

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION**

Thursday, February 3, 2022

**Committee Members Present:** Assata Brown, Monica Dillenburg, Robert Moeller, Tony Yarusso, Cana Yang, Jeremy Peichel, Todd Kemery, Anthony Taylor and Susan Vento, liaison to the Council

**Committee Members Absent:** Cecily Harris.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Recording Secretary did a roll call for a quorum.

Present – 8

Absent – 1

With a quorum being present via WebEx, Commission Chair Yarusso called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 3, 2022.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

Chair Yarusso asked for a consensus to approve the February 3, 2022, Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission agenda. The agenda was approved by consensus.

Next, Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the January 6, 2022 minutes. Kemery motioned, and it was seconded by Dillenburg to approve the January 6, 2022 minutes of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting.

The Recording Secretary issued a roll call vote.

Aye – 7 (Brown, Dillenburg, Moeller, Yarusso, Yang, Peichel, Taylor)

Nay – 0

Abstention – 0

**The motion was approved.**

**PUBLIC INVITATION**

Chair Yarusso stated that no one pre-registered to speak today. As a reminder, if you wish to offer public comment at a virtual meeting, please pre-register by emailing [public.info@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:public.info@metc.state.mn.us). You may also send us your comments by email.

**BUSINESS**

**2022-27, West Mississippi River Regional Trail, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund (Tandberg), Three Rivers Park District - Jessica Lee, Senior Planner**

Lee gave a presentation on a grant request from Three Rivers Park District for West Mississippi River Regional Trail as outlined in the materials provided.

With no discussion, Chair Yarusso called for a motion. It was motioned by Dillenburg and seconded by Brown to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$262,500 to Three Rivers Park District to acquire the 1.01-acre Tandberg property located at 17660 Dayton River Road in the City of Dayton for the West Mississippi River Regional Trail.
2. Authorize the Community Development Director to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

With no further discussion, Chair Yarusso called for a vote. The recording secretary issued a roll call vote.

Aye – 7 (Brown, Dillenburg, Moeller, Yarusso, Yang, Peichel, Taylor)

Nay – 0

Abstention – 0

**The motion was approved.**

**2022-28, Lake Byllesby Regional Park, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund (Augustine/Schluesner), Dakota County - Jessica Lee, Senior Planner**

Lee gave a presentation on a grant request from Dakota County for Lake Byllesby Regional Park as outlined in the materials provided.

With no discussion, Chair Yarusso called for a motion. It was motioned by Moeller and seconded by Brown to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$363,411 to Dakota County to acquire the 110.3-acre Augustine/Schluesner property, located in Randolph and Sciota Townships, for Lake Byllesby Regional Park.
2. Authorize the Community Development Director to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

With no further discussion, Chair Yarusso called for a vote. The recording secretary issued a roll call vote.

Aye –8 (Brown, Dillenburg, Moeller, Yarusso, Yang, Peichel, Kemery, Taylor)

Nay – 0

Abstention – 0

**The motion was approved.**

## **INFORMATION**

**Equity Nudge: Exploring the Regional Parks and Trails Equity Tool - Darcie Vandegrift, Principal Researcher**

Vandegrift shared a tool developed to better understand the demographics of the metro region in relation to existing and planned parks and trails. She conducted a demonstration of how to explore this Regional Parks and Trails Equity Tool on the Council’s website and noted there is a link within the materials provided.

Moeller stated he is impressed with this equity tool.

Mullin suggested the best way to learn more about this tool is to ‘play around’ with it on the website.

Chair Yarusso suggested commissioners think about combining personal local knowledge (from their own districts) with the data provided in the maps and discussed examples.

Taylor asked, who is the audience for this tool? Vandegrift responded that it is for park and trail planners as they work on long-range plans, as well as for outreach and engagement specialists, and programing and research staff.

Taylor discussed the language used referring to the percentage of poverty as opposed to Area Median Income (AMI) and asked, where does that number come from. Vandegrift stated that this value is benchmarked to a federal standard. She would be happy to research it further if Commissioners are interested.

Lisa Barajas discussed federal standards used to establish these numbers. Vandegrift added there is an option to choose a medium household income.

Chair Yarusso discussed other possible tool users including public that could explore this tool for their own interest in data analysis. Vandegrift noted data can be downloaded for further uses.

## REPORTS

**Chair:** Chair Yarusso noted that we are getting into the legislative session and saw there was a Governor's recommendation for a bonding bill. He discussed earmarked dollars requested in the past and stressed how this disrupts our regional request process and the formulas we use to fairly distribute the funds for all of our agencies.

**Commissioners:** Dillenburg shared a story about a visit she had with her brother in Australia, where they open all public meetings with an acknowledgement of the specific Indigenous groups who were, and in many cases still are, on the territory where the meeting is being held. She said these acknowledgements are often done by people of the tribes being referenced. She asked whether this practice could be done for MPOSC? She understands that some research or background work will need to be done.

Kemery stated he has resumed regular meetings with Niki Geisler and Jeff Bransford in Dakota County.

**Staff:** Mullin thanked Dillenburg for sharing the idea to acknowledge the tribal and cultural history of the land we are currently on. He discussed the Regional Park System's Historical-Cultural study currently underway and noted that this idea will be incorporated into the effort. He noted that Council Members Lilligren and former Council Member Atlas Ingebretson advised to proceed with caution in this area. Taylor discussed his own work beyond land acknowledgement and stated he appreciates the idea and the caution moving forward.

Mullin shared the Governor's bonding request for the Regional Parks System Bonding Program of \$3 million. If appropriated, the Council's match will be \$2 million.

Mullin stated the Regional Park quarterly newsletter (originally created in April of 2020) will now include MPOSC members. He stated if Commissioners have any questions about the newsletter, to please reach out to Council staff.

Mullin stated that the Council has a National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) membership that can be extended to MPOSC Commissioners. If interested, please let him know.

**Council Liaison:** Council Member Susan Vento commended Vandegrift for her presentation.

## ADJOURNMENT

Business completed the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Sandi Dingle  
Recording Secretary