



City of Ann Arbor

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

Tuesday, January 24, 2012

4:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Colin Smith called the roll.

Staff Present:

C. Smith, J. Straw, M. Warba, A. Kuras, J. Black, N. Hutchinson; 6

Present: 8 - Chair Julie Berson Grand, John McCoy Lawter, Gwen Nystuen, Samuel Offen, Mike Anglin, Christopher Taylor, Douglas Chapman, and Karen Levin

Absent: 2 - David Barrett, and Tim Doyle

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENTARY - (3 Minutes per Speaker)

None

A APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A-1 [12-0105](#) Park Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2011

A motion was made by Lawter, seconded by Levin, 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

[12-0119](#) Introduction - Susan Westhoff, Executive Director of the Leslie Science and Nature Center.

S. Offen introduced Susan Westhoff, the new Director of the Leslie Science and Nature Center.

Westhoff thanked the Commission for welcoming her. She thanked PAC for their support and commitment to the Leslie Science Center over the past 25 years. She

gave some background information about herself and gave a brief update on current and upcoming events at the Leslie Science and Nature Center.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

B UNFINISHED BUSINESS

B-1 12-0106 West Park Project Update

Amy Kuras, from the Parks and Recreation department, and Nick Hutchinson, from the City's Project Management department, gave a power point presentation on the West Park Project which mainly encompasses issues dealing with the storm water at the site.

J. Lawter asked if there was any concern with the swirl shutdown and the possibility of any loss of detention capability.

N. Hutchinson responded that the purpose of the treatment units is not for detention, and once they are on-line it is more like a steady state system, with the treatment of the quality of the water. He said a good thing with the treatment unit system was that if there is too much water sent into the units, any excess water simply passes through. He explained that the redesign of the system will make sure that they get the right amount of flow going into the units.

N. Hutchinson said that in the case of an improperly designed weir structure could cause backup upstream, but he believed that with all the design work put into this project they would have it such that it will not be causing any disturbances to the upstream area.

S. Offen added that it would be advisable to make sure any outstanding issues get resolved so that the residents in the area have a clear understanding of the situation. He asked if the construction area would make any areas of the park unavailable.

N. Hutchinson explained that the areas that will be dug up will be right around the treatment units, in the west corners of the park, and that two of the three pathways leading into the park from Seventh Street would be disturbed.

K. Levin asked what the timeframe was for completion of the project.

N. Hutchinson said he estimated that by mid to late July 2012 they should be completed, if the manufacturer's contractors are able to make the necessary repairs in May.

M. Anglin asked if flow data from the storm water system was available showing before and after calculations.

N. Hutchinson said that OHM did flow monitoring with devices inside of the storm pipes in the spring and summer of 2011.

M. Anglin asked if they were making an effort to talk to the group that spoke to them about the flooding of their basements. He asked if they are using some of the data on this system to have reference points with the group or if this was not part of the discussion.

N. Hutchinson said that discussion was not so much a part of this project. He said the

data they took was specific to West Park itself in their design efforts to create a system that would not cause disturbances to the upstream area.

A. Kuras said while there have been enquiries as to what is being done to correct the issues, she said the discussions that have occurred have mainly dealt with this specific West Park issue and how they are dealing with the flooding issues there. While she realizes that there is a need to create another forum to discuss the residents concerns with previous flooding issues she said it is part of a much larger issue that involves the whole Allen Creek Watershed.

N. Hutchinson noted that the flooding that occurred in 2011 was not related to anything that was done in West Park.

B-2 [12-0107](#)

Update on Fuller and Olson Athletic Fields

Jessica Black, Recreation Facility Supervisor who oversees park rentals, gave an update on renovations, and facility utilization at Fuller and Olson Parks during 2011.

Jeff Straw, Deputy Park's Director, gave an update on the associated revenue at the facilities.

Matt Warba, Interim Manager of Field Operations, reviewed the operating expense associated with Fuller and Olson Parks.

K. Levin asked what the projected expenses were for 2012.

M. Warba said while some expenses are unforeseen he believed that the presented costs are relatively static.

J. Lawter asked if both of the fields are currently irrigated.

M. Warba said, yes.

G. Nystuen asked how long it would be before they could expect more renovations at the facilities.

M. Warba said he was confident that they could continue to operate the facilities without having to close them for renovations. He said they would have to balance the demand for the half fields with the integrity and condition of the fields. They could maintain them instead of having to start over from scratch.

G. Nystuen asked about the possibility to protect the fields from wear and tear after heavy rainfall.

M. Warba said that it has been an issue at their facilities and they are looking into having staff monitor the fields after heavy rainfall in order to protect them from deterioration.

