

**Minutes of the
MEETING OF THE
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION**

Tuesday, September 3, 2013

Committee Members Present: Dean Johnston, Carrie Wasley, Daniel Shlaferman, Tony Yarusso, Emily Piper, Barbara Schmidt, Seyon Nyanwleh, Bob Moeller, Wendy Wulff, Council Liaison

Committee Members Absent: None.

CALL TO ORDER

After a tour of Spring Lake Park Reserve, Committee Chair Johnston called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 5:25 p.m. on Tuesday, September 3, 2013.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Wasley, seconded by Moeller to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Schmidt, seconded by Yarusso to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2013 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

PUBLIC INVITATION: Invitation to interested person to address the Commission on matters not on the agenda.

None.

BUSINESS

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Phalen Keller Regional Park (Keller portion) – MnDOT property, Ramsey County – Raintry Salk, Senior Parks Researcher

Salk gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the park acquisition opportunity fund grant request from Ramsey County for Phalen Keller Regional Park. She reviewed the request described in the materials provided.

Wasley motioned and it was seconded by Seyon to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

Authorize a grant of up to \$51,548 from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account to Ramsey County to finance the costs to acquire 44,443 square feet for the Keller Park portion of Phalen-Keller Regional Park. The grant should be financed with:

- \$30,929 from the FY2014 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation, and
- \$20,619 from Metropolitan Council bonds

Chair Johnston called for a vote and the motion carried.

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Vermillion Highlands Greenway and Rosemount Greenway Regional Trails – Klein Bank Property, Dakota County - Raintry Salk, Senior Parks Researcher

Salk gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the park acquisition opportunity fund grant request from Dakota County for Vermillion Highlands Greenway and Rosemount Greenway Regional Trails. She reviewed the request described in the materials provided.

Nyanwleh asked why the City of Rosemount owns the fee title. Al Singer, Dakota County explained that they're working in collaboration with the bank (who owns the property), the developer, and the City of Rosemount. He explained that Dakota County would own the conservation easement but the City would own the property in fee title (open space corridor) and would maintain it.

Schmidt motioned and it was seconded by Wasley to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Authorize a grant of up to \$270,000 from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account to Dakota County to finance up to 75% of the costs to acquire approximately 8.5 acres in a 100-foot wide, 3,200-foot long greenway corridor easement for the Vermillion Highlands Greenway and Rosemount Regional Greenway Regional Trails. The grant should be financed with:
 - \$162,000 from the FY2014 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation, and
 - \$108,000 from Metropolitan Council bonds
2. Consider reimbursing Dakota County up to \$90,000 from its share of a future Regional Park Capital Improvement Program for its 25% share of the total acquisition costs. The Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.

Chair Johnston called for a vote and the motion carried.

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve– JMJM Property, Scott County - Jan Youngquist, Planning Analyst

Youngquist gave a Powerpoint presentation outlining the request from Scott County for a park acquisition opportunity fund grant for Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve. She reviewed the request described in the materials provided.

Piper asked for clarification of additional land to be acquired and why it is not being acquired at this time. Mark Themig, Scott County stated that they do have an agreement for future acquisition of the remaining land and noted that the land owner is committed to selling. He stated that they have been great to work with and understand the need to stage acquisitions over time for funding purposes.

Moeller asked if Themig could give the Commission an idea of what can be expected in future acquisitions. Themig reviewed all the inholdings within the master plan (shown on a map in the PowerPoint).

Nyanwleh asked why the JMJM property was being acquired and not other properties identified. Themig explained that the Parks Advisory Commission helped them to rank the acquisitions by priority and noted that they were able to take care of the top three priority areas identified.

Wasley pointed out a typo on page 2 of the report where it reads Ramsey County, instead of Scott County.

Yarusso asked about connecting parcels through the 'orange' parcel (identified in the presentation). Themig stated that essentially the 2 areas on either side will stand alone, but noted they do anticipate acquisition within a few years.

Moeller motioned and it was seconded by Piper to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Authorize a grant of up to \$744,927 from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account to Scott County to finance up to 75% of the costs to acquire approximately 114 acres for the Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve. The grant should be financed with:
 - \$446,956 from the FY2014 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation, and
 - \$297,971 from Metropolitan Council bonds
2. Consider reimbursing Scott County up to \$248,309, its 25% share of the total acquisition costs, from a future Regional Park Capital Improvement Program. The Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.

Chair Johnston called for a vote and the motion carried.

