

**MINUTES
PARK COMMITTEE
Wednesday, December 11, 2013
City Hall, Room 207
5:30 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ald. Jerry Wiezbiskie, Ald. Joseph Moore, and Ald. James Warner

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Ald. Brian Danzinger (military obligation)

OTHERS PRESENT: Dawne Cramer, Dan Ditscheit, Mike Reed, Atty. Wachewicz, and Cheryl Renier-Wigg

Approval of the minutes of the meeting of October 23, 2013

A motion was made by Ald. Warner and seconded by Ald. Moore to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2013, Park Committee meeting. Motion carried.

Adoption of the Agenda

A motion was made by Ald. Warner and seconded by Ald. Moore to adopt the agenda of the December 11, 2013, Park Committee meeting. Motion carried.

1. Discussion/Action on a request to authorize staff to proceed with a condemnation process at 1418 Lawe Street (Parcel 17-736) for the expansion of East River Optimist Park

Staff referred to the map. Our softball and baseball user groups have wanted to secure this piece of property for park expansion for over two years. As you know, we have worked with the optimist groups who made many enhancements to this park. We have all agreed that owning this property will be the first step to further park enhancement.

We have had many conversations with the owner of this property throughout these two years. He is aware of the request being presented to you tonight. The issue is not that he is not willing to sell; the issue has centered around the purchase price, as well as the Parks Department not having the available funding to purchase it.

This house has some existing orders that have been placed upon it by the Inspection Department.

C. Renier-Wigg reported the current owner is willing to sell, but his price is way above value. The City has made multiple attempts to have appraisals done, but the property owner has cancelled those appointments. Community Development Block Grant funds could be used to purchase this property. In order to move forward with the acquisition

process, staff should begin condemnation of the property. An appraisal would need to be funded by the City, and the property owner could also hire someone to appraise the property. In this way, at least some sort of value would be established. C. Renier-Wigg spoke with the owner and let him know she was speaking at the Park Committee meeting tonight to move forward with the condemnation process.

Ald. Warner asked the difference between what the City feels the property is worth and how much the property owner values his property. C. Renier-Wigg said the difference is approximately \$20,000. She would prefer not to negotiate the purchase of the property in open session.

Ald. Moore asked if this purchase negotiation would go to the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) as others have in the past. C. Renier-Wigg said it would; she would take the project back to the RDA for permission to spend those dollars to acquire it.

Ald. Wiezbiskie added that there is a public assessment report, but actual negotiations should be done in closed session.

C. Renier-Wigg thought there might be some opportunity for private dollars to fund a portion of the project and will look into that further.

Ald. Warner stated that Ald. Tim DeWane spoke with him earlier regarding this item and gave his support to go through the condemnation process on this property.

A motion has been made by Ald. Moore and seconded by Ald. Warner to approve the request to authorize staff to proceed with the condemnation process at 1418 Lawe Street (Parcel 17-736) for the expansion of the East River Optimist Park. Motion carried.

2. Discussion/Action on accepting a DNR stewardship grant award to purchase property for the East River Trail (Parcels 8-263, 7-670, and 7-668) located at 435, 501, and 525 St. George Street for a proposed canoe/kayak launch

On May 1, 2013, we submitted a stewardship grant application to purchase the property needed for the canoe/kayak launch along the East River Trail. These properties are owned by the same property owner. The total project cost is \$200,000, with the DNR paying \$100,000 and the City paying \$100,000. In 2012, we bonded \$100,000 for our match.

We brought this item to the Park Committee on May 15, 2013, and received permission to apply for the grant and adopted a formal resolution of support. The DNR contacted the City to indicate that the City will receive the grant. We expect a grant contract to arrive in January 2014. We are asking you to authorize staff to accept this grant. We are presently in negotiations for the purchase of these three parcels.

A motion was made by Ald. Moore and seconded by Ald. Warner to authorize staff to accept the DNR stewardship grant to purchase Parcels 8-263, 7-670, and 7-668 located at 435, 501, and 525 St. George Street for the proposed East River Trail canoe/kayak launch. Motion carried.

3. Discussion/Action on a request to seek an appraisal for 517 St. George Street (Parcel 7-669) and to authorize the purchase following City and DNR guidelines

Staff referred to the map. The owner of this property contacted us with his desire to sell the property to the City. The property is currently on the market for sale. Presently, as we just stated in Item #2, we are negotiating with the adjacent property owners to secure those properties for the canoe/kayak launch.

We are seeking authorization to secure an appraisal, negotiate the sale, and purchase the property within the DNR guidelines.

Money needed to acquire this property would come from our existing DNR grant for the East River Trail acquisition, which is a 75/25 match (DNR 75%/City 25%) to purchase the property.

Ald. Moore asked if this is the property where discussion occurred in the past on the possible relocation of the building. Staff responded no.

A motion was made by Ald. Warner and seconded by Ald. Moore to authorize staff to obtain an appraisal and negotiate the sale of the property located at 517 St. George Street (Parcel 7-669) and to bring it back to Park Committee for final approval. Motion carried.