J. Lawter asked if staff felt that they were meeting the needs of the public for sporting activities or if the City could be doing more.

M. Warba responded that maintaining the field integrity and maximizing revenue are the key issues.

C. Smith noted that they are currently at 79% capacity and the time slots that are available are not when certain groups are looking for them.

J. Black said that 35 games on the field is the maximum because of the field usage. She stated that she believes that they are meeting the needs of most people and that the usage becomes a balancing act.

C. Smith said that one of the issues at Fuller field, after the renovations were made was that there was an understanding that there would be that fine balancing act for a number of years to make sure they avoid having to spend a lot of money on an investment and end up right where they started instead of treating them carefully.

J. Grand asked if they have been doing more outreach with groups that have lower impact intensity on the field usage.

J. Black said that there hasn't been much work to bring groups back.

J. Straw said that now that a year has passed they will be able to review their procedures to see if they need to do outreach to groups or just have the same groups return.

S. Offen asked if there was any feedback available from the teams in terms of how they felt about the scheduling.

M. Warba said that the primary concerns they received was over Field 6. He said the reality is that Field 6 functions very well down by the river as a floodway, and not so much as a soccer field. He said they can't invest in that field because they can't add materials to it, since they are regulated as to how much material is on that space. He said under ideal conditions when they don't have floods in the spring, the field performs well.

C NEW BUSINESS

C-1 11-1557

Resolution to Recommend Approval of a Contract with RMD Holdings to Renovate Softball and Baseball Fields at Veterans Memorial Park, Southeast Area Park, and West Park, and Appropriate Funds (\$982,333.60)

J. Straw and M. Warba gave an overview and power point presentation of the project goals, current conditions, and needs of the baseball fields.

K. Levin asked if there were other fields that would be available during the renovation period.

M. Warba said, yes, that there are 24 neighborhood fields throughout the Park's system.

G. Nystuen asked if there were other possible impervious surfaces available to use instead of the proposed concrete paths.

M. Warba said that they hadn't looked at the impervious option but he believed they would still have time to make such changes.

C. Smith added that they hadn't looked at the concrete pads in the dugouts since having an open surface could be problematic to the players who wear cleats. He noted that during the proposed time of the renovations the City would be doing the street improvements for Dexter Ave, which would include considerable storm water improvements that will help with drainage in the parks.

G. Nystuen suggested that there might be alternative surfaces available that might last longer than concrete.

C. Smith responded that staff would look into possible alternative materials.

C. Taylor asked if there would be any interface between the proposed field renovations and the skate park at Vet's Park and if future construction on the skate park would disrupt the field renovations.

C. Smith said that he believed it highly unlikely that there would be additional work on the skate park in August, given all the other work proposed at Vet's Park. He said staff would have a better timeframe on the skate park project in another month or two, and believed that construction could occur in 2013. He said the skate park project is out of the footprint of the fields.

M. Anglin asked if staff had been in discussion with staff of the Dexter street improvements.

C. Smith said yes, and that there would be on-going coordination with the Street's Dept.

J. Grand asked if staff foresees increased rates as a result of the field improvements.

C. Smith responded that that wasn't a conversation that they had had with the Ann Arbor Schools Rec. and Ed. Dept. yet.

Sara Aeschbach said that most of the current costs for renting the fields went towards prepping them, which she anticipated would be the same after the renovations. She said it would be up to the City to determine if they would raise the rental fees.

C. Smith said that this project is in line with restoring a large City park, which has become an eyesore.

G. Nystuen asked which budget the project would be paid from.

C. Smith responded that it is considered a Capital Improvement project and funding would come from several different funding sources, as outlined in the resolution.

C. Smith read the resolution.

RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF A CONTRACT WITH RMD HOLDINGS TO RENOVATE SOFTBALL AND BASEBALL FIELDS AT VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK, SOUTHEAST AREA PARK, AND WEST PARK AND APPROPRIATE FUNDS (\$982,333.60)

Whereas, The softball fields at Veterans Memorial Park, Southeast Area Park, and West Park, and are in need of renovations;

Whereas, City staff and Rec & Ed staff have worked collaboratively in identifying field renovations and construction schedules;

Whereas, the PROS plan identifies athletic field renovations as a priority;

Whereas, Of the 4 bids received, RMD Holdings submitted the lowest responsible bid;

Whereas, RMD Holdings received Human Rights approval on January 19, 2012; and

Whereas, Funding for the project is available in the approved FY2012 Park Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage budget , unobligated fund balance from expired Park Repair and Restoration Millage, and unobligated fund balance from the Park Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage;

