

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, May 2, 2017

Committee Members Present:

Tony Yarusso, Rick Theisen, Todd Kemery, Sarah Hietpas, and Anthony Taylor

Committee Members Absent:

Michael Kopp, Robert Moeller, Margie Andreason, and Wendy Wulff, Council Liaison

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Yarusso called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:05 p.m. on Tuesday, May 2, 2017.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the Agenda of the Meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. Hietpas motioned and it was seconded by Kemery to approve the agenda. The **Agenda was approved.**

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2017 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. Kemery motioned and it was seconded by Hietpas to approve the minutes. The **Minutes were approved.**

PUBLIC INVITATION

None.

BUSINESS

2017-94, Bunker Hills Regional Park Master Plan Amendment, Anoka County – Michael Peterka, Planner

Peterka gave a presentation on a master plan amendment submitted by Anoka County for Bunker Hills Regional Park as outlined in the staff report provided.

Kemery asked about the cold storage building and if it is to be refrigerated. Peterka explained that it is just a building that is not heated.

Yarusso asked if the skijoring trail will be plowed in the winter. Jeff Perry, Anoka County Parks stated that it will not be plowed but continue to be groomed for skijoring and cross-country skiing.

Theisen asked about the trail along the golf course and if there are railroad tracks close by. Perry stated that BNSF has a track that parallels the trail.

Theisen asked if this is a multi-use trail. Perry stated yes, it is used for biking, inline skating, hiking, running, etc.

It was motioned by Kemery, seconded by Yarusso to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Bunker Hills Regional Park Master Plan Amendment.
2. Inform Anoka County that future grant eligible development costs for the Central Maintenance Facility will be prorated to reflect the proportion of the County' regional park acreage to the total park acreage owned by Anoka County at the time of a grant request for Metropolitan Regional Parks funding.

Kemery asked about accessibility of camping areas. Perry stated that there are three loops and loop 'B' has two sites that are accessible. Kemery discussed 'raised tent sites' where a person in a wheelchair can easily transfer from their chair into a tent. He offered that this may be something the agency wants to look into in for the future.

Taylor asked if there are any snow making plans in the future. Perry stated not at this time.

Taylor asked about design, plans and classes for the recreational courses. Perry stated that they have worked with skijoring groups on the design of the courses. He noted that they have had sanctioned events but no in-house programming. He stated they do provide programs for cross-country skiing and also have high school trainings and host sanctioned race events.

Chair Yarusso reviewed the motion and called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

2017-95 Mississippi West Regional Park Master Plan Amendment and Facility Exchange, Anoka County – Jan Youngquist, Planning Analyst

Youngquist gave a presentation on the request from Anoka County for a master plan amendment and a facility exchange for the Mississippi West Regional Park as outlined in the materials provided.

Chair Yarusso asked if the two requests have to be done separately. Youngquist stated they can be done together.

Taylor clarified that the total development cost is \$1,053,000. Youngquist stated yes but not all of the development will be done eight away.

It was motioned by Kemery, seconded by Hietpas to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Mississippi West Regional Park Master Plan Amendment.
2. Approve the conversion of 5.31 acres of land within Mississippi West Regional Park needed for the Riverdale Drive frontage road project as shown in Attachment 1, in exchange for the investment of \$200,000—the appraised value of the property—toward the development of improvements in the park including a paved entrance road, parking, and additional trails.
3. Require Anoka County to submit documentation of its \$200,000 investment in the park improvements described above to the Council and inform the County that these costs are not grant eligible expenses.

Chair Yarusso made a motion to amend #3, inserting a deadline to read as follows:

Require Anoka County to submit documentation, by 12/31/2021, of its \$200,000 investment in the park improvements described above to the Council and inform the County that these costs are not grant eligible expenses.

It was seconded by Taylor. Chair Yarusso called for a vote on the amended language – **the motion carried.**

Chair Yarusso asked for additional discussion, questions, or clarification on the full motion.

Theisen asked if the omission of a deadline was an oversight. Youngquist stated no, the it was good suggestion and could be good practice in the future.

Chair Yarusso called for a vote of the entire motion, with the approved amendment. **The motion carried.**

2017-96 Battle Creek-Indian Mounds Regional Park, Project Scope Grant Amendment (Parks Grant SG-03653), City of St. Paul – Tori Dupre, Senior Planner

Dupre gave a presentation on the project scope grant amendment for Battle Creek Indian Mounds Regional Park requested by St. Paul as outlined in the materials provided.

Alice Metzger, St. Paul Parks and Recreation acknowledged the guests from the community at the meeting. She stated that several community members gave testimony to the significance of this land and noted that this is a sacred burial site. They feel that it would be very disrespectful to the area to place a 'splash pad' here. They felt better use of the grant would be to create a signage and interpretation focused on educating visitors about this significance of the site and history of this land.

Crystal Norcross, District Council member Dayton's Bluff, stated that this is a sacred burial site and feels that the splash pad project would be disrespectful to the area. The signage plans need to be updated and an interpretive program would be a great asset to this area and would educate the community on the history of this area.

Tammy Skinaway, citizen, stated that she is very connected to this park and stated how significant this land is. She stated that it is a healing space as well as an educational opportunity for the Indian heritage. She described it as an urban reservation and stated that it is a teaching tool. She suggested another area in the neighborhood for a splashpad would be great. She felt that an updated plaque in this area would be wonderful.

It was motioned by Theisen, seconded by Hietpas to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve an amendment to grant agreement SG-03653 to modify the project scope to support preparation of a cultural resource study and interpretive program at Battle Creek-Indian Mounds Regional Park.

Kemery asked if the \$622,000 for the splash pad and water feature is a done deal. Chair Yarusso clarified that the amount of the grant will be the same, they are just requesting a change of scope to the use of the funds, including a cultural resource study and signage plan.

Theisen asked how long has this discussion been going on? Metzger stated that their first meeting was in February and residents were strongly opposed. She added that in the several meetings that followed, the message was the same.

Taylor thanked all of the community members that came out to speak at this meeting. Hietpas gave her appreciation as well.

Chair Yarusso called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

REPORTS

Chair: Chair Yarusso discussed summer tours and proposed the following:

1. Tuesday, July 11 – Washington County – Lake Elmo Park Reserve
2. Tuesday, August 1: Anoka County – Bunker Hills Regional Park
3. Tuesday, September 12, MPRB – Upper River Tour with meeting at park headquarters

Chair Yarusso reminded members that tours begin at 3:00pm and the business meetings will start at 4:30pm.

Commissioners: None.

Staff: Mullin reported the Secretary of State Office has closed the posted vacancy in District G and has interviews will be held on May 10, 2017.

Mullin gave an update on the Legislative Session.

ADJOURNMENT

5:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary