

# Minutes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



**Meeting Date:** November 3, 2022

**Time:** 4:00 PM

**Location:** 390 Robert Steet

## Members Present:

Chair, Tony Yarusso, At-large

Monica Dillenburg, District A

Robert Moeller, District B

Cana Yang, District C

Vacant, District D

Jeremy Peichel, District E

Cecily Harris, District F

Anthony Taylor, District G

Todd Kemery, District H

Susan Vento, Council Liaison

= present,

## Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Vice Chair Harris called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:00pm.

## Agenda Approved

Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. **Approved by consensus.**

## Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Peichel to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2022 regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

## Public Invitation

None.

## Business

**2022-284**, French Regional Park Master Plan, Three Rivers Park District - Chee Yang

Yang gave a presentation on the French Regional Park Master Plan received from Three Rivers Park District (3RPD) as outlined in the materials provided.

Peichel asked for more information about the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum level of engagement. Ann Rexine, 3RPD responded that their planning effort generally falls into the collaboration column, which took place between Phases I & III. She noted they also did an extra step at the end of the process – going back to the public and asking, “did we get it right”?

Peichel asked what is being done about the large number of geese at the park? Rexine discussed the intervention, which includes adding buffer strips near the swimming area to obscure the view of the lake.

Peichel asked about tribal acknowledgement. Rexine stated 3RPD is committed to growing relationships with tribal populations. This is a work-in-progress.

Vice Chair Harris discussed land acknowledgement statements and the need to go slow and

focus on relationships.

Moeller asked about swimming lessons/skills being offered. Jonathan Vlaming, 3RPD stated they have talked with Hennepin County in the past about partnerships. These typically take place in pools. They have not looked at doing this in lakes. Moeller encouraged the agency to look into this. Rexine pointed out that 3RPD has piloted swimming lessons at some of their parks in the past.

Mullin discussed land acknowledgement for the regional park system and stated the advice has been to move slowly in this area.

Dillenburg asked how this will serve as an example to other parks? Ann Rexine, 3RPD discussed 'seed ideas' that will help inform future master plans, including the bridging facility-Parks-to-People Master Plan that is in progress.

Peichel asked about co-management in the future with tribal resources and restoration. Vlaming stated he doesn't know yet, but they are building a strong relationship with the Mdewakanton Sioux Community.

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Peichel, to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve Three Rivers Park District's French Regional Park Master Plan. **Motion carried.**

**2022-285**, Vermillion Highlands Greenway Regional Trail, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund (McMenomy), Dakota County - Jessica Lee

Lee gave a presentation on the Vermillion Highlands Greenway Regional Trail Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund request from Dakota County as outlined in the materials provided.

Moeller asked why an easement and not ownership. Al Singer, Dakota County responded that they are partnering with the City of Rosemont on this project. The area around the trail will become a city park, and there are significant conservation and economic benefits to doing this in partnership. Ultimately, the County will care for the regional trail and the city will manage the unpaved trails. The County will help with the natural area conservation.

It was moved by Peichel, seconded by Moeller, to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve a grant of up to \$187,860 to Dakota County to acquire a 5.72-acre easement on the McMenomy property, located at 120<sup>th</sup> Street West in Rosemont, for Vermillion Highlands Greenway Regional Trail

**Motion carried.**

## Information

### 1. 2021 Visitor Study – Research Findings, Part 3 of 3 - Darcie Vandegrift

Vandegrift gave a presentation on the 2021 Visitor Study research findings (part 3 of 3) as outlined in the materials provided.

Dillenburg stated communication and marketing are critical to reaching new audiences and asked about better understanding different cultural traditions. Vandegrift stated that better understanding cultural traditions is important in parks management. Right now, we don't know a lot about how they affect visitor patterns. She discussed the simple habit some cultures have of visiting parks on weekends, and the importance of relaxing and doing nothing.

Peichel asked about smart phone maps and noted that there are ways to work with the large providers to correct/update as needed. Mullin discussed the Regional Parks System GIS Improvement Project that the Council is working on with the agencies. Moeller noted the importance of this project and looks forward to correcting existing errors in the data. He pointed out that when we last visited Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, the App brought him to the wrong entrance.

Vento asked if Legacy Funds could provide money for a research project like that, even on a statewide basis. Mullin stated that currently the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund is supporting a statewide Streetlight Research project using Legacy funds. He also mentioned the Minnesota Great Outdoors Website ([Minnesota Great Outdoors - search our legacy parks and trails \(mn.gov\)](https://www.mn.gov/great-outdoors)) that is a helpful resource as well.

Vice Chair Harris discussed an app, Avenza used in Washington County Parks. She suggested that this type of information should be made available to the public. Otherwise, 'All Trails' is another app that is worth exploring.

Vice Chair Harris asked if implementing agencies have hired staff to do social media. Vlaming stated yes, they have a robust social media department and GIS department. It became clear that some of the other agencies do not have this position.

Vice Chair Harris asked, what are we hearing about this need from other communities, including BIPOC communities. Vandegrift said she has looked at research from NRPA and also the 2021 Visitor Study. She learned that newer visitors rely on getting information about parks and trails prior to their visit. Social media, websites, and friends/family are important resources for getting basic information. She noted that this is a good question, and it warrants a deeper look.

Dillenburg asked about how people get their information about the regional system and asked, what are the implications for our work as commissioners? Vandegrift discussed policy implications, etc.

Moeller discussed growth of aging population and importance of increasing their visitation. Vandegrift discussed looking at 75 and older and importance of looking at barriers and needs.

Moeller asked about the Legacy fund and how it expires in 2034. Has there been any work with the legislature to continue this fund beyond 2034? Mullin discussed the need to work with our legislators and commissioner outreach to the Legislature would be something to explore.

Vento stated addressing future funding needs is critical. COVID helped us to learn how important parks have been. We need to find ways to better support them.

Moeller asked for factual talking points to work with our legislators.

## Reports

### 1. Chair

Vice Chair Harris stated she went to a Commissioners Conference put on by Trust for Public Land and Conservation Minnesota. It was about helping support commissions and commissioners. She also noted that she hiked at Lake Elmo.

### 2. Committee Members

Peichel met with Anoka County and with two commissioners to discuss their interest in water trails.

Dillenburg shared that she has had some productive conversations with Three Rivers Park District.

### 3. Council Liaison

None.

### 4. Staff

Mullin reminded commissioners about expiring terms and noted they need to reapply if they wish to be considered for another term, particularly Districts D, E, F, and G.

Mullin announced Assata Brown's resignation.

## Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

## Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting of November 3, 2022.

Approved this 1st day of December 2022.

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### Council Contact:

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