

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, July 1, 2014

Committee Members Present:

Dean Johnston, Rick Theisen, Tony Yarusso, William Weber, Barbara Schmidt, Robert Moeller, Sarah Hietpas, Anthony Taylor, Carrie Wasley, Wendy Wulff, Council Liaison

Committee Members Absent:

None.

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Johnston called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 1, 2014.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Wasley, seconded by Weber to approve the agenda of the July 1, 2014 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Moeller, seconded by Yarusso to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2014 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

PUBLIC INVITATION

Invitation to interested person(s) to address the Commission on matters not on the agenda.

Laura Hedlund, a resident from Eagan asked how many in-holdings there were in the system and how many buildings are knocked down. She discussed her concern with asphalt trails. She also discussed her concern for bees and butterflies. Stefferud responded that some of this data (regarding inholdings) is in the Regional Parks Policy Plan that can be found on the Council's website.

BUSINESS

Request for Reimbursement Consideration for Lilydale Regional Park Improvement Projects, City of Saint Paul – Tori Dupre, Senior Planner Parks

Dupre presented the staff report regarding a request for reimbursement consideration for improvement projects for Lilydale Regional Park as outlined in the materials provided.

Yarusso asked if part of this park is still closed due to slope collapse last year and asked if these projects will address this.

Mike Kimble, St. Paul Parks and Recreation stated he is not sure if it is still closed or if it would help with slope stabilization there.

Wasley made the motion and it was seconded by Hietpas to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Consider reimbursing City of Saint Paul up to \$500,000 from its share of future Regional Parks Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) for Phase II of the Lilydale Regional Park Master Plan implementation projects. These include 3,200 lineal feet of new roadway and bike lanes, more than 3,000 lineal feet of new trails, a trailhead parking lot, surface water features, burial of overhead power lines, installation of sanitary and water utilities, signage, slope stabilization and landscaping.

2. Acknowledge that the Council does not, under any circumstances, represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.

Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Request for Blakely Bluffs Park Reserve, JMJM Property (2), Scott County/Three Rivers Park District – Tori Dupre, Senior Planner Parks

Dupre presented the staff report regarding a grant request for park acquisition costs for Blakely Bluffs Park Reserve as outlined in the materials provided.

Weber asked about funding and clarified that Scott County can request reimbursement for their 25% match. Dupre responded this is correct and explained the rules. She noted reimbursements requested are not guaranteed.

Wulff responded that last year this procedure was changed. The CIP is granted based on a formula and they are able to use part of their CIP to acquire land.

Yarusso further explained that different implementing agencies have different priorities. While some need more money for maintenance, others are still looking to acquire land.

Wasley asked what the total amount of acreage within the park boundary is. Dupre stated it is 2,240 acres and stated that the master plan shows a map of what's been acquired and what is yet to be acquired.

Theisen asked what's been acquired. Mark Themig, Scott County/Three Rivers Park District reviewed all the lands on the map that have been acquired both by the park district and the DNR. He noted the plan for this park was a 50 year acquisition plan but since the master plan has been completed, many land owners have come forward as willing sellers.

Moeller noted that this is a spectacular piece of land. He asked about the flooding in Blakely and if this park has been affected. Themig discussed some erosion that has occurred along the stream and also ravine failure they can't get to yet to see the extent. He noted they are continuing their assessment and will be looking at FEMA funding if it becomes available.

Moeller made the motion and it was seconded by Wasley to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Authorize a grant of up to \$950,781 from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account to Scott County to finance up to 75% of the costs to acquire 146 acres located in Blakeley Township at 24236 Union Trail, for the Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve. The grant is financed as follows:
 - \$570,469 from the Fiscal Year 2015 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation, and
 - \$380,312 from Metropolitan Council bondsScott County will match the grant with up to \$316,927 for its 25% share of the total acquisition costs.
2. Consider reimbursing Scott County up to \$316,927, its 25% share of the total acquisition costs, from a future Regional Park Capital Improvement Program. The Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.
3. Authorize the Community Development Director to sign the grant agreement and accompanying documents including the restrictive covenant.

Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Ridgway Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board - Arne Stefferud, Manager

Stefferud presented the staff report regarding the Ridgway Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan as outlined in the materials provided.

Moeller stated he is surprised that the annual cost of maintenance is only \$1,000. Stefferud stated this is what was presented in the master plan.

Wasley asked if the trail is maintained in the winter. Adam Arvidson, MPRB responded that they do plow in the winter. He noted that the costs are kept low due to the fact that they maintain many trails at once.

Taylor asked what the primary purpose was. Arvidson responded that there are two purposes. The first is to redevelop and improve an overlook of downtown Minneapolis as a trail amenity. The second is to serve as a trail connection as part of the Grand Rounds.

Yarusso noted that there should be two separate motions for staff's recommendations - voting on number 1 first and then subsequently on numbers 2 and 3 together.

Hietpas made the motion and it was seconded by Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Ridgway Parkway Regional Trail Development Master Plan (Referral No. 50045-1).

Johnston called for a vote on staff's number 1 recommendation. **The motion carried.**

Wasley made the motion and it was seconded by Schmidt to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

2. Authorize a grant of \$382,000 to partially finance an overlook redevelopment project included in the master plan that is consistent with the 2014 Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program.
3. Require that prior to initiating the overlook redevelopment project and any future construction identified in the master plan, that preliminary plans be sent to Scott Denz, Interceptor Engineering Manager (651-602-4503) at Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review in order to assess the potential impacts to the regional interceptor system.

Johnston called for a vote on staff's number 2 and 3 recommendations. **The motion carried.**

Minor Amendment to 2014 Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board - Arne Stefferud, Manager

Stefferud presented the staff report regarding a minor amendment to the 2014 Regional Parks CIP as requested by MPRB as outlined in the materials provided.

Weber commented that this is good rationale. He asked about the master plan that has not been approved and clarified that this will be looked at in the future prior to considering future funding. Stefferud confirmed this.

Weber made the motion and it was seconded by Taylor to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve a minor amendment to the 2014 Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program as depicted below:

| Park Agency | Project Description | CIP Amount As Proposed | CIP Amount As Amended |
|--------------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Mpls. Park & Rec. Board (MPRB) | Construct Ridgway Parkway RT overlook pending Metro Council review and approval of master plan | \$382,000 | \$382,000 |
| Mpls. Park & Rec. Board (MPRB) | Above the Falls RP development pending Metro Council review and approval of master plan | \$979,000 | \$100,000 |
| Mpls. Park & Rec. Board (MPRB) | Repave existing parkway streets to and through regional parks, parking lots, and stormwater management improvements plus replace associated lighting with 50% state (the grant) and 50% non-state funding. | \$0 | \$879,000 |
| | Totals | \$1,361,000 | \$1,361,000 |

Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

INFORMATION

Draft 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan – Jan Youngquist, Planning Analyst and Raintry Salk, Senior Parks Researcher

Youngquist gave an overview of the Regional Parks Policy Plan (RP3) initial draft with broad overviews of each chapter review to include the schedule, role, structure, and next steps.

Youngquist reviewed Chapter 1. She noted that the key change is that this is a new chapter describing Thrive, updated forecasts, and community designations. There was no discussion/questions.

Youngquist reviewed Chapter 2. She noted that the key change was that this is a new chapter introducing the reader to the Regional Parks System.

Wasley referred to page 14, regarding regional park special recreation features, and asked if they could be listed. Yarusso suggested putting “examples include” rather than listing them all so that if one is added in the future we don’t have to amend the RP3.

Salk stated this was done intentionally to be consistent with other areas of the policy plan, e.g., multiple trails are not all listed. Wasley suggested a footnote of where a list could be found.

Moeller discussed page 20, second paragraph regarding planning for 2040 and stated he is confused by the verbiage. He asked staff to look at it and make it more understandable.

Hietpas pointed out under special recreation features it states additional information could be found in Chapter 2 and it should read Chapter 3. Staff will make this correction.

Youngquist next reviewed Chapter 3 and noted the key changes included:

- Moved to precede the Policies and Strategies chapter.
- More comprehensive information on different system designations and includes more maps.
- Reclassified “proposed regional trails” to “regional trail search corridors”.
- 2040 System Additions.
- Removed Thompson-Kaposia Regional Park Study Area.

Yarusso pointed out that on pages 43 and 55 the Lake Links trail is shown as planned on one page on not on the other.

Weber asked if maps could be bigger.

Wasley asked that parks not yet open to the public be noted as such. She then asked when Kingswood will be open. Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District stated that it will be open on a limited basis this summer.

Wulff stated she loves the maps. She suggested it would be great if there were timeframes for when parks/trails might be completed.

Moeller referenced Whitetail Woods and asked if amenities like the shooting club adjacent to the park could be noted. Wulff stated she felt listing privately owned places would not be effective as the list would be too long. Moeller suggested it would be for the map but suggested listing them in the text.

Johnston commented that he was very impressed with the ease of reading and understandability.

Salk reviewed Chapter 4 and discussed the key changes including:

- Changed the order of the 5 policies for better flow.
- Added strategies regarding previously MPOSC recommended equity policy concepts.
- Integrated MPOSC recommended multimodal policy concepts into existing strategies.
- Incorporated confirmed language for Special Recreation Features, Master Plans and System Protection.
- Added discussion of the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network.
- Updated finance strategy language to conform with funding sources.

Wasley discussed equity lens and asked do we have any concept of how we are going to do this? Salk responded that this language was taken from Thrive and noted that discussions by Council staff and others are happening to see what this will look like.

Weber discussed linking different system plans and asked if any of that is in this plan. Salk stated yes and referred to the Regional Bike Transportation Network. Youngquist discussed the multi-modal discussions and links to lifecycle affordable housing. She also discussed Environmental Services where sewer interceptor pipe may be built in conjunction with trails.

Weber pointed out missing words on page 60.

Salk reviewed Chapter 5 and discussed key changes including:

- Reorganized based on funding type
- Included additional Parks and Trails Legacy Fund content
- Added Council approved Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund rules
- Updated costs to Complete the System

Yarusso asked what we’ve spent per year now. Salk stated it wouldn’t be enough to complete the system by 2040.

Moeller discussed Table 5-1 on page 95 that shows state funding is significantly down. He felt this may warrant further discussion. Stefferud noted that this table shows existing and authorized funding versus

proposed spending in future years. Moeller suggested footnoting this. He stated he would still like to have further discussion regarding State funding at another time.

Schmidt asked where redevelopment costs are listed. Stefferud stated that development costs include redevelopment costs.

Salk reviewed Chapter 6 and discussed key changes including:

- Added information regarding the CIP process and the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund process
- Added section on required State Bond Declarations
- Removed language on Backup Acquisition due to State Statute change

There were no questions/comments regarding Chapter 6.

Weber commented and thanked staff for a plan that was very well done. Moeller echoed his comments.

Johnston asked for public input from the audience. There was none.

Stefferud passed out a letter from the City of St. Paul with comments.

Salk noted that they are looking for comments by July 11th. She noted that they are not looking for substantive changes or comments that would require the convening of a special meeting of policy makers to discuss. She then discussed next steps.

Scheduling September and October MPOSC Tours and Off-site Meetings - Arne Stefferud, Manager

Stefferud discussed offsite tours/meetings for September/October. He reviewed tour suggestions outlined in the materials provided. Stefferud asked if the Commission would prefer meeting on 9/2/14 or 9/9/14 (in light of the holiday weekend just prior to 9/2/14). 9/2/14 was chosen by consensus. Stefferud noted that the tours will start at 3pm and business meetings will begin at 4:30pm.

REPORTS

Staff: Stefferud provided a summary regarding the bonding bill and its constraints based on the state constitution. He referred to the competition for dollars.

Chair: Johnston discussed changes in the parks system plans (variance) from our last meeting. Stefferud stated that the Community Development Committee (CDC) concurred with staff's recommendation and not the amended recommendation put forth by MPOSC.

Commissioners: Wasley stated she feels it's always wise to watch when the legislature starts earmarking funds. She stated that it's a red flag.

Theisen asked why the CDC chose not to follow MPOSC's recommendation. Stefferud stated that CDC chose to follow our policy and did not recommend a variance to the policy, which we do not have a procedure for. Wulff noted that additional information was provided at CDC. Yarusso stated that he does not feel it was a variance but a different interpretation of the policy. Theisen agreed.

Moeller discussed the comments from St. Paul (letter provided at today's meeting) and stated that he is concerned that we did not discuss this today. Johnston stated it was delivered at the beginning of the meeting. Moeller asked how this should be dealt with. Stefferud stated their position is they do not like what's being proposed. We are respectful of these comments. He noted that they will become a part of the minutes and public record and staff will take a look at it. Moeller noted that he wanted to acknowledge receipt of the letter.

Next meeting will be August 5, 2014 at 4:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

6:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary