

**APPROVED**  
**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes**  
**November 1, 2005**

Josh DeBruyn, Vice-Chair called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm in the Parks and Recreation Community Room in Mayors' Riverfront Park.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Members Absent:** John Hilliard (excused)

**City Commission Liaison:** Absent

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

**Procedural Matters:** None

**Introduction of Guests:** Ken Dahlberg; Barbara McCrea, Co-President, Oakland Drive/Winchell Neighborhood Association; George F. McCrea; Jonathan Ballema; Zach Greening, Student Director Vine Street Neighborhood; Gina Antoniotti, Gilmore Festival; Milton Wells, Eastside Coalition; Raoul Yochim, Co-President, Oakland Drive/Winchell Neighborhood.

**Changes to the Agenda:** New Business was moved ahead of Old Business.

**Special Presentations:** None

**Approval of Minutes:** The October 4, 2005 minutes were unanimously approved.

**New Business:**

**Rockwell Park/Eastside Youth Center Master Plan**

Milton Wells of the Eastside Coalition, presented information on a proposed youth center for the Eastside Neighborhood, which would be located in Rockwell Park. Currently there are few recreation/leisure alternatives for youth in the area. The Eastside Coalition planning group for the center is made up of the Boys and Girls Club, City of Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation, the YMCA, Head Start, Catholic Family Services, Kalamazoo Township, Open Door Ministries, and the Eastside Neighborhood Association. Gove and Associates is preparing draft plans for the building and the Stryker Center helped develop a business plan. The building would be owned by the City and located on City property, Rockwell Park; leased by the Eastside Neighborhood Association; and managed by the Boys and Girls Club. The 41,000 square foot facility is anticipated to cost \$5 million with an estimated annual operating budget of \$400,000. The facility would have an arts and crafts room, education center, tech center, sound studio, indoor track, gymnasium, and two classrooms for Head Start. A variety of organizations and agencies would provide programming.

The Eastside Coalition completed an asset evaluation of the area, which identified no elementary schools in the area and a number of churches with inadequate facilities. Mr. Wells shared that the City has been very supportive of the project and helped fund a preliminary design and business plan. The Kalamazoo Community Foundation is also supportive of the project. The Coalition hopes to break ground in the fall of 2006. The Coalition is seeking PRAB's support of the project. PRAB members unanimously requested that Vice-Chair Josh DeBruyn prepare a letter of support for the project.

### **Western Gateway Master Plan**

Carolyn Rutland, City Engineer, was not available to present the master plan to PRAB.

### **FY2006 Parks and Recreation Budget Update**

Frances shared that Parks and Recreation has been required to reduce \$180,000 from the FY2005 budget. She emphasized that the potential sale of parkland has no impact on this budget and the entire \$180,000 reduction was derived from current services and staff. After the new City Commission is presented with the budget, details can be shared with PRAB.

### **Old Business:**

#### **Interview with Prospective Board Members**

The Board interviewed Gina Antoniotti and Zachary Greening. Because the potential members were interested in the rest of the Board meeting, discussion of the applications and vote on the prospective members was postponed until the end of the meeting.

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

The committee did not meet in October but plans to present their final recommendations at the December PRAB meeting.

#### **Eastern Hills Golf Course – Further Comment**

Frances shared that the course will be open in 2006; KMGGA is implementing the "Plan for the Future"; and an RFP will go out in early spring to determine what the course is worth and evaluate whether or not it should be sold.

**Event Approvals:** The Board unanimously recommended that the Acting City Manager approve the following events:

- Epilepsy Foundation – Summer Stroll for Epilepsy™, Spring Valley Park, June 17, 2006, 8 am-noon.
- "Rooted in Kalamazoo: Seeds for Change" Culmination of Earth Day, Bronson Park, Saturday, May 20, 2006, 8 am-9 pm.

### **Comments:**

#### **Citizens – Non Agenda Items**

Barbara McCrea, Co-President of the Oakland Drive/Winchell Neighborhood Association expressed concern about PRAB's recommended sale of three

properties: 2731 Wellington (Glen Park North), 2700 Parkview (Glen Park South), 2915 Wellington (Canyon Park) and 2920 Brooklyn (Hillsdale Park). Ms. McCrea shared that she was out of town when the information from PRAB on the potential sale was sent to the neighborhood organizations or she would have come to the October 26 meeting. She wanted PRAB to know that the Oakland Drive/Winchell Neighborhood Association believes there are legal deeded restrictions on the properties and that the lands are dedicated to public use. Ms. McCrea handed out a plat map of the properties. She also shared that residents in the Neighborhood enjoy the open space and would not want to lose it to development.

Frances Jewell, Parks and Recreation Director, replied that in the material provided to PRAB about the properties, it was noted that there are plat restrictions on these properties, which are being referred to the City Attorney's Office for resolution. Frances assured PRAB and Ms. McCrea that if there are in fact restrictions that prohibit the sale of the properties that they would definitely not be sold.

Pat Klein responded that if she had known about the Neighborhood concerns that she would not have recommended the sale of the properties. Ms. Klein moved that the votes on the four properties be withheld until a legal decision is made. Motion was seconded by Garrylee McCormick. The motion failed in a 2 to 4 vote.

**Commission Liaison Comments:** None.

#### **Parks and Recreation Director – Monthly Report**

Frances said that a Russian Birch, a native tree of Russia, was planted in Bronson Park in recognition of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Russian Festival and Kalamazoo's connection with Pushkin, Russia. Garrylee shared that Prudential Nursery in Vicksburg donated the tree and that Colleen Smith and Diane Bushouse of the Parks and Recreation Department were extremely helpful and did an excellent job in working with the group and planting the tree.

At the last meeting Larry Haley inquired whether there could be any tax sharing with Kalamazoo Township if Eastern Hills were sold. Frances reported back that the preliminary inquiry indicated that there could be no tax sharing. The Westnedge/Pioneer former Dairy Queen property that was recommended for sale at the last PRAB meeting will go to the City Commission after a purchase and redevelopment agreement are prepared by City Attorney's office.

**Staff Comments:** None

#### **Board Member Comments:**

There was further discussion on the need to work on a mutual agreement with the County regarding Bronson Park. Gary Wager shared that Mark Polega was chosen to receive the annual City Employee Appreciation award from the Kalamazoo Neighborhoods Coalition (KNC) and will be recognized at the November 7, 2005 City Commission meeting.

The Board returned to Old Business and discussed the prospective Board members who would be replacing Garrylee McCormick and Larry Haley on January 1, 2006. There was some concern about diversity on the Board, however, it was pointed out that Zach Greening was a college student with enthusiasm for serving the public and Gina Antoniotti would bring valuable environmental expertise to the Board. It was moved to accept both members; the vote passed 5 to 1.

Vice Chair DeBruyn was asked to write a letter to the candidates as well as a letter of support of the proposed youth center for Milton Wells, Eastside Coalition.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pat Vinge, Recording Secretary