RESOLVED, That the Park Advisory Commission recommend approval of a contract with RMD Holdings to renovate softball and baseball fields at Veterans Memorial Park, Southeast Area Park, and West Park, for \$893,030.55 and approve a construction contingency of \$89,303.00 (10%) to cover potential contract change orders;

RESOLVED, That the Park Advisory Commission recommends the appropriation of \$64,000 from the unobligated fund balance in the expired Parks Repair and Restoration Millage, along with unobligated fund balance of \$668,333.60 from the Park Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage to the project budget;

RESOLVED, That the Park Advisory Commission recommends a total project budget not to exceed \$982,333.60 to renovate softball and baseball fields at Veterans Memorial Park, West Park, and Southeast Area Park without regard to fiscal year with funding sources as follows:

- Parks Existing Ball field Renovation Project - \$250,000.00
- Expired Parks Repair and Restoration Millage fund balance - \$64,000.00
- Unobligated Fund Balance - Park Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage - \$668,333.60

A motion was made by Offen, seconded by Chapman, to approve the Resolution to recommend to City Council approval of a contract with RMD Holdings to renovate softball and baseball fields at Veterans Memorial Park, Southeast Area Park, and West Park and appropriate funds (\$982,333.60). On a roll call, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Unanimously passed.

Yeas: 6 - Chair Berson Grand, Lawter, Nystuen, Offen, Councilmember Anglin, Councilmember Taylor, Chapman, and Levin

Nays: 0

Absent: 2 - Barrett, and Doyle

D COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS

G. Nystuen reported that at last night's City Council meeting, the Mayor had mentioned that there might be a resolution coming shortly regarding the Washington property that potentially might make it part of the Allen Creek Greenway. She said she believed the time had come that the Commission might actively try to pursue what they can do to forward action to get the Allen Creek Greenway going. She said the Council had passed a resolution about a month ago that recognized the Allen Creek Greenway Conservancy project formally, so that they can become a 501 (3) conservancy and apply for grants. She said she thought that PAC should be putting this on their agenda to see what they can do to pass a resolution supporting the

efforts of the Allen Creek Greenway.

C. Smith said that efforts are on-going with staff looking into the possibility of applying for a grant for the 415 Washington property to develop it into a park. He added that he believed since it was in the historic district they would need a recommendation from the Historic District Commission before their Commission could move forward on the issue.

M. Anglin added that the Environmental Commission will on occasion take up issues related to the park system and if there were subcommittee from PAC that was inclusive of any activities which involved the parks [having a standing member or two], who could attend such meetings and report back to PAC it would be a good idea. He said in this particular case there seems to be dialogue going on involving sites that had been for a very long time identified as potential green areas or places suitable for water management. He said he believed funds for the Washington site would ultimately have to come through federal funds.

C. Smith said it was important to realize that having an approved Master Plan in place from the outset of the planning process was imperative, since there are multiple interested user groups within the City that need to be included in this process.

J. Grand asked when the grant application was due.

C. Smith said it was due April 2, and City Council would need to pass a resolution in advance of that application submittal, which he believed could happen in March, with PAC passing a resolution in support of creating a park on the site at 415 W Washington, at PAC's February meeting. He said that the HDC would have to give their approval of a design which hadn't been worked out yet.

He said that there was a lot of interest in this parcel and there needed to be more open dialogue on the topic in order to reach a consensus.

G. Nystuen said that they need to realize that this area of the City is short on green space and with additional housing being built for several hundred more residents she believed it made sense to move forward with adding green space in areas adjacent to the downtown area.

C. Smith said that he felt it was PAC's decision to have a discussion on the direction that they wanted to move in.

E REPORTS FROM PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER

None

F REPORTS FROM MANAGER OF FIELD OPERATIONS

None

G REPORT FROM RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

None

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

J. Lawter gave an update on the dog park task force meeting.

J. Grand mentioned that K. Levin and herself had met with the Sustainability Committee, and hoped to bring it back to PAC for additional targets at the next PAC meeting.

K. Levin said that they continue to refine and work on the 14 goals before it moves on to City Council.

J. Grand said that Friends of the Millage Group will start looking at the millage renewal in the coming year, and if anyone was interested to be a part of the group they should contact her for more information.

I PUBLIC COMMENTARY - GENERAL (3 Minutes per Speaker)

None

J CLOSED SESSION

None

K TRANSMITTALS

K-1 [12-0109](#) City Council Items Update

Received and Filed

K-2 [12-0110](#) Park Projects Update

Received and Filed

K-3 [12-0111](#) City of Ann Arbor 2008 - 2013 Park Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage Status

Received and Filed

L ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Lawter, seconded by Levin, that the meeting be adjourned at 6:00 p.m. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously.

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