



## ***Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission***

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### **MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Date:** March 9, 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, Secretary/Treasurer; Janis Bobrin; Jimmie Maggard; Stephen Solowczuk; Rolland Sizemore Jr.; Jan Anschuetz; and Conan Smith.

**Members Absent:** Fred Veigel.

**Staff Present:** Coy Vaughn, Superintendent of Park Planning; Tom Freeman, Deputy Director; and Robert Tetens, Director.

**Others Present:** Trevor Staples and James Reische, Ann Arbor Skate Park Action Committee; Alice Ralph; Lily Guzman; Dave Askins; Adam Zemke; and Larry Deck.

#### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Marans at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. He noted that the first order of business would be a presentation of the Border to Border Trail Survey by MSU Professor Christine Vought.

#### **2. Border-to-Border Trail Survey Presentation – Christine A. Vogt, Ph.D., Michigan State University**

Ms. Vought began by noting that the survey was a collaborative effort by the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission; the Washtenaw County Health department, the Washtenaw County Planning and Environment department; Michigan State University; and a number of citizen volunteers. She also noted that in partnership with MSU Professor Charles Nelson, she had gained considerable experience in the past several years surveying trail users at other locations throughout the State of Michigan. That previous data helps benchmark the current survey data.

The survey, which was conducted in the fall of 2008 and in the spring of 2009, estimated that there were over 114,000 trail users during the months that the survey was conducted. Weekday trail use was slightly higher than weekend, 57% to 43%. Trail users were mostly adults, either walking/running or biking. 95% were County residents and 96% expressed satisfaction with the trail “experience”.

The survey noted that 88% of trail users were using the trail for recreation and/or exercise; 12% used the trail for transportation. Nearly half of trail users (44%) live within a mile of the trail; 87% within five miles. 65% accessed the trail by foot or bike.

Suggested areas of improvement include: Keep improving on-trail route information; comfort facilities (restrooms, etc.); linkages to other community assets; and trail surface condition. Other comments noted the need to address security/conflict concerns; intimidating dogs; and the visibility of the trail-side environment.

On behalf of the Commission, Mr. Marans thanked Professor Vogt for her work on the survey and for the very interesting and useful data that was collected.

### **3. Approval of Minutes of January 12, 2010**

The Minutes of the January 12, 2010 meeting were included with the agenda material.

*It was moved by Mr. Smith with support from Mr. Sizemore to approve the Minutes of the January 12, 2010 Meeting as submitted. Ayes all, the motion carried.*

### **4. Communications**

Mr. Tetens reported that a letter and had been received from the Ann Arbor City Council, expressing their gratitude to the County Park Commission for considering the cooperative development of a skate park in the City of Ann Arbor. The letter included a copy of the resolution (#08-1029) passed by City Council that allows the development of a skate park at Veteran’s Park. The letter was personally signed by every member of City Council. Mr. Tetens noted that consideration of the partnership was later in the meeting.

He also noted a thank you letter received from students at Paddock Elementary School (Milan) for a prize donation at their Spring Festival.

### **5. Public Comment**

Larry Deck, a member of both the Walking and Biking Coalition and the Greenways Advisory Committee, spoke in favor of the two trail projects to be considered later in the meeting. He noted the popularity of the border-to-border trail and the importance of continuing its development.

## 6. Reports

### A. Financial

Mr. Tetens presented the **Accounts Payable** for the months of **February** and **March, 2010**. He noted that there were two monthly reports because there was no meeting held in February. He highlighted a number of non-recurring expenses in the parks fund, primarily related to construction projects at the Pierce Lake Golf Course and Rolling Hills County Park; and updated the Commission on expenditures related to the Natural Area Preservation Program (NAPP).

- **Expenditures for the month of February 2010** totaled \$663,014.44, of which \$402,645.46 were expenditures for the Natural Area Preservation Program (NAPP).

*It was moved by Ms. Scribner with support from Mr. Solowczuk to approve the expenditures for the month of February 2010 totaling \$663,014.44. Ayes all the motion carried.*

- **Expenditures for the month of March 2010** totaled \$276,812.58, of which \$3,310.64 were expenditures for the Natural Area Preservation Program (NAPP).

*It was moved by Mr. Maggard with support from Mr. Solowczuk to approve the expenditures for the month of March 2010 totaling \$276,812.58. Ayes all the motion carried.*

### B. Recreational

A copy of the Recreational Report for the month of February 2010 was provided with the agenda material. Mr. Tetens noted that the only report was from the Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center, and all indicators were favorable for the first two months of the year. Participation and revenue were higher than in previous years, particularly for fitness programming, seniors and youth activities.

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

### C. Project and Activities Update

The **Project and Activities Update** for the month of February 2010 was provided with the agenda material. Mr. Tetens highlighted a number of continuing projects and activities.

*It was moved by Mr. Solowczuk and supported by Ms. Anschuetz to accept the Project and Activities Update for the month of February 2010 as submitted. Ayes all, the motion carried.*

## 7. Old Business

### A. Connection Communities initiative

Mr. Vaughn noted that in April 2009 the Commission authorized a new grant program for trail development. The program, **Connecting Communities**, was established to facilitate the funding of local projects that further the WCPARC vision of a county wide non-motorized trail system. Through this new initiative, WCPARC pledged to make available \$3 million during the 2010 – 2014 period (or \$600,000 each year) toward the cost of eligible projects.

The intent of the initiative is to work in partnership with other communities/agencies, providing funds to supplement those provided or obtained by the partner organization. Funding is available only for construction, not for planning or design development. Eligible projects are those that accomplish the Commission's primary objective of providing valuable, non-motorized connections between communities and activity centers – offering a healthy alternative for recreation, transportation, fitness and energy conservation.

He indicated that the deadline for submitting a Connecting Communities application for 2010 funding was December 31, 2009 - six applications were received. Staff was pleased with the quality and variety of applications submitted, as well as the geographic distribution of the proposed projects. Staff scored each project against the criteria that were adopted by the Commission. The projects were also presented at the Greenway Advisory Committee (GAC) meeting in January for additional input.

The following is a summary of the applications for Commission consideration (alphabetical order):

**Village of Dexter** – the construction of a trail and stairway (approximately 200-feet) to connect Warrior Creek Park, Mill Creek Park and the proposed B2B segment to Alpine Street, the Dexter Library, the Farmer's Market, and Downtown Dexter. The stairway will be designed with a ramp to accommodate bicycle use. Dexter is requesting \$100,000.

**Chelsea** – the construction of a 950-foot trail segment along Old US-12 that will connect the trail/boardwalk system at Pierce Lake Golf Course with adjacent residential neighborhoods, schools, and a commercial district. Due to the proximity to Pierce Lake and the associated elevation change, the majority of the trail will be boardwalk. Chelsea is requesting \$225,000.

**Lyndon Township** – the construction of a 10-foot wide asphalt trail along the abandoned Lyndon Township Hall Road corridor. The ¼ mile trail will connect M-52 to the Lyndon Township Hall on North Territorial Road. This proposed trail segment is part of a planned looped system that will connect to Park Lyndon and the surrounding Waterloo-Pinckney trails system. Lyndon Township is requesting \$46,369.

**Northfield Township** – the construction of the first phase of a three phase project will connect Whitmore Lake Elementary School to surrounding residential neighborhoods along Barker Road. Due to existing wetlands, Phase I will consist of the construction of approximately 260-feet of boardwalk. Future phases will extend the trail to the Whitmore Lake downtown, the Northfield Township Hall, and the Library. Northfield Township is requesting \$120,000 for Phase I (total project cost is estimated at \$600,000).

**Pittsfield Township** – the construction of a 2.38 mile trail along Lohr and Textile Roads linking Ann Arbor to Saline. The proposed trail will also connect adjacent residential neighborhoods to Teft Park and the Saline Community Recreation Center. Future phases will connect eastward on Textile to the Pittsfield Preserve natural area and to the recently completed Platt Road Greenway. This was the highest rated project by staff and the GAC. Pittsfield Township is requesting \$600,000 (total project cost exceeds \$1m).

**Ypsilanti Township** – the construction of a ½-mile trail along Textile Road that would connect to the B2B (future segment) at Bridge Road and extend west to Lakeside Park. The proposed trail will cross to the south side of Textile near Bunton Road where it continues west to connect with the existing trail at Huron River Drive. Ypsilanti Township is coordinating this project with the Washtenaw County Road Commission and is requesting \$200,000.

After careful analysis of each project against the adopted Connecting Communities criteria, it is staff's recommendation that WCPARC resolve to grant a total of \$600,000 for project funding to the following communities:

- Pittsfield Township - \$300,000
- City of Chelsea - \$80,000
- Northfield Township - \$120,000
- Ypsilanti Township - \$100,000

The project funding will be made available for each community when a contract for project construction has been executed. The funding will expire if a contract has not been executed within two years of the approval date. Each community has committed to long-term maintenance of their respective trail segments.

*It was moved by Ms. Bobrin and supported by Mr. Solowczuk to support staffs recommendation and award \$600,000 in 2010 Connecting Communities grants to four communities (Pittsfield Township - \$300,000; City of Chelsea - \$80,000; Northfield Township - \$120,000; Ypsilanti Township - \$100,000). Ms. Scribner stated that she would be abstaining from voting due to her elected position as Pittsfield Township Treasurer. Ayes all, the motion carried.*

#### B. B2B Trail Segment C Project (west of Dexter)

Mr. Vaughn stated that since 1998 the Commission has made non-motorized trail development a priority for project funding, particularly projects that are part of the Border-to-Border trail (B2B). He indicated that WCPARC staff, in coordination with the Washtenaw County Road Commission, Village of Dexter, and Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA), has been working to design and secure funding for an important segment of the B2B, a westside connector from the Village of Dexter to Hudson Mills Metropark. This proposed trail segment is over 3-miles in length along a scenic stretch of the Huron River and includes over 1,200-feet of boardwalk and a new pedestrian bridge over Mill Creek.

In summer of 2008, HCMA completed construction of Phase I of this trail (with financial support from WCPARC) – a two mile segment extending from North Territorial Road south towards the Village of Dexter. The proposed project (Phase II) will connect the Mill Creek Park trail to the Hudson Mills trail and complete the first B2B segment west of Ann Arbor. The total cost for Phase II is estimated to be \$2,890,000 - construction is anticipated in two stages. Phase IIA

(.25 miles) will be constructed through Warrior Park in the Village of Dexter. Funding is secured for this segment and construction is anticipated in 2010. Phase IIB (3 miles) will be built entirely on HCMA property and is planned for 2011. Phase IIB is partially funded.

Mr. Vaughn reminded the Commission that In April 2009 WCPARC committed \$657,000 towards this important project to serve as the local match for a Transportation Enhancement Grant application that staff submitted to MDOT. The project was awarded \$780,000 by MDOT, roughly half of the \$1.5 million requested for the project.

WCPARC support, along with the other project partners, has subsequently allowed leveraging of grant funding from a variety of sources. The following grants have been secured or are current applications (includes the Mill Creek Park Spur):

- \$780,000 - Transportation Enhancement Grant (MDOT)
- \$811,000 - Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MDNR)
- \$500,000 - *Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MDNR) – current application*
- \$100,000 - Washtenaw County Road Commission (STPU Funds)
- \$48,000 - Waterways Infrastructure Grant
- \$50,000 - MDNR Fisheries Grant

The HCMA plans to request partial grant funding for Phase IIB through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) and has requested support from WCPARC for their grant application. The MNRTF application deadline is April 1. In addition to providing the land, HCMA is also providing, design engineering, the required natural features inventory and environmental study, and most importantly, long term maintenance of the trail.

This project demonstrated considerable collaboration among several organizations and jurisdictions, and maximizes the use of public resources for a project with broad community appeal. It will be an important recreational destination with an undeniable economic impact. It is staff's recommendation that WCPARC resolve to support the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority's application to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for the development of Phase IIB of the Hudson Mills/Dexter Trail and contribute \$653,000 as local match towards the construction of this critical segment.

*It was moved by Ms. Anschuetz and supported by Mr. Sizemore to authorize an expenditure of \$653,000 as matching funds toward the construction of the Border-to-Border Trail, Segment IIB, between the Village of Dexter and Hudson Mills Metropark. Ayes all, the motion carried.*

#### C. Natural Area Preservation Program Recommendation, Freedom Township, Section 12

Mr. Freeman reported that In November 2008, a parcel of property located in Section 12 of Freedom Township and owned by the Roehm family was nominated for consideration by the Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Program as part of Round 9. The parent parcel contains approximately 116 acres, a significant portion of which is currently in agricultural use. The portion under consideration for NAPP is approximately 39 acres. A number of site visits were conducted by the Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee, along with Parks & Recreation

staff. The site visits focused on the eastern portion of the property and identified a number of significant natural features.

The 39 acres is comprised of a mixture of woods and wetland, along with some land currently in agricultural use. Of particular interest is the presence of a perennial stream and significant variations in topography. The wooded portion is actually part of two larger woodlots which also occupy a portion of the adjacent Brauer Preserve, one of the first NAPP properties acquired by WCPARC in August 2003.

The current parcel represents a valuable opportunity to extend the protection offered by the Brauer Preserve. The Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee identified it as a high priority property for acquisition (see Memo dated October 15, 2009). An appraisal prepared by Bosserd Appraisal Services, LLC of the 39 acres under consideration identified a value of \$292,500 (approx. \$7,500 / ac).

Mr. Freeman reported that all due diligence tasks have been completed, including: the Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment was conducted by Mannik & Smith Group, Inc. and found no environmental concerns; the boundary survey was prepared by Mannik & Smith Group, Inc., identifying a 39 acre parcel for purchase, including legal description, survey drawing and corner stakes; and an Appraisal Report was prepared by Bosserd Appraisal Services, LLC in September 2009 identified a value of \$292,500 (approx. \$7,500 / ac).

Based upon the review and recommendation of staff and the Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee, and having completed all necessary due diligence investigation of the property, staff recommends that the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission authorize the NAPP purchase of 39 acres of the Roehm Property – Freedom Township, Section 12, for the amount of \$292,500.

*It was moved by Mr. Maggard and supported by Mr. Solowczuk to authorize the NAPP purchase (final approval) of 39 acres in Section 12 of Freedom Township, currently owned by the Roehm family for the appraised price of \$292,500., A roll call vote was taken and all Commissioners voted in support (10-0).*

#### D. Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center HVAC Improvements

Mr. Freeman reported that in preparing the plans for replacement of the roof, on the recreation center, an issue was raised concerning the current location and condition of a component of the HVAC system that serves the poolroom. He reminded the Commission that a series of repairs to the exterior envelope of the Recreation Center – siding material, roof membrane, shingles (on the “barn” atrium) and vapor barrier – would commence next month (April 2010).

He indicated that the poolroom has an independent HVAC system, a Govern-Air unit, which provides heating for both the room air and pool water. The condenser element of the system is currently located on the roof. The specific installation of this unit is in a recessed space or pit. Mr. Freeman noted that while this does hide the unit from public view, it significantly hampers efficiency of operation. In addition, the unit is original, having been installed at the time of initial construction of the Recreation Center (1991). Current operation and maintenance of the

Govern-Air is expensive. It is in nearly constant operation and, due to its age, requires considerable maintenance attention to keep it operating. In an independent review, MEP Engineers (a mechanical engineering consultant to NTH) noted the unit is quickly reaching the end of its useful life.

The condition of the Govern-Air is of immediate interest because of the plans for replacement of the existing roof membrane. As designed, the plans include elimination of the pit, the recessed space which is the current location of the condenser serving the Govern-Air. Not only will this result in improved operating efficiency, it will eliminate a collection point for snow, rainwater, etc. The issue arises in designing the structure to support the unit. If the Govern-Air is to be replaced, it would be more cost-effective to design the new roof structure in this location to meet the requirements of a new unit. Given the condition of the existing unit, it was decided to proceed with replacement at this time.

A cost proposal for the work was obtained from CMR Mechanical, LLC – a mechanical engineering firm under contract with Washtenaw County. CMR Mechanical is located in Dexter. As proposed, CMR will provide the following services:

- Removal and disposal of the existing Govern-Air unit and remote condenser.
- Provide and install a new unit per WCPARC specifications.
- Provide and install a new remote condenser per WCPARC specifications.
- Crane rental and rigging.
- Sheet metal work, as necessary.
- Provide all required electrical work.
- Refrigeration piping.
- Air Balance and System Start-up.

