

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE OF THE CITY OF GROSSE POINTE WOODS HELD ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2023, IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE ROBERT E. NOVITKE MUNICIPAL CENTER, 20025 MACK PLAZA DR., GROSSE POINTE WOODS, MICHIGAN.

Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Bryant
Council Members: Brown, Gafa, Granger, Koester, McConaghy, Vaughn
ABSENT: None

Also Present: City Administrator Schulte
Assistant City Administrator Como
City Attorney Walling
Treasurer/Comptroller Murphy
City Clerk Antolin
Director of Public Services Kowalski

Motion by McConaghy, seconded by Brown, that all items on tonight's agenda be received, placed on file, and taken in order of appearance.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: Brown, Bryant, Gafa, Granger, Koester, McConaghy, Vaughn
No: None
Absent: None

The first item discussed was regarding the Park Improvement Proposal (PIP) submitted by the Citizens' Recreation Commission. Councilmember Brown provided an overview of the Park Improvement Proposal dated November 14, 2023. A major emphasis was focused on the proposed enhancements to the parks.

The following Ghesquiere Park enhancements were discussed:

- Building a multi-use pavilion with refrigerated ice rink/picnic tables and additional seating area;
- Adding walking path;
- Add Disc Golf course and dedicated pickleball courts;
- Update restrooms;
- Install additional swings and toddler playground equipment;
- Aesthetic signage;
- Improvements to baseball and softball facilities.

City Administrator Schulte added that the city is working with the Foundation and an active fundraising program is being implemented for additional toddler playground equipment and a Tot Swing set for Ghesquiere Park.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the updating and renovations of the bathrooms at Ghesquiere Park near baseball diamond #5.

The next park discussed was regarding the following enhancements for Lake Front Park:

- Add new cooking grills;
- Resurface bocce ball and shuffle board courts;
- Add toddler playground equipment;
- Add more shaded areas around pool and miniature golf course.

The Committee stated that the city needs to initiate cost findings with the Recreation Commission to get an estimated amount to prepare funding and budgeting. The parks need more toddler playground equipment; however, it is expensive. Other big expense projects need to be accounted for when making any projections.

A brief discussion began concerning drainage at Ghesquiere Park.

Councilmember Gafa addressed Little League's request to install new bleachers for baseball fields #2, #3, and #4. This includes 6 bleachers each with cement pads in the amount of \$75,000. This is approximately \$25,000 for each baseball field. Collaboration with the Recreation Commission and incorporating this request with the Park Improvement Proposal is ideal.

Grosse Pointe Woods is often asked by the Little League to host at Ghesquiere Park. With the requested enhancements, this would be a great way to expose what the city has to offer.

Additionally, adequate soccer fields throughout the city were discussed and the possible addition of benches were considered.

The Committee suggested creating a list of top 5 ranked big and small projects and possibly incorporating them into a 5- or 10-year plan with corresponding costs to implement as a guide for future projects. It was suggested to get information from the Master Plan Open House that was held on October 23, 2024.

The next item discussed was regarding a request from the Citizens' Recreation Commission regarding Member Clothing Allowance. The Commission produces several events yearly including Winterfest, Annual Fishing Derby, and bike cruises. The Commission is requesting a standard uniform, such as t-shirts/sweatshirts identifying the members at these events. Currently, no other commissions have

uniforms or attire identifying the members. It is important to have consistency with other commissions. It was suggested that vests for all seasons with ID badges would be ideal for all commissions. The Committee requested that the Recreation Supervisor present some pricing for vests to City Administration or on a future Committee-of-the-Whole meeting.

The next item discussed was regarding Walking Path Concepts for Ghesquiere Park. City Administrator Schulte, in his memo dated December 15, 2023, states that the Park Improvement Plan also included a walking path for Ghesquiere Park. Administration and city engineer AEW proposed three walking path concepts that are 6 feet wide and made of asphalt. The estimated cost for each concept plan is as follows:

1. Concept #1 is 3,000 ft. – total project cost \$475,000
2. Concept #2 is 2,900 ft. – total project cost \$450,000
3. Concept #3 is 1,950 ft. – total project cost \$360,000

It is the intent of City Administration, once approved by Council, to start a budget process by allowing the Citizens' Recreation Commission to review the proposal and submit costs to the Finance Committee.

