

## Minutes of the Meeting of the

### METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Thursday, September 3, 2020

**Committee Members Present:** Cecily Harris, Anthony Taylor Tony Yarusso, Todd Kemery, Jeremy Peichel, Nate Rich, Rick Theisen, Davis-Carter Davis Carter, Bob Moeller and Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson, liaison to the Council.

**Committee Members Absent:** None.

#### CALL TO ORDER

Secretary Dingle did a roll call for a quorum.

**Present: 7** at the time of the roll call. Note: two members (Davis Carter and Moeller) joined during the meeting.

With a quorum being present via WebEx, Committee Chair Yarusso called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 3, 2020.

#### APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Yarusso asked for a consensus to approve the September 3, 2020 agenda. **The agenda was approved.**

With a quorum present, Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the August 13, 2020 minutes.

Harris motioned and it was seconded by Theisen to approve the August 13, 2020 minutes of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting. Secretary Dingle issued a roll call vote.

Aye – 7 (Harris, Kemery, Peichel, Rich, Taylor, Theisen, Yarusso)

Nay – 0

**The August 13, 2020 minutes were approved.**

#### PUBLIC INVITATION

Chair Yarusso noted that the posted Agenda asked that anyone wishing to address the Commission should please email the Chair at [mposc@tonyyarusso.org](mailto:mposc@tonyyarusso.org). He noted that no one wished to address the Commission.

#### BUSINESS

**2020-231, Coon Creek Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment, Anoka County** – Tracey Kinney, Senior Parks Planner

Kinney gave a presentation on a request from Anoka County for an amendment to the Coon Creek Regional Trail Master Plan as outlined in the materials provided.

Taylor asked about the current traffic counts and if it is conducted under the current trail configuration. Karen Blaska, Anoka County, responded that the 250,000 'use' count was done with the current trail alignment.

Taylor asked if the counts were done on both sides of the intersection and did the intersection impact on the counts? Blaska stated she was not sure but could check on that.

Taylor asked about anticipated acquisition costs. Blaska stated that the trail alignment is in the right of way and therefore there will not be any acquisition costs.

Taylor asked about plans for signage. Blaska stated that there are signage plans included in the City's redevelopment plans.

Theisen asked about the solar and natural resources comments contained in the business item. Kinney stated that the comments are related to Council division review, including best management practice recommendations.

Kemery asked about snow removal – who's responsible? Kinney stated that each transportation element, i.e., sidewalk, bus stop, bridge, has its own responsible unit, and a joint powers agreement/plan will be developed to clarify snow removal responsibilities.

Kemery stated he understands snow removal to be prioritized and asked for clarity on priority level. Kinney stated staff would need to follow up with Metro Transit for this information. Kemery stated he could do that. Atlas-Ingebretson stated she would like to hear back on this topic as well.

Peichel commended staff for the clarifications on the engagement piece. He asked how social distance rules impacted the ability to connect with targeted audiences? Blaska stated the majority of engagement happened prior to COVID-19. After this time social media was used heavily.

It was motioned by Peichel and seconded by Taylor to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Coon Creek Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment.
2. Encourage the County to implement the advisory comments in the "Consistency with Other Council Policies and Systems" section regarding solar, transit, and transportation planning.

Secretary Dingle issued a roll call vote.

Aye – 7 (Harris, Kemery, Peichel, Rich, Taylor, Theisen, Yarusso)

Nay – 0

**The motion was approved.**

## **INFORMATION**

**Public Engagement Approach on the Draft Regional Parks Policy Plan Amendment – Tracey Kinney, Senior Parks Planner and Amanda Lovelee, Senior Outreach Coordinator**

Kinney began the presentation on the public engagement approach being done on the draft Regional Parks Policy Plan Amendment (RPPP) as outlined in the materials provided. She noted the comments heard today will help inform the process going forward. Staff will be back at the October MPOSC meeting to provide an update and that the public hearing will take place on October 19 at the Community Development Committee Meeting.

Lovelee discussed the 4 major topic areas that staff are focusing engagement efforts on including:

- Growing the system
- Equitable access
- Reconsidering history
- Climate resilience

Kinney discussed ways to participate as outlined in the presentation. Next, she discussed the promotion of the video challenge.

Atlas-Ingebretson asked if the list of partners could be shared. Mullin shared his screen showing a list of organizations to be included in engagement.

Atlas-Ingebretson asked committee members to share any additional organizations they feel may be good contacts with staff.

Harris stated that she was not familiar with a couple of survey questions, particularly land acknowledgement and water trails, and she felt a footnote with definitions could be included.

Harris noted she knows of 4 organizations that she will share this opportunity to comment on the plan. Chair Yarusso noted if anyone has a personal connection, be sure to include contact information. He noted that in the Chat, Urban Boat Builders is another water trail organization.

Mullin stated that suggested organizations do not have to be an outdoor recreation group but could be a group that has interest, i.e., a church group.

Peichel utilizing Instagram may be another way to capture people's stories with pictures. He suggested having an award for best picture/park related story.

Lovelee noted that they do use this form of social media. #MNRegionalParks is their hashtag. There will also be one for comments on the RPPP.

Atlas-Ingebretson felt it would be helpful to provide draft language for commissioners to use when reaching out to organizations. Lovelee stated that the Communications Department has created language that will assist commissioners with their outreach. This will be sent next week.

### **2020 Equity Grant Program Priorities Discussion – Jessica Lee, Senior Parks Planner and Dan Marckel, Planning Analyst**

Lee gave a presentation on the 2020 Equity Grant Program as outlined in the presentation.

Atlas-Ingebretson noted this is a big deal and shared her excitement about this program. She gave credit to MPOSC for this work.

Marckel talked about the history of the equity grant program.

Atlas-Ingebretson shared additional history of the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee that began this work and noted there was initial pushback, so she is now glad to see it being brought back.

Lee reviewed the 2019 pilot that established the competitive equity grant program and what was learned. Next, she discussed funding for the 2020/2021 program.

Marckel asked for discussion/advice:

- What are your non-capital or programming ideas?
- What is your advice for 2020 program priorities?

Chair Yarusso stated the tricky part will be figuring out how to do things one-time or first-time.

Harris added that often with program grants the request is - can the money be used for design and/or implementation work.

Lee stated both are really good questions and responded to Chair Yarusso that staff could build this input into the criteria and application. She agreed with Harris and stated she felt it could be eligible.

Moeller suggested we may want to permit or encourage agencies to apply together with a shared grant request. He also suggested making a portion available for marketing and communications.

Chair Yarusso noted these were both brought up last year. He asked about marketing/communications and if it would be specific to the Metropolitan Council or for agencies as well. Moeller felt funds should be available for both.

Atlas-Ingebretson noted examples in the presentation to add programming. Also, a key strategy – welcoming environment - was discussed. She reminded the commission that these funds were dedicated to underserved, under resourced, parks. Also – make sure parks are accessible, i.e., rental equipment at little or no charge. She also discussed programming at different skill levels and discussed the DNR's 'I Can' series. She then discussed partnerships that could promote collaboration of organizations to bring users in.

Chair Yarusso discussed free rental and the possibility of sponsorships for some rental costs.

Atlas-Ingebretson asked if it would be helpful to have a presentation from the DNR on the 'I Can' series? Also, she asked if target marketing campaigns could be shared. Mullin responded that he could invite the DNR to present to the Commission.

Moeller discussed the number of groups under 'special groups' and all have contact lists and a wide array of marketing tools and stated this may broaden our reach.

Chair Yarusso discussed scoring done last year, to ensure the criteria developed resulted in reflecting the Commissioner's priorities.

Marckel shared a series of criteria areas that were focused on last year.

Lee reviewed the four areas including:

- Racial equity
- Welcoming underserved populations to the Regional Park System
- Accessibility
- Equitable use of Regional Trails

Marckel discussed developing the capacity of the agencies to do this type of work. He stated we need to decide how to "script" what money can be used for what purposes, and see what ideas come in.

Atlas-Ingebretson worries about not getting projects that are important to us or quality projects. She feels we need to be as explicit as possible so we're clear about types of projects we're looking for.

Chair Yarusso commented that last year we received this type of feedback and stated the agencies want clarity.

Marckel asked for additional comments.

Chair Yarusso engaged staff to prioritize the "harder" projects – the ones that include unknowns or are more out of reach, i.e., because there are not existing organizational relationships.

Peichel agreed and asked about transit and connectivity to the parks and events. He would like to see more connections, i.e., park trails or circulator bus designated for parks and park programming.

Atlas-Ingebretson stated she felt we haven't seen bus routes included in park plans. She suggested more discussion about transportation connections.

Chair Yarusso encouraged Commission members to forward additional comments.

Lee reviewed the next steps.

Chair Yarusso discussed doing this program on a two-year basis because the budget at the Met Council is done every two years. He noted we are not trying to rush the process.

## REPORTS

**Chair:** Chair Yarusso invited Commissioners, especial new Commissioners, to reach out by phone or email.

**Commissioners:** None.

**Staff:** Atlas-Ingebretson has been added to the State Outdoor Recreation Task Force. She shared our Equity Grant Program with the group and found that this is a leading effort that is not happening in other parts of the Country. She noted that no one else has done this and she will be sharing information with them on our program.

Mullin stated he will send a draft list of organizations to the group and further instructions including sample emails, etc.

Mullin reminded Commissioners that the public hearing will be held at the Community Development Committee on 10/19/2020.

Nicole Clapp gave a brief update on a grant change with Ramsey County. She discussed Legacy funding dollars that are being shifted because of last year's legislative outcomes, no bonding bill.

Chair Yarusso asked if this will end up being a business item or just information at a future meeting. Clapp stated it would be just information.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed the meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Sandi Dingle  
Recording Secretary