

## Minutes of the

### MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, August 7, 2018

#### Committee Members Present:

Tony Yarusso, Mike Kopp, Bob Moeller, Margie Andreason, Rick Theisen, Catherine Fleming, Sarah Hietpas, and Wendy Wulff

#### Committee Members Absent:

Anthony Taylor, Todd Kemery

#### CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the meeting of the Council's Special Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 7, 2018.

#### APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the August 7, 2018 Agenda. Moeller motioned, and it was seconded by Theisen to approve the agenda. The **Agenda was approved.**

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the July 12, 2018 special meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. It was motioned by Andreason and seconded by Kopp. The **Minutes were approved.**

#### PUBLIC INVITATION

None.

#### BUSINESS

**Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan** - Tracey Kinney, Regional Parks and Natural Resources

Kinney gave a presentation on the master plan boundary amendment of the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park submitted by Three Rivers Park District (3RPD) as outlined in the materials provided.

Kelley Grissman, 3RPD discussed community engagement done for this master plan.

Theisen discussed comments in the document outlining engagement and asked Grissman to summarize comments regarding development of pristine land. Grissman discussed the development of the regional park and noted that the footprint will not change from what is currently developed (from the previous land owner).

Theisen asked how 3RPD is addressing those that are not using the park. Grissman stated that the number one thing they heard was awareness. She discussed signage plans. She also discussed larger community social events to be held at the park as well as other gatherings. Grissman discussed the Welcome Center/Visitors Center and noted that it will also be available for rental to the public.

Theisen talked about the reference to the 'small' playground area and asked why emphasize that it's small. He also asked what the easements noted are. Grissman stated that the playground is on the Brooklyn Park side and feedback during engagement was that they have plenty of playgrounds. They asked for more picnic areas. She stated that they focused on that as well as a nature-based play area. Grissman stated that the easements were a condition of the sale. NSP needs them to maintain their power lines.

Moeller asked about language diversity and how will 3RPD deal with this. Grissman stated they are working on a program translator and also stated there is a translation function on their website. Moeller encouraged including this information in the master plan.

Theisen asked if there is a bus line in that area. Grissman state that there is however there are no evening and weekend routes. Theisen felt this should be addressed.

Fleming questioned the 'no known opposition' and stated that she is aware of opposition. Grissman stated that there was no opposition to the park itself and that overall there was support.

Fleming asked if there is a list of organizations that 3RPD reached out to. Grissman stated she can provide that complete list. She noted that many are noted in the master plan.

It was motioned by Theisen and seconded by Hietpas to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan.
2. Approve the Master Plan Boundary Amendment to include an additional 5.2 acres of natural area including a 2.6-acre property held by the City of Brooklyn Park and a 2.6-acre property held jointly by Hennepin County and the City of Brooklyn Park, to protect the natural resources.
3. Prior to implementing the Master Plan, require Three Rivers Park District to:
  - Recognize that Regional Parks System funding requests must be for facilities only within the Council approved 170.5-acre master plan boundary;
  - Create a Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Brooklyn Park to:
    - Establish regional park use through a long-term lease or in perpetuity that identifies, outlines, and confirms use of land required for a park maintenance facility on land owned by the City of Brooklyn Park;
    - Clarify a minor realignment of the Rush Creek Regional Trail and grade separated crossing;
    - Transfer the 2.6-acre park easement held by the City of Brooklyn Park that is currently outside the regional park boundary.
  - Create a Purchase Agreement with Hennepin County and the City of Brooklyn Park to transfer ownership of another 2.6-acre parcel of forfeited land currently owned by Hennepin County and the City of Brooklyn Park to Three Rivers Park District.

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

**Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for West Mississippi Regional Trail, Three Rivers Park District – Goodin Property** - Deb Jensen, Senior Parks Finance Planner

Jensen gave a presentation on a request from Three Rivers Park District (3RPD) for a park acquisition opportunity fund grant for West Mississippi Regional Trail as outlined in the materials provided.

Andreason asked about the floodplain and the pros/cons of acquiring this land. Grossman noted that the parcel being acquired for a trail corridor and trail alignment will be on the upland.

It was motioned by Andreason and seconded by Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$325,839.68 to Three Rivers Park District to acquire the 7.3-acre Goodin parcel at 17180 Dayton River Road in the City of Dayton for West Mississippi River Regional Trail;

2. Authorize the Community Development Director to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council;
3. Consider reimbursing Three Rivers Park District for up to \$108,613.22 from its share of a future Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program for costs associated with this item; and
4. Inform Three Rivers Park District that the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that future reimbursement will be granted and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.

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

**Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Baker-Carver Regional Trail, Three Rivers Park District – Hodgson Property - Deb Jensen, Senior Parks Finance Planner**

Jensen gave a presentation on a request from Three Rivers Park District (3RPD) for a park acquisition opportunity fund grant for Baker-Carver Regional Trail as outlined in the materials provided.

Chair Yarusso asked how long the grant agreement is good for? Grissman clarified that it is good for one year. If it is not used the agency needs to apply for a grant amendment.

Wulff felt this is a wide corridor. Grissman explained that they created a corridor that is wider, and it gives the user a park-like feel. Also, the property owner was not interested in selling only a portion.

It was motioned by Moeller and seconded by Theisen to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$474,355.50 to Three Rivers Park District to acquire the 55.94-acre Hodgson parcel at 7300 Halstead Drive in Minnetrista for the Baker-Carver Regional Trail;
2. Authorize the Community Development Director to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council;
3. Consider reimbursing Three Rivers Park District for up to \$158,118.50 from its share of a future Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program for costs associated with this item; and
4. Inform Three Rivers Park District that the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that future reimbursement will be granted and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.

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

**Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Grey Cloud Island Regional Park, Washington County – Kartarik Property - Deb Jensen, Senior Parks Finance Planner**

Jensen gave a presentation on a request from Washington County for a park acquisition opportunity fund grant for Grey Cloud Island Regional Park as outlined in the materials provided.

Theisen asked why Washington County wants the third parcel of land. Sandy Breuer, Washington County explained that the third parcel is part of 'the package,' but has no value and will not be added to the regional park boundary.

It was motioned by Theisen and seconded by Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve a grant of up to \$435,083.63 to Washington County to acquire the two Kartarik parcels comprising 4.24 acres at 10870 Grey Cloud Island Drive in Grey Cloud Island Township for Grey Cloud Island Regional Park and authorize the Community Development Director to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

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

**Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Big Marine Regional Park, Washington County – Bofenkamp Property** - Deb Jensen, Senior Parks Finance Planner

Jensen gave a presentation on a request from Washington County for a park acquisition opportunity fund grant for Big Marine Regional Park as outlined in the materials provided.

It was motioned by Hietpas and seconded by Theisen to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve a grant of up to \$451,924 to Washington County to acquire three parcels comprising the 8.33-acre Bofenkamp property at 18135 Margo Avenue in the City of Scandia for Big Marine Park Reserve and authorize the Community Development Director to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

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

**Regional Parks Policy Plan, Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Comments on the Draft 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update – Chair Tony Yarusso**

Chair Yarusso reviewed the procedure to comment on the draft 2040 RPPP as a Commission. He reviewed the comments summarized in the materials provided.

It was motioned by Chair Yarusso and seconded by Andreason that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission submit comments on the draft *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* to the Metropolitan Council as follows:

The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission has discussed the proposed update to the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* at each of our eight monthly meetings so far in 2018 and will continue to discuss the plan until we recommend its adoption to you later this year.

While we look forward to reviewing comments received during the public comment period, we submit the following comments on the draft plan as released for public comment:

- We support handling future potential uses of the interest earnings on Regional Parks System funds outside of the plan update and are interested in using this funding for the Equity Grant Program. (Chapter 2, Key Legislation)
- We support the strategy of geographic balance and would look forward to better articulating what geographic balance means, including how it aligns with population distribution and access to a range of recreational opportunities. (Chapter 4, Siting and Acquisition)
- We support reaffirming the equity strategies and engaging a broad community of stakeholders around equity solutions. (Chapter 7)
- We are interested in learning more about the estimated cost to complete the system, including how and why the cost increased from the 2015 plan estimate and how this significantly higher number will affect future funding strategies for the Regional Parks System. (Chapter 8)

As Commissioners, we plan to engage our networks and partners in the public comment period on the plan. We look forward to discussing the final revisions of the update with you this fall. Thank you for your continued support of our region's magnificent Regional Parks System.

Moeller discussed removal of the provision for MPOSC to prioritize spending. Chair Yarusso discussed the language the Council added (shown in the materials provided).

Moeller made a friendly amendment to suggest restoring the original language that had been stricken from Strategy 4 by the Council and remove the new language. Chair Yarusso accepted this friendly amendment.

Andreason asked why the language was removed. Wulff discussed why the amendment was made at the Council meeting by Chair Cunningham and stated that she was against it.

Moeller thanked Wulff for supporting the work of MPOSC.

Theisen asked for clarification of the new language. Wulff explained that it leaves in language that allows MPOSC to prioritize projects.

Theisen discussed the majority of the Council voting for new language. Wulff stated that a number of Council Members stated that they only voted for it to be put in 'for comments only' and that it did not mean it would remain. She felt it was possibly going to be changed.

Andreason asked for clarification on the controversy. Chair Yarusso stated that the language 'may shift the order' is what is basically controversial.

Moeller felt it was disrespectful to the implementing agencies.

Chair Yarusso asked where this letter (Commission comments) goes from here. Starling explained the process and the publishing of comments.

Fleming asked what is wrong with the new language. Moeller noted that the priorities set by the implementing agencies are approved by their County Boards. He feels that this Commission is ill prepared to make decisions to change priorities for the agencies.

Theisen stated that this was discussed at length and noted that the legislature has said that we can't do it and it also caused a lot of dissension between the MPOSC and the agencies.

Chair Yarusso asked if there are any other additions.

Kopp commented on the third and fourth bullets. He is shocked by the cost of completing the system. He shared his concern with defending this higher number.

Chair Yarusso discussed the change in methodology of how costs were calculated.

Kopp stated he would like to see a red-lined document to reflect the increases. He discussed sustainability and tax capacity and where the money comes from.

Starling noted that staff have a red-lined version but it is very hard to follow. She reiterated the Chair's point that the new number is really just due to the new methodology.

Kopp asked if he gets a call asking what has changed, where can he point them. Starling stated that nothing has changed, it's just new math in estimating what it will actually cost.

Kopp wants to be able to point. Starling stated that staff can have something for the September meeting that outlines what assumptions are that brought about the new totals.

Andreason stated it would also be helpful to know what was missing before.

Theisen stated that we need to have more information regarding costs when we approve master plans or a way of attaching realistic dollar amounts.

Fleming noted that most of the words in the letter are passive and asked if that was intentional. She asked if there could be a more affirmative approach. Chair Yarusso stated there are not specifics at this time.

Fleming asked how (third bullet) we support reaffirming the equity strategies and engaging a broad community of stakeholders around equity solutions. Chair Yarusso went over Chapter 7 specifics and the intent to support this.

Chair Yarusso asked for consensus on the language in the letter adding Moeller's friendly amendment to add the following language and remove language that was substituted by the Council:

Add:

While the Council will not use these questions for project prioritization, the information provides the Council with a mechanism to track and monitor efforts and progress toward strengthening equitable use of the Regional Parks System.

Remove:

~~The information provides the Council with a mechanism to track and monitor efforts and progress toward strengthening equitable use of the Regional Parks System. The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and Council will use the equity toolkit to review, assess and, on occasion, shift the order of the prioritized list of capital projects submitted to the state for state and regional bonds and other funding sources as appropriate and allowable, not including the Parks and Trails Legacy projects. Reprioritization will in no way apply to regional park implementing agency projects that serve as a match to Federal or State funds. The review of proposed projects will in no way alter an agency's share of funding received from state and regional bonds.~~

Andreason and Fleming shared concern that they do not consent to all of the language in the letter.

Chair Yarusso stated that it could state that it is from the majority of the commission.

Andreason and Fleming agreed. Chair Yarusso noted that they may also comment on their own.

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

## INFORMATION

### **2017 Regional Park System Annual Use Estimate – Rainry Salk, Regional Policy and Research**

Salk gave a presentation on the Regional Park System Annual Use Estimate report as outlined in the materials provided. She shared some of the projects related to parks including an interactive ap.

Fleming asked if there is disaggregation of data for demographic information. Salk stated there is not.

Andreason asked about the app and if it is for visitors? Salk stated it is not. They are beta testing. The primary audience has not been determined.

Wulff asked about the app and how the data is collected. Starling explained how data is collected and the technology behind it.

## REPORTS

**Chair:** Chair Yarusso announced that Randy Quale from Bloomington Parks is retiring. The commission congratulated him, thanked him for his service, and wished him well.

**Commissioners:** Fleming stated she was waiting to hear back from Met Council Legal staff before discussing an email that she previously sent to commissioners. Chair Yarusso noted that if you have items to discuss with the commission, doing it through email is a violation of open meeting law. He stated that if members have an item they would like to discuss, please forward to himself or staff to be placed on the agenda or discussed in another way.

**Staff:** Starling discussed Legislative funding for bonding for the regional parks system. This bonding (10 million dollars) will be backed by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. The RPPP has a policy for matching general obligation bonds to support capital projects in the regional parks system. She stated that the Community Development Committee discussed whether the Council has the intention of matching those bonds in the same 3:2 ratio that the Council has historically matched general obligation bonds. Based on their discussion, it looks like the Council is moving towards action (later this month) to officially agree to match the bonds being backed by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

Starling reviewed upcoming meetings for MPOSC.

September 4 will be held at Spring Lake Park, with a tour beginning at 3pm and a business meeting to follow at 4:15.

September 17 will be the official Public Hearing for the RPPP. It will be live streamed or can be watched later. You do not need to be present to see it.

October 1 will be a Special Meeting at 3pm and then a joint meeting with the Community Development Committee at 4pm. This replaces the October 2 meeting.

November 6 is election day therefore MPOSC will begin at 3pm to ensure that we end before 6pm as required in state statute.

## ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Sandi Dingle  
Recording Secretary