

A meeting of the Normandy Oaks Task Force was held on Wednesday, July 29, 2015 in the M/M Senior Center, located at 3500 Marias. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ellison at 6:00 PM.

Present: Mayor Ellison, Commissioner Douglas, Commissioner Fournier, Ms. Amanda Klein, Mr. Mike Ripinski and City Manager Don Johnson.

Also: DPS Director Greg Rassel, Recreation Director Tod Gazetti, Economic Director Todd Fenton

* * * * *

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Tom Regan, 3126 Glenview, was in favor of Oakland County taking over Normandy Oaks. They are inspiring, dedicated and would do a good job. The head of Oakland County Parks was at the last Royal Oak Democratic Meeting and was asked if Oakland County was interested in the park. He stated that they were. The park should be green and while the costs are expensive up front, they pay for themselves over time.

Ms. Mary Ann Craddock, 2026 Massoit, had a problem with Oakland County running the park. The city wouldn't have a say about what goes into the park. She felt everything would work itself out in tax revenues. If they go with Oakland County, they need to have representation and a say of what is developed.

Mr. Kyle DuBuc, 312 Fairgrove, felt they owe it to everyone to look at every option. Greenspace is a rare commodity. They should explore the county options. They could enter into a contract for a mutually beneficial agreement and share the cost of maintenance.

Mr. David Sims, 4403 Woodland, had the same concerns as Ms. Craddock and didn't trust the county. He hoped that they were careful if they do enter into an agreement with the county. He was in favor of multifamily housing for people who owned homes as opposed to renters.

Mr. Jeremy Mahrle, 3905 Devon, reminded everyone that this is an opportunity to invest into the park system in Royal Oak. He didn't know if they would get bids as high as they thought and hoped it would be enough to maintain the property. They have 50+ parks throughout the city. If they leased to the county, they could use the proceeds for the other parks and check off the items on the master plan for parks. They should look at all options. It is very clear that voters want a park there.

Mr. Dave Drawbaugh, 2027 Cresthill, lives across the street from Normandy Oaks and felt the whole thing has been a fiasco. He didn't understand why they were talking about this now when they didn't know what development was happening.

* * * * *

NORMANDY OAKS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL, ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION RFP UPDATE

Department of Public Service Director Rassel spoke to the city manager a few months ago to line up a landscape architect. They released an RFP, which was due this week consisting of 17 firms. The intent was to bring the proposals to the committee for review and go through a selection process. At the pre-bid meeting, it was explained that the county was still an option. It was also explained that everything was contingent on the sale of the property and that they probably wouldn't start until a transfer of funds was sufficient enough to pay for the work.

Mayor Ellison questioned what was in the RFP. Mr. Rassel explained that they wanted a world class park with amenities such as a pavilion, soccer fields, nature path, hill and parking. It was not an exclusive list.

Mayor Ellison wanted to know the logic in going out for an RFP before the committee discussed anything. Mr.

Rassel explained they were not trying to circumvent the committee. They just wanted to be ready.

Mr. Ripinski asked if a water feature was also included; Mr. Rassel stated it was.

Commissioner Douglas asked if she missed the e-mail regarding the RFP that was supposed to be forwarded to them. Mr. Johnson did not recall sending it to them. Commissioner Douglas felt the committee needed to have input on the RFP or at least see it.

Mr. Johnson stated that was highly unusual. In his ten years as City Manager, he didn't recall any committee having input in an RFP. Mayor Ellison stated this was different. It was a major project that went before the voters. The purpose of the Task Force was to have citizen input.

Mayor Ellison questioned when the results from the RFP's would be in. Mr. Rassel stated the bid openings were going to be this week and thumb drives would be delivered to committee members within the next two weeks.

* * * * *

CURRENT STATUS OF NORMANDY OAKS PARK

Mr. Rassel advised that Normandy Oaks has been being used for soccer. Royal Oak Golf Course employees have been cutting the grass and they are being paid \$25 an acre for mowing. They have sold greens that have generated \$7,000. They are working with Royal Oak Golf Course to sell to them some irrigation from Normandy Oaks.

* * * * *

DISCUSSION OF CONDITIONS FOR OAKLAND COUNTY INVOLVEMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND/OR MANAGEMENT OF THE NORMANDY OAKS PARK

Mayor Ellison understood the advantage of hearing what the county has to say. They need to talk about perimeters and go through the proper channels to see what they have to offer.

Commissioner Douglas felt they needed to deliver a laundry list. The parks should reflect Royal Oak's demographics. They need to have a final say in the final design; no lighting of night time activity in the park. The park needs to be open with no admission fees. The county should contract with our recreation department and pay us a fee. Royal Oak residents should receive priority for scheduling and pay less than non-residents.

