

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, January 6 2015

Committee Members Present:

William Weber, Robert Moeller, Sarah Hietpas, Anthony Taylor, Dean Johnston, Rick Theisen, Wendy Wulff, Council Liaison

Committee Members Absent:

Barbara Schmidt, Carrie Wasley

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Johnston called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:02 p.m. on Tuesday, January 6, 2015.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Johnston asked for motion to approve the agenda of the January 6, 2015 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. Weber motioned and it was seconded by Theisen. Agenda was approved.

Chair Johnston asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2014 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. Weber motioned and it was seconded by Hietpas. Minutes were approved with one abstention.

PUBLIC INVITATION

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

None.

BUSINESS

Appointment of Rick Theisen as Vice-Chair to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission – Dean Johnston, Chair

Johnston noted that in accordance with the terms of the MPOSC bylaws, he is recommending appointing Rick Theisen as Vice-Chair.

Johnston motioned and it was seconded by Moeller to approve Chair Johnston's recommendation that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission approve the appointment of Rick Theisen as the Commission's Vice-Chair for 2015. **The motion carried.**

Public Hearing Report and Adoption of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan – Jan Youngquist, Manager and Raintry Salk, Research Analyst

Youngquist and Salk gave a Powerpoint presentation on the public hearing report for the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

Youngquist reviewed the original timeline and the stakeholder engagement and research done. She discussed the plan development details.

Theisen asked why it was brought to the Committee of the Whole (CoW). Youngquist discussed concerns over equity and funding. There were a lot of

directives without details. She discussed the placeholder put into the policy plan that talks about the intent to clear up the details in 2015. Youngquist also noted that comments from Three Rivers Park District were to include their entire proposed trail plan – so this issue was brought to the CoW.

Youngquist discussed public comments received – both written and oral. She noted that in addition to the comments at the public hearing, we also received 125 written comments from implementing agencies, CBOs, Federal and state agencies, counties, cities, and residents. She stated that to put this into perspective, for the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan, 20 comments were received, thus we have achieved greater than a five-fold increase in comments received. She attributed the increase to the expansive public engagement that was done.

Youngquist stated that there was a total of 469 individual comments made that were categorized into 20 themes. She discussed the revisions to the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan and noted that there were no substantive policy changes. Revisions included clarifying language, updating data/maps, further background/definitions/recommendations, and additional implementation language as outlined in the handout provided.

Salk reviewed the revisions, further background definitions/recommendations and also discussed implementation language. She then reviewed staff's recommendation.

Johnston asked for questions from the Commission and also the public.

Moeller asked if we are going to put more effort and money into wayfinding as a way of promoting equity. Youngquist discussed the work being done by the Council to work with implementing agencies and other partners on wayfinding best practices and noted that the plan does state that we will be updating that information.

Wulff stated that page 66 states that equity is going to be a key factor in prioritizing but then in the finance policy area she noted that strategy 2 has bullet points on things that are priorities in terms of regional funding and asked for clarification from staff – are we only going to be interacting with agencies in terms of equity prioritization or do all of the regional funding priorities come into effect. See page 85-86. Youngquist noted that the items listed on page 86 are eligibility criteria for presenting projects. She noted that the intent was to have conversation based on the equity tool kit. She noted that at the November meeting with the implementing agencies, one of the things discussed was concern if parks and trails legacy fund money or CIP money were to be used as a match to federal grants or other grants there was concern about not losing out on that.

Wulff is still concerned with time sensitive safety items or environmental protection restoration being lost priorities to equity. Salk noted that there is not an equity tool kit developed yet. She stated that the intention is to make that broad.

Moeller stated one year to work out language in the tool kit makes sense to him. He feels this project-to-date has been rushed.

Johnston commented that when the constitution was developed, the Bill of Rights was left out and had to be added later. He feels this work will be done in a collaborative, inclusive manner.

Weber stated that he liked the integration of the regional trail system and regional bikeway system.

Theisen stated he feels this has, overall, been a positive experience. He discussed the controversy of members being elected/appointed and noted this is a discussion for the legislature. He feels that this has been a good faith effort.

Hietpas stated she is pleased with the equity inclusion in the plan and sees this as something that is evolving.

It was motioned by Moeller, with a note of thanks to staff, and seconded by Hietpas to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

- Accept the public hearing report on the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*
- Adopt the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* as part of the comprehensive development guide for the metropolitan area authorized under Minnesota Statutes sections 473.145

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

Johnston thanked all for their contribution.

INFORMATION

None.

REPORTS

Chair: Johnston noted that he will be gone in February and March and will ask Vice-Chair to step in.

Commissioners: None.

Staff: Youngquist announced that she's accepted the Manager position and noted that Stefferud will be retiring in June and will be helping with the transition of new staff until then. She stated that there will be a parks finance position and a parks planner position posted soon.

Youngquist noted that the MPOSC deadline for applications has been extended until this Friday.

Youngquist announced that the Community Development Director – Guy Peterson is retiring on 1/16/15.

Johnston added his thanks to Stefferud for his insight and noted it has been immeasurable.

Stefferd discussed prioritized project list (discussed at the December 2 MPOSC meeting) and noted that on December 30, 2014 he was notified that due to the November forecasts of revenues for the Parks and Trails Legacy account, we need to revise our budget (cut it by \$517,000). He stated he is preparing a revised prioritized project list and will send a copy to MPOSC members.

Wulff asked what happens if the forecast is revised in February. Stefferud stated we'll work through this if necessary.

ADJOURNMENT

4:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary