

**Parks Advisory Commission Comments, Tuesday, January 18
Rita Mitchell**

Commissioners, I am here to address the PROS plan draft, and the process related to its review.

Your agenda today indicates your plan to vote to approve the draft as written. If you take the action to approve the resolution and the draft, you will be doing so prematurely.

Per documentation on the city web site,

(see green, bold, highlighted copy/paste, from:

<http://www.a2gov.org/government/communityservices/ParksandRecreation/Pages/default.aspx>)

PROS Plan Draft now available online

The draft of the Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan is complete and we would like your comments.

To view a copy of the draft, use this link.

If you would like to purchase a paper copy of the plan, it is available for a cost of \$43.48 + tax for a color version or black/white for \$12.94 + tax. Please call Dollar Bill Copying at 734.665.9200 or visit 611 Church Street when it's ready to be picked up.

A limited number of CD's are also available. Please contact Amy Kuras at 734.794.6230 ext. 42590 for more information. A survey was conducted in the spring of 2010, and we thankfully received feedback from more than 800 people. We greatly appreciate your support. **Comments may be submitted until Jan. 24, 2011 to be considered for inclusion in the plan. In February and March, public hearings will be held at the Park Advisory Commission, Planning Commission and City Council. Dates will be posted as they are confirmed. To submit comments e-mail a2parks@a2gov.org.**

End quote from city web site

You have not heard from citizens who are prepared to make comments. I am one. I'll give you some of my comments today, but I have more. I intend to submit them in writing, and I ask that you table the resolution until the period for public comment has completed, AND that you wait until after the public hearings that are yet to be scheduled, before you act to approve the PROS plan.

If today is considered a public hearing on the PROS plan, then insufficient notice has been provided to the public to participate in such a hearing. At a minimum, your efforts should go out to parks users, with notices posted at park entrances, with information on how to obtain the draft, and where to send comments.

A question: Will two public hearings be held as indicated? Will you incorporate comments and ideas presented at public hearings, and for that matter, from the submissions that are yet to be sent to the Parks offices as of next Monday? If not, why have you indicated any date for closure of public comment, or that hearings will be held?

My concerns with the document:

-Page 39 sets up a scenario for public/private efforts to fund parks. I oppose the concept, as I feel that it will result in additional projects that I oppose because they would dismantle the park system, piece by piece, such as those that have surfaced in the last year: Fuller Road Station, representing the taking of park land from the public, without a vote; and the Huron Hills Golf course proposed leasing agreement, what is actually a subsidy of a private business, at the expense of park-loving taxpayers. Do not move to privatize parks.

-P 74: How are Greenbelt funds applied within the city limits? I did not find reference in the report of how Greenbelt funds have

been applied within the city limits. Should that not be included in terms of \$ and sites?

-The draft uses outdated census data. At a minimum, use the 2010 census data. Take the time to make the document truly reflective of the community, or it will be useless.

-Lack of acknowledgement of the Ann Arbor Greenway, as supported by open-ended comments that are buried in appendices, and not summarized in the document. The project is not addressed until 2015, as indicated in the draft, and with minimal funding.

-Lack of clarity on the budget; make certain that the top priority items are actually those that appeared on the set that the community supported as valuable.

That is the start of my comments. I will send more.

I'm here because I love the parks, and see them as significant positive resources that are loved by many others in the city, and that benefit us for recreation, socialization, and access to natural open spaces. You, as commissioners owe the community the benefit of listening to us about what we want in the parks. Please, table the resolution for today. You can return to it after completing the public comment period, integrating ideas provided, and after open, advertised public hearings are held. Then consider whether to approve it and move it forward. Don't skimp on process or on accuracy of reflecting the views of citizens.