

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, October 4, 2016

Committee Members Present:

Dean Johnston, Todd Kemery, Rick Theisen, Bill Weber, Anthony Taylor, Sarah Hietpas, Robert Moeller, and Wendy Wulff, Council Liaison

Committee Members Absent:

Rachel Gillespie, and Michael Kopp

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Johnston called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:01 p.m. on Tuesday, October 4, 2016.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Johnston asked for a motion to approve the Agenda of the October 4, 2016 Meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. Taylor motioned and it was seconded by Weber to approve the agenda. The **Agenda was approved.**

Chair Johnston asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2016 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. Kemery motioned and it was seconded by Taylor to approve the minutes. The **Minutes were approved.**

PUBLIC INVITATION

Catherine Zimmer, Executive Director Women Observing Wildlife Minnesota submitted comments (PowerPoint supplied) to review the intent of the Legacy as outlined in the materials provided. She discussed the 2011 Legacy Parks and Trails plan developed with input from citizens. She then discussed the proposal submitted at the last MPOSC meeting to amend the Regional Parks Policy Plan.

BUSINESS

Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Review File No. 50056-3 - Jan Youngquist, AICP, Planning Analyst

Youngquist gave a presentation on the proposed Master Plan for the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park submitted by Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board as outlined in the materials provided.

Moeller stated this is an exciting and expansive long range picture and complimented staff and the MRPB but questioned equity.

Youngquist stated that this master plan was reviewed under 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan. This plan as received in June of last year, therefore equity is not a primary focus but she noted that Moeller's point is a good one. She referred to the staff report that called out opportunities to use connecting people to outdoors money to increase usage by persons of color. She also discussed research done by Rainry Salk that lead to the discussion and planning of larger open space and picnic areas as identified as a need.

Taylor discussed re-connecting North Minneapolis to the river on the west side of the river and feels MPRB is working really hard on equity.

Kemery asked about contamination and if there has been any work on locating any. Youngquist stated that some of the properties are not under MPRB control so testing would not have been done.

Tyler Peterson, MPRB stated that they do test on their own sites however they rely on existing data from the Pollution Control Agency. He noted that they are used to most of the property they own having varying levels of contamination.

Weber stated the value of these investments to the city, state, region, goes way beyond their capital costs – every dollar is well spent.

Theisen asked if there is an end date. Peterson stated that the MPRB usually schedules Master Plans for a 20-year range but if an opportunity arises, they tend to act on it.

Theisen discussed subsidy of the art community and asked what kind of philanthropic sources does the MPRB have. Peterson stated that the Minneapolis Park Foundation is their partner and they are working with them to support the arts.

Adam Arvidson, MPRB added that this is an area that they are continuing to work through and develop more partnerships to leverage additional funding into the park system. The first big example of this is in this park (Water Works).

Theisen noted commercial areas benefit as people come into the city.

It was motioned by Weber, seconded by Theisen to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan.
2. Require that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board submit estimated land acquisition costs that were not quantified in this master plan as an amendment to the master plan for Metropolitan Council review and approval prior to seeking grants for acquisition of applicable parcels.
3. Inform the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board that in order to be eligible for future regional parks funding for soil contamination remediation, the project requests must meet the specific criteria delineated in the Regional Parks Policy Plan that is in effect at the time of the request.
4. Require that prior to initiating development within the regional park, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board must send preliminary plans to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineering Manager at Metropolitan Council Environmental Services, for review in order to assess the potential impacts to the regional interceptor system.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried** unanimously.

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Lebanon Hills Regional Park (Hansch), Dakota County – Deb Jensen, Senior Parks Finance Planner

Jensen gave a presentation on the request from Dakota County for a Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Lebanon Hills Regional Park as outlined in the staff report provided.

Moeller asked about utilizing the house that they are buying – could it be moved and repurposed? Jensen stated that moving it, because of asbestos remediation is not fiscally feasible. Moeller encouraged Dakota County to attempt to reuse.

Kemery asked about the current driveway and if there are any plans to incorporate it into a trail. Al Zinger, Dakota County stated that it is actually public right of way. He noted that it will allow future visitors access to a picnic area which is part of the Master Plan.

It was motioned by Kemery, seconded by Taylor to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$183,000 to Dakota County to pay part of the acquisition costs for the Hansch parcel at 1252 Carriage Hills Drive in Eagan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park;
2. Authorize the Community Development Director to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council;
3. Consider reimbursing Dakota County for up to \$112,841 from its share of a future Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program for costs associated with the acquisition; and
4. Inform Dakota County that the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that future reimbursement will be granted and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried** unanimously.

FY2018-19 Parks and Trails Legacy Prioritized Project Recommendations – Deb Jensen, Senior Parks Finance Planner

Jensen gave a presentation looking first at the history and then looking at individual requests from agencies to determine if priorities need to change. Background is contained in the staff report provided.