4. Discussion/Action on accepting a DNR stewardship grant award to reconstruct the Fox River Trail from Main Street to the East River

Staff referred to the map, specifically the area outlined in red. This area extends from Main Street to the East River.

We also brought this item to the May 15, 2013, Park Committee meeting to get approval to apply for this grant and adopt a resolution of support. This grant would be used to replace the six-foot-wide brick trail with a ten-foot-wide brick trail. The existing trail is in poor condition and is too narrow for the present amount of users.

The total cost of the project is \$335,000; it is a 50/50 grant with the DNR paying \$167,500 and the City paying \$167,500. The City bonded \$150,000 in 2013 for this project. The remaining \$17,500 will come from the Park paving account. The DNR contacted the City to indicate we have also received this grant. We expect to receive a grant contract by mid-January 2014.

We are seeking permission to authorize staff to accept the grant.

A motion was made by Ald. Moore and seconded by Ald. Warner to authorize staff to accept the DNR stewardship grant to reconstruct the Fox River Trail from Main Street to the East River. Motion carried.

5. Discussion/Action on accepting a grant award for an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Great Lakes Shoreline Cities Green Infrastructure Grant at Bay Beach Amusement Park

Staff reviewed the proposed parking lot location on the Bay Beach Master Plan map.

At the September 11, 2013, Park Committee meeting, we brought this item before you to apply for this grant. We applied for a \$500,000 grant; it is a 50/50 match. Our match would come from the Bay Beach development fund.

In Phase 1A of the Bay Beach Master Plan, we included \$400,000 to construct a portion of the west-end parking lot. This would fund approximately 200 stalls or one-quarter of the lot. The new parking lot is needed to accommodate the proposed west-end shelter.

Receiving this grant will allow us to install half of the west-end lot, approximately 400 stalls. The grant will also hopefully fund the installation of the central circulation spine connecting the west-end parking lot to the Sea Dragon. The parking lot would be constructed in the summer of 2014 and open in May 2015.

Our goal is to still try to construct the west-end shelter in conjunction with the parking lot; however, the shelter construction would now be contingent upon available fundraising dollars. The parking lot aisles will be standard asphalt. The green infrastructure will include permeable asphalt parking stalls along with planted bio swales. There is not adequate space for a stormwater pond, so this is a good alternative to addressing the stormwater requirement.

Included in your packet is an email we received December 3, 2013, from the EPA stating its intent to award the grant to Green Bay. The funding is not final until we receive the grant contract. The EPA has indicated its hope to get the grant agreement to us by the end of this month.

We are seeking permission to authorize staff to accept this grant when awarded.

Ald. Wiezbiskie clarified that the grant could be up to \$500,000, and then the City would have to match that. Staff verified this was correct.

Staff said the EPA is having internal discussions about possibly removing funding for the proposed connecting walk portion of the project, which would lessen the funding to approximately \$450,000.

Ald. Moore asked if the grant funds were available to go towards total project costs, such as stormwater management costs. Staff said this particular grant will fund total project costs.

A motion was made by Ald. Moore and seconded by Ald. Warner to authorize staff to accept the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Great Lakes Shoreline Cities Green Infrastructure Grant for the west-end parking lot at Bay Beach Amusement Park. Motion carried.

6. Discussion/Presentation of the 2013 Wildlife Sanctuary achievements

We wanted to take a few minutes to review all the great achievements that have occurred at the Wildlife Sanctuary this year. Staff presented the following achievements to the Park Committee:

- Reconstruction of the bridge to the Observation building
- Installation/Replanting of multiple gardens
- Dedicated the nature-based play area and opened to the public
- Successful administration of “No Child Left Inside” programs
- 4K – Oak School program
- 12-week fishing programs run by interns
- Multiple programs successfully completed with both school groups and the general public
- Significant invasive species removal
- Animal rehabilitation
- New animals added for observation, education, and exhibits
- New waterfall lighting
- Huge growth in Facebook media status
- Successful Earth Day event
- Special events
- Visitor statistics

Ald. Wiezbiskie stated he would like this presentation shown to the City Council.

Ald. Moore asked if the integration between two different packs of wolves went well and if other entities have attempted to “copycat” this idea. Staff responded that the adaptation went very well because it was done when the pups were very young.

Ald. Warner congratulated the staff on how well the 4K program was received by the community. Staff agreed and has received many positive comments about the program from the community as well.

A motion was made by Ald. Warner and seconded by Ald. Moore to receive and place on file the presentation of the 2013 Wildlife Sanctuary achievements.

7. Director's Report

The Ameriprise Rink is three weeks into operation. The cold weather has already allowed us to start preparing the other ice rinks. Fall tree planting is now completed. Three hundred trees were planted, mulched, and staked. Above-ground tree removal is underway. There are currently 250 ash trees in the SLAM (Slow the Ash Mortality) zone scheduled for preemptive removal. This is Year 2 of 5 of the reduction plan. As this year comes to an end, the Park Department would like to thank all of you for all you do throughout the year to make this a great City. Staff wished Park Committee members and their families a happy holiday season.

A motion was made by Ald. Moore and seconded by Ald. Warner to receive and place on file the Director's Report. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Ald. Moore and seconded by Ald. Warner to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.