

**CITY OF WIXOM
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
JOINT CITY COUNCIL AND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2016**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Hinkley at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

City Council: Kevin Hinkley (Mayor), Richard Ziegler (Deputy Mayor), Patrick Beagle, Keenan Gottschall, Nick Kennedy, Thomas Rzeznik, and Robert Smiley

Parks & Recreation: John O'Brien (Chairman), Maryanne Chupa, Lisa Ferrari, Tom Marcucci, Jon Martinez, Tom Menzies and Mary Walsh

Absent: Fred Lorenger

City Staff: Clarence Goodlein (City Manager), Debra Barker (Business Development Liaison), Cathy Buck (City Clerk), Deanna Magee (Community Services Director), Jeff Roberts (Fire Chief), Charles Yon (Interim Police Chief), Marilyn Stamper (Finance Director), Sharon Butsavich (Deputy Treasurer), Melissa Harrison (Community Center Supervisor), Kathy Venegas (Parks and Recreation Coordinator), Stacey Banks (City Manager's Office)

Determination of Quorum:

A quorum was present for this meeting.

Changes or Additions to the Agenda:

No changes were made to the agenda.

Call to the Public:

There were no comments at this time.

Parks & Recreation Commission Business:

- 1.) Approval of Minutes – September 14, 2015

Approval of the September 14, 2015 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes:

MOTION and seconded by Commissioners Menzies and Ferrari to approve the September 14, 2015 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

- 2.) Approval of Amended Liquor License Dates

Approval of the amended dates for the Summer Beer & Wine Tasting (August 11, 2016) and the Holiday Markt (December 2 & 3, 2016) for the temporary liquor licenses for 2016:

MOTION and seconded by Commissioners Menzies and Marcucci to approve the amended dates for the Summer Beer & Wine Tasting (August 11, 2016) and the Holiday Markt (December 2 & 3, 2016) for the temporary liquor licenses for 2016.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

New Business:

- 1. Consider a Proposal from Mr. Terry Sever for a Land Exchange of City Park known as Gunnar Mettala for an Abutting Property Complete with a new Community Athletic Complex**

Ms. Barker explained that this meeting was for information purposes only. Mr. Sever came to her with a proposal and she felt it was worth bringing to the City Manager, City Council and the Parks & Recreation Commission for further study. Because it is a park, any changes would have to go out for a City vote according to the City Charter.

She stated that currently Gunnar Mettala Park is 64.57 acres with approximately 6 acres of utility easements. The current actual recreational usage of land is approximately 16.2 acres. The park has one slightly used ball field, two soccer fields, one comfort station, two tennis courts, a pavilion, and one volleyball court. It is an attractive nuisance for encouraging criminal activity and there are constant complaints from abutting neighborhoods. Also, there is no tax revenue because it is a City park. Ms. Barker said that for purpose of discussion, the Cavallaro's property is the only City tax dollars and they are \$2,094 annually to the DDA.

The approximate costs to the City, if this Park is improved by City today, total approximately \$2 million dollars, which includes 8 soccer fields, 2 ball fields, one storage building with restrooms, one concession building and road improvements. Fields with drainage and irrigation, as well as lighting are not included in this estimate.

Ms. Barker reviewed the map of the area which outlined the DDA boundary, the Cavallaro's property, the current Gunnar Mettala Park, and the proposed development. Mr. Sever has proposed that this proposed development would be at no cost to the City. The trade would be that the current Park would turn into mixed-use residential. The new Gunnar Mettala Park would include approximately 30 acres of recreational usage with 2 ball fields, 8 soccer fields, sprinklers on all fields, storage building with comfort station, concession building, tennis court, 2 volleyball courts, road connection to downtown and we would retain the existing buildings at the Park with open space. There are two buildings on the Cavallaro's property which could be utilized.

She said that if this was to be realized, the new DDA captured revenue would equal \$243,047.25 annually based on 90 new homes priced conservatively at \$250,000 market value. There are some possible Park revenues of approximately \$30,000 annually for things like concessions and league participation.

