

**APPROVED**  
**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes**  
**October 4, 2005**

Chair Hilliard called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm in the Parks and Recreation Community Room in Mayors' Riverfront Park.

**Roll Call:**

**Members Present:** John Hilliard, Lance Ferraro, Larry Haley, Patricia Klein, Gary Wager, Garrylee McCormick, Josh DeBruyn

**Members Absent:** none

**City Commission Liaison:** Don Cooney arrived at 6:00 pm.

**Staff Present:** Frances Jewell, Mark Polega, Pat Vinge

**Procedural Matters:** None

**Introduction of Guests:** David Rachowicz, Kalamazoo County Parks Director; Mark K. Chilcott, PlazaCorp Realty Advisors, Inc.; Heather Finch, Matt Hollander, WMU students; Zach Greening, Student Directory, Vine Association; Lynn Stevens, Western Michigan Business Review.

**Changes to the Agenda:** It was unanimously approved to move New Business ahead of Old Business and move the Eastern Hills Golf Course Update to beginning of Old Business.

**Special Presentations:** None.

**Approval of Minutes:** The September 6, 2005 minutes were unanimously approved with the addition of "excused" after Josh DeBruyn's name in the roll call.

**New Business:**

**Dairy Queen Property – PlazaCorp**

Mark Polega, Parks Manager, presented information on the potential sale of City-owned property at Westnedge and Pioneer (Dairy Queen location) to PlazaCorp (*memo from Mr. Polega and Property Review Committee minutes attached with PRAB minutes*).

PlazaCorp intends to use the property as parking for a new commercial/restaurant establishment. City staff has requested that a contingency of the sale would be to provide extra parking spaces, some of which meet Americans with Disabilities guidelines, to allow easier public access to Axtell Creek Park. PlazaCorp has agreed to that provision. Park staff will review plans prior to acceptance of proposal to ensure this contingency is met.

On August 31, 2005, the sale of this parcel was brought before the Property Review Committee (PRC). The PRC unanimously recommended approval of the sale to PlazaCorp. PlazaCorp has issued a formal offer to purchase the property for \$8,000 and has obtained a formal survey and environmental report at their expense. Mr. Chilcott of PlazaCorp provided additional information for PRAB. ***PRAB unanimously recommended the sale of the City-owned property at Westnedge and Pioneer to***

***PlazaCorp Realty Advisors, Inc., with the stipulation that net proceeds are given to the Kalamazoo Municipal Recreation Endowment.***

There was also discussion regarding PRAB's "disappearance" from the Property Review Committee. ***PRAB unanimously moved that Chair Hilliard write a letter to the Acting City Manager requesting that PRAB be returned to the Property Review Committee as a voting member.***

**Eastern Hills Golf Course Update**

Chair Hilliard distributed a joint memo to the City Commission from Acting City Manager Collard and Jim Roschek, Director of Golf, KMGGA that proposals be sought for the potential sale of all or part of Eastern Hills Golf Course (EHGC) and that public be informed that EHGC will be operated as a golf course in 2006. Chair Hilliard also provided a copy of the KMGGA Management Agreement from January 22, 1996 between the City and KMGGA. John Hilliard requested that PRAB review these documents and carry over further discussion of EHGC to the next PRAB meeting. Larry Haley asked if the option of possible shared tax revenue from the course had been explored yet. Frances will contact Bruce Minsley about this and report back at the November 1 meeting.

**Hearing on City Leased and Owned Properties**

Ms Jewell presented information on the non-designated parkland being considered for sale. She indicated that in many cases the properties are vacant and were never intended to be developed into a park. In some cases, the properties have become dumping grounds for trash and thus present various maintenance issues to the Parks Division. Frances's stated goal is to maintain the best park system possible and to have any funds from the sale of "excess" property be funneled into the Kalamazoo Municipal Recreation Endowment. Frances outlined the process for any property being considered for sale: 1) recommendation from PRAB; 2) City Commission approval; 3) the City's Economic Development staff would create development guides for the properties, and 4) sell one property at a time as funds related to the sales' expenses are available as well as staff capacity to manage the sales.

The hearing was opened for public comment and there was none. Several PRAB members were concerned about selling off pieces of parkland and viewed it as a short term approach to a budget crunch. The properties were reviewed one at a time and Frances indicated that all the properties being considered had very little value as parkland and were instead a drain on the resources of Parks and Recreation. It was agreed that it would be stipulated that revenue from any property PRAB recommended for sale would be given to the Kalamazoo Municipal Recreation Endowment. Garry Lee cautioned that the City Commissioners might not agree that revenue from the sales be given to the Endowment. Chair Hilliard offered to correspond with the Acting City Manager regarding the disposition of any revenue generated by these potential sales.

***PRAB unanimously recommended that the following surplus non-designated parkland be sold, with the stipulation that net proceeds are given to the Kalamazoo Municipal Recreation Endowment: 1425 Mosel; 1000 Dunkley; 4728 K.L. Avenue; 925 Grant; 937 Boerman; 118 Frank; 1310 Hays Park; 2731 Wellington; 2700 Parkview; 2915 Wellington ; 2920 Brooklyn; and 3000 Nelbert.***

PRAB next considered three City owned tot lots. Frances shared that Krom, Princeton, and Springmont Tot Lots had very little usage and had limited play equipment. Mark Polega observed that the Princeton Tot Lot is something of an “afterthought” with only one piece of equipment that has been vandalized; Krom Tot Lot also seems to have little appropriate usage; and Springmont is used the most of the three properties. Gary Wager indicated that the Oakwood Neighborhood Association might be interested in a lease agreement with the City in exchange for the Association maintaining the Springmont Tot Lot. ***It was unanimously recommended that 2416 Springmont not be sold and that Parks and Recreation and the Oakwood Neighborhood Association (ONA) explore the possibility of an agreement/lease with ONA relative to maintenance of property.***

Frances offered to contact NACD to see if there is similar interest in the Krom and Princeton Tot Lots. ***It was recommended unanimously that 1602 Krom and 1508 Princeton be sold contingent upon Parks and Recreation notifying the Northside Association for Community Development (NACD) of this intent and inquiring if NACD is interested in an agreement/lease with the City relative to the maintenance of these properties; it is also stipulated that if sold, net proceeds be given to the Kalamazoo Municipal Recreation Endowment.***

Discussion moved on to the leased property. Frances shared that Bronson Park had been leased by the City from the County since the 1890’s and all maintenance and improvements have been paid for by the City. She recommended that the County be given a two year notification of withdrawal from the current lease which expires in 2015. Frances recognized that everyone loves Bronson Park, however, it costs the City \$65,000 annually to operate the park which in times of budget constraints means that other City owned Parks and Recreation facilities and programs are cut as a County owned park is being maintained by the City. Pat Klein asked what kind of revenue Bronson Park brings in relative to community events; Frances replied that approximately \$7,000 will be generated this year.

PRAB asked David Rachowicz, County Parks Director, to comment on Bronson Park. Mr. Rachowicz said that the County is in a fact finding mode and is facing the same financial challenges as the City. He indicated that some partnerships already exist between the City and County related to the railway system. He shared that the County and City park systems operate differently, in that the County parks are all fee based with the intent to eventually be self-funding.

Several PRAB members advocated that instead of returning Bronson Park to the County that a partnership between the City and County be explored. Larry Haley was in support of returning Bronson Park to the County and cited that Bronson Park is no longer the heart of festivals downtown now that the Arcadia Festival Site has opened. He believed that asking the County to consider partnering with the City in Bronson Park has been proposed in the past and that without some incentive, talk was all that would happen. Garry Lee was very opposed to the City losing control of Bronson Park and believed it is the “heart of the downtown.” He believed the return of the park to the County would be “penny-wise and pound foolish.” Don Cooney indicated that he hadn’t studied this issue, but would hate to see the City give it up. He advocated that the responsibility of maintaining Bronson Park should be a cost-sharing partnership between the City and County. Lance Ferraro stated that this partnership could be the beginning of partnerships into other areas.

Frances observed that the request to partner with the County regarding Bronson Park has been made in the past and has not occurred. She expressed concern that Parks and Recreation is facing up to \$200,000 in budget cuts this year which will impact youth development programming as well as other traditional programming and that she was opposed to funding a County Park at the expense of the City's youth. Don Cooney responded that he would fight for another alternative than cutting Parks and Recreation programming for kids.

After much discussion, the following motion passed with four yes votes and three opposed: ***PRAB recommends that the City not return Bronson Park to the County by exercising its right of two year notice to terminate the lease with the County; furthermore, PRAB recommends that by December 31, 2005, the City Manager and the County Administrator discuss ways for both parties to form a partnership to maintain Bronson Park.***

At 6:40, Josh DeBruyn excused himself from the meeting due to another commitment.

The Oakwood Memorial Beach lease was discussed. Gary Wager suggested that when the lease is up for renewal next spring, that new terms be negotiated that would relieve the City of maintenance issues but would still allow the City to provide the liability insurance for the property. ***It was unanimously recommended that the City not terminate its lease with Oakwood, Inc., (Oakwood Neighborhood Association) for Oakwood Memorial Beach and discuss options (including, but not limited to, maintenance and insurance) for revising the lease with Oakwood Neighborhood Association.***

Allen Chapel and Bethany Tot Lots leases were discussed (properties owned by Allen Chapel AME Church and Bethany Reformed Church). Mark shared that these tot lots were "tired" and in need of major help, also that deficiencies in the play equipment were cited during the City's Playground Safety Audit. The stipulation in the current lease requires that upon termination, the City return the property to its original state (remove play equipment and restore the original cul de sac). Larry asked if the equipment could be offered to the property owners to save the City the cost of removing the equipment. Frances cautioned that she would need to discuss this with the Attorney's Office since the Playground Audit noted deficiencies in the playground equipment's current condition. ***It was moved unanimously that Frances Jewell, Parks and Recreation Director, contact the City Attorney's Office regarding the feasibility of offering the playground equipment located on the Allen Chapel and Bethany Tot Lots to the owners of the property at a nominal fee; PRAB recommends that the City terminate its lease with the owners of said tot lots after determination is made regarding the play equipment.***

#### **Event Fees – Sub-committee Update**

The committee met in September and plans one more meeting, with a report to the Board at the November PRAB meeting.

