

SPECIAL PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING - MARCH 4, 1999 - PAGE 1

Present: Chairperson Schmitt; Vice-Chairperson Greening; Members: Brink, Cobleigh, Davis, Harmon and Woodman

Absent: None

Also Present: Assistant to the Manager, Pasioka
Council members, Lison and Worrell

Chairperson Schmitt presided and called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Village municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road. Notice of this special meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board had been given personally to all members of the Board on Wednesday, February 24, 1999, and has been posted on the bulletin board at the Village office since Friday, February 26, 1999.

MOTION by Davis, supported by Cobleigh, to waive any irregularities in the notice of the Special Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

Motion passes unanimously.

The purpose of this meeting is to update everyone on discussion that has taken place relative to implementation of the Park Master Plan and to propose and discuss a Board resolution to Council.

Schmitt reviewed that on March 2, 1998 the Village Council unanimously adopted the Park Master Plan. The Parks and Recreation Board has discussed implementation of the plan. A joint meeting was held with Council in February, 1999. Since that time, Schmitt has met with Board member Pat Greening and Sheila Seaver representing the Village Woman's Club to work on strategies for implementing the Master Plan.

The Parks and Recreation Board with the concurrence of Council members attending the joint meeting arrived at a two-pronged priority to construct a new main gate and to pave the parking lot in Beverly Park. The park is not easily accessible by foot traffic or cars for approximately four months of the year due to muddy conditions. The idea is to generate energy and enthusiasm by paving the parking lot and completing the new entranceway in order to raise funds for further implementation of the Park Master Plan.

Grant applications to the State have been considered. It is understood that it is not likely that the Village will receive this funding due to the fact that the State is currently focusing on shoreline preservation. Any grant money received would be allocated to park improvement projects.

Schmitt commented that there is a consensus that the playground equipment needs to be updated and replaced. While this is considered to be a high priority, replacing playground equipment is further down on the priority list because it will not be difficult to raise funds for the playground improvements. The Board is concerned that everyone will consider the park improvements completed once the playground is done and lose enthusiasm for the remaining steps needed to complete the Master Plan.

At the joint meeting with Council, Frank Worrell presented the idea of establishing a "Friends of Beverly Park" group. People were receptive to this idea. Membership dues were suggested. There was discussion as to what type of business entity the Friends of Beverly Park should be. Some municipalities organize a 501C3 charity and others raise money as part of the municipality. The Parks and Recreation Board is recommending establishing a Friends of Beverly Park organization that exists as a function of the Village of Beverly Hills. The Board of Directors would be the Parks and Recreation Board. Checks would be made payable to the Village of Beverly Hills with donations deposited in a separate account for park use. Gifts to the Village for park improvements will be tax deductible.

There is some concern about obtaining public financing for park improvements such as paving the parking lot. There are also challenges involved in raising private funds. It was suggested that a challenge grant be issued to the Village Council. The Friends of Beverly Park would commit to raising money to build the front entrance with separate pedestrian and vehicle entrances. There are no formal bids on this project, but a rough cost estimate is \$50,000. At the time the Friends of Beverly Park commits to raise that money, it would ask Council to commit the Village of Beverly Hills to paving and striping the parking lot in Beverly Park. A rough cost estimate would be in the range of \$100,000.

Schmitt stated that the purpose of this meeting is to try to organize a Friends of Beverly Park committee, adopt a resolution that can be taken to Council at its March 15 meeting, and to organize subcommittees to arrive at fund raising strategies and obtain quotes for the projects.

RESOLVED by Greening, supported by Davis, to request Council's support to:

- 1) Establish the Friends of Beverly Park;
- 2) Accept the Friends of Beverly Park's challenge and commit the Village to paving and striping the parking lot at Beverly Park when the Friends of Beverly Park has raised 3/4 of the funds necessary to complete construction of the proposed new main entrance; and
- 3) Support the Parks and Recreation Board and the Friends of Beverly Park in their efforts to raise funds to implement the Master Plan, with the direction of the Village administration to assist the Friends of Beverly Park.

Schmitt opened the floor for discussion of the resolution.

Davis stated that the Beverly Hills Garden Club is interested raising money for park improvements.

Jim McCook of 19370 Riverside asked what assurances there are that privately raised funds will not replace publicly provided funds that have been budgeted for many years. It is McCook's opinion that paving the parking lot is a Village responsibility and that maintaining the park is the responsibility of Village administration and Council. He contends that, if the Village had been dumping pebbles on

that parking lot for fifteen years, there would be no problem with mud. He is concerned about the maintenance expense to the Village of fixing cracks and repainting stripes on a paved parking lot. McCook thinks that paving the parking lot is a bad idea. He added that the funding of parking lot paving from the private sector replaces funding that should come from the Village of Beverly Hills at large.

Schmitt stated that the intent is to request that the Village of Beverly Hills commit to paving the parking lot through public funds. Paving and striping the parking lot will allow for 50% more cars in the parking lot than can be parked there currently. In answer to McCook's other point, Schmitt answered that this Board cannot guarantee how future Councils will allocate funds for park expenditures.

Harmon stated that the issue is not maintaining the park but raising money for changes and additions to the current park configuration. He mentioned that the Village currently spends money grading and adding gravel to the parking lot.

Worrell thinks that the energy of the Parks and Recreation Board should be directed to one particular project. He thinks that a new, safer entrance would make the park more inviting and attractive. He suggests that the focus of the Board should be the entrance first and then the parking lot.

Schmitt explained that the Parks and Recreation Board is suggesting that the Village pave the parking lot after the Friends of Beverly Park raises 3/4 of the money for the entrance improvement. The idea is that there will be so much excitement created by the park entrance improvements that the Village can proceed to the next project whether it be the pavilion, ball diamonds, or playground equipment.

Worrell questioned the method of fund raising and the cost of the entranceway.

Schmitt stated that preliminary ideas for fund raising include placing the name of the person donating on a brick used in the sidewalk at the park entranceway. The Board anticipates donations from the Village Woman's Club and Garden Clubs. There has been discussion about a fund raising dinner and silent auction. The Board anticipates raising money through membership dues for the Friends of Beverly Park.

Jensen spoke enthusiastically about the long term fund raising possibilities of an organization such as the Friends of Beverly Park. He does not think the Village should move into an implementation program without setting priorities. He maintains that people who want to be part of things want to know what the whole project involves. It takes thinking and planning to do that.

Jensen thinks that everyone on the Village Council wants to do their part. He believes that the Village wants to rally around the concept and begin to do some of these projects because the park really is a jewel. Jensen displayed a brochure describing a new development on the coast of Florida as an example of the type of material that should be developed and circulated in the Village. A brochure could contain graphics and define the purpose of the park Master Plan and the Friends of

Beverly Park. Jensen does not think that this can be done properly without involving every group and every aspect of this community; it is a community-wide effort.

Jensen stated that he was asked by the Parks and Recreation Board to work on a design for the entranceway. He proceeded to explain the design for the new entranceway with the use of an artist rendering of the new pedestrian and vehicle entrance.

He commented on visual aspects of the entranceway that will draw people into the park including decorative iron work, sidewalk, flowers planted in the area, and lighting. It has the feel of a rural park circa 1922 which says it has always been here. The design is relatively low maintenance. The entrance brings you from the existing sidewalk to a brick sidewalk extending towards the flagpole and gives you an opportunity to go in different directions.

Schmitt adds that the gateway design can be replicated and used as an identity for the Village of Beverly Hills. It is something residents can be proud of.

In answer to a question from Lison, Schmitt stated that the Parks and Recreation Board suggests that the Friends of Beverly Park be a function of the Village rather than a private foundation. People will be able to write a check to the Village of Beverly Hills and it will be a tax deductible donation. There will be a separate account for park donations.

There were questions about fund raising. Greening stated that we are here tonight to put something together. A dinner and silent auction is proposed to get the fund raising activities off the ground. The benefit dinner will attract a nucleus from which the Village can compel more people who will expand this idea. The Friends of Beverly Park will want to display the Master Plan and bring the park improvements in front of the people.

Schmitt commented that the members of this Board hope to achieve a consensus on a proposal and take it to Council for their support. With Council support, the Board can proceed with the first step which is something that will be visible and tangible.

Jensen thinks it is appropriate to ask Council for seed money to create a brochure that provides a vision of the Master Plan. Brink suggested that a brochure include a description of the Friends of Beverly Park and how residents can become involved.

Lison concurs that the first step is to get Council behind the plan. He indicated that he would be in favor of this kind of project. Lison questioned the Board's time frame for getting things going.

The Parks and Recreation Board proposes placing its Resolution on the agenda of the March 15 Council meeting. If March 15 is not available, the Board will approach Council on the first meeting in April.

