



MINUTES
Committee on Ways and Means
May 31, 2017 @ 4:00 p.m.
10th Floor Conference Room, City Hall

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Councilmember Jody Washington, Chair
Councilmember Kathie Dunbar, Vice Chair. absent
Councilmember Carol Wood, Member

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, Council Staff
Eric Brewer, Council Internal Auditor
Brett Kaschinske, Parks & Recreation Director
Angela Bennett, Finance Director- arrived at 4:03 p.m.
Joseph Abood, Chief Deputy City Attorney
Todd Heywood, Lansing City Pulse
Kathy Miles
Elaine Womboldt
Judith Felice
Mary Stanford
Elo Wittig
Bethany Styer
Ryan Smith
Harold Leeman
Dale Schrader
Kathleen Badgley
Brian Lum

Discussion/Action

Ormond Park

Council Member Washington explained to the public the purpose of this meeting was to find out where the financing for the road in Ormond Park entrance was coming from and where the direction for the plan was going.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

Mr. Schrader acknowledged it was not in his neighborhood, but voiced a concern about the loss of the parks.

Mr. Smith voiced his concern with the entrance and road proposed through Ormond Park, and questioned the legality of the process and if it would still be classified as a park if the majority of it is turned into a driveway.

Mr. Wittig acknowledged he visited the park for the first time this past weekend, and spoke to a local resident at the park who is in opposition to the road.

Ms. Styer a resident from Green Street in the neighborhood that abuts Osmond Park spoke in opposition to the road going through the park.

Ms. Felice spoke in opposition to the road through Ormond Park stating her belief that it was deliberately done as a last minute to avoid dealing with the community.

Ms. Womboldt spoke in opposition to the proposed road through Ormond Park.

Ms. Stanford spoke as a resident near Ormond Park, stating she spoke in support of keeping the park as it is with no entrance for Groesbeck Golf Course at that location.

Ms. Badgley spoke as a resident that broadens Ormond Park and voiced her concerns that the park is dedicated, inquired to any restrictions and acquisitions, and concluded by asking Council to pass a resolution to halt construction.

Ms. Miles spoke in support of all comments stated so far.

Mr. Leeman reminded the Committee of the process that was done in the past by Council at the same park where they took public comment for the full body to hear and it was held.

Mr. Lum asked the Committee to pursue steps to go through a transparent process.

Ormond Park

Council Member Washington began the conversation outlining what was known at this time, and clarifying that Council was not made aware of the project at any time until the neighborhood informed them of the progress.

The details in the Park Board minutes from March 8, 2017 noted the cost budgeted for the road through Ormond Park would be \$385,000 making an accessible and visible entrance to Groesbeck Golf Course. In the CIP ranking of the project at the Park Board there were only 3 board members who wanted the access road.

Council Member Washington then listed questions for the Administration which included where was the funds coming from, where were these funds in the budget, who did the Administration talk to in the neighborhood, who wants it, and who is implementing it. Also added was the question on why additional signage was not considered before a road through the park was decided.

Council Member Washington reminded the Administration that during the budget the Council was told that Lansing residents do not golf, and so that is why the golf course management was

moving to LEPPA to get more usage, but now Council is being told that a road through a residential park is needed because there is too much traffic on the residential streets. Lastly, Council Member Washington asked two more questions, if there is a liquor license for the course and whose authority is this coming under.

Council Member Wood had no questions at this time, she wanted to hear responses from the Administration.

Ms. Bennett provided answers to some of the questions, beginning by stating the \$380,000 was available from park millage funds from FY2016/2017 and it will also include approximately \$5,000 for project design.

Council Member Wood reminded Ms. Bennett that during the budget Council was told there was \$250,000 in the current budget in carry forward. Ms. Bennett clarified that there is available funding at \$380,000 which is CIP funds and Council does not have to approve those carry forward transactions.

Council Member Washington asked if park millage can be used for roads, and Mr. Kaschinske noted that in the parks millage there were references to "paving items" and design funds.

Council Member Wood asked how the priority of the projects is determined. Mr. Kaschinske referred to the pacer ratings the perform on all asphalt trails and parking lots, and then those results are taken into consideration for the projects under "parks paving". They have received estimates on Foster Community Center parking lot, the Bancroft loop and have done paving in the cemeteries. The funds for those fall under the paving account. The Foster and Bancroft projects will fall in next fiscal year.

Council Member Wood asked if the Ormond project was not done this year if they could address Foster paving instead. Mr. Kaschinske admitted they plan to do both. Ms. Bennett acknowledged there was \$380,116 in this fiscal year, and the amount will also include design funds.

Council Member Washington asked about potential projects at Gier, Sycamore and Alfreda Schmidt South Side Community Center. Mr. Kaschinske pointed out that that Alfreda Schmidt Community Center is on school property, and added that they look at all parking lots.

Council Member Wood asked about the grants from the County for the trails, so why not put dollars into the trails to open them all up. Mr. Kaschinske confirmed all of the River Trail is open, and reminded the group that the voters did not agree to put this amount towards the River Trail from the millage.

