

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, September 4, 2018

Committee Members Present:

Tony Yarusso, Mike Kopp, Bob Moeller, Margie Andreason, Rick Theisen, Sarah Hietpas, Anthony Taylor, Todd Kemery, and Wendy Wulff

Committee Members Absent:

Catherine Fleming

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, after touring Spring Lake Park Reserve, Committee Chair Yarusso called the meeting of the Council's Special Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:20 p.m. on Tuesday, September 4, 2018.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the September 4, 2018 Agenda. Andreason 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 August 7, 2018 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. It was motioned by Hietpas and seconded by Moeller. The **Minutes were approved.**

PUBLIC INVITATION

None.

BUSINESS

None.

INFORMATION

Visitor Demographic Information for Regional Parks and Trails – Raintry Salk, Research

Salk gave a presentation on a study conducted by the Council in 2016 to look at visitor demographic information for regional parks and trails as outlined in the materials provided.

Draft 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update. Estimated Acquisition and Development Costs for the Regional Parks System 2018-2040 – Dan Marckel, Planning Analyst and Tracey Kinney, Parks Planner

Marckel and Kinney gave a presentation and additional background on the estimated acquisition and development costs for the regional parks system 2018-2040 as outlined in the materials provided.

Theisen asked if inflation, over 22 years, is taken into account. Marckel noted that the numbers are presented in 2018 dollars. Theisen felt inflation should be factored into the cost estimate because much of the needed acquisition and development will not take place for years to come.

Chair Yarusso stated that we may need to state: “these estimates are in 2018 dollars”. He felt land values will go up faster than inflation. This cost of waiting to acquire needed land will be significant.

Theisen felt land values are somewhat predictable.

Moeller discussed trail costs per mile and asked if they've verified the estimates with some of the implementing agencies (IA's). Kinney responded that they did verify acquisition and development costs with the IA's.

Marckel noted the map of search areas and stated that it is not expected that all would be acquired and developed by 2040. This process could take another 100 years.

Theisen asked why the estimate in the policy plan update is so different from the one done at the end of 2014. Marckel stated that the methodology for determining the 2014 estimate was not clear, which makes it different to compare the two numbers.

Mullin stated that staff consulted with the implementing agencies as they developed the methodology to build this estimate.

Kopp thanked staff for this presentation and asked how the land acre value was determined. Marckel said that the estimate uses Metropolitan Council Research staff information on average land values within the Metropolitan Urban Service Area and average values outside of it.

Kopp asked how do we know this estimate won't change again and prices go up? He said that there were no system additions to the draft plan since 2015, but the price went up substantially. He asked how do we know the price won't go up again?

Chair Yarusso suggested showing comparisons going forward of recent acquisitions and this estimate.

Marckel stated this is one of the great central questions. As a region, we have a responsibility to be good stewards of the regions land and financial resources. One thing we do know is numbers will change.

Mullin noted that the plan includes a conservative 5-year Capital Improvement Plan that projects future funding for the relative near term using known funding sources.

Wulff stated that if we could get actual dollar amounts of what agencies contribute from their own funding sources verses what the state and regional provide may help us understand to know what the gaps are. She felt this would be helpful to have this information and also private foundation contributions as we have our policy discussions.

Taylor agreed with Wulff's statement and reinforced the importance of better understanding contributions from private sources. Marckel stated this point is well taken and said that these perspectives help inform us going forward to future estimates.

Park and Trails Legacy Fund Project Proposals for State Fiscal Years 2020-2021 - Deb Jensen, Senior Parks Finance Planner

Jensen led the conversation for the parks and trails legacy fund project proposals for state fiscal years 2020-2021. Each of the agencies reviewed projects that have been outlined in the materials provided.

Mullin encouraged committee members to talk with their legislators to promote the needs of these important project proposals.

Connor Schafer, Washington County reviewed projects outlined in the materials and discussed equity impacts.

There were no questions.

Adam Arvidson, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board discussed seven projects outlined in the materials provided. He discussed the diverse populations their agency serves, and the equity impact considerations made with each project.

There were no questions.

Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District discussed three projects outlined in the materials provided. He focused on the Mississippi Gateway project, which won a national planning award for the public engagement efforts around the park improvements.

Andreason asked how the Gateway project was designed to be inclusive. Vlaming discussed the public engagement conducted and shared how the resulting design seeks help people not comfortable with the outdoors gradually move through environments that begin with highly developed areas, then move to less developed, and finally end with a more primitive and natural experience. The idea is to get people more and more comfortable with outdoors slowly and at their individual speed and go from there.

Paul Sawyer, Saint Paul Parks, provided an overview of their 10 projects. Commissioner Kemery had questions about access and safety, particularly with the Bruce Vento-Sam Morgan Regional Trail pedestrian bridge. There were also questions regarding the engagement efforts for Indian Mounds Regional Park interpretive plan which proposes a series of meetings with the tribal communities and stakeholders. The remaining agencies provided an overview of their Legacy project proposals with a number of clarifying questions from Commissioners about project details.

REPORTS

Chair: Chair Yarusso noted that the next MPOSC Meeting will be held on October 1 (Monday) in Room 1A. There will be a few short business items and then there will be a joint meeting at 4pm with the Community Development Committee in Council Chambers.

Commissioners: It was noted that the audience had a hard time hearing staff at past Commission meetings. Staff said they would look into ways to improve acoustics or amplification at meetings.

Staff: Mullin discussed moving MPOSC from Tuesdays to Thursdays in 2019. With our current Tuesday schedule, there are at least four conflicts with our 12 monthly meeting schedule.

Randy Quale and Jon Oyanagi are retiring.

Todd Kemery won two awards for hand cycling and rugby at a recent competition.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary