

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES - AUGUST 17, 2000 - PAGE 1

Present: Chairperson Schmitt; Vice-Chairperson Greening; Members: Davis, Harmon and O'Reilly

Absent: Cobleigh and Mooney

Also Present: Assistant to the Manager, Pasieka
Village Manager, Hanlin
Council Liaison, Stearn
Council Members, Pfeifer and Kennedy

Chairperson Schmitt called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Village municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Davis, supported by Harmon, that the minutes of a joint Council and Parks and Recreation Board meeting held on June 15, 2000 be approved as submitted.

Motion passes unanimously.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Schmitt opened the floor for nominations for the office of chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Board.

Davis nominated Schmitt as chair and Greening as vice-chair. There were no other nominations. Schmitt and Greening were unanimously elected as chair and vice-chair of the board.

GRANT APPLICATION

Schmitt stated that Beverly Hills did not receive a park grant from the Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI)-Recreation Bond Program. The Village has been informed that grant applications not funded in Round 1 of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources 2000 Recreation Grants program have automatically been carried over for consideration in Round 2, which will be the fourth and final round for CMI-Recreation Bond applications.

Schmitt, Davis, O'Reilly and Pasieka met with Deborah Apostol, regional grant coordinator for southern Michigan, in Lansing today. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the scoring results of the grant application and learn how to enhance the Village's application for the last round of the grant program.

The grant application asked the state for \$350,000 and committed Village matching funds in the amount of \$118,000. The Village might have received a grant had it asked for \$200,000. The grant application will be revised to make it more acceptable.

Schmitt outlined the scoring criteria and point system used by the grant administrators. Apostol informed Beverly Hills representatives today that the cost per capita was probably the point that eliminated the Village from further consideration. The cost per capita is derived by the estimated

project cost (\$455,000) divided by the population (10,610), which comes out to \$45/capita (gross) or \$32/capita with the \$118,000 matching funds. The grant committee looks favorably on an application that requests an amount representing \$20/capita. The Village's population would allow for a \$200,000 maximum grant from the CMI initiative. There was scoring criteria made known today by the grant administrator that was not included in the grant application material sent to the Village.

With the Village committing \$133,000 as its matching funds, this would be 40% of a total project grant of \$333,000. This would give Beverly Hills the points it needs to have a legitimate chance at receiving a grant.

Schmitt proposes that the Village commit \$133,000 of its own money to ask the state for a \$200,000 grant in its revised grant application. The deadline for the grant application is October 20, 2000. The grant administrator asked to receive it earlier. It is expected that the Round 2 grants will be announced around Christmas time or early January with the contracts available in February. If a grant is awarded, the Village would spend its money on a project and would be promptly reimbursed by the state.

The board discussed the improvements to be included in the grant application and the amount that should be allocated to each project. It was learned that it is essential that the grant application include an active recreation project, such as playground equipment.

The board discussed asking for \$140,000 for the parking lot paving and striping, curbs, islands and landscaping; \$90,000 for the pedestrian safety entrance and fence, and; \$103,000 for the first phase of a handicap accessible, safe playground equipment. It was emphasized that the figures are estimates, and the village has not gone out for bids on these projects. Public Services Director Spallasso has prepared a cost estimate for the parking lot improvement. David Jensen has estimated a cost of \$50,000 for the iron gate portion of the park entrance.

Pasieka affirmed that there is \$133,000 available in accumulated park funds that is available for matching grant money for the next application.

It was clarified that park improvements cannot begin until next year if a grant application is resubmitted. Money accumulated through private fund raising and funds allocated in the Village budget must be committed as matching grant money. The money distributed by the State of Michigan as a bonding issue will be depleted at the end of the next round. This is the last year for this CMI Recreation Bond Program.

Greening understands that the Village has committed to pursuing this grant money. She suggested that an article be included in the Villager Newsletter explaining the status of park improvements to people who have contributed towards the park.

