

**Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Parks and Recreation**  
**Monday, November 6, 2006 @ 4:00 p.m.**  
**Parking Services Conference Room**  
**50 Ottawa Avenue NW**

**A G E N D A**

- I. Welcome and Thank You to Participants
  
- II. Introductions
  
- III. Review of Charge
  
- IV. Ground Rules
  
- V. Meeting Schedule
  
- VI. Overview of Parks & Recreation Department
  
- VII. Next Steps/Meeting Wrap Up

## Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Parks and Recreation

### Review of Charge

- A) Charge - Develop a plan, with short and long-term strategies, to financially sustain the Parks and Recreation Department. The strategies should result in enabling the department to improve existing facilities and programs, develop new facilities and to continue to offer quality programs and services that are accessible and affordable. The strategies should include considerations of partnerships, collaborations, and sponsorships.
- B) Goal - To develop goals and strategies with objectives, timelines, measures, and responsible parties.

### Ground Rules

- A) Participant's Responsibilities
- 1) Regular attendance is critical.
  - 2) You're here to share ideas – so participate!
  - 3) So much to do, so little time – be brilliant, but be brief.
  - 4) R-E-S-P-E-C-T – Aretha had it right.
- B) Proposed Ground Rules & Decision Making Structure
- 1) Work within and support the process.
  - 2) Decide whether to select a spokesperson.
  - 3) Agree on a decision-making structure.
    - Consensus\*, if possible
    - Majority vote, when needed.
  - 4) Agree on how minority viewpoints/opinions will be handled, if necessary.

\* CONSENSUS – We can all “live with” the decision/recommendation.

### Meeting Schedule

- A) Schedule and Meeting Themes (Suggested)
- November 6 - Introductions/Overview of Parks & Recreation Department
- November 20 - Follow-up Information from Meeting #1  
- Department Overview Continued
- December 4 - Follow-up Information from Meeting #2  
- Brainstorming  
- Prioritization of Services and Programs  
- Small Group Designation
- December 18 - Follow-up Information from Meeting #3  
- Small Group Work
- January 8 - Small Group Reporting  
- Discussion of Final Report (Content, Format, & Responsibilities)
- January 22 - Review of Draft Report
- February 12 - Presentation of Final Report

## **City of Grand Rapids Parks & Recreation Department**

### **The Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission's Charge**

Develop a plan, with short and long-term strategies, to financially sustain the Parks and Recreation Department. The strategies should result in enabling the department to improve existing facilities and programs, develop new facilities and to continue to offer quality programs and services that are accessible and affordable. The strategies should include considerations of partnerships, collaborations, and sponsorships.

### **Introduction/Background**

The following information is provided to the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission for the purpose of providing a broad overview of the Parks and Recreation Department. The focus of the information is on the administrative and support functions, recreation programming, and the park operations and maintenance. The Department also operates and maintains six city cemeteries and a golf course but information about those functions is not included because they are considered an enterprise cost center with limited General Fund support.

### **Administrative Structure**

State of Michigan Public Act 156 of 1917 entitled *Local Government; Operate System of Public Recreation* is an act authorizing Cities, Villages, Counties, Townships, and School Districts to operate systems of public recreation and playgrounds. The Parks and Recreation Department is governed by the City of Grand Rapids Municipal Code, Title III, Section 3.1 to 3.27. The purpose of these provisions is to authorize the Director of Parks and Recreation, under the supervision and control of the City Manager, to promulgate rules and regulations relative to the use of areas and facilities which are declared recreational areas in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and other areas or facilities as may be designated by the City Commission to be under the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks and Recreation, subject to the approval of the City Commission.

#### **A. *City of Grand Rapids***

The City of Grand Rapids has a City Manager form of government with six elected City Commissioners and a Mayor. The Parks and Recreation Department provides recreation facilities and services for Grand Rapids residents and non-residents. The Parks and Recreation Department is divided into three primary divisions: Administrative and Support, Recreation, and Operations and Maintenance. A Parks & Recreation Advisory Board also exists to provide citizen guidance to the Department.

#### **B. *Parks and Recreation Department - Administrative and Support Division***

The Administrative and Support Division of the Department includes 5 full-time and one part-time employee including the Director, Administrative Secretary, Financial Assistants, Office Assistant and part time student aide.

**C. *Parks and Recreation Department - Recreation Division***

The primary purpose of the Recreation Division is for the provision of a diversified schedule of year-round activities to meet the leisure time needs of children, youth and adults throughout the community. In addition, the Recreation Division is responsible for coordinating individuals, equipment, and facilities in a detailed fashion to insure smooth delivery of quality programs.

The Recreation Division includes six full-time employees who oversee a variety of programs. The Recreation Division also includes 300 – 400 seasonal workers including umpires, lifeguards, site leaders, instructors, etc. as well as 150 youth volunteer coaches. The Recreation Division provides programs for children, youth and adults and utilizes many of the Grand Rapids Public School gymnasiums and multi purpose room facilities annually.

**D. *Parks and Recreation Department - Operations and Maintenance Division***

The Operations and Maintenance Division is responsible for the routine maintenance, repairs and minor construction activities associated with the City's 1500 acres of parks, public spaces, and outdoor art and memorials. Employing a permanent workforce of 20 and a seasonal staff of 60 - 80, this division maintains and operates athletic fields, restroom buildings, swimming and wading pools, playgrounds, miles of irrigation systems and trails. In addition, it provides labor support for a limited number of special events and recreation programs within the parks as well as snow removal activities in the winter.

**Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**

The Parks & Recreation Advisory Board was established under City Commission Policy No. 1100-07. The Board recommends policies, rules and regulations for the public use of parks and recreation facilities and programs. The Board assists the Director of Parks and Recreation in the evaluation of the City's Parks and Recreation programs and activities. The Board also suggests changes in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Board is comprised of seven voting members who must be City residents and have an interest in supporting Parks and Recreation services as well as two student members who do not have voting rights. Members are appointed by the City Commission and serve a term of three years.

**Grand Rapids Public School District**

In 1951, the Grand Rapids Public Schools and City of Grand Rapids entered into an agreement calling for the joint development of, and use of, park-school facilities at sites where such development and use would serve the needs of both public park recreation users and students. The essence of this agreement calls for the cost of site development to be shared and for the establishment of an economical approach to outdoor facility maintenance. This agreement has been refined and re-adopted several times since its initial adoption.

## **Budget Analysis**

### **A. *Operating Budget***

A five-year summary of the Parks and Recreation budget is shown below. The budgets include Administration and Support, Recreation, Operations and Maintenance, and Special Events (When the Special Events Division was located within the Parks and Recreation Department). The increase in the FY 05 budget was due primarily to an increase in Grant funding for the Recreation Reaps Rewards After-School Program.

<u>FY 03</u>	<u>FY04</u>	<u>FY05</u>	<u>FY06</u>	<u>FY07</u>
\$8,860,682	\$8,345,258	\$8,608,035	\$7,081,892	\$6,886,184

### **B. *Capital Budget***

A five-year summary of budgeted Parks and Recreation Capital Projects is shown below.

<u>FY 03</u>	<u>FY04</u>	<u>FY05</u>	<u>FY06</u>	<u>FY07</u>
\$515,300	\$25,000	\$0	\$60,000	\$0

The City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2003 – 2007 was used as a source for some of the information provided.

Jay D. Steffen  
 Director  
 City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department

October 27, 2006