

# Minutes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



**Meeting date:** October 3, 2024

**Time:** 4:00 PM

**Location:** 390 Robert Street

## Members present:

Chair, Tony Yarusso,  
at large

Monica Dillenburg, District A

Robert Moeller, District B

Tess Bouska, District C

David Yakes, 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

Following a tour of Baker Park Reserve, a quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:24pm.

## Agenda approved

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

## Approval of minutes

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Yakes to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2024, regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

## Public invitation

No one requested to speak.

## Business

1. **2024-272**, North Creek Greenway Regional Trail, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (Oliver), Dakota County

Colin Kelly gave a presentation, in Jessica Lee's absence, on the North Creek Greenway Regional Trail Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award request from Dakota County as outlined in the materials provided.

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

Approve a grant of up to \$117,384 from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Dakota County to acquire a 20.43-acre parcel located on Vermillion River Trail in Empire, MN, for the North Creek Greenway Regional Trail.

**Motion carried.**

2. **2024-273**, Miesville Ravine Park Reserve, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (Schwamb), Dakota County

Kevin Phan, gave a presentation, in Jessica Lee's absence, on the Miesville Ravine Park Reserve, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award requested by Dakota County, as outlined in the materials provided.

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

Approve a grant of up to \$388,910 from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Dakota County to acquire a 5-acre parcel located at 26287 Miesville Trail in Douglas Township, MN, for the Miesville Ravine Park Reserve.

**Motion carried.**

3. **2024-275, Regional Parks System 2024 Fishing Piers Notice of Funding Availability**

Emmett Mullin, in Jessica Lee's absence, gave a presentation on the Regional Parks System 2024 Fishing Piers Notice of Funding Availability that was presented as an information item at the September MPOSC meeting. He noted that it needs to be implemented by June 30, 2026 because the funds expire.

Yakes asked if this will be a 'one time' opportunity, or will it possibly be ongoing? Mullin stated for now, it is a one-time opportunity but recommended reaching out to Representative Rick Hanson at the Legislature, who was a champion of this funding.

Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District, discussed the number of Regional Park Implementing Agencies that plan to submit applications and asked if the Met Council would consider matching the funds to meet all requests, as possible.

Chair Yarusso discussed opportunities and bigger decisions on a policy that addresses this sort of funding in the future.

Taylor discussed the competitive nature of this type of funding and expressed support for the idea of recommending matching funds to support all requests.

Vento shared her willingness to bring this suggestion to the Council with the argument that this is the 50-year anniversary of our Regional Parks System and an incredible opportunity for diversity and serving underserved communities.

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

1. Approve the 2024 Regional Parks System Fishing Piers Grant Program Notice of Funding Availability attached to this report.
2. Approve the funding and awarding of four grants selected through a lottery as outlined in the NOFA.
3. Consider using Council funds to match state funding to expand the fishing pier opportunity to more residents.

Vento made a strong point that we should work with Watershed Management Organizations, the DNR, and the Department of Health to let people know about impaired waters and provide fish consumption warnings where necessary.

**Motion carried.**

## Information

1. Draft 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook Information Item (Colin Kelly, 651-602-1361, Tracey Kinney, 651-602-1029, Kevin Phan, 651-602-1345)

Kelly, Kinney, and Phan gave an update on the Draft 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Planning Handbook as outlined in the materials provided.

Dillenburg asked, for clarification on what is meant by "ineligible facilities" in Section 7 of the draft? Mullin explained that there are a number of activities and facilities that remain ineligible for regional funding including athletic fields, tennis courts, and baseball fields.

Chair Yarusso asked about trail realignments within 1.5 miles and possible cost implications. Kinney discussed that Council staff now have the ability to approve administrative Long-Range Plan amendments that have increased costs up to a threshold of \$750,000. However,

for complex proposals, staff have the discretion to direct the plan amendment through the Council process, even when they are within the administrative amendment thresholds.

Chair Yarusso asked about whether future amendments to the Planning Handbook would be on a 4-year policy plan update timeline. Mullin stated that he believes the handbook will be added to more often than the 4-year Regional Parks Policy Plan cycle.

Chair Yarusso asked about future adoption of this handbook (as a Business Item)? Mullin stated that staff see this is a procedural document – not a policy plan. Chair Yarusso asked why we shouldn't adopt it? Mullin stated that it remains a more flexible document and can be updated on a more frequent basis. Chair Yarusso still felt it should be adopted. Mullin stated he will bring it to the Leadership Team and get back to him.

Dillenburg asked about Section 4 – Climate Resilience, which does not currently have content. Staff noted that this part of the Policy Plan and Handbook is new and a work-in-progress. There will be more to come.

## Reports

### 1. Chair

Chair Yarusso reminded folks to vote yes for Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund on the ballot this fall.

### 2. Committee Members

None.

### 3. Council Liaison

None.

### 4. Staff

Mullin noted that the Arts and Policy Event at Lebanon Hills was a big success. He also noted that the 2025 Legislative conversations have begun.

## Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 6:15 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 October 3, 2024.

Approved this 7th day of November 2024.

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### Council contact:

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