Council Member Wood pointed out to all present that the intent of the budget is to have information provided as part of CIP, and Council is given information on all projects. Ormond Park was never part of that information provided to them. Law was asked if the money can be spent without Council approval. Mr. Abood reiterated an earlier statement that the funds put towards the entrance to Ormond Park are CIP carry forwards, which do not need Council approval. He added that it is not a legal question, and there is no fact on why something was or wasn't discussed.

Council Member Wood then asked Mr. Kaschinske why Ormond Park was never discussed during the Groesbeck Golf Course with LEPPA during the budget. Mr. Kaschinske stated that

Parks discussed it in the 5 year Master Plan, and was presented to the Park Board as part of 3 options. Two of the options would be off Wood Road coming in at \$2 million and \$4 million. Those were vetted at the Park Board meeting, and there was also discussion on the project at the past board meetings and during the Master Plan meetings.

Council Member Wood stated her understanding that there was a decision to move forward, but Council was not privileged to it. Ms. Bennett added to the discussion that there were discussions in the past in general with no specific amounts or parks.

The Committee asked if there was money already spent on this project. Mr. Kaschinske stated that C2AE was hired for the design work and they were the ones that created the three (3) proposals. These three (3) proposals were presented at the public Parks Board meetings. Council Member Washington asked staff who made the final decision on this proposal. Mr. Kaschinske confirmed the Administration made the decision and it is part of the overall plan of Groesbeck Golf Course. This will include closing access to the course from Maryland, Otto, and Sheldon. They have not received any records of any accidents, but it will make it safer in those areas.

Council Member Washington voiced her frustration for the neighborhood that have been effected by the changes with Bancroft Park, the change of management of Groesbeck Golf Course to LEPFA and now the changes in Ormond Park.

Mr. Brewer pointed out that there is \$75,000 in CIP for FY2018 for Groesbeck decking, the mentioned \$385,000 of CIP carryforward, and the \$600,000 subsidy for Groesbeck. He suggested they increase the revenue at the Course.

Council Member Wood asked why the project could not halt and allow for community input. Mr. Kaschinske stated they did get input during the Master Plan presentations, during the Park Board meetings at three different times, and during the overall plan of Groesbeck Golf Course. The Park Board saw the project options during their CIP discussions and votes and this was voted on by the Park Board for ranking in how important they thought it was. It came in 3rd on the list with the patio with pavilion or tent at Groesbeck in 4th place. Council Member Washington noted to Mr. Kaschinske that she spoke to Park Board members and they were not aware of this.

Council Member Wood stepped away from the 4:47 p.m.

Council Member Washington voiced her frustration on the lack of transparency from the Administration and the need for compromise for everyone to win.

Council Member Wood returned to the meeting at 4:48 p.m.

Council Member Washington asked the staff present if there was a way to halt the process and create a win-win for everyone involved.

Ms. Felice asked Mr. Abood if the road was to go through Ormond, and the course does go to LEPFA, if the park land can be retained in the Parks and Recreation Department. Council Member Wood answered the question by clarifying that with the contract, the park will remain with the Parks and Recreation Department, and LEPFA will have a contract to manage the facility.

Council Member Washington explained to the public that there was no RFP, no business plan or plan presented to Council on this recent proposal and Council did not know until the budget came before them about the contract with LEPFA.

Council Member Wood stepped away from the meeting at 4:51 p.m.

Ms. Badgley pointed out that in the Park Master Plan Ormond Park was listed as one of 5 major goals, and when the public was asked how they wanted park millage money spent, it was for preservation, nature centers, more park land, and more playgrounds. She added, that on the list it was #14 out of 15 items, a golf course was acknowledged.

Council Member Wood returned to the meeting at 4:52 p.m.

Ms. Stanford asked if the golfers were asked about the entrances. Mr. Kaschinske stated in their surveys, it was asked and is in the current survey. The new entrance is proposed for safety reason, because currently there is access on 4 residential streets; Ormond, Sheldon, Otto and Maryland. There is a concern with traffic on those streets to they want to close those accesses and create a dedicated entrance. Ms. Stanford was asked for traffic calming on the existing streets instead, and she was referred to Public Service for those changes.

Mr. Wittig spoke on behalf of the residents on Otto, Sheldon and Maryland that want the park to stay as is.

Ms. Bennett noted that there were funds from FY15/16 in the paving fund that was carried forward. Council Member Wood asked for a detailed list of all dollars carried forward and the projects they were for and the balances.

Council Member Washington directed Mr. Brewer to assist in gathering the information, and include in the information details on why such a large carryforward. Mr. Kaschinske provided examples of projects that come in under budget so there are funds that can be carried forward for future projects, or projects that do not get done because they were granted supported and the grant was not awarded or approved.

Council Member Washington asked when the project through Ormond Park would start, and Mr. Kaschinske stated they have not received any bids back, so they do not have a start date. Council Member Washington encouraged staff to go back to the Administration to see what other options can be done and seek out community input.

Ms. Womboldt stated her opposition to the lack of details on the funding process.

Council Member Washington concluded by reminding all staff present that tax dollars are being spent on something the residents do not want.

ADJOURN

Adjourn at 5:02 p.m.

Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on July 11, 2017