Amend Scope of Grants SG-2012-096, SG-2012-097 and SG-2012-098, Three Rivers Park District - Jan Youngquist, Planning Analyst

Youngquist gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the request from Three Rivers Park District to amend the scope of three park grants described in the materials provided.

Schmidt noted that she had an opportunity to speak with Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District and the projects will be completed.

Nyanwleh asked why there is no completion date for SG-2012-097. Vlaming stated that this project is being put on hold, so before the grant expires, they would like to amend the scope to redirect the funding.

Nyanwleh motioned and it was seconded by Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Council amend the following grant agreements:

1. Amend SG2012-096, Section 2, Grant Project Scope to include, "at Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes Park Reserve, use \$150,000 to fund the Hyland cross-country ski trail with snowmaking and lights."
2. Amend SG2012-097, Section 2, Grant Project Scope to include, "at Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes Park Reserve, use \$194,000 to fund construction of the Hyland cross-country ski trail with snowmaking and lights."
3. Amend SG2012-098, Section 2, Grant Project Scope to include, "at Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes Park Reserve, use \$1,093,000 to fund construction of the Hyland cross-country ski trail with snowmaking and lights."

Chair Johnston called for a vote and the motion carried.

Additional Metro Council Park Bonds for Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Account - Raintry Salk, Senior Parks Researcher

Salk discussed the potential action for additional Metro Council Park Bonds for the Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Account as outlined in the memorandum provided. She discussed the call for additional analysis needed and reviewed the recommendations from staff.

Wasley asked if any implementing agencies have ever returned money. Stefferud stated they have not and explained that if an agency has extra money, they come back with a request to amend the scope of the grant so they can use it on other projects.

Moeller clarified that it is not an option to increase the bonding levy at this time. Salk stated that this is correct. This could not be done until FY2015.

Yarusso asked if there is any timeline of when we would see this item again to discuss a long term fix. Salk stated she is not able to predict that at this time.

Yarusso asked if we have to change the policy, will it have to go through a hearing process. Stefferud explained that it would be up to the Met Council and would have to be a capital budget conversation. He also pointed out that we will look at revisions to the rules after staff have met with all of the implementing agencies.

Wulff discussed and further clarified the budget process. She asked if staff is looking at getting more money from the State as well. Stefferud stated that we would be with regards to matching funds. He stated it will be explained in more detail in the additional analysis.

Nyanwleh clarified that there will still be a shortfall. Salk explained that this is a short term fix and confirmed that there will still be an anticipated shortfall.

Steve Sullivan asked about the \$7 million cap and if this was an unwritten policy. Stefferud explained that this is a Metro Council policy and part of the capital budget.

Sullivan asked if the Council can move funds from within programs. Wulff responded that it is all set funding. She stated there is some flexibility with the General Fund, but those funds are spoken for.

Wasley motioned and it was seconded by Yarusso to recommend:

1. That the Metropolitan Council issue \$1.5 million of park bonds as soon as possible and add it to the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Account.
2. Direct Metro Council staff to continue analysis with the Metro Council's Finance Division and in consultation with the regional park implementing agencies regarding whether the Metro Council should raise the current Park Bonding limit beyond that of \$7.0 Million annually of five-year bonds. The analysis must address:
 - A. The fiscal impact on property taxes for homeowners and businesses relative to projected tax base growth;
 - B. The forecasted capital project and land acquisition needs among the park implementing agencies and cash flow timing for those projects;
 - C. The ability of the regional park agencies to finance the additional operations and maintenance costs for the additional projects financed from the incremental increase in Metro Council park bonding and any matching State funds.

The results of the analysis and any recommendations should be submitted to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and Metropolitan Council for its consideration when it is completed.

Chair Johnston called for a vote and the motion carried.

INFORMATION

None.

REPORTS

Chair: None.

Commissioners: Yarusso reported there was a Star Tribune article about canoeing at Rice Creek Chain of Lakes.

Staff: Stefferud discussed the MPOSC application process and noted that 9/24 is the deadline for applications. He stated there will be three public meetings for interviews. The current members will meet on October 1, after their MPOSC Meeting. There will be a meeting at Cottage Grove City Hall on 10/8 from 6:30pm-8pm and at Minnetonka City Hall on 10/15. He stated that recommendations will be made at the 11/13 Met Council meeting and members will be sworn in at the 12/3 MPOSC meeting. He noted that the November MPOSC Meeting needs to be rescheduled due to Election Day.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary