Study - Recommendations that Affect City Parks

Attachments: WCWRC-Malletts Creek Materials

Harry Sheehan gave a history of the request from City Council to look at street and yard floodings in the area and the ability to reduce or minimize flooding in the Upper Malletts area in a storm related event through partnering with City Parks.

F2 Capital Projects Update

A. Kuras gave updates on projects being worked on during the construction season.

Esch Park, Gallup, Transformer Plaza, Various Plantings, Mack Pool and Ice Arena Roofs, Baseball Field and Skatepark improvements and developments were described.

G UNFINISHED BUSINESS

H NEW BUSINESS

I COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS

I1 13-1285 Resolution to Approve Downtown Parks Subcommittee Report and Recommendations

Attachments: Downtown Parks Resolution, Park Advisory Commission (PAC)
Downtown Parks Subcommittee Report

Chair Ault and J. Grand gave a presentation on the Downtown Parks Subcommittee Report. The Resolution will go to Council for Approval. The detailed report is on the Parks website. B. Galardi read the resolution:

Whereas, In 2012, the DDA completed the Connecting William Street study; there needed to be an effort focusing on open space needs;

Whereas, City Council asked PAC to look further into the subject of downtown parks and open spaces;

Whereas, PAC created a Downtown Parks Subcommittee to study the subject of downtown parks and open spaces;

Whereas, PAC developed the following mission statement: "To determine whether and what additional parks are wanted and/or needed in downtown Ann Arbor, focusing on city-owned parcels in the DDA district while maintaining awareness of additional nearby properties, for example: Liberty Plaza, 721 North Main and 415 W. Washington. The 'deliverable' will be a set of recommendations for the City Council.";

Whereas, The Downtown Parks Subcommittee devoted considerable time and effort to learn more about downtown parks and open space and engaged the public through public meetings and a survey; and

Whereas, The Downtown Parks Subcommittee has set forth recommendations as described in the Downtown Parks Subcommittee Report;

RESOLVED, that PAC accepts the Downtown Parks Subcommittee Report and approves the following recommendations in regards to downtown parks and open space:

1. The development of any new downtown park or open space should prioritize community preferences. The most commonly expressed community-based priorities include: a central location; sufficient size for passive recreation/community gatherings; shade; and natural features.

2. New downtown parks and open space should adhere to placemaking principles. Criteria for a successful downtown open space include: high traffic/visibility; flexible programmable space; active use on at least three sides; the ability to provide activities desired by the community; and funding for maintenance and security.

3. Any new downtown park should enliven the downtown, complement existing parks and development, and serve the community desire for a central gathering space.

4. Any additional downtown park space should not come at the expense of the quality or maintenance of Ann Arbor's existing parks. Downtown parks are expected to be more costly to develop and maintain. Further, existing downtown parks are not currently utilized to their potential. Given the limits of current parks funding, the development of new parks should not be approved without an identified funding source for capital development, ongoing maintenance, and programming.

5. Significant capital/structural improvements to Liberty Plaza should only be made in concert with the adjacent property owner. Short-term efforts should continue to focus on smaller-scale incremental changes (removal of shrubbery) and programming opportunities (fee waiver). Future improvements should also work to create a permanent and highly visible connection between the Library Lot and Liberty Plaza.

6. The downtown could benefit from the addition of small "pocket" parks and flexible spaces. The City should work with potential developers of City-owned properties to identify opportunities, create, and maintain privately funded, but publically accessible open spaces. (e.g., the Y and Kline lots). As a part of this effort, staff should develop recommendations for how development contributions can better serve to provide and improve downtown passive recreational opportunities, including proposals such as flex space (parklets), streetscape improvements, and public art.

7. The public process for downtown parks and open space does not end with these recommendations. Any additional park/open space would require robust public input regarding the design, features, and proposed activities.

8. Based on the aforementioned criteria, the Downtown Parks Subcommittee recommends that a park/open space be developed on the Library Lot that takes advantage of the flexibility offered through temporary closures of Library Lane. The size of this space should exceed the proposed allocated open space in the Connecting William Street study. However, the subcommittee is strongly in favor of a mixed-use vision for the Library Lot. Adjacent development, including the accompanying increases in activity, is essential for the future success of additional downtown open space. In order to adequately address issues of safety and security, the Ann Arbor District Library must also be strongly represented in the planning process.

RESOLVED, that PAC recommends that City Council accept the report and adopt the recommendations as proposed to be used as guidelines when considering adding park space/open space in the downtown core if and/or when it is deemed desired by the public or when any of the five parcels identified in the Connecting Williams Street plan are developed.

Commission discussion ensued and the following amendments were considered friendly:

Add the word "necessary" at item 2 to read as follows:

2. New downtown parks and open space should adhere to placemaking principles. Necessary criteria for a successful downtown open space include: high traffic/visibility; flexible programmable space; active use on at least three sides; the ability to provide activities desired by the community; and funding for maintenance and security.

Change item 8 to read as follows:

8. Based on the aforementioned criteria, the Downtown Parks Subcommittee recommends that a park/open space be developed on the Library Lot that takes advantage of the flexibility offered through temporary closures of Library Lane. The size of this space should exceed the proposed allocated open space in the Connecting William Street study (5,000 square feet). However, the subcommittee is strongly in favor of a mixed-use vision for the Library Lot that utilizes the city's investment in development-ready foundation and infrastructure. Development of the site and adjacent parcels, including the accompanying increases in activity, is essential for the future success of this site. In order to adequately address issues of safety and security, the Ann Arbor District Library must also be strongly represented in the planning process.

Changes were unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Galardi, seconded by Krapohl, that the Resolution be Approved as Amended. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

J REPORT FROM PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER

NAP Appreciation Day Potluck on October 23 to recognize staff for all their contributions to the parks.

K REPORT FROM MANAGER OF FIELD OPERATIONS

L REPORT FROM RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

M REPORTS FROM RELEVANT COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND/OR TASKFORCES

M1 Update from Dog Park Subcommittee

2nd Dog Park public meeting was held with a small group of participants. Good feedback. Consolidate information from survey and public meetings.

M2 Update from Environmental Commission Representative

M. Stultz gave an update on EC workplan. Strategies tied to the sustainability framework. Strategies range from most important, work to promote reusable waters, discourage water bottle usage. App for public water fountains. Work in terms of flooding--mapping vulnerability to climate changes. How to manage smoking in parks--just at preliminary level.

N PUBLIC COMMENTARY - GENERAL (3 Minutes per Speaker)

William Higgins of 2131 Chaucer voiced concerns about the impounds and how the areas might be enhanced.

O CLOSED SESSION

P TRANSMITTALS

