

## Minutes of the Special Meeting of the METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Thursday, August 13, 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

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 4:01 p.m. on Thursday, August 13, 2020.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Yarusso asked for a consensus to approve the August 13, 2020 agenda. **The agenda was approved.**

With a quorum present, Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the July 9, 2020 and July 15, 2020 minutes.

Harris motioned and it was seconded by Rich to approve the July 9, 2020 minutes of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting. Secretary Dingle issued a roll call vote.

Aye – 6 (Harris, Kemery, Peichel, Rich, Theisen, Yarusso)

Nay – 0

**The July 9, 2020 minutes were approved.**

Kemery motioned and it was seconded by Peichel to approve the July 15, 2020 minutes of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting. Secretary Dingle issued a roll call vote.

Aye – 5

Nay – 0

Abstentions - 1

**The July 15, 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

**2020-215, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Lake Rebecca Park Reserve (Ahrens), Three Rivers Park District - Jessica Lee, Senior Parks Planner**

Lee gave a presentation on a request for a Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Lake Rebecca Park Reserve as outlined in the materials provided.

Harris asked about the third staff recommendation regarding “future reimbursement consideration”. Do we have a precedence for this practice? Chair Yarusso explained that this practice is outlined in our Regional Parks Policy Plan and explained that in order to be reimbursed, agencies must first ask for a future reimbursement prior to any work being done.

Next, Harris asked when we might know about reductions of state funds. Mullin stated that the Parks and Trails Legacy Funds come in monthly installments

(collected in sales tax receipts). He added that although we've heard from Minnesota Management and Budget that there may be reductions (up to 6%), nothing has been made official yet.

Kemery asked if there is still a resident living in the house on this property. Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District, stated yes, the homeowners are looking forward to moving in October.

Kemery asked if the equestrian facility would continue to operate and/or how long before everything is moved out. Grissman stated that the owners of the boarding horses have been notified and will be expected to find new stables by September 1, 2020. The demolition of structures will start after the closing in October. She stated they are looking to see if any structures can be reused, however she noted that most likely most will be removed.

Kemery asked if there are equestrian trails in Lake Rebecca Park Reserve and whether it is possible to continue their use? Grissman stated there are trails on the other side of County Road 50, but there is not an easy or safe crossing to the existing horse trails. She noted that across the road to this parcel the park has an equestrian trail head, so Three Rivers believes this need is being met.

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

1. Approve a grant of up to \$727,500 to Three Rivers Park District to acquire the 15.14-acre Ahrens property located at 8680 Rebecca Park Trail in the City of Greenfield for Lake Rebecca Park Reserve.
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 \$242,500 from its share of a future Regional Parks Capital Bonding Program for costs associated with their local match.
4. Inform Three Rivers Park District that the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that the Council will grant future reimbursement and that expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.

Secretary Dingle issued a roll call vote.

Aye – 8 (Carter, Harris, Kemery, Peichel, Rich, Taylor, Theisen, Yarusso)

Nay – 0

**The motion was approved.**

**2020-216, Release the Draft Amendment to the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan for Public Comment and Set Public Hearing Date** - Emmett Mullin, Manager Regional Parks and Natural Resources, Tracey Kinney, Senior Planner, and Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst

Mullin thanked everyone for their participation in this process. He stated that today, we are looking to release the draft amendment to the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan (RPPP) for public comment and set a public hearing date.

Mullin reviewed the timeline for the plan amendment as outlined in the materials provided. He discussed who has participated to help inform the amendment as shown in the presentation. He stated that soon the public comment period will be open.

Mullin discussed the six most significant things about the amendment as outlined in the presentation.

Kelly reviewed changes to Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Mullin went over Chapter 9 – 2020-2021 Workplan. He then discussed the RPPP next steps outlined in the presentation.

Kinney discussed the public comment invitation outlined in the presentation and reviewed the proposed action.

Harris asked how Commissioners should comment. Kinney stated that in the past there was a letter from MPOSC. She noted there is also a website and a video challenge.

Mullin stated Commissioners are invited to comment at any time. He noted that staff have attempted to keep up with suggestions/comments as the draft has been developed.

Chair Yarusso gave historical background. He encouraged Commissioners to comment just as the public would submit them, through the website. If/when there are comments that need discussion, he stated that the Commission would take them up at future MPOSC meetings.

Harris stated she will submit her comments to staff.

Kemery asked for additional information on a photo image of a trail included in the presentation. Kelly noted the graphic was placed in the presentation for illustrative purposes and he does not have information about this specific trail.

Atlas-Ingebretson asked what feedback and ideas we have around engagement. Mullin stated we will have a deeper discussion in September on our engagement approach, and staff will ask Commissioners for their assistance.

Atlas-Ingebretson encouraged thinking outside the box and using plain language in all outreach materials, to make the public process more accessible. Council Researcher, Darcie Vandegrift seconded these comments and stated she looks forward to working with Atlas-Ingebretson's expertise.

Theisen motioned and it was seconded by Taylor to recommend that the Metropolitan Council

1. Release the 2020 draft amendment to the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* for public comment.
2. Authorize a public comment period from August 26, 2020, to October 30, 2020, including a public hearing to be conducted at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, October 19, 2020, at the regularly scheduled Community Development Committee meeting.

Secretary Dingle issued a roll call vote.

Aye – 9 (Carter, Harris, Kemery, Peichel, Rich, Rich, Taylor, Theisen, Yarusso)

Nay – 0

**The motion was approved.**

## REPORTS

**Chair:** None.

**Commissioners:** None.

**Staff:** Mullin stated that staff are looking at ways to allow for the public to participate in the meetings during public invitation.

Mullin stated there was a short third special legislative session to extend the Governors Executive Powers. He noted there was no discussion on the Bonding Bill.

Atlas-Ingebretson discussed possible new tools with WebEx regarding aiding in the effort to allow for public participation.

## ADJOURNMENT

Business completed the meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Sandi Dingle  
Recording Secretary