Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: August 8, 2023

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Parks Administration, 2230 Platt Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Members Present: Patricia Scribner, WCPARC President; Janis Bobrin, Vice President; Dan Ezekiel, WCPARC Secretary, JoAnn McCollum, Brenda McKinney, Evan Pratt, Robert Joerg and Yousef Rabhi

Members Absent: Katie Scott; Robert Marans

Staff Present: Coy Vaughn, Director; Meghan Bonfiglio, Deputy Director; Ginny Leikam, Superintendent of Park Planning and Natural Areas; Jason Brooks, Manager of Finance and Administration; Ann Ziolkowski, Communications Manager; Peter Sanderson, Project Manager; Kira Macyda, Park Planner; Anna Pasek, Park Planner.

Others Present: Jack Smiley; Ken Schwartz

1. Call to Order

Ms. Scribner called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the June 13, 2023 regular meeting were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt, seconded by Ms. McCollum, to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2023; regular meeting as amended. All ayes, the motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

Jack Smiley, 10325 Cherry Hill Rd, spoke in favor of the Parks Commission approving the conservation easement with the Township and noted an adjacent property may be coming to them for prioritization later this year. He urged the commission to consider partnering with SMLC on the conservation easement as well.

5. *Communications, Projects & Activities*

Mr. Vaughn reported on the communications, projects, and activities for the month of June and July 2023. Mr. Vaughn introduced Anna Pasek, the new Park Planner.

It was moved by Ms. McKinney, seconded by Mr. Joerg, to receive and file the Communications, Projects & Activities for the month of June 2023, as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

6. Financial & Recreation Reports – June and July 2023
   A. Claims Report

Mr. Brooks reported on the financials and stated that the total for the claims for the month of June 2023 was $1,201,658.31 and for the claims for the month of July 2023 was $985,011.49.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt, seconded by Mr. Ezekiel, to approve the claims for the months of June and July 2023 as submitted. Roll call vote, 8 ayes, 2 absent (Marans, Scott).

B. Fund Balance Reports

Mr. Brooks provided an update on the Parks fund and Natural Areas Funds along with the fund balance status for each through July 31, 2023.

Commissioners asked regarding the 2024 Parks Millage renewal and when that would need to be discussed. Question was also raised if there have been projections on future revenue, expenses and Capital Improvement Projects as there is increasingly more infrastructure to maintain. Staff noted that recent millages have been a renew and restore which would increase the revenue.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt, seconded by Ms. Bobrin, to receive and file the financial reports for June and July 2023 as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

C. Recreation Reports

Mr. Brooks presented the Recreation Reports for the month of June and July 2023.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi, seconded by Ms. McKinney, to receive and file the Recreation Reports for the month of June and July 2023. All ayes, the motion was approved.

7. *Old Business*

A. NAPP – Lippert Final Approval

Ms. Leikam presented the details on the Lippert final purchase. The property is adjacent to the Whitmore Lake Preserve, one of WCPARC's largest and most visited preserves. The Lippert property was under consideration with the original purchase of the preserve, but Parks could not come to an agreement with the landowners at the time. Due diligence has been complete, and no environmental issues were identified, and a survey has been completed. The property is ready to close.

Commissioners discussed the evaluation process for natural areas and Commissioner Rabhi raised concern that old farm fields were not the highest priority for preservation. Staff reviewed the NATAC evaluation process and the scoring system that was developed by the Parks Commission.

It was moved by Mr. Joerg, seconded by Ms. McKinney, to authorize the fee simple purchase of the Lippert property as identified in attached maps in the amount of $320,000, contingent upon attorney review of final closing documents, and a contribution of $12,360 to the stewardship special revenue fund for the future maintenance and management of the land. Roll call vote, 8 ayes; 2 absent (Marans, Scott).

B. NAPP – Phinney Final Approval

Ms. Leikam presented the details of the Phinney property for final approval. The property is adjacent to the Cavanaugh Lake County Park and will provide more opportunities for a trail system at the location. The majority of the Cavanaugh Lake Park is submerged land. Since it is adjacent to the existing park a parking lot will not be needed, but a boardwalk will be needed. The property is ready to close.

Commissioner Rabhi raised a question regarding the quality of the property as looking at aerial it looked like there were significant coverage of invasives. Staff reviewed the NATAC evaluation form and noted that on the site visit the committee determined it to be pretty high quality.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi, seconded by Ms. McKinney, to authorize the fee simple purchase of the Phinney property as identified in the attached maps, in the amount of $255,360 contingent upon attorney approval of final closing documents and to contribute $21,280 to the stewardship special revenue fund for the future maintenance and management of the land. Roll call vote, 8 ayes; 2 absent (Marans, Scott).

C. Nominations to the Michigan Folk School Advisory Committee

Ms. Leikam presented the recommended slate of committee members to the Michigan Folk School Advisory Committee. In total, there were 11 applications submitted for the 6 public seats to be filled. One seat will be filled by a representative from the Parks Commission. Brenda McKinney volunteered to serve to fill that position.

Commissioners discussed the potential conflict of interest of a couple of appointees and staff reviewed the application process and review of the by-laws from Corp. Counsel.

It was moved by Mr. Joerg, seconded by Mr. Pratt, to appoint the follow members to serve on the Michigan Folk School Advisory Committee as follows:

- *Tom Freeman to serve as one of the public at large seats, serving a one-year term.*
- *Leslie Mason to serve as one of the public at large seats, serving a three-year term.*
- *Julia Gold to serve as the educational representative, serving a two-year term.*
- *Michael Marie Kaufman-Schofield to serve as the agricultural representative, serving a three-year term.*
- *Atticus McFadden-Keesling to serve as one of the folk arts crafts industry representatives, serving a one-year term.*
- *Barbara Augusta to serve as one of the folk arts crafts industry representatives, serving a two-year term.*
- *Brenda McKinney to serve as the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission representative, serving a one-year term.*

D. B2B Change Order – Barton-Bandemer Tunnel Engineering

Mr. Sanderson presented background information on the project that was approved at the August 2021 regular meeting. As approved by the Commission, a project agreement with the City of Ann Arbor was executed for the Barton-Bandemer Tunnel and Trail project into the engineering and construction phases. Per the agreement, the Commission is responsible to hire and manage the consultant team to design and engineer the project and a contract was executed with Bergmann Associates and OHM Advisors (the Project Team) to complete the engineering work for $443,784. The City of Ann Arbor is sharing 50% of the engineering costs.

Engineering is nearing completion, and the plans are being reviewed by the necessary permitting agencies (EGLE, DNR, and Amtrak). However, as the project advanced through the detailed design and engineering, it was necessary to expand the scope of the project in several areas as detailed in the memo.

It was moved by Ms. Bobrin, seconded by Ms. Rabhi, to authorize an amendment to the Bergmann Associates contract in the amount of $120,148.00 for the Barton to Bandemer Tunnel and Trail Project. Roll call vote, 8 ayes, 2 absent (Marans, Scott).

E. MNRTF Grant Agreement – Grossman Property

Ms. Leikam notified the Commission that a MDNR Trust Fund grant has been awarded for the purchase of the Grossman property in Saline. The property is adjacent to the Leslee Neithammer preserve that NAPP contributed funds toward the purchase. A resolution, accepting the grant was included in the Commission packet. Once the grant agreement is fully executed and appraisal completed, a memo will be brought back to the Commission for approval for a sales contract with detailed budget included.

It was moved by Ms. Bobrin, seconded by Mr. Joerg, to approve the resolution to accept the terms of the grant agreement with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in the amount of $541,800 for matching grant funds towards the acquisition of the Grossman property in Saline Township, and to approve to provide $812,800 in matching funds for the remainder acquisition funds. Roll call vote, 8 ayes, 2 absent (Marans, Scott).

F. Other Old Business

None.

8. New Business

A. NAPP – Superior Township Conservation Easement

Ms. Leikam presented details on the Superior Township conservation easement property. The property was purchased by Superior Township in 2022. The Township is requesting the Parks Commission hold a conservation easement on the property to ensure the property is protected into the future. The property stretches from Geddes Road north almost to Cherry Hill Road. An adjacent property to the north ahs been nominated to NATAC for consideration, which would connect this property to the Cherry Hill Nature Preserve. The township is not requesting payment for the conservation easement.

It was moved by Ms. McKinney, seconded by Mr. Ezekiel, to authorize a sales contract for the donation of a conservation easement on the property contingent upon attorney review and completion of due diligence, and final approval of the Parks Commission.

B. Comprehensive Master Plan Award

Ms. Macyda explained that every five years, the Parks and Recreation Commission undergoes a comprehensive planning process to guide its development, culminating in a Recreation Master Plan (RMP). The document follows MDNR guidelines and allows WCPARC to be eligible for state recreation grants. The current RMP covers the years 2020-2024. She reminded the commission that the previous two RMPs were developed in-house by staff, building upon previous plans. To ensure WCPARC maintains at the forefront of the parks and recreation industry, staff determined that a planning consultant should be engaged in the next planning process.

Ms. Macyda added that as WCPARC celebrates its 50th anniversary, staff recognizes that the agency has grown exponentially over the decades and would benefit from a long-term, organizational Strategic Plan (SP) to ensure sustainability. This document would be the Commission's first Strategic Plan. Both the RMP and SP inform each other, and their planning has the potential to duplicate efforts; therefore, the plans should be prepared jointly by a single consultant team. The final product would result in a Comprehensive Master Plan.

In June, staff issued a formal RFP to obtain proposals to develop the Comprehensive Master Plan. The RFP was posted on the county's Purchasing webpage and BidNet, and purchasing staff directly notified several potential bidders. Five firms submitted proposals as detailed in the memo.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt, seconded by Ms. McKinney, to issue a contract to PROS Consulting in the amount of $127,810.00 (one hundred twenty-seven thousand eight hundred ten dollars, and no cents), with a contingency of $13,000.00, to prepare the 2025-2029 WCPARC Comprehensive Master Plan. Roll call vote, 8 ayes, 2 absent (Marans, Scott).

C. Community Center Grant Program Application

Ms. Leikam explained that the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) recently announced $60 million in Community Center Grant funds for Michigan municipalities and organizations in the amount up to $2.5 million to expand programming or capital projects.

In 2017, a structural inspection was completed for the exterior southern glass block wall in the pool facility at the MLM Recreation Center after staff noticed cracks and leaks developing in some of the glass blocks. Subsequent repairs were made to the wall with the understanding that more extensive repair would be required in the future. In June 2020, a feasibility study was completed by IDS which included community engagement and proposed facility renovations.

Recently, further deterioration of the glass block wall has been noted, increasing the urgency for repairs. To address the concerns, staff engaged JFR Architects to complete an analysis and cost estimates to replace the glass blocks with high efficiency windows, that will be insulated, and color tinted for sun control benefits. Ms. Leikam explained that given the opportunity for the potential grant funds and the results of the public engagement conducted in 2020, staff is recommending moving forward the option to also include the addition of universal locker rooms adjacent to the pool. The total grant request would be $900,000 or 69% of the total projected costs of $1,300,000. The remaining contribution, if awarded, would be approximately $400,000 (31%) from WCPARC.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi, seconded by Mr. Pratt, to approve the attached resolution and approve a grant application to the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity in the amount of $900,000 and obligate $400,000 toward matching funds of the project. Roll call vote; 7 ayes, 3 absent (Marans, McKinney, and Scott)

D. Other New Business

None.

9. Commissioners / Directors Comments

Mr. Vaughn provided a status update on the Eastern County Recreation Center project. He also shared an overview of a discussion with the Lowertown Ann Arbor Conservancy and the suggestion to route a portion of the B2B trail through the new development.

10. Adjournment

Mr. Pratt moved; seconded by Mr. Rabhi, to adjourn. All ayes, the motion was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:33 PM.