Commissioner Fournier wanted the city to have veto power. They would be remissed if they didn't see what the county could offer. They need to make a statement to the county and give them guidance as far as what is acceptable. He didn't want to sell the land, but maybe have a lease deal to free up capital. The county could handle maintenance and management of the park. They shouldn't be stuck with costs. He didn't want to see entry fees or a closed off park. It should have an approachable, walkable community feel. They need to give a wish list with general concepts, what the costs would be and compare against the alternative (the city developing the park). Having a county proposal is important, but they need guidelines as well.

Mr. Ripinski confirmed that they cannot sell 40 acres, only 10. When the county was here at the beginning, their reaction was bordered from lukewarm to cold. He didn't feel they had any interest in the park. He felt they were now begging them for help. The referendum passed with 74% of the vote. Everyone he has spoken with has said that they voted for a Royal Oak community park. If they end up having to have a scaled down version, so be it.

Ms. Klein stated that the county has a process that they have to go through. They can't just come in and say they want to put in a park. They owe it to the residents of Royal Oak to look at the county option. If they are in the hole in ten years, they need an option. A community park will still be here. The county parks are beautiful. She wants to make sure that the other 50 parks and golf course are taken care of as well.

Mayor Ellison stated they will not know the answer until they ask the question. He wanted to include the idea of having the county help fund different things in the park. Would they be interested in funding a splash pad? They don't need to have an all or nothing approach. They need to bury all of the confusion that is out there.

Motion by Ms. Klein
Supported by Commissioner Douglas

Be it resolved, the Normandy Oaks Task Force recommends to the city commission that they task staff to officially initiate discussions with Oakland County Parks and Recreation in regards to the Normandy Oaks property.

Motion Adopted

Nays: Mr. Ripinski

* * * * *

SIGNATURE ASSOCIATES UPDATE OF LAND PURCHASE PROPOSALS

Mr. John Salsberry of Signature Associates explained that there was a diverse set of proposals and they need direction as far as where the priorities are and what they think is the most important thing is to get out of the proposals. He narrowed them down to the differences in the proposals. As best as they can, they need to have discussion what is important to them including price, what type of use (senior family, single family), use from a tax standpoint (developer owned/developer tax - single family) and timing (vs closing 45 days or money over time to maximize the value). In negotiating with purchasers, there are a lot of moving parts.

Commissioner Douglas stated that the community is aging. By 2030 25% will be over age of 65. The needs of the community are changing. It is important that the park has features to accommodate an aging population. There is also a need for the kind of housing to serve that population. As a public body they have a chance to look to their future and the demands that seniors need.

Mr. Ripinski did not think they were under served for senior housing, as they have senior housing in the community. For people who are downsizing, there is plenty of existing housing stock for seniors to move into that type of housing. More important was the usage and density of individual housing such as condominiums and a mix of single family housing that will give them a good return on the investment

Ms. Klein didn't want to see apartments. She has spoken to seniors in Royal Oak and they want condos that are one on level. It isn't necessary senior living. She wanted to see single family homes. They need to have many options. There are a lot of people who want to live in Royal Oak.

Commissioner Fournier didn't know if single family homes would do well there. Townhome buyers would be preferable to him. He didn't want to say that there would be less issues or problems with rentals, but a greater sense of pride in homes with homeowners.

Mayor Ellison wanted to see the best return on investment, which would include more density, such as condominiums. He didn't think single family homes were the best use for that area, with it only being 10 acres. He envisioned higher density, such as smaller condominium units. Right now there are smaller homes being torn down to build bigger homes. Condo sales are up in the downtown. He was looking more towards the empty nesters who want smaller homes, yet want to stay in the city.

Mr. Salsberry stated out of the four items previously described, it seemed like they were leaning towards not having the housing developer owned, socially it is available, affordable with a higher density. That leaves price and timing. He hasn't heard anyone saying maximize the price.

Mayor Ellison felt they were looking for biggest bang for buck. He didn't want anything that was going to create

problems for them.

Mr. Paul Hoge of Signature Associates asked the committee in terms of dollars you get, what was their opinion in terms of how quickly they achieve those dollars? Would installment payments be an option?

Mayor Ellison felt they needed some kind of initial cash flow to get the park going. He assumed it would be a payment over a period of time with interest accrual. He didn't want to say he wasn't open to options.

Commissioner Fournier felt the financial stability should depend on the credit of the developer.

Mayor Ellison asked for a written update to be placed the agenda for the next city commission meeting regarding highlights of the discussion, as well as a verbal update for the commission.

Mr. Ripinski stated that Commissioner Paruch had mentioned at the last commission meeting to look into grants. The DNR has grants in the amount of \$15k - \$300K for a community park development. He suggested the city look into those grants.

Upon motion of Commissioner Douglas, seconded by Mr. Ripinski, and adopted unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Melanie Halas, City Clerk