Mr. Sever indicated that he was on the City Council in Farmington Hills for about 14 years. He was Mayor in 1989 and a County Commissioner for four years. During that time, the City was a very proactive recreational community. They were fortunate to get millage money that helped them move forward. They were losing their vacant land to developments so they purchased property on Eight Mile for the Founders Sports Park. They also purchased a passive park. He has extensive experience in terms of how his community progressed. Mr. Sever said that as a realtor, the Cavallaros approached him years ago. Prior to the downfall of the economy and development, that property sat, as well as a few parcels to the west of it. He has been working a proposal for 25 acres combined that is west of the ITC line. He has had discussions well enough to have a pretty good idea of the numbers in values. His numbers in his presentation came from the ones that Farmington Hills experienced when they built Founders Sports Park. They built 8-10 soccer fields there.

They didn't put underground storage at that time. They attempted to rotate the fields to keep the grass growing. They found out later that they needed to spend \$100,000 a field for underground storage to rectify that. He has done some conceptual ideas with this to see how it would play out and he thinks it will work out very well. He said he is a realtor and he has worked with the Cavallaros.

Previously, Mr. Sever met with Mr. Doran to look at the City's conceptual plan for this Park property. He noticed that we had one ball field there with a few weeds so it didn't appear to be utilized to its potential. And it was taking up a lot of space. He noticed that the soccer fields were part of the grassy area of the ball fields. There was a dual purpose there, but it didn't have the type of grass or density we would be looking forward to in high quality parcels.

Mr. Sever said that he talked to the Cavallaros and told them he had an idea. They signed an agreement with him to pursue it and that brought Mr. Sever to Ms. Barker and Mr. Goodlein.

He said that his numbers include a road because if we were meeting our objective to connect the park land, Beck Road and Maple Road, with our downtown area, we would need to extend the road quite a distance. There is also a gas easement that runs through the property that had to be addressed. He said he has learned that the best team is a big team that all gives input to come up with a consensus that works best. He looked at the layout of the fields to see that it works best to put the fields north and south rather than east and west to avoid the sun. What is unique about this property is that the house can be converted into a concession stand. The Cavallaros just put a metal roof on their stable building, which he believed would be a very good storage building with bathrooms.

Mr. Sever thought he would work through some kind of an agreement with the City, get some input from the Parks & Recreation Commission in terms of layout, size, popularity for different age groups, etc. This was a starting point to see if there was any interest. He would definitely want to get input from everyone. He'd like to see this be the cream of the crop in terms of what other communities in the area have done.

He further explained that he incorporated the existing facilities and he thought it was a good idea to incorporate access to the trail. He noted that he would like this to not be his proposal, but the community's proposal.

Councilmember Rzeznik asked about the egress points to Maple Road to the north. Mr. Sever replied that we would keep the existing drive. The Cavallaro drive would be for an emergency exit. Councilmember Rzeznik asked about the egress points to the downtown area and Mr. Sever indicated that it would come across the ITC property to the downtown area. He assumed that the site plan would come across Theodore.

Commissioners Ferrari asked about the timeframe. Mr. Sever said that if this goes well, he thought we could conceivably play in 2017. We would probably want a spring and fall growing season. If there was a need, we could probably fast track one or two fields. Commissioner Ferrari wondered how that would work with the people playing on them now. He said it would be Wixom's park and Wixom's decisions. He would just develop it.

Commissioner Martinez thought soccer fields might cost a lot to maintain. Our current soccer program was just combined with two other cities due to participation. They are also playing at other places indoors. He wondered about the maintenance for a field like that.

Mr. Sever thought the community was still growing and developing. The advantage is it is in the downtown and creates other things for us. In terms of maintenance, he thought there would be one or two retention ponds that we would draw from for watering the fields. He didn't think Farmington Hills had that great of an expense other than cutting and striping the fields and he thought the user fees would cover that. If we move forward with conceptual discussions, he thought we would get into that. He indicated that the soccer program would definitely grow.

Chairman O'Brien asked if there was enough parking. Mr. Sever stated that he expanded the parking in another sketch. Also, we typically wouldn't have soccer and baseball at the same time. He added that this is far from a final design. Chairman O'Brien asked about the connection to the downtown area. Mr. Sever showed him on a map where the park would be connected to the downtown area. He learned that ITC is not interested in us using their facility.

Commissioner Marcucci asked what the City would lose. Mr. Sever showed him on the map the area of the current Gunnar Mettala Park that would become residential.

Mr. Sever said that he knew that there was flooding in that area and he took that into consideration. He also looked into underground retention. For a developer to be cost-effective, they need to double load. They would put a house on either side of the road. The zoning district allows for 110 foot depth with a 48 foot right-of-way and the roadway is 48 feet. Many times we leave 320 feet of width. He took into consideration the gas line that comes through the property. It could be an attractive development in terms of deeper lots because of the Edison lines. It would be nice to dress up the trail so it is an enhancement to the whole park. He said that if this goes through, we would add 300 homes in this downtown area.

Commissioner Chupa commented that with this proposal, she didn't see anything that was inter-generational. There were no walking paths or park benches. She thought a splash park would be wonderful. Mr. Sever said that we would probably have to raise money for a splash park. They just built one in Farmington Hills and it cost \$750,000. Commissioner Chupa said she likes that idea because you don't have to worry about children drowning.

Mr. Sever suggested the Mayor appoint a committee that would study this and come back with a more detailed plan that is needs-oriented.

Commissioner Chupa said that when she looks at this, anybody that is able-bodied can be out there, but what about our seniors, older people, or parents with young children. Mr. Sever said that it wouldn't be difficult to shift the park north and have space along the trail. He thought we would incorporate the trail in the whole concept.

Councilmember Beagle asked if there was a buffer of some kind planned between the Park and the residents. He was worried about the lights. Mr. Sever said that the lights would be the City's call. He didn't think we would light the soccer fields. Councilmember Beagle asked what type of road would be located there. Mr. Sever thought the developer would pick up the expense of the required cement road. He envisioned something similar to what Robertson Brothers is doing. He thought they put in curb and asphalt. A lot of the people he works with prefer concrete.

Councilmember Beagle asked about the price per acre for the Park. Ms. Barker said that the Park is not taxed right now. Going off of some of the residential properties that recently

sold, she thought it would be about \$55,000-\$60,000 an acre. Mr. Sever commented that the difference was if we didn't develop with a private entity that made the trade this way, we would be spending \$2-2.5 million to get the same type of facilities because the road expense would be there too. We would lose rather than gain. He thought we were trading ten acres for 20 or 30 acres.

Councilmember Gottschall wondered if the Morgan Creek Estates would tie in. Mr. Sever said that the road would, but ITC said they are not interested in anything else. He hoped we would get some kind of retention from them which would open up our retention pond and provide more water for irrigation and the road. Councilmember Gottschall asked if the road that runs from the northeast to southwest would be the same road that would run through to Morgan Creek Estates. Mr. Sever replied yes. He assumed the Council would be approving site plans. He showed where the road would run on the map. The road would go across to Theodore and Theodore intersects with a road that would come to the downtown. Councilmember Gottschall asked if the goal was single family residential and Mr. Sever thought he would do 52 and 60 foot lots and alternate them so the side yards were a little better. Councilmember Gottschall commented that the road and the parking were quite long. He thought we would probably like to see something shorter. If the main goal was to have traffic come off of the existing road instead of driving through the neighborhood, it seems long and further setback than what we have right now. Mr. Sever said that what most communities do is close the road in the winter. All of these things would be determined during the site plan approval process. He said the approach he was taking tonight was if we don't like it, we can tell him no and he will go about his business. If this is something we want to work toward and do, he will put the time in and he'll listen to everyone. In the end, he will be the one with the least amount of input because we know what we want for our community. Councilmember Gottschall asked if it would be the same developer as Morgan Creek Estates. Mr. Sever said no, not necessarily. He said he would work with the City on that. If he were on the Council, he would like some kind of say in terms of what would be done so he is flexible on that. Lastly, Councilmember Gottschall asked if there were any underlying terms between the Cavallaros and any developer. Mr. Sever replied no. They just have a written agreement with him to develop a concept. If this doesn't work, they will sell the property and develop it. He has a strong heart for government and community. This is a good opportunity and it probably has some shelf life.

Councilmember Kennedy said that when he was on the Planning Commission and St. Catherine's was going in, they talked about the City getting a couple soccer fields out of them. He wondered what happened with that. Mr. Goodlein said that they have some fields directly to the east of the school that they are using for their athletics. Their enrollment problem has diminished their ability to have a ready amount of cash to develop the rest of the property according to the plan that they originally had.

Mr. Sever commented that one other thing that we will find is by centrally locating multiple fields, we will be able to host tournaments that will draw people into the downtown.

Councilmember Kennedy wondered if the traffic would be driven through the development if the road stopped at Theodore. Mr. Sever said with the design having three access points (north, east, and south), it allowed a more ideal situation than only having one access point. Councilmember Kennedy hoped the traffic would drive downtown and this would have the traffic driving through Theodore. Additionally, he believed the traffic issue at Maple and Beck Road would become a concern as it may move traffic down to Wixom Road where they could get to a four-lane road for a faster commute. He said that he was making light of these issues hoping the traffic along Theodore would be thought about. Mr. Sever

agreed that with any development the residents were concerned with the traffic. He noted that when there were a lot of two lane roads, traffic becomes an issue most of the time. There may be enough at the north end of the property to open that up and gain access for additional lane. He did not have an answer to all the traffic issues and noted that certainly traffic studies would be performed.

Mr. Goodlein said before any type of a design went forward, there would have to be a traffic engineering study to look at all the traffic concerns and answer some of the questions that Councilmember Kennedy had. The traffic patterns would have to be married into a design that would go before the Planning Commission and ultimately be approved by the Council.

Mr. Sever stated this was a plan that the City had 98% control. While he had a contract with the Cavallaros, they were willing to work with the City. He added that this presentation was a concept and could be tweaked. He thought if the City didn't develop this, the Cavallaros may develop homes or something and the City would have less control.

Councilmember Kennedy asked what the square represented off Beck Road on the map. Mr. Sever said it was a retail space and noted that was optional. Councilmember Kennedy asked how much space was sectioned off for retail and what kind. Mr. Sever said it was 2 acres and it would be up to the City but considered a doctor, dentist, cleaners, etc.

Council Kennedy wondered how the Gunnar Mettala park property was purchased. Mr. Goodlein said the property was given to the City by the DNR. Because of that, the DNR would be required to approve the transfer of the property. He stressed that this meeting was for the purpose of evaluating the proposal; we would then develop an opinion as to whether or not they believed it would be worth it to have this taken to the Wixom voters. He added even after that occurred, the Council had the ability to not do anything.

Ms. Barker noted that Mr. Sikma spoke to the DNR and it just became a formality of paperwork and would be one of the easiest parts of this.

Mr. Sever said he had about 12 months with the Cavallaros to develop a plan. He just asked that if it wouldn't work for the City, or if there was no interest, he hoped he would be told sooner rather than later so he could move on. These are just conceptual ideas right now. The City could scrap the entire thing and come up with their own idea. He was only looking to see if there was an interest in the development of a park in exchange for land.

Councilmember Rzeznik said the figures that were given for approximate cost in improvements of the park were based on the Founders Park Development in Farmington Hills. He wondered what year the park was developed. Mr. Sever thought roughly 14 years ago. Councilmember Rzeznik believed it was still a true statement - the faster field sport in the USA was lacrosse. He wondered if the soccer fields were being doubled as lacrosse fields. Mr. Sever didn't know but Mr. White, an audience member, said they could.

Councilmember Rzeznik wondered if a Public Hearing was required to put something like this on the ballot. Mr. Goodlein said that he was uncertain if a Public Hearing was necessary but he suggested at least one town hall meeting to provide information to the residents. He explained that the reason that he and Ms. Barker were so interested in this project was because they thought having an athletic complex like this could be a great fit for the community.

Councilmember Rzeznik questioned if this was to be placed on the ballot, the way the Charter was written, would a sealed bid be needed for the purchase. Mr. Goodlein said per Ordinance Section 3.16.040, Subsection B, paragraph 3, *"the Council shall make the award of the bid for the acquisition of the property at a regular City Council meeting. The bid shall be awarded to the bidder offering the highest value for the property unless the City Council adopts a Resolution finding that the award of the bid to a party other than the high bid is in the best interest of the City for the purpose of promoting the public health, safety and welfare or specifically economic development goals."*

Councilmember Rzeznik asked if there was any additional cost to place this on the ballot. Ms. Buck said there would not be any additional cost as there would already be a scheduled Election.

Mr. Sever noted that if this all worked out and came together, he was certain they would cover additional expenses for this to be placed on a ballot.

Councilmember Gottschall wondered how many houses were in the section. Mr. Sever said the number of units depended on the type of facility. It could be between 90-130 houses with 60 foot lots.

Mayor Hinkley wondered if the current fire apparatus would be able to fit through the path ways based on the layout. Chief Roberts said from what he could see, he did not believe there would be any issues.

Mayor Hinkley brought to light that the City acquired a Federal Grant a few years ago for the purpose of economic development. After the Ford Plant closed, they wondered what the next thing would be for the City of Wixom. The answer to that was recreation. He believed this became an opportunity to have a partnership with a private sector with the City maintaining the driver seat. They had the ability to develop a park that was highly under used, a park that was a security issue, a park that has a lot of property that was not being utilized. This gives the ability to provide the residents with a park that was different from the other parks, but it could generate revenue and help local recreational teams generate revenue. He explained there was a plethora of opportunity with this. As a Council, we may not have all the chances to put down a footprint but this gives them the opportunity to accomplish that. He has been on Council for a long time and over that time, they had many discussions about lighted baseball diamonds. If this development was completed the right way, there may be a select amount of homes affected. He said

the point was it was entirely in the City's hands. He expressed that the ability to redevelop a piece of property that was highly under-used was a great opportunity. He became wowed after he met with Mr. Sever, so much so that he went to look at the similar facility off of Eight Mile Road. He suggested the rest of Council and Parks and Recreation Commission do the same thing. As a City, we are at the point where we need to generate revenue. He noted that the former Ford property was not developing as quickly as we had hoped. In looking at the long term goal within the City, we worked hard to connect the north end of the City to the downtown area. Money was already spent on pathways and sidewalks. This concept continued to support that goal in connecting the City and gave the opportunity to work toward a recreational community. He certainly could see the recreational programs, soccer and lacrosse, bringing families and homes together, and inviting new families to Wixom.

Commissioner Menzies said that as a Council and Commission, he believed we owe it to the community to pursue this. Whether we end up making it work or not, we would be remiss if we didn't see what we could do.

Mayor Hinkley thought some sort of task force could be formed to get some ideas so they could take it from there.

Deputy Mayor Ziegler thought they had a great task force with the Parks and Recreation Commission. Mr. Sever thought it would be better if there were a few members of the Parks and Recreation, Planning Commission, and Council because they would all be affected by this. Deputy Mayor Ziegler understood but noted that he thought the Parks and Recreation Commission would be in charge of having the town meeting and discussion on what direction they wanted to go.

Councilmember Rzeznik wondered when the cut off was to have something like this on the August Primary Ballot. Ms. Buck said it was May 10, 2016.

Councilmember Smiley said that it could be on the November ballot.

Mr. Sever said that the Council should keep in mind the Cavallaros may not want to wait another year with pushing it out to the November 2016 ballot.

Councilmember Kennedy didn't want to see a reason to push it. He would like to see us get good input from the community. Whether or not that timeframe worked for the Cavallaros, he was more concerned with the Wixom community. Mr. Sever agreed and was not in favor of pushing but he believed the timetable for August gave people seven months. With his experience, if you pushed it back too far you run a stronger risk of losing the project.

Deputy Mayor Ziegler asked the City Manager to explain the new legislation regarding ballot proposals and the City's involvement. Mr. Goodlein said that was a great point. He explained that the Governor recently signed Senate Bill 571, which says that 60 days prior to a ballot question, there could be no contact with the

municipality and the residents concerning that ballot question. He would like to speak with the attorney because he thought that was specifically aimed at millage questions. Deputy Mayor Ziegler asked Mr. Goodlein to put together a timeline so they were aware of where all the things fell into place. Mr. Goodlein agreed.

Call to the Public:

Mark White, 2077 Millstream, said he has been a resident of Wixom for 20 years. He was speaking on behalf of Walled Lake Gladiator Lacrosse, a program out of the Walled Lake Community Education. Currently in the western part of the school district, they had one dedicated lacrosse field located at Walled Lake Western High School. The membership totaled roughly 200 players ranging from 2nd grade to 8th grade. There would be a parent meeting on January 12, 2016 and he would be certain then how many teams were signed up in 2016. He knew there were seven teams in 2015. The fields located at Gunnar Mettala Park had not been marked for lacrosse, which the Community Education would take care. He asked for the consideration that the lacrosse team become a viable option for the use of the field space at Gunnar Mettala.

Ms. Barker invited the Council to the business forum that was being held on January 12, 2016 at 7:30 a.m. in the Community Center. Breakfast would be provided by Gary's Catering and DTE would be there to discuss power issues.

ADJOURNMENT:

This joint meeting of City Council and the Parks & Recreation Commission was motioned and adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Catherine Buck
City Clerk