There was discussion on the Board's presentation to Council. The Master Plan has been approved by Council. The Parks and Recreation Board has submitted a list of priorities and estimated costs to

complete park improvements. The Board is now proposing to start a fund raising program to implement the Master Plan. It needs Council support to proceed with securing bids for the different phases and beginning fund raising efforts.

Woodman suggested that a time line be included in the presentation to Council. The Parks and Recreation Board would like to raise the money in 1999 and have the parking lot paved by the end of 1999. A time line would allow budgeting for this project.

The cost of paving the parking lot was discussed. Worrell commented on the Village's infrastructure needs. He thinks Council will be under a tremendous amount of criticism if it spends money on paving the parking lot when there are improvements needed for sewers and roads. He thinks that extra money should be directed toward expediting sewer system repairs.

Lison expressed the view that it is incumbent on this Board and the rest of us to look forward. He does not think the park deserves to be ignored for another five or six years while the Village awaits the completion of the sewer system projects.

Jensen commented on the importance of establishing a Friends of Beverly Park group and raising private money for park projects. He thinks Council will have difficulty allocating money to the park when there are serious infrastructure issues in the Village.

Council candidate Todd Stearn of 15690 Kirkshire commented on privatizing the paving of the parking lot or at least a portion of it so that Council can say to the residents with sewer problems that there are people willing to put money into the parking lot. He thinks that it is more of a "want" to have a new entrance to the park while the parking lot paving is more of a "need". The parking lot has been a problem in the park for a long time.

Schmitt feels that money can be raised for gates and playground equipment but parking lot paving is not a great naming opportunity. Schmitt thinks the Village needs to commit to putting some money into the park. Every year there is less playground equipment because one more item is found to be unsafe and has to be removed. The only thing that has been done in the last ten years other than a volleyball pit is the drainage. It is time that the Village step up and do something to improve Beverly Park. It is the center of the town. Schmitt thinks that the parking lot is public infrastructure and should be done by the public from Village funds.

Stearn agrees that paving the parking lot is something the Village should do but that there are a lot of problems in the community that need to be addressed and this is only one of them.

Lison suggests that the Parks and Recreation Board present the implementation program they recommend to the Council. It would be terrific if the Board can create a Friends of Beverly Park, solicit donations, and fund park improvements.

Downey thinks that paving the parking lot is infrastructure. The majority of the people in the Village supported improvements to the infrastructure. The parking lot situation is a reflection of why people

voted for improving roads. It is the obligation of the Village to provide good, safe, and useable facilities. He agrees that fund raising for a gate is easier than fund raising for a parking lot.

Woodman thinks that everyone is close in their thinking. We are saying that the Friends of Beverly park is going to raise an amount of money and, if that is done, Council should commit to allocating an amount of money to pay for paving the parking lot.

Jensen thinks that the condition of the parking lot is such a problem that the Board should have a backup plan if the cost of paving is too high. He suggests a gravel parking lot and deferring the paving for several years until this fund raising organization can get ahead of the game after putting in a park improvement that is more visible.

The motion on the floor was read. Schmitt asked if there were any amendments to the motion.

MOTION by Harmon, supported by Woodman, to amend the resolution to remove the second paragraph from the resolution and submit the second item separately to Council so that the challenge and commitment by the Village are separate proposals.

The amended resolution will read as follows:

RESOLVED by Greening, supported by Davis, to request Council's support to establish the Friends of Beverly Park and to support the Parks and Recreation Board and the Friends of Beverly Park in their efforts to raise funds to implement the Master Plan, with the direction of the Village administration to assist the Friends of Beverly Park.

FURTHER RESOLVED to request Council's support to accept the Friends of Beverly Park's challenge and commit the Village to paving and striping the parking lot at Beverly Park when the Friends of Beverly Park has raised 3/4 of the funds necessary to complete construction of the proposed new main entrance.

Vote on motion to amend resolution:

Schmitt	- no
Greening	- no
Brink	- yes
Cobleigh	- no
Davis	- yes
Harmon	- yes
Woodman	- yes

Amendment passes (4-3). The Parks and Recreation Board then unanimously agreed to send these two resolutions to Council as soon as possible.

It was the sense of the Board to defer the establishment of committees until Council considers the resolution passed this evening.

The Parks and Recreation Board will attempt to bring this resolution before Council at its next meeting on March 15, 1999 or at the first meeting in April.

A motion made by Davis to cancel the regularly scheduled March 18 Parks and Recreation Board meeting failed for lack of support.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

**Philip Schmitt, Chairperson
Parks and Recreation Board**

**Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk**