



**CITY OF YPSILANTI
CITY COUNCIL/RECREATION COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION MEETING MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
ONE SOUTH HURON STREET, YPSILANTI, MI 48197
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2005
7:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER –

Council Member LaRue called the Council meeting to order in the temporary absence of Mayor Farmer and Mayor Pro-Tem Swanson at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL –

Mayor Farmer	7:25 pm	Council Member Nickels	Present
Council Member Filipiak	Present	Council Member Richardson	Present
Council Member Gawlas	7:10 pm	Mayor Pro-Tem Swanson	Absent
Council Member Larue (chair)	Present		
Chairman Weiss	Present	Commissioner Wilbanks	Present
Commissioner Lucchetti	Absent	Commissioner Winkelseth	Absent
Commissioner Rhoden	Absent	Commissioner Zuber	7:10 pm

Council Member Larue announced he would be chairing the meeting in the absence of Mayor Farmer and Mayor Pro-Tem Swanson.

Council Member Richardson offered a motion to excuse the absences of Mayor Farmer, Mayor Pro-Tem Swanson, Council Member Gawlas and Commissioners Lucchetti, Rhoden, Winkelseth and Zuber. Motion was supported by Council Member Nickels.

Ayes: 4 Nays: 0 Absent: 3 (Farmer, Swanson, Gawlas) Vote: 4

III. INVOCATION –

Council Member Larue asked all to stand for a moment of silence.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE –

"I pledge allegiance to the flag, of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

V. AGENDA APPROVAL –

**City of Ypsilanti
City Council/Recreation Commission
Study Session Agenda (as Amended)
City Hall
One S. Huron Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Tuesday, February 15, 2005
7:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Mayor Farmer	P A	Council Member Nickels	P A
Council Member Filipiak	P A	Council Member Richardson	P A
Council Member Gawlas	P A	Mayor Pro-Tem Swanson	P A
Council Member Larue	P A		
Chairman Weiss	P A	Commissioner Wilbank	P A
Commissioner Lucchetti	P A	Commissioner Winkelseth	P A
Commissioner Rhoden	P A	Commissioner Zuber	P A

III. INVOCATION

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"I pledge allegiance to the flag, of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

V. AGENDA APPROVAL

VI. INTRODUCTIONS

VII. RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS

A. Resolution No. 2005-14, regarding voting equipment

VIII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

IX. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A.** Introductions & Review of November Action Items
1. Recreation Coordinator
 2. Council/Commission Communication
 3. Regional Authority
 4. Recreation Master Plan
- B.** Regional Authority Concept
- C.** Recreation Master Plan
1. Discuss most important ideas
 2. Prioritize capital recommendations
 3. Potential Salvation Army partnership
 4. Next Steps

X. ADJOURNMENT – 9:50 p.m.

Council Member Larue noted that there is a Resolution (2005-14) before the Council regarding voting equipment. There were no objections to placing the resolution before the Council. The resolution is to be placed after INTRODUCTIONS on the agenda. All voted in favor of placing the resolution before the Council and accepting the amended agenda.

VI. INTRODUCTIONS – No introductions

VII. RESOLUTIONS

A. Resolution No. 2005-14

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YPSILANTI:

Whereas, the Ypsilanti City Council wishes to apply to the Secretary of State for a grant to purchase an optical scan voting system and related Election Management System (EMS) software to comply with the Help America Vote Act (HAVA); and

Whereas, the Ypsilanti City Council has chosen to submit a grant application for a new optical scan voting system in 2005; and

Whereas, the Ypsilanti City Council authorizes its City Clerk to serve as the Grant Manager to sign the grant application on behalf of the City, maintain records relating to the purchase, maintenance, and training of the new voting equipment; and

Whereas, the State of Michigan Bureau of Elections grant application provides for 10 Precinct Tabulators, one Absent Voter Counting Board Tabulator and Election Management Software (EMS) to be purchased through the Washtenaw County Clerk Office that will be used at each designated voting location throughout the City of Ypsilanti.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Ypsilanti City Council authorizes the submission of the grant application to the Secretary of State for the purpose of complying with the Help America Vote Act for the purchase of 11 new voting equipment systems, and authorizes the City Clerk to serve as the Grant Manager for the application and maintenance process.

OFFERED BY: Council Member Filipiak

SUPPORTED BY: Council Member Gawlas

DISCUSSION OF RESOLUTION

City Attorney's opinion regarding challenge about requiring a 5-member vote. Section 2.08 of Charter – Procedures as applied to the legislature (City

Council). Referenced Subparagraph C – affirmative vote of 4 or more members of the Council.

Council Member Gawlas asked about life expectancy of the present equipment (about 5 more years according to the Clerk's office). He asked if it was possible to sell the present equipment and get some salvage value out of it. The Clerk is checking with communities to discuss selling the present equipment and replacing with the new equipment. Some counties will still be using the old equipment. Council Member Gawlas asked if the equipment complies with the requirements of the new Help America Vote Act. Ms. Lawson explained the compliance of the equipment.

Council Member Richardson asked if the grant would cover the total cost of the new machines. Ms. Lawson explained that the grant would cover 11 machines (one machine per precinct). She explained that we would have to budget an additional \$4750 for the 12th machine, which serves as a back-up.

Council Member Nickels asked if we would have the same ballots. Ms. Lawson stated there would be different ballots and explained how the new ballots would work.

VOTE

YES: 6 NO: 0 ABSENT: 1 (Swanson) VOTE: 6

VIII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

A. Tyrone Wilson, representing RAID and NAN, mentioned that he was glad that Council had noticed that there was a missing item on the agenda, Audience Participation. He spoke of his opinion of the City Clerk's office. He discussed the lack of updates to the City web-site as the Mayor and Council supported. He also spoke about the Recreation Department.

B. Lee Tooson spoke regarding the Police Department's Audio and Video Department and the incident at BW3's. Tooson alleged that the cameras weren't on in the locker or booking rooms. He passed out telephone numbers for the Council to get in touch with the persons involved in the incident.

C. Joseph Lawrence of 212 South Huron St. spoke regarding the Vacant Buildings Ordinance that is due to come back on March 1, 2005. He referred to the St. Paul, Minnesota Dangerous Building Ordinance.

D. Steve Pierce of 118 South Washington also spoke regarding the Vacant Buildings Ordinance that is due for second reading on March 1, 2005. He expressed concern for Towner House and Freight House.

Resolution 2005-14 approved as read.

IX. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Introductions and Review of November Action Items.

Mayor Farmer introduced the Chairman of Recreation Commission, John Weiss. Mr. Weiss discussed items on table entitled Action Items. (See table attached.)

1. Recreation Coordinator Position - The person in this position would manage both current and emerging relations, focus on programming and lend support to grant making to allow the Assistant City Manager to concentrate on other responsibilities.

Council Member LaRue asked if anyone had researched grant opportunities for this position. Would this be a 40-hour per week position?

Council Member Filipiak stated that this would free up the Assistant City Manager to concentrate on items other than clerical issues.

Commissioner Weiss believes there is enough work to support a full-time position. Bob Bruner and Davia Cox have put together a comprehensive grant application.

Council Member LaRue asked what the salary range of this coordinator would be. Commissioner Weiss stated \$35,000-\$40,000 plus benefits. He stated that they would be requesting funding for the position for one year. Then it would be expected that the City be able to support this position after that first year as a City position by means of income tax or other means.

Council Member LaRue spoke about the feasibility of income tax to cover this position.

Council Member Gawlas wished to ask from a practical standpoint if there might be a possibility to make this a contractual position. He talked about the issues with hiring staff.

Commissioner Weiss spoke about non-profit contractual hiring, but wasn't sure how that would work with the City.

Mayor Farmer stated that initially the Recreation Department stated that they would find the way to support the coordinator position financially. She was unsure that income tax would really be able to cover this

position. There are so many other needs, such as the police force, that require attention first.

Chairman Weiss said that if the Council was willing to commit to even possibly supporting the position, it would be reason enough for him to continue to expend the energy to find funding for the position.

Commissioner Zuber stated that the constituents believe that this coordinator position is really necessary. We need to figure out better ways to support the citizens that are spending their own time and money. She spoke of finding even a potential third of a salary for a person to fill this role.

Mayor Farmer stated that it looked as if after one year the City would need to be responsible for the whole salary, which is not feasible.

Commissioner Zuber said that the person who would fill this position would need to come in and raise the money to support their own salary. If they don't after a year, then the position would be cut.

Council Member Nickels spoke of it being common for grant employees who depend on grant funding for their positions. If there is no grant money, there is no position.

Commissioner Zuber said the Commission is committed to finding the grant money for this position. She stated that the Commission could not go forward without a blessing from the City

Council Member Nickels stated that he believed it was a wonderful idea. However, he thought that committing general fund money was not something that could be done.

Chairman Weiss believes we need to get citizen input. He stated there is a plan and people who are working hard, but that more City support is needed.

Council Member Nickels spoke of the serious financial problems that the City is experiencing.

Council Member Gawlas stated that the position is a great concept, but that moving forward, that the whole Recreation program run as a grant-driven model until it can find another funding source. He spoke of using income tax to fund. He does believe the City should be able to make a commitment to this Recreation Coordinator based on the success of "grassroots" efforts, such as Friends of the Freighthouse. Further down the road, he feels the City should be able to put some General Fund

monies toward this position. He stated the importance of making this position aware that it is funding itself.

Mayor Farmer asked Mr. Bruner how it is working out with him being the point-person. She also asked if the coordinator position really needed to be a full-time position.

Mr. Bruner stated that he spends half of his time on recreation easily. Davia has done a lot of the grant researching and writing. He has been focused more on direct operational items, making sure the staff has what they need. He feels that there is definitely a need for a full-time position.

Chairman Weiss stated that we need to remember that recreation services have been cut back significantly. He said that the vision is for this position to continually expand.

Council Member Gawlas asked where the responsibility would lie in evaluating the position in terms of cost-effectiveness. What is the net gain for the city beyond just covering that position, and who would make that assessment?

Commissioner Zuber expressed the hope that there would be a joint effort between the Commission and the city in evaluating the validity of the position. She stated that continued sessions would help to make clear what goals should be. If the position isn't meeting the goal, she believes it would be clear that it was not meeting the goal.

Council Member Gawlas restated that he felt it should be a contractual arrangement that would provide for a fixed dollar amount for the position as long as pre-determined obligations and goals are reached. He stated that the Recreation Department needs to help Council to determine what the goals are for that position.

Commissioner Zuber introduced James Mueller, the Development Director at the Salvation Army, stating that the Salvation Army could potentially be a funder for this or other items being discussed.

Council Member LaRue met with Leslie Chase with Friends of the Freighthouse. He discussed with her how the Riverside Arts Center runs without any paid staff. He asked if we necessarily have to pay a full-time staff person, or could we seek a volunteer. It may be worthwhile to look for those who are retired that may just want to donate their time.

Council Member Filipiak stated that he doesn't want to see the position split among three or four people. This would make the idea of a single coordinator invalid.

Council Member Gawlas mentioned the possibility of an RFP for support. He believes the work involved is more labor-intensive than the Riverside Arts Center.

Council Member LaRue countered that he simply thought that there might be talented people in the area of the retired workforce who might find this to be a challenge.

Council Member Nickels requested a job description and details. He asked what the goal of the Commission was at tonight's meeting.

Chairman Weiss stated that he would like to get Council's approval to shop around with funders so that a proposal could be crafted.

Council Member Gawlas said that once approval is given, then it could be determined what goals, priorities and targets need to be reached.

Mayor Farmer defined "pro-active in sustaining" the position as "continuing to commit part of Bob's time to work with the Coordinator, continuing to pay for the utilities to keep buildings open." She believed the Council could commit to that definition.

Council Member Gawlas asked about being able to give office space for this position.

Mr. Ed Koryzno explained that this is no different than the grants that are running the Recreation Department now, except that this entails a one-year person as opposed to a one-year program.

Council Member Gawlas asked how many grants have built into them administrative support.

Chairman Weiss spoke about challenges in terms of funding the grant and sustainability.

James Mueller made the suggestion that the City should consider private funders. There are individuals out there who could and would fund something like this.

Mr. Weiss requested that Mr. Mueller talk with the Council more about strategy.

Mr. Mueller said he's willing to work with the City as much as possible to meet the Recreation shortcomings. He spoke of the tremendous amount of resources available to the Salvation Army.

A consensus was reached and it was agreed upon to move forward.

2. Council/Commission Communication - Chairman Weiss wished to express his appreciation for the involvement of the Council and the Mayor in coming to Commission meetings. He is grateful for the awareness of the Council. He believes that the meetings being held are very useful.

B. Regional Authority

Chairman Weiss spoke about looking at different models before the March meeting. He said some of the things that were developed were talking points as to why the Regional Authority is a useful concept.

Council Member Gawlas wondered how the value of the Authority would be different from County recreation programs. How would this be different from what the County could provide?

Robert Tetens (Washtenaw County Recreation) said he wishes to examine the feasibility of establishing a Regional Authority within other local municipalities and even the County that were interested in partnering.

Council Member Gawlas shared his perception of County Recreation being more weighted toward facility than programming.

Mr. Tetens stated that he had been very concerned with programming, and said he is now focusing on an outreach effort to contact every school to ask if there is an opportunity to bring programs to their venues.

Chairman Weiss summarized what Mr. Tetens said by asking if Mr. Tetens thinks that if we were to look at a regional authority that is smaller that there would be more of a local focus than the county.

Council Member LaRue wondered about the pragmatic aspects of other entities doing the same. Has anyone established whether there are any willing partners? Or is it because WE think it's good?

Chairman Weiss stated that one of the goals was to find talking points and bring those talking points to people in other regions to get their reactions. If positive reactions are found, he feels the need to have additional meetings.

Mr. Tetens discussed the importance of program accessibility. If schools will donate facility space to run programs, then a revenue ~~screen~~ stream could be started to support the programs.

Council Member Gawlas brought up the importance of spelling out the advantages of having a Regional Authority. For instance, if a school is paying for a pool within their facility and becomes part of a Regional Authority, there could be potential Authority dollars going toward paying for that pool.

Commissioner Zuber inquired as to whether Ypsilanti schools are starting an initiative to ask the community for help with problem issues. She felt this was part of the need to work together.

Council Member Filipiak asked who would benefit from being involved in a Regional Authority. He also wondered what Ypsilanti's benefit would be.

Council Member LaRue said this would be based on SEV. There would be fewer general fund dollars going to it, but that specific designated funding would be paying for it, which would free up their ability to lower their general fund millage.

Council Member Gawlas brought up that charter townships are granted by charter a certain ability to levy a millage. They would still have their full complement of a charter allotment that they could assess as a millage for other needs that they may have.

Council Member LaRue suggested that in Ypsilanti we would be able to put some of the cost that we are bearing on an annual basis into the Authority (utilities, upkeep, etc.) and take it off of the general fund.

Council Member Gawlas stated that the City alone can not create a Recreation Authority. Our 20 mils could be free of the Recreation obligations.

Council Member LaRue said we have to use the mechanism of the authority that we can't do with Recreation as we did with the solid waste millage that we imposed (which is above the 20 mils). He asked Mr. Koryzno if that is by State law.

Mr. Koryzno responded that State law allows you to do the solid waste millage, but with the Recreation Authority, it has to be more than one.

Mayor Farmer observed that we would be providing a lot of the leadership to make everything happen. All they would need to do is

help provide some of the funding support and simply join in. An advantage with allying with the City is that there are a lot of people who would be willing to take a leadership role.

