

Minutes of the

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, August 8, 2017

Committee Members Present:

Tony Yarusso, Rick Theisen, Anthony Taylor Todd Kemery, Margie Andreason, Bob Moeller

Committee Members Absent:

Mike Kopp, Wendy Wulff, and Sarah Hietpas

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the special meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:35 p.m. on Tuesday, August 8, 2017.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the August 8, 2017 Agenda. Moeller motioned and it was seconded by Kemery to approve the agenda. The **Agenda was approved.**

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2017 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. It was motioned by Andreason and seconded by Taylor. The **Minutes were approved.**

PUBLIC INVITATION

None.

BUSINESS

None.

INFORMATION

Annual Use Estimate of the Regional Parks System for 2016 – Raintry Salk

Salk gave a presentation on the 2016 Visitor Use Estimate as outlined in the materials provided. She noted that there were 47.8 million visits in 2016 which was approximately 500,000 more visits than in 2015.

Chair Yarusso inquired about winter use and how the multipliers differ in the winter season, especially in light of the snow making equipment that Three Rivers and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board have. Salk stated that multipliers are the same across the system for all winter use.

Moeller asked about low use in Scott and Ramsey County. Salk stated that the Scott County trail had a significant decrease in usage and staff at the county were not sure why. It was a similar answer for Ramsey County. She noted that the numbers are averaged over 4 years.

Mullin noted that one of the goals of the Park Ambassador Program is to market to a demographic group that is not using the parks in proportion with their share of the region's population, i.e., persons of color.

Theisen asked how agencies are responding to the formulas being used and is there an opportunity to re-examine them. Salk stated that there will be meetings this fall to discuss multipliers and methodology used.

Taylor asked if winter recreation is treated as an event. Salk stated it is not.

Marty Walsh, Carver County Parks, asked if staff know what multipliers will be used in the future. Salk noted that this will be discussed at the fall meetings with the agencies.

State Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program Project Proposals - Deb Jensen and Implementing Agency Leaders

Chair Yarusso stated that each agency would have 10 minutes to discuss their projects as listed in the materials provided.

Jensen noted that if questions arise after the meeting, she would like them sent to her. She will coordinate with the group as a whole to keep everyone informed.

All ten agencies contributed slides to a PowerPoint presentation. Jeff Perry of Anoka County presented their projects as distributed at the meeting.

Kemery asked about the playground area and pavilion and if they were ADA accessible. Perry responded that they are.

Randy Quale, City of Bloomington Parks, described his project as outlined in the materials provided.

Kemery asked for more detail about the beach. Quale clarified that there is swimming and also availability for fishing adjacent to the beach. Kemery discussed accessibility and current trends using a portable ramp. He stated that he is available to discuss this type of flexible accessibility tool further. Quale noted that there is a paved trail to the water's edge currently.

Marty Walsh, Carver County Parks, described their request for reimbursement for a land acquisition.

Jeff Bransford, Dakota County Parks, reviewed the County's two requests as outlined in the materials provided.

Andreason asked about multi-lingual directions and wayfinding for Lake Byllesby Regional Park. Bransford stated that it has not been decided yet, but they are using a county-wide survey and census data to determine the needs.

Taylor asked if the results of the survey could be shared. Bransford said that they could be provided.

Cliff Swenson, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, reviewed three requests outlined in the materials provided.

Taylor asked if there is additional investment around programming? He feels that programming is essential in order for Water Works to have an effective equity impact. Swenson offered to discuss this further after the meeting.

Jon Oyanagi, Ramsey County, discussed their one project at Long Lake Regional Park as described in the materials provided.

Taylor asked if bike trails are connected to a bigger system. Oyanagi stated that they are and showed a map where a missing link has just been completed.

Chair Yarusso discussed the low use rail line and the potential for it to be converted to a trail. Oyanagi stated that they are continuing to watch this; however, the rail line does still see limited use.

Paul Sawyer, City of Saint Paul, reviewed their three requests as outlined in the materials provided. One was for new construction, and two were for rehabilitation projects.

Mullin clarified that trails will be constructed with ADA in mind. Sawyer agreed.

Chair Yarusso asked if the study will consider transit. Sawyer stated he would look into that.

Moeller discussed challenges with signage and communication, considering the multiple languages being used. Sawyer discussed work being done to incorporate different languages.

Moeller asked what is being done at the Council level in terms of wayfinding best practices, as all agencies probably are dealing with this issue. Mullin noted that the Met Council is looking at wayfinding best practices.

Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District, explained their CIP planning process and discussed their long-range infrastructure planning. He then outlined their four requests.

Chair Yarusso asked if Three Rivers Park District has trail ratings for all trails. Vlaming stated that they do.

Dan MacSwain and Connor Schaefer, Washington County Parks, reviewed four requests for new construction projects as described in the materials provided. They noted most of their projects are about access improvements.

Chair Yarusso asked about access to trails – are there any standards to be used for natural trails vs. paved trails to make them accessible? Kemery discussed a tool used to measure accessibility that addresses acceptable natural surfaces. He stated there are a wide range of opportunities to keep in mind.

Patty Freeman, Scott County, reviewed the two requests they have as outlined in the materials provided.

Taylor asked where the fishing piers are in the project. Freeman noted they are on Spring Lake.

Kemery asked if there are any swimming activity plans. Freeman stated that there are not. She said the topography is pretty challenging, but she noted they will look at this during the design phase.

Jensen asked the commissioner to look at the projects to determine if the projects are properly prioritized. She stated that at our next meeting the commission must make a recommendation of the projects and their priorities.

Mullin suggested that members take a good look at the project proposals prior to our next meeting.

Chair Yarusso discussed that perhaps agencies with only one project could share future CIP projects. He noted that if there is only one project, and it doesn't have an equity focus, it may be helpful for the Commissioners to learn about other plans for future projects.

Steve Sullivan, Dakota County Parks, stated that when the implementing agencies discussed priorities, they all have different needs at different times and projects presented in any given year may not always provide a direct equity impact. He stated that it would be helpful to move toward equity as a region and asked commissioners to look at this broader effort as a whole and ask – are we trending towards equity?

Freeman stated that she agrees whole heartedly with Sullivan’s comments.

Taylor agreed and added that we need to come up with a challenge or a way to measure regional efforts. He discussed the Greater Greener Conference he attended last week and how it reminded him that we have an amazing system.

REPORTS

Chair: None.

Commissioners: None.

Staff: Mullin noted that interviews for District G will be held August 9, 2017.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary