

Business Item

Metropolitan Council



For the Metropolitan Council: December 13, 2023

Business Item: 2023-305

Appointments to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stat. §§ 473.303 and 15.0597
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Charlie Zelle, Chair
Division/Department:	Chair's Office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve the following appointments to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, to fill the open Commissioner seats that resulted from redistricting. The following terms run until January 1, 2025:

- Chair – Tony Yarusso
- District A – Monica Dillenburg
- District B – Bob Moeller
- District C – Tess Bouska

That the Metropolitan Council approve the following appointments to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission for the following terms that run until January 1, 2027:

- District E – Chris Suerig
- District F – Cecily Harris
- District G – Anthony Taylor
- District H – Amanda Duerr

Background

The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) was created by the Legislature in 1974 to advise the Council on matters related to the regional recreation open space system. The MPOSC has nine members appointed by the Council—eight district representatives and a chair who represents the region at large. MPOSC terms are four years and are staggered. Appointments are made in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 473.303 (Metropolitan Park and Open Space Commission) and 15.0597 (Appointments to Multimember Agencies).

All nine Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission positions are up for reappointment due to the process of decennial redistricting (Minn. Stat. § 473.123) for Council districts, which happens in the year ending in “3.” MPOSC districts are defined as combinations of Council districts pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 473.303., subd. 2(c)

Notices of vacancies were published by the Secretary of State’s office and the Metropolitan Council. Council members and staff worked to recruit candidates with community organizations, park partner agencies, and elected officials since July 2023.

On November 21, 2023, Council Members Susan Vento and Dr. Tyronne Carter served on the nominating committee. The committee interviewed twelve candidates for the open commissioner seats. They did not interview anyone for District D because there were no applicants. Council members and staff are still actively recruiting for District D. Following the interviews, the committee reviewed the application materials and interview notes, and made appointment recommendations for Chair Zelle’s consideration. Staff also conducted legislative consultation, as required by Minn. Stat. 473.303, subd. 2(a). The Chair’s final recommendations are noted above.

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 473.303, subd. 4a, the candidates for the Chair and Districts A – C will serve out the remaining approximately one year on a four-year term ending on January 1, 2025, if approved by the Council. Similarly, if approved, the candidates for District E - H would serve out the remaining approximately 3-year period and end on January 1, 2027.

Rationale

Recommended appointments for the nine-member Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission are all highly qualified and motivated to actively contribute to conversations and decisions at MPOSC. The recommended candidates for District E and H are brand new to the Commission. Both candidates bring a knowledge and passion for the regional system and a commitment to advancing equity in the regional parks and trails system.

Thrive Lens Analysis

Appointing members to MPOSC is necessary to keep the commission functioning to meet its statutory charge. MPOSC’s work advances all five Thrive Outcomes by advising the Council on regional park and trail policies, planning, and funding.

Funding

N/A

