

Minutes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Meeting Date: August 3, 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

Vacant, District H

Susan Vento, Council Liaison

= present

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:02pm.

Agenda Approved

Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. Agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Bouska to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2023, 2023 special meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

Public Invitation

None.

Business

1. **2023-169:** Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park Long-Range Plan Amendment, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (Colin Kelly)

Kelly gave a presentation on the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Parks long-range plan amendment outlined in the materials provided.

Moeller asked about community engagement and how the plan amendment was received. Kelly gave some background and shared the enthusiastic support for adding the parcel to the park.

Bouska asked about the fire at the house and what the future of this area will be. Kelly stated that the house has been removed and the property has been stabilized. The property will be a key entryway to a natural surface trail that follows the old Loon Lake Trolley path.

Chair Yarusso asked about the future use of this parcel. Kelly discussed future amenities, including overlooks, art, benches, etc.

It was moved by Moeller, seconded by Dillenburg, that the Metropolitan Council approve Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park Long-Range Plan Amendment.

Dillenburg asked about the design of the area. Colleen O'Dell, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board stated they've been working on the design with neighborhood organizations.

Bouska shared her support for the future acquisition of this parcel.

Mullin discussed a tour of the site taken by staff and noted the views from this site are worth preserving.

With no further discussion, Chair Yarusso called for a vote. **Motion carried.**

2. **2023-170:** Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (Ruddick) Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (Jessica Lee)

Lee gave a presentation at the request of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board for a park acquisition opportunity fund award for a parcel on Bde Maka Ska, Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, as outlined in the materials provided.

Chair Yarusso asked, where does this leave our fund balances. Lee responded around \$12-13 million. There is \$5 million in the Environmental Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) and the rest in Legacy funds.

Moeller asked if the money in the PAOF account carries over year to year. Lee explained that ENRTF funds expire.

It was moved by Moeller, seconded by Dillenburg, that the Metropolitan Council:

- 1) Contingent on the approval of the concurrent Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park long-range plan amendment, approve a grant of up to \$964,125 to Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to acquire a 0.2-acre parcel located at 1699 West 34th Street for the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes 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. **Motion carried.**

Information

1. Regional Parks and Trails System 2024 Competitive Equity Grant Program, Draft Notice of Funding Availability (Jessica Lee)

Lee gave a presentation on the Regional Parks and Trails System 2024 Competitive Equity Grant Program as outlined in the materials provided including background, available grant funds, scoring criteria, and timeline. She noted they'll be looking for 4 MPOSC commissioners to form a sub-committee to review the applications.

Dillenburg felt it would be nice to have grants approved in a timelier manner.

Chair Yarusso stated grant agreements are on a 3-year term.

Moeller complimented staff on growing this program and asked if this program helps bring awareness of the Regional Park System as a whole. Lee stated she believes it does. Mullin felt the framework for the funding will assist agencies to bring forward projects that promote awareness.

Moeller shared his concern that the criteria doesn't give a home to 'building awareness' of the parks.

The commission discussed how to add 'building awareness' into the criteria scoring. Moeller feels it's important enough to be its own category.

Lee felt this idea could fit nicely within the funding criteria and will adjust it.



Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District thanked the commission for this grant program.

Chair Yarusso suggested a guiding policy could be added to the Regional Parks Policy Plan.

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

Kelly, Yang and Mullin gave a presentation to update the commission on the 2050 Regional Development Guide and the Regional Parks Policy Plan (RPPP) as described in the materials provided.

Moeller asked if ‘agencies’ refers to the implementing agencies (IA’s). Yang confirmed. Mullin added that all the IA’s were invited and encouraged to participate.

Chair Yarusso asked if we are hearing feedback from the agencies on engagement – what works, what doesn’t.

Staff asked for comments on engagement activities going forward.

Dillenburg suggests keeping approaches varied and trying not to engage the same groups all the time. Also, she suggests keeping the language simple.

Chair Yarusso discussed parts of the RPPP that have broad relevance in interest to communities. Would it be possible to translate these sections into other languages? Yang agreed and discussed publishing a high-level document in different languages.

Chair Yarusso discussed a policy about process, for example, what is the Metropolitan Council responsible for, what are the IA’s responsible for, etc. to help people understand the roles of the Council and Agencies.

The commission discussed utilizing engagement data gathered from the IA’s own engagement.

Moeller asked, are we going after any ethnic groups or other groups that have recently moved into the area? How about connecting with English as a Second Language groups? Yang stated their intern is gathering demographic information to help us reach out to underrepresented people.

Staff discussed the Vision, Mission and Values outlined in the materials provided and asked for feedback.

Moeller stated he likes the feeling that is being portrayed. He questioned values – and safety, noting a lot of minority communities don’t feel safe. Kelly noted that under Value – Belonging it discusses safety.

Chair Yarusso discussed being safe, versus feeling safe and recognizes that there may be separate strategies to address both.

Bouska stated safety could be mentioned after “well-being” as well.

Dillenburg stated we need to educate minority communities on how to safely use the parks.

Chair Yarusso discussed the Mission – “Parks & Trails System” and asked, what is a system – how do we define system.

Moeller discussed wayfinding and having commonality between all the IA’s.

Kelly reviewed the next steps listed in the presentation.

Reports

1. Chair

Chair Yarusso discussed upcoming details of what will be happening with the appointment process.

2. Committee Members

Dillenburg noted that the Eagle Lake mini golf project is finished. Also, she discussed an Outdoor Escape being planned.

3. Council Liaison

None.

4. Staff

Mullin discussed that redistricting as a result of the 2020 Census has been done and noted the entire commission is up for reappointment. He strongly encouraged all members to reapply. He noted all vacancies will be published on the Secretary of State's website. Staff will forward applications (and include previous applications for reference).

Mullin noted that the Equity Grant Sub-committee will be looking for up to 4 MPOSC members. Please let Chair Yarusso or Mullin know if you'd like to serve on that.

Mullin noted that this month's Arboretum Newsletter featured a story on Bob Moeller and his wife.

Moeller asked about the Legislative Committee that is looking into Met Council governance. Is there anything he should recommend being done differently with organization or approach? Lisa Barajas, Community Development stated that is a good question. She noted that she and other Council leaders are supporting and tracking these conversations closely at the Legislature.

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 August 3, 2023.

Approved this 7th day of September 2023.

Council Contact:

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