Mr. Tetens introduced survey data that he believed the Council would find useful.

Council Member Gawlas mentioned Estabrook School's pool.

Commissioner Zuber observed that this would take time and that all involved would have to be committed to taking the time to talk to people and make this happen.

Council Member Gawlas brought up the initiative happening at the school district. He stated that we should be talking with some of these people as they are looking for ways to cut or offset costs.

Mr. Bruner asked how many members of the 36 commission members are representatives of the City. It was brought out that there were none representing the City.

A discussion followed of who would contact whom to discuss this Regional Authority and its benefits.

The Council agreed that Fall was the best time to schedule a summit for Regional Authority.

C. Recreation Master Plan

Chairman Weiss requested the Council's reactions on the master plan. The Council agreed that progress was being made despite challenges.

Council Member Gawlas and LaRue spoke of Operational Costs versus Capital Costs. Mr. LaRue gave the example of the Ypsilanti High School that the City built but could not afford to properly operate.

Council discussed local versus regional amenities.

Commissioner Zuber drew the Council's attention to the Safety Inspection Summary. She is very concerned as a mother with the findings of this summary.

Mr. Tetens offered Washtenaw's playground inspector could be loaned to the City for playground inspections.

Chairman Weiss referenced pages 17, 18 and 19 to call attention again to the need to push for a Recreation Coordinator, as this was mentioned several times.

Ms. Zuber mentioned Peninsular Park. She wondered if anything has been done with current development.

Mr. LaRue suggested talking to whoever develops something at the old paper mill once they get up and running. Would they be interested in doing something that could be an amenity for the residents of their development?

Chairman Weiss wished to look at tables that follow page 22 which summarize capital improvements, with various ideas listed. The goal is to get some sense of priorities. He suggested finding the top five priorities.

Mayor Farmer noted that a lot of the items were interconnected. She said that most of the items required a certain amount of work to be completed before any of the rest of the items could be completed.

Council discussed improving parks. Parks that are used as event parks need to be upgraded. Could grant dollars be put to good use in upgrading these areas? Friends of the Park was brought up to facilitate improvements.

Chairman Weiss wanted to give Mr. James Mueller the opportunity to share his thinking on how the Salvation Army fits in on a partnership basis.

James Mueller gave the Salvation Army's estimate of \$3-5 million for building a center for recreation, education and fine arts. He stated that it's a struggle to maintain the facility that Ypsilanti presently has. He added that there would be an endowment of \$5 million for helping with operating expenses. They are in the process of gathering a committee and getting feedback from neighborhood associations. They need to hire a company to do a feasibility study in this area to see whether \$10 million can be generated. He believes there are endless opportunities to partner with the City. The Salvation Army is looking at this as a regional effort which would benefit the entire county. They ask that the City donate the land for this center. Waterworks Park was offered as a potential site. James stated that the problem with this is the flood plain. He said \$30 million would have to be spent to bring the land above the flood plain. Parkridge Park was one of his recommendations for the site.

Council Member LaRue suggested an adaptive reuse in incorporating the facade of the Ypsilanti Community Center into a new building so that WPA, architecture, etc. can be retained.

Mr. Mueller next suggested that the Salvation Army take over the cost of operating one of the facilities, such as the Senior Center or the Parkridge Community Center, while developing the new community center. When the new community center opened, operations would be transferred.

Chairman Weiss closed the discussion with summarizing what the next steps would be. He spoke of contacting individuals regarding the Regional Authority idea. We need to begin working on the Recreation Coordinator concept to try to find funding and bring it before Council as a resolution. Focus energy on working with ideas in the Master Plan. A new working session is planned for May.

Mayor Farmer wanted to take the time to share her comments on the State of the City.

Council suggested that it be saved for a time when there is an audience.

X. ADJOURNMENT

That the City Council Meeting be adjourned, on call, by the Mayor or two (2) members of Council.

Mayor Farmer called that the meeting be adjourned.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.