

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE  
CITY OF AURORA  
October 8, 2009

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan Review Committee of the City of Aurora, Ohio, met on Thursday, October 8, 2009 at City Hall Council Chambers, for the purpose of holding a regular meeting. Mr. Kraus, called the meeting to order at 6:40p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Earl Biederman  
Pete Conces  
Sean Devins  
Tony Gramm  
Dennis Kovach  
Marcell Malecki  
Rita Scott  
Kurt Ruehr  
Bob Toth

Absent: George Hettinger  
John Kudley Jr.  
Kristin Lieberth

Also Present: James Kraus – Parks and Recreation Director  
Madeleine Marazzi - Recording Secretary

**INTRODUCTION & ELECTION OF COMMITTEE OFFICERS:** Members that were not here at the last meeting introduced themselves.

Mr. Kovach nominated Mr. Kraus for Chairman, Mrs. Malecki seconded. Mrs. Scott nominated Mr. Ruehr for Chairman, Mr. Conces seconded.

**MOTION:** Mr. Kraus was nominated for Chairman of the  
Parks and Recreation Master Plan Review Committee.

Mr. Kovach moved: Mrs. Malecki seconded and the motion passed 7-0. Mr. Kraus accepted.

**MOTION:** Mr. Ruehr was nominated for Chairman of the Parks  
And Recreation Master Plan Review Committee.

Mrs. Scott moved: Mr. Conces seconded and the motion was defeated 2-7.

**MOTION:** Mr. Ruehr was nominated for Vice Chairman of the  
Parks and Recreation Master Plan Review Committee.

Mrs. Malecki moved: Mr. Conces seconded and the motion passed 9-0. Mr. Ruehr accepted.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Kovach moved to approve the minutes of September 10, 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Review Committee. Mr. Gramm seconded and the motion passed 9-0 with a voice vote.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Review Bus Trip of Properties: Mr. Kraus stated the scheduled Saturday trip had to be cancelled due to illness and he would like to reschedule the tour if needed for those who could not make today's tour. Since some of the members that have not seen the property were not present, Mr. Kraus will be contacting them for a reschedule.

Mr. Kovach stated as Chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Committee he stated the Committee will be updating their tours all the time and will forward the information to this Committee. It is the Buildings and Grounds Committee responsibility to make sure that the buildings and grounds are kept up. The main thing right now is to get money in the budget for next year to keep up the property that will be utilized.

Mrs. Malecki asked what was the condition Ray and Margaret Harmon houses. Mr. Kraus stated the Margaret Harmon house is not in bad shape, the Ray Harmon house is in need of more work but not in great disrepair. Mr. Kovach stated the decision as to what and why we are going to save and how we are going to use the specified property is what we need to address. Mr. Kovach stated he felt the present administration does not have a game plan on the usage of all the buildings and is hoping with the Committee's input it will help Council make a decision.

Mr. Kraus stated the houses on the properties are not going to fall down right away, but we are going to want to make a decision on usage of all the properties and come up with an idea of what are the recreation needs and where are the best locations for those. Once the Committee makes a decision it will still be ultimately be up to Council to agree with the decision, then money can be allocated to the properties that will be retained.

Mrs. Scott asked if a summary of the last Parks and Recreation Master Plan and status be provided to the Committee.

Mrs. Malecki asked about what kind of grants could be applied for. Mr. Kraus stated it depended on the government status, parks grants etc. Mr. Conces there are grants for Parks and Recreation on the national level but takes a lot of research and qualifications. Mr. Rhuehr stated there were some listed in the Connectivity Report on page 37. Mr. Kraus stated sometimes you find them in businesses and little out of the way places such as the skate board park there was one offered by Tony Hawk. Mr. Kraus stated having an approved master plan will help target the right grants to apply for and make it easier to be approved. We also need to make sure if the grant matches funding that we have that funding available should we receive the grant.

Mr. Ruehr stated there are some other properties that the city owns around town, he wanted to know what the intention for them are and is the committee to discuss these parcels of land.

Mr. Kovach stated the Building and Grounds will be looking at all the extra properties with the intentions of making a list of what can be sold. Ultimately Council will make the decision and they will be cautious of what they will sell and buy due to the economy.

Mr. Kraus stated just the major parcels of land were visited during the present tour, not all the parks were visited. This could be done on another tour or if a committee member would like to go with him or as time permits they could drive by and see it for themselves. Mr. Kraus stated the major parcels of park land were visited on this tour because they are more up in question as far as vary in usage and what could or not be done. Mr. Kovach stated we probably should concentrate on the larger parks.

Mrs. Malecki stated after the tour she started thinking a little more on the historical side with the different homes on the properties. If Spring Hill is acquired by the city and it is the first settlement, this would be a great opportunity to do something big to bring people and money into town.

Mr. Graham was surprised on how much property is owned that he was not aware existed. He felt there is not enough awareness of what is out there and the challenge of connectivity needs to be concentrated on for a vision.

Mr. Conces stated the Cleveland Metro Parks has won several national gold medal awards because of their layout of properties and connectivity. We have the same opportunity with our properties; we have a circle of properties that we will need to look at as we lay out what properties we want to work with. We also want to think about the communities around us and take advantage of all the resources.

City Master Plan: Mr. Kraus stated every five years the City is charged with review of the master plan. In 2007 the City Master Plan Committee was established and developed a document that was approved in 2008. The major recommendations on page 2 and 3 are key concepts. One is the City will create a new Land-Use Map and Priority Development Area and Priority Conservation Area Map as an integral part of the plan. Mr. Kraus stated it's not only looking at development in the city but also conservation, so it does get into a little about what this committee is talking about as to what we want to conserve and preserve.

Mrs. Scott stated as part of the City Master Plan Committee in 2007 their philosophy was to be pragmatic. Some master plans in the past were very elaborate and it shows how time may change the needs and ways of thinking. She felt it was wise to have review commissions to see what the priorities were and what they are when reviewed and how much progress has been made on those priorities. The Master Plan Committee distilled everything down to five recommendations. This plan was adopted by City Council which means are the intent for every organization that is named is to be followed as planned.

Most of it is recommendations and analysis. Mrs. Scott stated the first was Steady and Controlled Growth and represented most people that live in Aurora do so because it's green and open and different by not having all the development of our neighbors. The city is under the magical numbers that major chains use to establish themselves in the area and we fall under the radar. Mrs. Scott also stated we are following a priority development area and a priority conservation area with the Chagrin River Watershed Partners. This means when a developer comes to the Planning Commission and it's not right for the area they will be told to follow another plan. The second recommendations was, Connections between places and neighborhoods which this committee will discuss further. The third recommendation was Continued Growth and Development of Open Spaces and Parks, at that time the Master Plan Committee felt as a whole, there were no properties to dispose of but an analyses of the 2000 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and revise if needed. The fourth part was a Historical and

Modern Town Center. We have all the hard parts already intact as far as property and locations we just need to make it workable by basic things and to focus our resources on our historic and modern town center. The last one was New Planning and Design Tools. Mrs. Scott stated the three that impacts us are #2,#3,#4.

Mr. Kraus stated a couple of key concepts for Parks and Recreation that came out of the plan was the core center and linkages for the most part. On page 12-15 of the City Master Plan it goes into detail of what our role is and will be. Mr. Kraus stated the Planning Commission is keeping in line with the City Master Plan by asking us to review our Parks and Recreation Master Plan before we continue with some of the property usages.

Connectivity Plan: Mr. Kraus stated this was charged to the Planning Commission to study and recommend in March 2009. Mr. Kraus discussed the phasing summary table on page ii of the City of Aurora Connectivity Study and what would apply to our committee.

Mrs. Scott stated she did not like the time frame on this for sidewalks and bike trails. We are talking under a million dollars to accomplish this and felt City Council should not take fifteen years to make this happen.

Mr. Kraus reviewed the phases of the connectivity report and explained to keep in mind when property is bought we will need to keep in mind bike trails, paths and sidewalks. In future meetings the committee will prioritize the sections of trails that need to be accomplished.

Mr. Ruehr asked how much of this Connectivity plan falls under the scope of our group. He felt phase four would fall under the scope of this committee. Mr. Kraus stated the three phases was intended for background information. Our plan will go with the Connectivity plan as we decide on parks and trails as to how it will fall into place with the sidewalk connectivity and end up supplementing the first three phases.

Mr. Gramm asked what was the overall Committees role. Mr. Kraus stated right now preparatory information is being discussed. We are thinking on how we want to use the properties the eventual goal is to have a map of trails and how we will connect, to have a list of properties and what will be done on them. It is creating a road map of where we want to go and where we see ourselves in twenty years as a parks and recreation system. It will also include programmatic information, and we will have individual groups come and speak to the Committee.

Mr. Kraus stated he would send out a list of groups that will be asked to speak for the Committee to review and asked if there are any groups that are missing to let him know. Mr. Kovach asked to keep in mind people that don't have children and what would be their interest.

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Mr. Biederman stated there was a committee to try to make connections from Aurora, to Solon and eventually end up in Cuyahoga Valley by the train line. Mr. Threw was part of this group and suggested they be invited also.

Mr. Conces stated when we sent out invitations to these groups we will need to impress on these groups that we are looking for feedback on what is needed and their desires.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Kovach moved to adjourn: Mrs. Scott seconded and the meeting adjourned at 8:00pm

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Mr. Kraus – Chairman

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Madeleine Marazzi – Recording Secretary