#### **PRAB Survey**

John asked that members look at alternative ways for Parks and Recreation to cut expenses or enhance revenue and e-mail their responses to him. John will present these at the next meeting.

**Event Approvals** – No events on agenda

**Comments:**

**Citizen-Non Agenda Items**

None

**Commission Liaison**

None

**Parks and Recreation Director—Monthly Report**

Frances shared that Mayors' Riverfront Park was featured in a radio interview as one of the "Seven Wonders of the World." Budget reductions for FY2006 are currently being requested at 8% or approximately \$203,000 for Parks and Recreation. A Pouring Rights Agreement RFP for City owned property will be finalized and sent to potential vendors in the next couple months. A public input meeting for LaCrone Park master plan will be held November 3 at NACD, 612 N. Park, at 6:00 pm.

**Staff Comments**

None

**Board Member Comments**

Gary Wager announced that a Friends of Woods Lake (FOWL) public meeting would be held at the Oakwood Neighborhood Association building, 3320 Laird, on October 20 at 7:00 pm to discuss a comprehensive plan for Woods Lake Beach Park. Frances Jewell and Mark Polega will also attend this meeting.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pat Vinge, Recording Secretary

**Attachment**

PRAB recommendations on City Leased and Owned Properties (10/4/05)

**Attachment included in October 4, 2005 Agenda Packet**

Sale of City-owned Property at Westnedge and Pioneer  
Informational memo from Mark Polega, Parks Manager  
Property Review Committee minutes

## PRAB Recommendations 10/4/05

Non-Designated Parkland				
Property Address	Estimated Market Value	Estimated Taxes Generated	Maintenance Impact	Cost to Maintain
1425 Mosel	\$63,486	\$696	None	None
1000 Dunkley	\$51,045	\$559	None	None
4728 K.L. Ave	\$163,761	\$1795	20 staff hours	\$693
925 Grant	\$84,464	\$926	None	None
937 Boerman	\$4,773	\$52	4 staff hours	\$139
118 Frank	\$2,142	\$24	11.25 staff hrs	\$390
1310 Hays Park	\$8,176	\$90	11.25 staff hrs	\$390
2731 Wellington	\$22,400	\$245	11.25 staff hrs	\$390
2700 Parkview	\$33,884	\$371	None	None
2915 Wellington	\$26,930	\$295	None	None
2920 Brooklyn	\$28,960	\$317	None	None
3000 Nelbert	\$25,004	\$274	10 staff hours	\$500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$515,025</b>	<b>\$5,644</b>		<b>\$2,502</b>

PRAB Recommendation for above properties –sell with proceeds to be placed in the Kalamazoo Municipal Recreation Endowment.

Non-Designated Parkland				
Property Address	Estimated Market Value	Estimated Taxes Generated	Maintenance Impact	Cost to Maintain
1602 Krom	\$4,457	\$49	10 staff hours	\$500
1508 Princeton	\$2,870	\$32	10 staff hours	\$500
2416 Springmont	\$13,715	\$151	10 staff hours	\$500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$21,042</b>	<b>\$232</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>\$1500</b>

PRAB Recommendation for above property – work with neighborhood associations to determine if they would like to maintain the property, otherwise sell.

<b>Leased Property</b>				
<b>Property</b>	<b>Maintenance Impact</b>	<b>Cost to restore property</b>	<b>Cost to Maintain</b>	<b>General Fund Savings</b>
Oakwood Memorial Beach	107 hours	N/A	\$3,709	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>107 hours</b>		<b>\$ 3,709</b>	<b>\$0</b>

PRAB Recommendation on Oakwood Memorial Beach – explore lease agreement that city would still lease but neighborhood would maintain.

<b>Leased Property</b>				
<b>Property</b>	<b>Maintenance Impact</b>	<b>Cost to restore property</b>	<b>Cost to Maintain</b>	<b>General Fund Savings</b>
Allen Chapel Tot Lot	64 hours	\$1,800	\$2,218	\$0
Bethany Tot Lot	64 hours	\$3,200	\$2,218	\$0

PRAB Recommendation on above properties – work with the City Attorney to determine if owners want to maintain the tot lots, is there a way for the City to sell the equipment to them.

<b>Leased Property</b>				
<b>Property</b>	<b>Maintenance Impact</b>	<b>Cost to restore property</b>	<b>Cost to Maintain</b>	<b>General Fund Savings</b>
Bronson Park	1,520 hours	N/A	\$104,600	\$63,910

PRAB Recommendation for Bronson Park – City Manager issue letter to the County requesting that a partnership for created to maintain the park.