The cost proposal submitted by CMR Mechanical, LLC for this work is \$165,895.00. Implementation of these improvements will ensure the heating and cooling needs of the pool room air and pool water are met in a reliable and cost efficient manner.

Recognizing the improved efficiency, Mr. Smith suggested that Mr. Freeman investigate the availability of an energy grant to help offset the cost of the proposal.

*After a brief discussion, it was moved by Ms. Anschuetz with support from Ms. Scribner to authorize the expenditure of \$165,895 to CMR Mechanical to replace the Govern-Air unit for the pool room at the Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center. Ayes all the motion carried.*

#### E. Other Old Business

There was no other Old Business.

## 9. New Business

### A. Ann Arbor Skate Park Action Committee

Mr. Tetens stated that skateboarders and in-line skaters of the recreational community have desired a public skate park in Washtenaw County for several decades. Recreation organizations throughout the county frequently receive requests for skate park facilities, and Mr. Tetens noted previous Commission meetings where skate park advocates have addressed the Commission. Mr. Tetens noted that a few years ago a local grassroots group of individuals established the Ann Arbor Skatepark Action Committee (AASAC) to help address this need. He also noted that our current Recreation Master Plan identified such potential development at Rolling Hills Park.

To date, AASAC has the support of the Ann Arbor Parks Advisory Commission, Ann Arbor City Council, Ann Arbor Public Arts Commission, Neutral Zone Teen Advisory Council, various business Associations and several local business owners, and has well over 2000 citizen signatures of support for developing a public skate park. AASAC has demonstrated professionalism and a strong commitment to achieving their goals.

On January 5, 2009, AASAC entered into a Memorandum of Intent with the City of Ann Arbor that identified specific development conditions and commitment of land at Veterans Memorial Park for construction. The AASAC established an endowment fund with the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation (AAACF) to receive and administer gifts toward implementing the project. Additionally, 10% of the donations received shall be secured in a separate maintenance escrow fund (also administered by AAACF) to facilitate maintenance, operations, and future improvements. The fundraising of an estimated \$1 million construction budget is AASAC most urgent effort at this time.

The skate park funding campaign is underway with various levels of contributions already received. AASAC is confident that they will be able to raise approximately one-half of the projected money with help from several key local donors. At the January 2010 WCPARC meeting, AASAC presented their vision for developing a world –class, public concrete skate park in Ann Arbor and urged the Commission to make a financial commitment to the project. The financial support of WCPARC would be the stimulus AASAC needs to bring forth these additional donations.

Ms. Anschuetz observed that the proposed location was excellent. She stated that if the WCPARC joins this collaborative effort, their contribution should be appropriately recognized. Mr. Maggard expressed an interest in a continuing role for the Commission, perhaps as a member of an operational oversight board. Mr. Sizemore suggested that Mr. Smith be designated as the Commissions representative to any such board, given that the project would be in his district. In response to the obvious support for a skate park in our community, and to the request presented at the January meeting, Mr. Tetens recommended that the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission establish a construction matching grant program, not to exceed \$400,000. That would allow the Ann Arbor Skatepark Action Committee to leverage the necessary additional funds for development of a public skate park at Veterans Memorial Park. Further, the project must be under contract for construction on or before January 1, 2012 or the pledge will expire.

*It was moved by Mr. Smith with support from Ms. Bobrin to establish a construction matching grant program, not to exceed \$400,000, for the collaborative development of a skate park to be located in Veteran Park in the City of Ann Arbor. The project must be under contract for construction on or before January 1, 2012 or the pledge will expire Ayes all, the motion carried.*

B. Ford Lake Boathouse

Due to the length of the March meeting, this item was postponed until the April meeting.

C. B2B Segment D-1 Update

Due to the length of the March meeting, this item was postponed until the April meeting.

D. Other New Business

There was no other New Business.

**10. Commissioner's and Director Comments**

Ms. Scribner expressed the appreciation of Pittsfield Township officials and residents for the WCPARC support of the Lohr road trail (Connecting Communities)

**11. Adjournment**

*It was moved by Mr. Maggard with support from Ms. Bobrin to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Ayes all, the motion carried.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Nelson Meade, WCPARC Secretary/Treasurer