

Grosse Pointe Park Recreation Commission
Minutes of Wednesday September 9, 2015 7:05 pm Tompkins Community Center

Roll Call: Chairman Lou Cerre, Gerry Schilling, Larry Haggart, Stacey Jarvis, Bob Klacza, Carla Palffy, Parks and Rec. Director Terry Solomon, Activities Center Manager Mary Beth Hathaway, Councilman Dan Grano, Mayor Greg Theokas, and City Manager Dale Krajniak are present. Absent: **Excused absence for** Roy Edmonds.

Approval of Minutes of July, 2015

Mayor Theokas started the meeting with a commendation on Lou Cerre's 34 year history with the Recreation Commission and commented that it was a great turnout of citizens to voice their views in the matter of the potential dog park.

The Commission rearranged the agenda to put item 7 on the agenda first to accommodate over fifty citizens present to discuss the dog park.

Bob Klacza stated that the Rec. Commission is an advisory body that can give their recommendations to the City Council, but it is the City Council who votes on the site and funding issues.

Dale Krajniak raised some issues which would need to be addressed for a dog park including fund raising and cost of upkeep. He also commented that the approach should be the least disruptive to home owners and our present parks and that features such as parking, a decorative fence, two gates with holding area, a computer controlled scan entry system, (at \$10,000) landscaping, water, lights, and a camera (system) are to be considered in the final implementation.

The following locations were considered:

- Essex Road/Patterson Park area,
- Marck's Park adjacent to Lakepointe and East Jefferson
- Wayburn and Vernor, and
- between Maryland and Wayburn along Mack Avenue.

A number of people spoke passionately about the proposed location for an extended time including:

- Commission members Stacey Jarvis and Larry Haggart indicated that the Patterson Park area was their favored choice.
- Dan Grano initially preferred Marck's Park.
- Pete Muller of 959 Lakepointe indicated that Marck's Park is a mud pit when the snow melts in the Spring, and every time it rains.
- Bill Sumner, of Windmill Pointe Drive also indicated that Mark's Park is a mud pit at those times. Bill also commented about the use of Astro-Turf **in a Detroit dog park in**

Grand Circus Park, and what happens if it is not kept clean. He also commented about using the Park Foundation.

- Gerry Kudzin, 1031 Summerset, like Patterson, for it is 22 acres.
- Fred Olds strongly dislikes the Patterson and Essex location, due to the very close proximity to his home.
- Colleen Jogan at 811 Bedford has two dogs, but is very concerned with Parking Safety, and Noise.
- Cathy Lynn of 1455 Maryland, Sidney Sculley of 807 Pemberton, and John Chouinard, of 880 Westchester, wants it inside of Patterson Park,

In response to the suggestion that the dog park be placed inside of Patterson park there was considerable discussion about the pluses and minuses of that suggestion. There appeared to be general consensus against having the dog park inside Patterson Park.

Commission members Gerry Shilling, Bob Klacza, and Carla Palffy indicated that the City Council should be open to considering all potential locations, Carla Palffy favored discussing all three locations; however after public discussion agreed that due to proximity of neighbors Marcks Park was also “off the table” for her.

- Lynn Far of 815 Grand Marais, urged the minimum requirements for any dog park dog to have a Grosse Pointe Park Dog License, and all Shots and Vaccinations. Several other citizens, such as John Chouinard, also indicated the same, as well as several commission members.
- Mike Bannon of 1129 Nottingham and Debbie Carmody of 1429 Kensington also commented of the desirability of having a dog park.
- Scott of 982 Lakepointe also did not like the Marck's Park location.

Upon persistent urging from the citizens at the meeting, Larry Haggart made a motion, supported by Stacey Jarvis, that the Commission recommend consideration of Patterson Park as a location for the Dog Park with the condition of ongoing discussion as to the pros and cons of both inside and outside the park itself. The motion was passed by a vote of 4 to 2 vote in favor of that location. Schilling and Palffy opposed the motion stating that the vote was out of order since there had not been discussion amongst the Committee members as was in the agenda.

At this time most citizens left; however, the meeting continued with items 3-6.

There was no material news or updates on Windmill Pointe Park, Lavin's Activity Center and the Marina.

It was noted there would be two bands at Patterson Park on September 20, from 3 to 4PM.

Solomon noted there 113 Kayakers on the waiting list for racks at Patterson Park. A motion was made and resolution passed by a vote of 4-2 to raise the fee for a rack permit from \$150 Kayak to \$200.

The Commission then returned to further discussion on Item 7, the dog park. The Commission discussed the positive attributes of a dog park at Mack and Wayburn. Schilling and Palffy opposed the motion stating that the vote was out of order since there had not been discussion amongst the Committee members as was in the agenda. A resolution was made by Schilling and adopted by a 5-1 vote, with Haggart dissenting, for consideration prior to the Mack and Wayburn site as an additional viable site for a potential dog park.

A motion to nominate Bob Klacza to **succeed** Lou Cerre as the Chairman was approved by a unanimous vote.

Lou Cerre was presented with a GPP fleece jacket, and an Ice Cream Cake given in his honor was enjoyed by all !!

The meeting was adjourned at 9:58PM.

The next meeting of the Rec. Commission will be on Wednesday, November 4, 2015, at 7PM at the Windmill Pointe Park location.

** The Commission apologies for any name misspellings.

Grosse Pointe Park Parks and Recreation Commission,
Grosse Pointe Park City Council,
Dale Kranjiak, Grosse Pointe Park City Manager

Ladies and Gentleman:

On September 9 the Grosse Pointe Park Parks and Recreation Committee held an open meeting to take public comment, discuss and vote on a recommendation to the City Council as regards a Dog Park in Grosse Pointe Park.

The undersigned believe that, due to the nature of the events and votes, that further explanation is required for the record and hereby submits the following to be submitted as part of the Meeting Minutes and as a consideration for the City Council in its deliberations. The views herein are those of the undersigned only and are not necessarily intended to contradict other views which may be tendered by other members of the Committee.

At the meeting the Committee heard from dozens of residents, most of whom advocated adoption of a Dog Park at Patterson Park. In response to this demand the Committee was asked to vote on a proposal to recommend to the City Council that a Dog Park be placed at Patterson Park. Contrary to the intent of the meeting, this vote was held PRIOR to any Committee discussion and was passed by a vote of 4-2. Subsequent to the vote there was public comment about actually locating the Dog Park *inside* Patterson Park. However, the Committee vote was limited to *outside* of the park on Essex.

After the vote, most of the public left. The meeting continued with ongoing after which it voted 5-1 to recommend that the City Council also consider Mack and Wayburn as a site for a Dog Park.

It is unfortunate that the second vote was taken after the public left and thus leaves the false impression that the Committee adopted, preferentially and exclusively, Patterson Park as its recommendation for the Dog Park. The public perception does not match the reality and there will, unfortunately, be some discord when the second vote is disclosed to the public.

Nevertheless, the vote to place the Dog Park at Mack and Wayburn was undertaken with the benefit of reasoned discussion and by virtue of that discussion, its more affirmative 5-1 vote, and its penultimate nature ***it is the opinion of the undersigned that the second vote to place the Dog Park at Mack and Wayburn more accurately reflects the wishes of the Committee.***

It is obvious that a majority of residents who advocate a Dog Park and attended our meeting clearly prefer Patterson Park. This is not surprising, but should not be the determining factor. Just because a minority of residents with a special interest wish the Dog Park to be placed at Patterson does not mean this is the site most in the public interest.

We agree that a Dog Park is a public amenity which provides a valued public service and, as do other public parks, services and amenities, adds value to the Community. This does NOT mean that potential users of the Dog Park, which include the undersigned, being a minority of the community have the determining vote in where this Dog Park is located. Again, location should be in the PUBLIC interest, no matter how much users would prefer Patterson Park.

We believe it is overwhelmingly in the public interest to place the Dog Park at Mack and Wayburn for the following reasons.

1. Patterson Park already is stretching its "passive" charter. Any further activities there risk violating that charter, but more practically place more stress on the Park, in terms of landscaping, parking, safety, rules, and crowding. If any alternative site can be provided that is "additive" there is no reason to put what is already limited public park space at risk for further activities.
2. Dog Park advocates use Grosse Pointe Farms as an example. We agree. The Farms first attempted a Dog Park at Farms Pier. They found it led to conflicts and complaints and determined it was better to add to public park space by utilizing underdeveloped space. Accordingly they moved the Dog Park to Mack on their border with Detroit with very positive results; a "win-win". The parallel speaks for itself. We should learn from "history".
3. Mack and Wayburn has been idle for a number of years, contributing nothing but blight to the community and begs for a value added purpose. Here it is.
4. Traffic and parking are not an issue at Mack and Wayburn. Not so at Patterson.
5. Safety has been raised as a concern at Mack and Wayburn. However, the Farms has not seen any such problems at its site. This is a DOG park, the users of which (the dogs) are clearly a deterrent to crime. In addition precautions such as fencing, security cameras, emergency phones, and regular patrolling naturally mitigate this concern; there is a Detroit mini station located just across the street; and the Dog Park can contribute to the safety, aesthetics, and redevelopment of the neighborhood.

In sum, we believe the Council should adopt a Dog Park at Mack and Wayburn and in so doing should include landscaping (aesthetic fencing, vegetation, and water feature) and safety features that make the Dog Park:

- An attractive destination
- A Gateway to the Park and
- By virtue of eliminating blight and attracting traffic an anchor for development on the commercial corridor

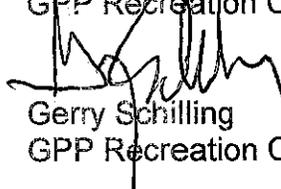
In sum, we agree with the "Dog Park Advocates" that a Dog Park would be a community asset and that models, such as Grosse Pointe Farms are relevant. However, we do not believe that this special interest should dictate the location of the Dog Park and that Mack and Wayburn is the site most in the public interest because it poses no risk to existing Parks or neighbors and actually provides value as a development asset to our Park system and commercial development. It is an additive, not a risky solution. We thus encourage you to work use this opportunity to work with the community and specifically businesses in the Mack-Wayburn-Charlevoix corridor to make this the impetus for expanded improvement in the Park.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Carla Palffy
GPP Recreation Commission Member



Gerry Schilling
GPP Recreation Commission Member