It was questioned whether the Village is locked into a figure indicated on the grant application for a project. This question was not asked of the grant administrator. Pasieka mentioned that they were

told today that the state will assist with the engineering costs if the grant is awarded. Actual costs are not known until an engineering study is prepared. The figures included in the grant application are estimated costs for the projects.

Stearn remarked that the proposal to resubmit the grant application with additional matching funds will have to come before Council for approval. This could be an agenda item for the first meeting in September.

MOTION by O'Reilly, supported by Harmon, to recommend that Council ask administration to revise and resubmit the grant application to request a match of \$133,000 in Village money for \$200,000 of state money for a total grant of \$333,000, and that the money be allocated as follows:

Pedestrian safety entrance & fence	\$90,000.00
Playground equipment	\$103,000.00
Parking lot improvements & fence	\$140,000.00

Motion passes unanimously.

Phyllis Lauer commented that the replacement of chain link fence with wrought iron fencing should be part of the new park entrance project. She was informed that the \$90,000 figure covers the gate and some fencing. The amount of wrought iron fence that is erected will depend on the cost of the iron gates.

SUMMER CONCERTS

Pasieka stated that the final summer concert in Beverly Park scheduled for Sunday, August 27 at 4:00 p.m. will feature the Birmingham Concert Band.

O'Reilly remarked that there have been three great concerts in the park this year and the attendance has been good.

Board discussion on next year's concert series will be an agenda item for the September meeting.

CATFISH FOR BEVERLY POND

Don Greening of 19289 Riverside has observed that the water in the pond is muddy this year, which is probably due to the number of goldfish in the pond. Goldfish are similar to carp and disturb the sediment causing turbid water. He referred to a letter dated June 16, 2000 from James Francis from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources on this topic. Francis suggests that consideration be given to stocking the pond with largemouth bass and channel catfish. These fish are predatory and will reduce the number of goldfish.

Greening proposes to stock the pond with catfish and largemouth bass at his expense. This will decrease the amount of goldfish and help clear up the water. The pond will be more attractive and

interesting because bass will jump out of the water. An additional benefit to stocking the pond would be to provide fishing opportunities.

Greening stated that there is also a flathead minnow that could be added to the pond to provide food for the fish. There is currently not enough food for the fish.

Davis mentioned that she and Don Greening transplanted about a dozen water iris plants growing at the edge of Riverside Pond to the north side of Beverly Park pond. There is no weed growth in the pond area because the sun cannot penetrate through the trees. D. Greening stated that fish need weeds for oxygen.

MOTION by Davis, supported by O'Reilly, that the Parks and Recreation Board thank and support Don Greening's efforts to stock catfish and largemouth bass fish in Beverly Pond and recommend its implementation.

Motion passes unanimously.

OPTIONS FOR PARK MILLAGE

Greening commented that she would like to see the park master plan completed. The estimated cost of implementing the master plan was \$801,500 a couple of years ago. Greening is proposing that the Parks and Recreation Board request that a question be placed on the ballot for the March election asking the voters to approve 0.25 mills for ten years to be dedicated for park capital improvements as outlined in the approved park master plan. Ballot language must be submitted by the first week in December.

The cost to the taxpayers would be \$25 a year for a \$200,000 home in the Village. The millage would raise about \$100,000 a year, which would enable the Beverly Park improvements to be completed in ten years. Any excess revenue could be spent on Riverside Park or the nature preserves.

Greening is asking for support and input from the Parks and Recreation Board. She indicated that she has the support of some members of Council and many people throughout the community who have contributed to fund raising efforts for the park. She noted that more people have supported the park with donations than have voted in the last two elections. Greening expressed the view that the cost of improving the park should be shared equally by everybody in the Village who is using the park.

Hanlin asked if it is the intent that this money be spent for physical improvements in the park. She questioned whether the Parks and Recreation Board envisioned hiring a project manager to implement park improvements or programs. Greening responded that any major construction would need to be supervised, but the dedicated millage would be strictly for physical improvements as opposed to park programs requiring administrative costs.

Greening stated that the pavilion was built in the 1970's and will need replacement. There are park facilities that need upkeep and/or replacement.

Harmon commented that a dedicated millage would allow for the enhancement of the park playground and landscaping and attention to the sled hill problems.

Stearn questioned whether a dedicated park millage would result in a future council shifting general fund money normally budgeted for the park to other areas. Maintenance fees for the park that are currently part of the general fund budget could get shifted. Greening stated that the millage would be dedicated for park improvements and not maintenance.

Stearn expressed the concern that, if the millage loses, future councils may have a difficult time being persuaded to allocate money from the general fund towards capital park improvements.

Pfeifer commented that it would be up to the people to support a park ballot proposal. It should be made clear that the Village is currently investing up to \$65,000 a year for park maintenance. She suggested that, if there is a dedicated millage, there is a chance that the capital improvement budget will be discontinued.

Pfeifer stated that the Village could be asking the voters for next year for a dedicated park millage at the same time it may receive CMI grant funds that, combined with matching funds, total \$333,000. If the Village is successful in its grant application, the people may not approve the dedicated millage.

Joellen Gilchrist expressed the view that the people elect a council to approve a budget and decide during their term how the money needs to be spent. It is her opinion that it is a cleaner process for spending issues to be part of the budget that is debated each year. Each of the many needs of the Village should not be decided by the people.

O'Reilly supports the concept of a ballot proposition for a dedicated millage to maintain and improve park facilities. He thinks that the board should be cautious in its method of pursuing this. Davis supports the millage proposal.

Harmon stated that he is in favor of a ballot proposal for the March election if the Village does not receive the CMI grant. If the grant application is approved, the Village will have \$333,000 to spend on the park next year. He questioned whether the Village can hold off on the ballot proposal until it receives a determination on the grant application. If the grant is received, the Village may have a better chance of passing a dedicated park millage next year. People will see the improvements made in the park with the grant money and can decide on completing the park projects.

There was discussion on the deadlines for placing a proposition on the ballot and the time frame for learning whether the Village receives a grant.

It was clarified that the Council can place a ballot proposal on the March ballot. An issue can also be placed on the ballot by a petition of the people.

A decision on whether to recommend a ballot proposal for the March election was deferred until the next meeting. This will be an agenda item for the September Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

MEETING WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23 AT VILLAGE HALL WITH PLANNING BOARD TO DISCUSS VILLAGE PATHWAYS

Schmitt stated that the Planning Board has requested that the Parks and Recreation board members meet with them next Wednesday, August 23, at 7:30 p.m. at the Village municipal building. The Planning Board would like input from this board on several issues, including sidewalks throughout the Village. They want to know if the Parks and Recreation Board is interested in improving the access to the Douglas-Evans and the Hidden Rivers nature preserves.

Greening expressed the view that sidewalks to the parks is not a subject for the Parks and Recreation Board.

Harmon would like to meet with the Planning Board but will be not be available next week. He thinks that sidewalks and pathways through the Village is of Parks and Recreation interest. He mentioned that this board has always concentrated on Beverly Park and not on other Parks and Recreation issues in the community. O'Reilly and Davis were interested in meeting with the Planning Board.

Pasieka distributed a document prepared by the Planning Board that outlines preferred recommendations for a pathway plan.

Board members discussed the issue of sidewalks and access to the nature preserves. The majority of the members support constructing sidewalks in most places to make these links in the Village as long as funding does not come from park funds. Board members expressed interest in pursuing better access to the nature preserves. It was understood that constructing paths in the nature parks is not being considered.

Hanlin informed the board that she has been contacted again by Steve Vartanian. He owns a parcel of property on Lahser Road at 13 Mile Road immediately north of the Standard Federal Bank. Mr. Vartanian appears to be divesting his estate and would like to donate this parcel to the Village. Council discussed this offer in October of 1998 and concluded that the Village was not able to meet all of the conditions set forth with the acceptance of the land.

Hanlin stated that Mr. Vartanian is now asking that the property be cleared and that he be acknowledged as the donor. He is no longer requiring that the property be preserved as a park.

The board discussed the property in question. It is a small parcel with very little growth of any value on it, and it is not conducive to creating a park. It would be a maintenance problem, and the Village is not in a financial position to develop the property.

It was the view of Parks and Recreation Board members that the Village should accept the Vartanian property if it is offered without restrictions.

LARGE GROUP SURVEY

There were no objections to the large group event in the park scheduled for September.

Schmitt stated that the Multiple Sclerosis Walk through the Village is scheduled for May 6, 2001. The organizers request to use the restrooms in the pavilion, which are adequately handicap accessible, rather than the porta-johns.

MOTION by Davis, supported by Harmon, to recommend that Council approve the MS Walk on Sunday, May 6, 2001 from approximately 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and waive the pavilion fees for that event.

Motion passes unanimously.

LIAISON COMMENTS

Stearn referred to a motion made at the joint Council and Parks and Recreation Board meeting on June 15 authorizing the erection of a construction sign at the entrance to Beverly Park. He questioned the status of this sign.

Pasioka recalled that the sign was proposed to be displayed if the fence was removed in preparation for the entryway project. David Jensen offered to build a construction sign to be displayed at the park entrance. A sign saying "Park Improvements Coming Soon" would alert people to the fact that something is happening in the park. A decision was made not to remove the fence in that area. The money for the park entrance project was held up in the grant application, and it was determined that there was no need to go forward with the sign. The sign can be prepared by Jensen within two weeks when there is activity in the park.

It was the consensus of the Parks and Recreation Board that there is no need to erect this sign until next spring. Board members did feel that the status of park improvements should be explained to the people who donated towards the new park entranceway.

Stearn stated that a motion was passed at the joint meeting to direct administration to either enforce an existing ordinance prohibiting the parking of vehicles after hours and parking construction vehicles at any time in Village parks, or bring such an ordinance to Council for consideration. Hanlin stated that the ordinance is enforced.

ADMINISTRATION COMMENTS

Pasioka thanked Mooney for preparing and distributing flyers for the concerts in the park this year. They have helped to increase the turn out. Pasioka thanked Schmitt for bringing a popcorn machine to the last concert and Greening for supplying lemonade.

Pasieka informed the board that the Village's web page is up and running. The URL is www.villagebeverlyhills.com. Bob Belaustegui has volunteered much time and expertise to create this web site.

BOARD COMMENTS

Davis thanked Don Greening for all of his assistance with Beverly Park.

Greening read in a subdivision newsletter that there will be a butterfly garden at Riverside Park. She does not recall this being discussed at the Parks and Recreation Board. She asked what it is and where it will be located.

Pasieka responded that the homeowners association and SOCRRA invited him to attend a meeting held at Riverside Park in June. There was a discussion about stabilizing the bank at Riverside Park by installing railroad ties to reduce erosion. Another suggestion was made to remove some of the Buckthorn that was taking over that area and planting wild grasses. Pasieka was not aware of plans to plant a butterfly garden.

Joellen Gilchrist commented on plantings that are conducive to a butterfly garden. She stated that the SOCRRA staff is knowledgeable about environmental and ecological subjects.

Gilchrist stated that she is present to voice her concern about the Buckthorn growing in Beverly Park. There has been some Buckthorn removed on the east side of the park near the pond. She asked if there is continuing plans for any Buckthorn removal and restoration of that area.

Greening thinks that there will be more Buckthorn removed when Parks and Recreation has sufficient funds to replace those plants in the park. Schmitt added that there were complaints about removing greenery the last time the Parks and Recreation Board instigated the removal of Buckthorn.

Gilchrist suggested that there may be a need to educate people on how destructive Buckthorn is to other valuable growth. She volunteered to write an article for the Villager newsletter. Pasieka welcomed the article.

Board members recommended that additional Buckthorn be removed from the park.

MOTION by Harmon, supported by Davis, to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

Motion passes unanimously.

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

**Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk**

