

Minutes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Meeting date: January 4, 2024

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members present:

Chair, Tony Yarusso,
at large

Monica Dillenburg, District A

Robert Moeller, District B

Cana Yang, District C

Tess Bouska, District D

Chris Suerig District E

Cecily Harris, District F

Anthony Taylor, District G

Amanda Duerr, District H

Susan Vento, Council Liaison

= present, E = excused

Call to order

Without a quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:05pm.

Agenda approved

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

Approval of minutes

Due to a lack of quorum, approval of the December 7, 2023 minutes will be postponed until a future meeting where a quorum of this Commission is present.

Public invitation

There was no one from the public wishing to address the Commission.

Business

2024-6, Veterans Memorial Greenway Regional Trail, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (Schiela), Dakota County (Jessica Lee, 651-602-1621)

Lee gave a presentation of a request from Dakota County regarding a Parks Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award for Veteran's Memorial Greenway Regional Trail as outlined in the materials provided.

Mullin mentioned that Commissioner Duerr commented that she was in favor of this item.

Due to a lack of quorum, the Commission chose to forward the following recommended action to the Council by Consensus:

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$568,655 from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Dakota County to acquire a 10.62-acre parcel located at 4420 Dodd Road in Eagan for the Veterans Memorial Greenway Regional Trail.
2. Allow the County to convey 3.2 acres of the property, valued at \$16,000, to the City of Eagan in exchange for a more efficient lake management approach and to save \$80,000

in assessments; retain a greenway corridor easement on approximately 0.14 acres of the conveyed property; and require a Council Agreement and Restrictive Covenant only on the easement portion of the conveyed property.

3. Authorize the Executive Director of Community Development to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

2024-7, Rush Creek Regional Trail, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (Segal), Three Rivers Park District (Jessica Lee, 651-602-1621)

Lee gave a presentation of a request from Three Rivers Park District for a Parks Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award for Rush Creek Regional Trail as outlined in the materials provided.

Chair Yarusso discussed the possibility of selling off a parcel at a future date and asked what would happen with the money received for this purchase. Staff will investigate this possibility for future discussion.

Due to a lack of quorum, the Commission chose to forward the following recommended action to the Council by Consensus:

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$801,150 from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Three Rivers Park District to acquire a 11.4-acre parcel located at 15406 Territorial Road in Maple Grove, MN, for the Rush Creek Regional Trail.
2. Authorize the Executive Director of Community Development to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

2024-8, Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park Long-Range Plan Amendment and Cedar Lake Regional Trail Long-Range Plan Amendment, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, (Colin Kelly, 651-602-1361)

Kelly gave a presentation on the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park Long-Range Plan Amendment and Cedar Lake Regional Trail Long-Range Plan Amendment as submitted by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and outlined in the materials provided.

Dillenburg discussed comments received regarding public access around Cedar Lake.

Chair Yarusso referenced an email he received that stated areas are inaccessible due to private licensed encroachments and asked about ADA accessibility as well.

Emma Pachuta, MPRB referenced an acquisition map, specifically the southeast portion of Cedar Lake, and stated that this topic was discussed at great length during the planning process with her Board. There is a long-term plan to restore the shoreline area and more clearly identify it as part of the park. Landowners who have licensed encroachments such as fences, walls and docks will have to remove the encroachment at their own expense ahead of the restoration. Pachuta noted that there is no timeline for the restoration at this time. Once the shoreline is restored, the board will look at the possibility of adding a trail.

Adam Arvidson, MPRB stated encroachments are always difficult. He noted these are legal encroachments and were originally approved in 1940. Landowners would need to re-apply for these encroachments at the sale of any of the properties.

Chair Yarusso discussed claims that were received via emails and asked for clarification. Arvidson stated that landowners cannot impede access, and the easements can also be revoked at any time. He noted that while access is available, the perception is that the land has been privatized.

Dillenburg asked what is the timeframe for implementing this long-range plan? Pachuta stated this is a 20 – 30-year plan.



Chair Yarusso encouraged signage that declares this as public land in the shoreline areas that appear to be private land.

Harris asked if there will be any public parking for the regional trails. Pachuta stated that the conversation for parking did not come up nor has any study been done on parking.

Harris stated it feels that some of the Minneapolis regional trails feel less “regional” because there are no trailheads or designated parking.

Bouska noted there are some parking lots near the beaches on the west side of the lake and that there is always street parking. She felt some signage would be beneficial.

The Commission discussed the plans for park and trail amenities, such as additional restrooms and benches.

Chair Yarusso noted that some members of the public felt that the public engagement process was dominated by local residents. Pachuta stated they spent approximately one additional year doing more engagement to broaden the voices heard during the planning process. Arvidson noted that the Citizens Advisory Committee requires half of its members to be from outside of the service area because it is for a ‘regional trail’.

Harris suggested that the Metropolitan Council could post some of the engagement sessions on their website.

Chair Yarusso stated he is in favor of the amendments, however conveyed some concerns regarding signage, etc.

Due to a lack of quorum, the Commission jointly forwarded the following recommended action to the Council by Consensus:

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park Long-Range Plan Amendment.
2. Approve the Cedar Lake Regional Trail Long-Range Plan Amendment.
3. Require Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to send preliminary plans to the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager prior to initiating any construction.
4. Advise Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to consider implementing the recommendations for solar resources and transportation in the Advisory Comments section of the business item.

Information

2050 Regional Development Guide and Regional Parks Policy Plan Update (Emmett Mullin, 651-602-1360 and Colin Kelly, 651-602-1361)

Kelly gave a presentation on the 2050 Regional Development Guide and Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan Update. He discussed the proposed timeline, engagement and schedule for finalizing the Regional Development Guide.

Mullin discussed the structure of the plan, including the cross-cutting Council wide goals, the Parks objectives and Parks Policies. He shared questions for a short discussion.

The Commission broke into small groups for discussion.

Harris had ideas for park objectives and felt it’s missing the regional community engagement piece (under equity). Under infrastructure, she suggested having additional information on Parks and Trails whether on the website or with improved and coordinated signage.

Chair Yarusso discussed having a policy about communication and marketing – some may be best practices. Mullin liked the ideas and noted that this coordinated approach could be developed over the next few years, as part of policy plan implementation.



Chair Yarusso discussed doing a better job of public engagement at a regional level. He discussed planning, cost to complete the system, and when do we expect to see projects done and where should we scale back.

Mullin shared appreciation for the feedback and will bring this topic back for further discussion at future meetings.

Reports

Chair - None.

Committee Members - None.

Council Liaison - Unavailable

Staff

Mullin asked members for participation in the Equity Grant Committee. It would involve two meetings. Bouska, Dillenburg, and Chair Yarusso agreed to participate.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 5:55 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 January 4, 2024.

Approved this 1st day of February 2024.

Council contact:

Sandi Dingle, Recording Secretary
Sandi.Dingle@metc.state.mn.us
651-602-1312