Some Committee members felt the costs were too high and suggested incorporating this project with part of the Park Improvement Plan preferred list to see how high they rank this proposal. It was also suggested to possibly complete the project in phases. However, there were concerns that completing the project over multiple years may significantly increase the costs. In addition, another concern is that the walking path may not be utilized as expected.

Discussion ensued regarding different ways of decreasing the cost of the walking path. It was request that City Administration get a quote for 5 feet wide rather than 6 feet wide path.

The Committee stated that it would be of more value and make more sense if the walking path is part of an infrastructure park plan that links all the amenities of the park together.

Under New Business the following individual was heard:

- Councilmember Koester addressed the request from the Tree Commission to approve the purchase of three memorial plaques in honor of the members who recently passed away. The members were Ted Colborn, Bob Greening, and Peter Groschner. There was a consensus of the Committee-of-the-Whole to approve the purchase of the three memorial plaques in memory of the Tree Commission members who recently passed.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the availability of memorial plaque locations and options for placements.

- Councilmember Koester stated that the current fee for a memorial tree marker is \$250.00; however, the fee does not cover the cost. The Tree Commission is requesting to increase the fee from \$250.00 to \$500.00. There was a consensus of the Committee-of-the-Whole to increase the memorial tree marker from \$250.00 to \$500.00. This cost increase will be updated in the fee schedule.

There was a brief discussion regarding evaluation of tree planting for City Hall. It was stated that the Tree Commission has submitted a grant to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Collaboration with the Beautification Advisory Commission was suggested.

- Councilmember Vaughn addressed the Planning Commission's recommendation to approve the ordinance amendments to Chapter 32 – Signs at their meeting on December 12, 2023. Although there were several changes to the ordinance, one major reason for the amendment was to be in compliance with laws regarding "Temporary Signs" and more specifically "Political Signs" with the upcoming Presidential Primary election approaching on February 27, 2024. Enforcement will be complaint driven. Councilmember Vaughn was comfortable to proceed with the approval and suggested to place this item on a future Committee-of-the-Whole meeting. City Administrator Schulte stated that City Attorney Tomlinson has reviewed the changes to the ordinance and concurred to move forward with the approval. There was a consensus of the Committee-of-the-Whole to further discuss this item at the Committee-of-the-Whole meeting on January 8, 2024.
- Director of Public Services Kowalski addressed the concept of allowing dog walkers at Lake Front Park provided that the owners have a park pass, the dogs are on a leash, and remain on the walking path. It was stated that the local communities are having geese issues at their parks and that more dogs at the park would deter more geese. The Committee suggested to be very specific with the rules and enforcement. There was a consensus of the Committee-of-the-Whole to allow dog walkers at Lake Front Park on a trial basis.
- City Administrator Schulte addressed that there are many non-union employees with the potential to retire and vast institutional knowledge of Grosse Pointe Woods. Once retired, he is requesting to engage in possibly bringing them back. There will be a savings to the city of approximately \$50,000.00 on average per employee. This process has been done in the past with no issues. The Committee wanted to make sure there was a contingency plan to be implemented. There was a consensus of the Committee to approve City Administrator Schulte's request to bring back non-union employees after their retirement with a contingency plan.

Under Public Comment, the following individuals were heard:

- An anonymous resident, addressed Ghesquiere Park regarding flooding, accessible walking paths, and the sale of t-shirts to minimize costs.

- Bill Meredith, addressed the importance of parks in the city, Ghesquiere Park being a “neighborhood” park, concerns of moving the ice rink, and welcoming enhancements to the park.

Motion by Gafa, seconded by McConaghy, that the meeting of the Committee-of-the-Whole be adjourned at 8:58 p.m. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul P. Antolin
City Clerk

Arthur W. Bryant
Mayor