

Minutes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Meeting Date: March 2, 2023

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

Tess Bouska, District D

Vacant, 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, Chair Yarusso called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:02pm.

Agenda Approved

Chair Yarusso asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Committee members did not have any comments or changes. The agenda was approved by consensus.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Harris to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2023, regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

Public Invitation

None.

Business

1. Appointment of an MPOSC Vice-Chair to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission for 2023

It was moved by Chair Yarusso, seconded by Moeller, that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission approve the appointment of Monica Dillenburg as the Commission's Vice-Chair for 2023.

Motion carried.

Information

1. Equity Nudge: Three Rivers Park District's Parks to People Plan, Status Update, Three Rivers Park District (Colin Kelly, Ann Rexine, Jonathan Vlaming)

Kelly introduced Ann Rexine and Jonathan Vlaming from Three River's Park District (3RPD) who then gave a presentation on the Parks to People Plan as outlined in the materials provided.

Chair Yarusso provided a summary of what 'bridging facilities might actually look like and noted that 3RPD is the first.

Harris asked what is being done for seniors, 75 years old and up? Rexine discussed four focus groups specific to seniors.

Harris asked what they are hearing from seniors, did they find that seniors were generally aware of 3RPD, and what are they looking for? Rexine stated many are looking for different experiences than they had when they were younger. Much was about staying fit, ADA accessibility, and more.

Moeller asked if the cities involved in the bridging facilities would participate in costs. Vlaming stated they have learned that bridging facilities are more about programing than facilities, and helping people transition from local parks into our regional parks. He added they typically do not ask partners to help pay however, there may be opportunities for shared partnerships in planning and programing.

Vento discussed a grant program where dollars may be available. Harris suggested looking to Blue Cross Blue Shield and other large health care providers.

Vlaming reiterated that this is an experimental approach. The master plan that comes out of this will not fit/align with the traditional plans covered by the Regional Parks Policy Plan. He asked the Commission for flexibility.

Chair Yarusso asked for a briefing document outlining where the 'miss matches' occur before bringing the master plan for approval. Mullin stated staff are happy to work with 3RPD on this.

2. 2050 Regional Development Guide including the Regional Parks Policy Plan, (Emmett Mullin, Colin Kelly, Chee Yang)

Mullin shared the working draft of the Regional Development Guide's terminology and the regional values and vision. Kelly and Yang then gave a presentation on the 2050 Regional Development Guide and Regional Parks Policy Plan update process.

Harris asked, will the 10 implementing agencies (IA's) be involved in all subgroups and how will they engage cities. Kelly stated they've invited IA's to participate directly in workgroups. He added they have not articulated how cities will be involved, however, there will be a full spectrum of engagement.

Vento stated she was happy that the Watershed Districts are being involved.

Moeller asked about what we have learned from past update processes that will help this process. Kelly noted the scope of this update is broader than the previous two Parks Policy Plan updates. He feels this will be a more integrated process with a much broader engagement. Mullin stated we are learning how to take lessons from past efforts including research and long-range planning efforts, and using them in our work. We are getting a little better at this.

Moeller encouraged working with IA's as much as possible.

Mullin noted staff are interested in engaging Commissioners in our workshop where we break into smaller groups and discuss ideas.

Chair Yarusso asked commission members to think about what areas they are passionate about.

Mullin discussed "meeting people where they are" and the work of the Parks Ambassador program.

Chair Yarusso discussed unfinished business regarding funding. He stated funding language that was removed from the RPPP will need to be discussed during this process. He also discussed statutory changes to interest earning money and noted we should discuss what should be done with that money.

Harris asked should the equity grant program language be 'cemented' in the RPPP? She also



asked about the regional trail and regional bicycle transportation network, wondering if this conversation is “housed” under the purview of MPOSC? Chair Yarusso responded that past discussions have been about work in this area.

Vento discussed different days celebrated, i.e., ‘Kids to Parks Day’ (3rd Saturday in May) and suggested there could be a ‘Regional Parks Day’. Mullin noted that next year will be the 50-year anniversary of our Regional Parks system. Vento suggested having one ‘special day’ per season.

Chair Yarusso discussed measurable outcomes and difficulty of measuring equity, climate resiliency, etc. and asked the commission members to think about this.

3. Regional Development Guide, Regional Parks System and Scenario Planning: An Introduction (Tracey Kinney and Dan Marckel)

Kinney and Marckel gave a presentation on scenario planning as it relates to the Regional Development Guide, as outlined in their presentation.

Harris asked do we have a map of our regional parks that shows how to connect to other green spaces. Chair Yarusso felt that our Regional Parks map shows some of this but probably needed updating.

Marckel discussed the parks system plan, and how it has yet to be fully developed. He asked the commissioners to think about how it might evolve based on the different scenarios shared.

Moeller referenced the search corridor map for parks and trails and stated that this could be used to align with different scenarios. He added understanding the demographics of 2050 would be helpful.

Dillenburg discussed different scenarios and investments - if we become more compact with high growth -or- if we have high growth with more dispersed patterns, would this require greater investment to adequately serve the region.

Chair Yarusso discussed disbursed growth versus compact, and stated what will be interesting to him is who will be part of this growth? What demographics? If we grow into the donut-like development, and the population is more diverse, how can we make sure our system is welcoming to people of color.

Bouska discussed growth, how donut-like growth may happen, and concerns of continued loss of habitat. How might we create byways for wildlife. This could be an opportunity for programming, too.

Vento spoke of the importance of conserving native species, including native plants and our insect populations.

Chair Yarusso discussed the future of our funding models and impacts of continued growth, including growth just outside of our seven county metropolitan area. He discussed political scenarios as well and asked, should we be look at those?

Dillenburg discussed migration of people in the United States and Minnesota. She feels we may become receivers of climate immigration.

Reports

1. Chair

Chair Yarusso discussed ways to make more efficient meetings, including sending Commissioners homework in advance of meetings, longer meetings, workshops, or other approaches.

Chair Yarusso stated the Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund is about to expire. Bills have been introduced at the state legislature to reauthorize it but they have not made it out of Committee yet. He encouraged commissioners to contact their Legislators.



Chair Yarusso noted that Districts E and H are still vacant and encouraged commission members to think about who they may know in these areas that could fill these seats.

2. Committee Members

Harris stated the final meeting was held last week for the Middle St. Croix Regional Trail.

3. Council Liaison

Vento stated the Governor will be making decisions tomorrow regarding the appointment and reappointment process.

4. Staff

Mullin stated this Legislative session has been very busy and gave a brief update on some of the initiatives. He also noted that 2023 is a year that Parks and Trails Legacy funding is appropriated.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 6:10 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 March 2, 2023.

Approved this 6th day of April 2023.

Council Contact:

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