



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: July 13, 2010

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Parks Administration Building, 2230 Platt Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8645

Members Present: Robert Marans, WCPARC President; Patricia Scribner, WCPARC Vice-President; Nelson Meade, WCPARC Secretary/Treasurer; Jimmie Maggard; Jan Anschuetz; Rolland Sizemore Jr.; and Fred Veigel.

Members Absent: Conan Smith; Janis Bobrin; and Stephen Solowczuk.

Staff Present: Jeff Dehring, Park Planner; Coy Vaughn, Superintendent of Park Planning; and Robert Tetens, Director.

Others Present: Art Serafinski, Ypsilanti Township Parks and Recreation; Deb Cooper, BRI, Inc.; and Kirk Profit, Governmental Consultant Services, Inc.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Marans at 7:05 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

It was moved by Ms. Anschuetz with support from Mr. Sizemore to amend the agenda to allow item 6. C. the Lakeside Park Improvements presentation to occur next on the agenda. Ayes all, the motion carried.

6. C. Lakeside Park Improvements Presentation

Mr. Tetens noted that the proposed improvements for Lakeside Park, which is located on the south side of Ford Lake and operated by the Ypsilanti Township Parks Commission, had been discussed in general terms at a previous Commission meeting. He indicated that a major component of the project was the construction of a boathouse by Eastern Michigan University; and the Township had submitted a grant request to the Natural Resources Trust Fund (NRTF) program for phase I of the park improvements.

Mr. Tetens further stated that Ypsilanti Township has formally requested the financial support of the WCPARC in the collaborative effort to develop the park and improve public access to Ford Lake. He commented that the Commission has always considered increased access to water (lakes and rivers) to be a priority for the WCPARC. He then introduced Art Serafinski, Director of the Ypsilanti Township Parks department, who would describe the proposal in more detail and answer any questions that the Commission may have.

Mr. Serafinski summarized the memo that was included in the agenda material. He stated that Lakeside Park is a Township park located on the southeast shore of Ford Lake. It is approximately 21 acres in size with the west portion of the park being already partially developed, including: a pavilion with restrooms, play equipment and a small dirt parking lot. The rest of the park is primarily open with some wooded areas along the waterfront and a tree line running north/south through the middle of the park.

Mr. Serafinski noted that since the mid 1990's, the Eastern Michigan University's Women's Crew Team has been utilizing Ford Lake for their rowing program. The Ypsilanti Township Recreation Department has granted them permits to use Ford Lake Park as their launching and storage site.

Over the years the popularity of the EMU program grew, and the need to develop a larger, more permanent site became a priority of the team. In early 2002 EMU approached the Township with preliminary plans to construct a boathouse at the east end of Ford Lake Park. That project never materialized. More recently, a group from Saline also developed a rowing program which also utilizes Ford Lake (from the property of Lake Shore Apartments). Their program also continues to grow and they are working with several high schools in the County to develop a High School Rowing Program.

In late 2009, EMU and the Saline Rowing Club approached the Township to revisit the construction of a boathouse facility somewhere on Ford Lake. Several meetings were held, other potential stakeholders were invited to participate, and the project moved from conceptual discussion to site plan development at Lakeside Park. EMU agreed to retain the services of the consultant who worked on the previous proposal, BRI, Inc., to develop design plans of sufficient detail that they could support a grant application to the MNRTF program.

With input from the committee, the grant application was completed on time and submitted for MNRTF support. Mr. Serafinski noted that due to time restrictions, total funding for the project was not secured by the grant deadline. The committee working on the project realized this and felt it was important to get the application in on time and then work on securing the necessary funding. As a result, the formal request for the financial support from the WCPARC was delayed.

Mr. Serafinski stated that the design of this project goes far beyond constructing a boat house and a dock. In addition to the facilities needed for a rowing program, the site offers many opportunities to link a beautiful park on the shores of Ford Lake to a non-motorized trail system that will eventually tie into the WCPARC "Border to Border" trail system. The project also enhances the park by adding interior trails, a pavilion, look out points off of the shore, access to fishing and access for canoes and kayaks. These amenities open the doors to a wealth of outdoor opportunities to residents in eastern Washtenaw County and beyond.

Mr. Tetens again indicated that a formal request had been received from the Township, but given the MNRTF process of awarding grants (the final decision is not expected until December 2010) a decision could wait for a few months while the Commission became more familiar with the project. He stated that additional discussion would be on the September agenda, as there is no meeting in August.

2. Approval of Minutes of June 8, 2010

The Minutes of the June 8, 2010 meeting were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Mr. Veigel with support from Mr. Sizemore to approve the Minutes of the June 8, 2010 Meeting as submitted. Ayes all, the motion carried.

3. Communications

Mr. Tetens noted thank you letters from several organizations for donations received from the WCPARC, including: the Chelsea Community Hospital; the Ypsilanti Symphony Orchestra; the Ypsilanti District Library; Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County; and the Washtenaw Community College Foundation. Mr. Tetens also noted that the Golf Channel recently filmed an episode of "Destination Golf" at Pierce Lake Golf Course, featuring Jeff Daniels on his favorite course.

Mr. Tetens stated that a request for funding the construction of a missing trail segment at the Whittaker/Stony Creek roundabout had been submitted by Ypsilanti Township. The Township was requesting the 20% match for the federally funded trail project. The amount requested was \$8,065. He indicated that it was placed on the agenda for consideration later in the meeting.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Reports

A. Financial

Mr. Tetens presented the **Accounts Payable for the month of July, 2010**, noting that total expenditures were \$423,685.92. Of that total, \$25,098.81 were expenditures of the Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP); and \$398,587.11 were expenditures of Parks and Recreation. He highlighted a number of non-recurring expenses in the parks fund, primarily related to construction projects at Rolling Hills County Park; the lease for golf carts at Pierce Lake Golf Course; and consulting services for engineering services.

It was moved by Mr. Veigel with support from Mr. Solowczuk to approve the expenditures for the month of July 2010 totaling \$423,685.92. Ayes all, the motion carried.

B. Recreational

A copy of the Recreational Report for the month of June 2010 was provided with the agenda material. Mr. Tetens again noted the increase in sales of seasonal/trial passes at the **Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center** and current YTD participation rates that exceed each of the previous two years.

Mr. Tetens reported that due to the extreme heat this summer, **Rolling Hills Water Park** was far exceeding revenue estimates, which were based on the previous two seasons. Despite the abundant rainfall so far this summer, the weekends have experienced more favorable weather. Water Park attendance, programming, concession sales and pavilion rentals are all higher than in the previous two years.

The **Pierce Lake Golf Course** has been open for about twelve weeks and participation and overall revenue continue to be higher than in previous years. The additional food and beverage opportunities have resulted in a significant increase in concession revenue. There is concern, however, that the excessive heat during the month June has stressed the turf, particularly on the greens.

Rolling Hills Water Park and **Independence Lake County Park** have both benefited from the unusually hot weather and no major storms on the weekends. Attendance and revenue remain higher than in the previous two years.

It was moved by Mr. Maggard and supported by Ms. Scribner to accept the Recreational Report for the month of June 2010 as submitted. Ayes all, the motion carried.

C. Project and Activities Update

The **Project and Activities Update** for the month of June 2010 was provided with the agenda material. Mr. Tetens mentioned a number of continuing projects that were nearing completion, and preliminary work on a number of future projects.

It was moved by Mr. Maggard and supported by Ms. Scribner to accept the Project and Activities Update for the month of June 2010 as submitted. Ayes all, the motion carried.

6. Old Business

A. B2B Trail, North Hydro Park to the County Border

Mr. Vaughn began by reminding the Commission that in September 2009, the Commission approved funding (\$180,000) to construct the eastern most section, segment M. The proposed trail will extend the B2B from the current terminus point at North Hydro Park to the Wayne County border (Van Buren Township) at Rawsonville Road. The project is a partnership with Ypsilanti Township. The Township is funding the project engineering (approximately \$40,000) and contributing an additional \$20,000 towards construction costs.

He stated that since the Commission last reviewed the conceptual plans and approved the project funding, it has been discovered that the original project costs were underestimated by the townships consultant. The original estimates were based on a concept (pre-design) plan and utilized the typical linear foot costs for similar trail projects.

Once more detailed construction engineering was underway; several site limitations were discovered that significantly increased the anticipated construction costs. These include: relocating utilities; considerably more site work, due to slopes and soils; limited right-of-way; and the need for additional easements. As a result, the total anticipated project cost increased from \$200,000 to \$356,000. Further, the scope of the project has changed to include two 4-foot wide bike lanes on Bridge Road rather than a 10' wide multi-use trail. The Textile Road to Rawsonville Road segment remains unchanged.

Mr. Vaughn recommended that the Commission continue to collaborate with Ypsilanti Township on this high-profile B2B segment and maintain the previous commitment of \$180,000 for the project. This will allow the construction of the segment along Textile Road to proceed as planned. The anticipated construction cost for this section is \$197,000. The proposed bike lanes on Bridge Road are anticipated to be installed by the Washtenaw County Road Commission in combination with a future overlay project (targeted for 2011).

It was moved by Mr. Solowczuk and supported by Ms. Scribner to continue to collaborate with Ypsilanti Township and maintain the previous commitment of \$180,000 for the project. Ayes all, the motion carried.

B. Whittaker/Stony Creek Trail Segment

Mr. Vaughn noted that In December of 2008, representatives from the Washtenaw County Road Commission and Ypsilanti Township contacted WCPARC staff to discuss future reconfiguration of the Whittaker/Stony Creek intersection and adjacent pedestrian improvements. The project described at the time included a proposed roundabout to alleviate traffic congestion and improve safety at this problematic intersection. The pedestrian improvements included a bike path around the proposed roundabout and a connection to the new Library on Whittaker Road. At the time there was a 500-foot gap in the proposed bike path improvements that was in need of ROW and additional funding (estimated to be at a cost of \$12,000 to \$15,000). The opportunity to participate in the project was subsequently discussed at a Commission meeting. However, no financial commitment was made.

The construction of the roundabout is now complete and the ROW for the bike path has been secured and paid for by Ypsilanti Township. Ypsilanti Township is now requesting a contribution of \$8,065 from the WCPARC towards bike path. The requested funding represents approximately 20% of the total cost of the improvements; the balance would be paid with federal highway funds. (\$40,325 total cost). The new bike path is 10-foot wide asphalt and will improve future connections to Rolling Hills County Park to the south, residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and other popular destinations.

It was moved by Mr. Veigel and supported by Mr. Sizemore to approve an \$8,065 contribution to the construction of a non-motorized trail (bike path) at the Whittaker Road/Stony Creek roundabout. Ayes all, the motion carried.

C. Lakeside Park Improvements

(Presentation moved to beginning of meeting)

D. Forest Avenue Bike Lanes

In June 2006, the City of Ypsilanti submitted an application for a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant in order to make improvements to a portion of the Border to Border Trail located within Riverside and Frog Island Parks. The Grant funds would be used to install Border to Border Signage, upgrade and extend the trail and install trail amenities. Mr. Vaughn noted that the Commission pledged \$37,500 to the project. Those funds were intended to meet the requirement for local matching funds. Unfortunately, the City later received notice that they would not be receiving the grant.

In October 2006, the City asked the WCPARC to consider reallocating the committed funds to another B2B project located nearby on Forest Avenue. On November 14, 2006 the Commission honored this request and agreed to provide the matching funds for a grant application to the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ). The funds would be used to construct bike lanes on Forest Avenue. The proposed bike lanes will connect an existing segment of the B2B Trail with Frog Island Park. The City was later awarded the CMAQ funding for \$64,000 towards this important B2B project.

On July 2, 2010 the project was bid for construction. The low bid came in at \$174,000, which is \$28,000 more than the engineering estimate. The higher than expected bid price is due to the recent increase in asphalt prices and some additional required road work to correct drainage that was not anticipated.

Mr. Vaughn indicated that the funding shortfall leaves two options:

- 1) Increase the WCPARC contribution to the project. The City of Ypsilanti has agreed to split the project funding shortfall equally (\$14,000 each).
- 2) Reject the construction bid. If the bid is rejected, the CMAQ funding will return to MDOT.

The B2B Trail segments within the City of Ypsilanti are critical links and, once improved, will be a valuable asset for all Washtenaw County residents. Moreover, this is an opportunity for the Commission to leverage its funds. Therefore, staff recommended that the Commission provides an additional \$14,000 towards this project, for a total commitment of \$47,000.

It was moved by Mr. Sizemore and supported by Ms. Anschuetz to approve a \$14,000 increase in the WCPARC support for the Forest Avenue Bike Lanes. Ayes all, the motion carried.

E. Rolling Hills Update

Mr. Dehring provided an update to the Commission on the development of the new trails and road at Rolling Hills County Park. He noted that staff has worked with the consulting team to refine the alignment and minimize conflicts between motorists and pedestrians. The new road will add an additional 1.5 miles of roadway, providing access for future developments within the park. Mr. Dehring noted that in addition to the road, an additional 3 miles of paved trail will be added, bringing the total trail network to over 4.5 miles. Additionally, phase 1 improvements will include the development of several ball fields and storm water management facilities that are consistent with the most recent requirements of the Water Resource Commissioners office.

Mr. Dehring noted that construction plans would be completed in July and bids sought during the month of August. The Commission would receive staff's recommendation at the September meeting. The estimated cost of the Phase I improvements is nearly \$3 million.

9. New Business

There was no New Business.

10. Commissioner's and Director Comments

Mr. Sizemore asked about the development of a marketing video and display panel at the Recreation Center, and the addition of GPS capability (coordinates) for parks and preserves. Mr. Tetens responded that staff was already working with a vendor on the marketing video and working with the IT department on the GPS project. Mr. Sizemore suggested that the new County Deputy Administrator be invited to the September meeting to meet the Commission. Mr. Tetens indicated that he would extend an invitation to Mr. Reynolds.

Ms. Anschuetz stated that the pedestrian improvements along Whittaker road would be very popular. Ms. Scribner complimented the quality of food available at the food concession of Rolling Hills Water Park.

11. Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Maggard with support from Mr. Sizemore to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m. Ayes all, the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Nelson Meade, WCPARC Secretary/Treasurer