Moeller asked if one agency is frugal but another is spending more – would they benefit from the higher level of spending by receiving more? Jensen explained that to a certain extent this is true, however Operations and Maintenance (O&M) are reviewed by the Metropolitan Council.

Moeller asked if there is a recommendation from staff. Jensen stated that the recommendations seen in the provided materials are staff's recommendations after working with the implementing agencies (IA's).

Weber asked does staff feel this is in line with the intentions of the legacy statute? Jensen described all factors looked at including every question in equity tool kit. She feels the application requests meet every requirement.

Mullin stated staff felt every response from the IA's dealt with equity toolkit within staff's recommendations. Youngquist clarified that when staff reviewed the applications they did not assess priority ranking of the projects. Therefore, this is not a staff recommendation of the prioritization. The intent of the policy plan is for MPOSC and the Met Council to discuss and evaluate.

Theisen asked if items are prioritized by available funding or in terms of which will come first, second, third, etc. Youngquist stated for Legacy we know (roughly) how much money will be received and how much goes to the agencies. Where this will come into play is when we are looking at the CIP prioritization because in that case some of the lower prioritized projects may not get funded.

Jensen stated that the projects are being presented as agencies gave them to us.

Johnston asked if the Committee prefers to go through item by item and take action on each. With no preferences, Johnston suggested addressing specifically item by item.

Weber suggested discussing county by county (agency) year by year and take action. Wulff agreed. Moeller agreed.

Jensen presented the 2018 projects from Anoka County.

Mullin clarified that the Commission will go through each Agency (county) one at a time and vote on each. Johnston agreed.

Jensen presented the 2019 projects from Anoka County.

Wulff suggested hearing from the Commission first, then the agency and then audience prior to a vote.

There were no comments from the Committee and none from the audience.

It was motioned by Theisen, seconded by Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the attached Regional Parks System Parks and Trails Legacy Project List for state fiscal years 2018 and 2019 based on current appropriation estimates from Minnesota Management and Budget for Anoka County.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried** unanimously.

The Commission reviewed the 2018-19 projects from the City of Bloomington.

Weber felt that the Park Ambassador Program should be #1 in both years. He did not feel that resurfacing a parking lot is good use of Legacy dollars.

Johnston asked for comments from the audience.

Scott Brewer, City of Bloomington commented that both projects are very important priorities however the infrastructure that has been a priority for some time whereas the ambassador program is a new priority.

Kemery agreed with the change in priority but asked if Bloomington was counting on getting funding for both. Brewer stated their hope is to receive funding for both.

Johnston asked what the consequence is in changing priorities. Weber stated it is likely they will both be funded. He doesn't want to prioritize paving a parking lot a number one priority. He doesn't feel it is a good use of Legacy dollars.

Wulff noted that parking lots are an eligible use of Legacy dollars. She referred to research done by Dr. Salk that showed that people don't want to use parks due to unsightly restrooms, etc.

Johnston stated his concern with changing priorities if they are going to happen anyway. He doesn't want to change the priorities if it is going to cause conflict with Bloomington when it is likely to happen anyway.

Weber asked if we can't change the priority – why are we here?

Mullin stated that for 2018-2019 the Legislature there is always the chance that we would not receive enough to fund all projects. We are discussing the priority of the projects in the event that funds are reduced and there would be an impact.

Jensen discussed reasoning for equity toolkit is to generate discussion and take a look at equity. This is a bit of a practice run because when this is done for the CIP – there could be big impacts.

Johnston discussed the greater number of projects from Anoka County and noted with Bloomington there are only two projects so reversing will make no difference. In the case of Anoka County, it could be significant.

Moeller discussed the process. We rely on staff to bring a thoughtful analysis. To expect this Commission to go to such detail without the benefit of the thoughtful work of the staff and the agency is not prudent. He would prefer that staff let us know if the priorities are wrong and we can discuss that. Jensen responded that the Regional Parks Policy Plan doesn't give staff any authority to do that. It gave the authority to this Commission and the Council.

Moeller stated we go on staff analysis all the time. We don't have to agree with staff's recommendation and reserve the right to amend.

Mullin discussed the staff effort and analysis working with the agencies to help them understand how to respond to the equity tool kit recommendations. Staff assisted agencies with how to see if their projects promote equity.

Johnston feels it is a good exercise to go through to feel comfortable with the recommendation to the Council and to discuss areas where we are not.

Taylor asked what is it that is making this tough for this Commission to prioritize the projects? He feels this gives the Commission an opportunity to say what we feel and in turn hear from the agencies.

Johnston stated that he is concerned that this is a collaborative process. If we arbitrarily make changes from the top down – how will it affect our relationship with the IA's.

Taylor noted that they are here to respond to our concerns/opinions.

Theisen feels we need to follow the process. Have the conversations and hear from the IA's and then vote. It may or may not pass.

Johnston asked for a motion.

It was motioned by Weber, seconded by Kemery to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the attached Regional Parks System Parks and Trails Legacy Project List reversing the two projects in both 2018 and 2019 and for state fiscal years 2018 and 2019 based on current appropriation estimates from Minnesota Management and Budget for Bloomington.

Weber added that his reason for the reversal on the projects is because he feels it is this Commission's charge to determine which projects are more consistent with the Legacy Act and he feels that the Park Ambassador Program is more consistent that repaving an existing parking lot.

Mullin stated that his understanding of what the Commissioners are being asked to do is to look at the information in the equity tool kit and make a recommendation based on that. He clarified that it is not the Commission's role to determine eligibility on the Legacy Plan.

Kemery clarified that he went to a seminar on the Park Ambassador Program and he feels that before you do anything this program will provide a doorway to gather input from the community on what the needs are.

Johnston asked what is the outcome of our vote – is it a recommendation or a requirement. Mullin stated that it is a recommendation that will go to the Community Development Committee and changes can be made or accepted and it will then go to the full Council.

Wulff stated that a re-ordering of projects should only be based on the equity tool kit not eligibility of funds.

Kemery asked - isn't the Ambassador Program part of the equity tool box. Salk noted that this is different from the Council's Ambassador Program.

Moeller discussed the four pillars. He felt these projects deal with all four not just equity. Mullin clarified that one of the pillars is connecting people to the outdoors. This is different from the equity toolkit.

Wulff pointed out that connecting people to the outdoors is defined as 'everybody' not just the underserved.

Moeller clarified what we need to look at is the equity toolkit being properly reflected in the prioritization of these projects and we do not need to worry about the four pillars. Wulff affirmed this.

Johnston stated he still supports the position to only change the list of priorities if there's a problem.

Theisen called to question.

Johnston asked for a vote. Four voted in favor of the motion. Three voted against the motion. **The motion passed.**

Johnston asked for insight from Salk.

Salk reviewed a discussion in 2014 when the Commission was not involved in the prioritization. At that time MPOSC asked to be involved. At the same time MPOSC asked to look at equity impacts. The toolkit is a way to shape the discussion. There is the potential that legacy funds may decrease so the

Commission is encouraged to look at the list and consider their prioritization as some of the last item(s) may not get funded.

The Commission reviewed the 2018-19 projects from the Carver County.

Jensen noted the second project in 2019 is a placeholder as the County has asked for more time.

Marty Walsh, Carver County stated that because of the status on master plans not being complete it makes them ineligible for funding. Their proposal to the Met Council staff is to be able to come back and re-prioritize.

Weber suggested that at another point in time staff should be able to consider a request from IA's to be able to submit for funds for projects without an approved master plan.

Walsh stated they believe by the time they receive the funds in July the master plan would be complete.

Mullin stated the requirement to have a master plan approved prior to funding any projects is a best practice of the Council.

Wulff stated that if the list is changed will it have to go back to the Legislature. Mullin stated that in the past we have had to go back to the Legislature to re-prioritize the list. With new language, we are going to ask that the Council be able to re-prioritize by Council action.

Weber made a motion to move the third project in both years to number one because he feels it is more consistent with the equity toolkit. Motion died for lack of a second.

Moeller motioned to move the third project in both years to number two, it was seconded by Weber and to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the attached Regional Parks System Parks and Trails Legacy Project List for state fiscal years 2018 and 2019 based on current appropriation estimates from Minnesota Management and Budget for Carver County.

Walsh noted in practical terms it doesn't change what they do.

Johnston asked for a vote. Four voted in favor of the motion. Three voted against the motion. **The motion passed.**

The Commission reviewed the 2018-19 projects from the Dakota County.

It was motioned by Weber seconded by Taylor to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the attached Regional Parks System Parks and Trails Legacy Project List for state fiscal years 2018 and 2019 based on current appropriation estimates from Minnesota Management and Budget for Dakota County.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried** unanimously.

The Commission reviewed the 2018-19 projects from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

It was motioned by Theisen seconded by Taylor to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the attached Regional Parks System Parks and Trails Legacy Project List for state fiscal years 2018 and 2019 based on current appropriation estimates from Minnesota Management and Budget for Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Weber suggested moving number six, in 2018, to number one or at least higher and also to move number six to number one in 2019.

Arvidson spoke to Webber Park and stated this is the tail end of a big project. He stated it is the first time up for Legacy funding (this is the first year without tax benefit).

Taylor stated this pool is already open and would trust the IA's prioritization.

There was no motion to amend the prior motion.

Arvidson noted that Hall's Island does have other state funding and it would severely hamper development.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried** unanimously.

The Commission reviewed the 2018-19 projects from the Ramsey County.

Weber suggested moving number six to number four in 2018 and number seven to number five in 2019.

Scott Yonke, Ramsey County reviewed the reasoning for ranking is that they have existing projects that are ongoing and added that this is supplemental money to completing projects.

Kemery referred to the ADA improvements and asked if this is additional that is being planned. Yonke responded that they have just completed their Transition Plan. He noted this will just begin to initiate their priorities within that plan and they will be coming back for more.

Kemery asked if they have any ADA compliant restrooms or will this have to wait until 2019? Yonke discussed what they can effectively do right away looking at efficiencies and what makes sense to do as a bigger item. He noted that the restrooms are ADA accessible.

Kemery applauded the Transition Plan but shared his concern with ADA compliant playgrounds for children. Yonke noted that their Transition Plan covers all of their parks and facilities within their park system. He noted that there were a number of components at Battle Creek playground that did not meet ADA compliance. There are a number of projects that currently have funding to begin the make them compliant.

Kemery noted that ADA does not require all of the playgrounds to be ADA compliant but if you are spending money to upgrade, and there is a need, it does require that those needs be addressed. He noted that the Transition Plan needs to be followed. Yonke agreed and stated that they take their Transition Plan very seriously.

It was motioned by Weber seconded by Theisen to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the attached Regional Parks System Parks and Trails Legacy Project List for state fiscal years 2018 and 2019 based on current appropriation estimates from Minnesota Management and Budget for Ramsey County.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried** unanimously.

The Commission reviewed the 2018-19 projects from the City of St. Paul.

Weber asked what program allocations are? Jensen referred to page 38 of the report regarding education of volunteer coordinators.

Weber motioned to change number six to number three in 2018 and number five to number two in 2019. **Motion failed** due to a lack of a second.

Hietpas noted that St. Paul is already to 23% in connecting people to the outdoors. She would like to see more leeway to the IA's preference of order.

It was motioned by Hietpas seconded by Kemery to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the attached Regional Parks System Parks and Trails Legacy Project List for state fiscal years 2018

and 2019 based on current appropriation estimates from Minnesota Management and Budget for City of St. Paul.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried** unanimously.

The Commission reviewed the 2018-19 projects from the Scott County.

It was motioned by Theisen seconded by Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the attached Regional Parks System Parks and Trails Legacy Project List for state fiscal years 2018 and 2019 based on current appropriation estimates from Minnesota Management and Budget for Scott County.

Kemery asked what the difference between wood and vault latrines is. Patty Freeman, Scott County stated existing latrines are made of wood and will be replaced with a prefab concrete structure to meet ADA standards.

Kemery asked if trails are connected (accessible) to the latrines. Freeman affirmed.

Jensen pointed out the third priorities are placeholders.

Freeman noted previously the Scott County Board and the Parks Advisory Commission had identified the 2018-2019 Scott County Legacy allocation on a maintenance facility but a couple of months ago they didn't feel that they had examined that project in comparison to what else they could be doing in other facilities so they took a pause to examine other potential projects. They have not had a chance to fully vet this discussion so they asked for placeholders.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried** unanimously.

The Commission reviewed the 2018-19 projects from the Three Rivers Park District.

Theisen asked why are four and five not higher in 2018. Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District stated more or less this ranking is inconsequential – they will all get done. He noted that their projects are ranked based on fiscal prudence and added that he feels there is no good equity data. He pointed out that in 2009 Three Rivers Park District spent four million dollars connecting people to the outdoors and now spend \$4.6 million annually.

Vlaming stated that he feels it is not wise to connect an unstable funding source to an operational budget. He stated he is concerned and submitted a letter (not part of the packet). Essentially all of these projects are placeholders until the Board takes action.

It was motioned by Hietpas seconded by Weber to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the attached Regional Parks System Parks and Trails Legacy Project List for state fiscal years 2018 and 2019 based on current appropriation estimates from Minnesota Management and Budget for Three Rivers Park District.

Moeller noted he approves of research expanded to include Scott County. He asked if there is a way to broaden the impact through collaboration. Vlaming responded this is a great question and he agreed there is.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried** unanimously.

The Commission reviewed the 2018-19 projects from the Washington County.

It was motioned by Weber seconded by Theisen to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the attached Regional Parks System Parks and Trails Legacy Project List for state fiscal years 2018

and 2019 based on current appropriation estimates from Minnesota Management and Budget for Washington County.

Chair Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried** unanimously.

REPORTS

Chair: None.

Commissioners: None.

Staff: None.

ADJOURNMENT

7:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary