

Minutes of the

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Monday, October 1, 2018

Committee Members Present: Barber, Chavez, Commers, Dorfman, Elkins, Fleming, Hietpas, Kemery, Kramer, Moeller, Munt, Taylor, Theisen, Wulff, Yarusso

Committee Members Absent: Andreason, Cunningham, Kopp

Committee Members Excused:

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Chairs Commers and Yarusso called the special Joint meeting of the Council's Community Development Committee and Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:20 p.m. on Monday, October 1, 2018.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Wulff seconded by Elkins to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

No minutes - special Joint Community Development Committee and Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting.

All the meeting attendees introduced themselves.

BUSINESS - none

INFORMATION

1. Discussion of Public Comments received on the 2018 Update to the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

Parks & Natural Resources Manager Emmett Mullin; Housing Analyst Dan Marckel and Regional Planning Director Libby Starling provided direction of the discussion. The discussion opened with an overview of consensus themes from the public comments:

- ❖ Allowable Recreation Activities
- ❖ Balancing Natural Resource Conservation and Facility Development
- ❖ Coordination with Transportation Planning
- ❖ Priorities for 2019 System Additions
- ❖ Equity Toolkit Use and Project Prioritization

Staff asked how should allowable activities defined? By whom? With what specificity?

View discussion: http://metro council.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=2997

Members discussed the language on page 91 and the language in the previous plan and questioned the intent of the current draft. Chair Yarusso suggested the language should not adversely affect impact the environment while keeping a

balance and respect to natural resources. Another member suggested a concept of zones in a park; focus on interest and uses, create principles which guides implementing agencies to balance resources/uses while avoiding adverse impact.

Members discussed the list of criteria/principles. Differentiating from city parks and athletic complexes, focusing efforts on providing unique activities. The necessity of community engagement was discussed. With changing demand, desires, and differing sets of standards. The changes in demographics and activities prompts an updated list of eligible criteria by reexamining assumptions and definitions of allowable activities.

Next, the members discussed facilities' impact on the environment and ability to serve the public, and ways to measure the impact. Discussed costs and the acceptable levels of impact of development with concessions to some impact tied to natural resources. For example, parking lots supports access to nature activities. Another factor discussed was there is no legal exclusion of activities, in the current plan park implementing agencies propose new activities/amenities, and the state statutes differentiating regional parks, city parks, and state parks.

A member repeated the need for criteria that provides a framework for changing recreational needs while protecting the environment. Members discussed the changing desires, separate funding, and compatible uses. Members want to shift focus to the experience not outcome.

Both chairs expressed the language of the plan has raised many questions. Suggests incorporating language for terms of plan. Members stated without seeing the red-lined version they cannot view differences. Indicating the limit of scope, and this is not a re-do.

Ms. Barajas explained the existing language is similar to the adopted 2040 plan, indicating new activities are determined by the implementing agencies.

Staff directed the discussion to the next theme; balancing natural resource conversation and facility development.

Chair Yarusso commented on the statutory requirements regarding recreation open space and development impact. Members discussed the sources and allocations of funding for restoration and preservation, the availability and distribution of grant money.

Members commented on the new language is not interpreting the emphasis on conversation. They discussed the challenges providing unique experience for visitors with the changing demand of activities while balancing natural resources and meeting ADA requirements.

An edit to page 91 the last bullet was suggested to add age, similar to Thrive language.

Staff directed the members to the topic of coordination of developing trails. A member explained the some of the funding for trails, and trails serve as transportation, others for recreation and in some areas, trails provide both. References made to MnDOT's requirements.

Members commented the plan does a good job of listing uses. The region is different from park to park, difficult to accommodate all differences. The challenges of the multiple uses and users on the trail system from cyclists, walkers, runners, strollers, etc. and the concerns over the speed of cyclists was discussed. Members commented on the importance of movement and inquired how new trails are proposed. Staff responded standards are in place with the implementing agencies. The linkage of regional parks via connections was discuss, along with the need for safe design, some of which is a requirement for ADA.

Chair Commers agreed the staff had enough direction to proceed to the 5th topic regarding the Equity Toolkit, what language should the plan include?

Recommendations from members included: engaging people of color, hire diverse staff, identify barriers for people of color, make regional parks more accessible, use the Toolkit when re-prioritizing projects.

Members noticed changes in the language from previous version regarding state bonding and the tight timeline to review and re-prioritize. Member commented applying the Equity Toolkit to all projects sends a message of intent. Some members struggle with how to address equity with limited authority, not a clear path between the legislature and parks implementing agencies.

Addressing equity through an improved equity grants program was suggested as a way to move the dial. However, members via conversations with implementing agencies restrictions of funds are based on guidelines, with a limited amount of time, and without a lot of input. Members acknowledged the challenges which will forced them to get creative and find solutions that move the dial. Other sources of funding, and incentives strategies for park uses to underrepresented areas were discussed. Equity in the DNR was discussed; regional and city approaches and their strategies. The importance of identifying and measuring the connection of people to parks was mentioned. "You can't just drive a group of people of color to a park and count them."

Members commented on the importance of equity within implementing agencies, regulatory restrictions, equity programs and efforts. The value of the Equity Toolkit was discussed, suggesting the outcome not worth the effort. Members discussed feedback received from implementing agencies was vague, with some strategies for incentives and re-ordering projects. It was suggested encouraging the use of the Equity Toolkit, getting familiar with it, take re-ordering out of the discussion and get better at identifying inequitable situations.

Capital investments were discussed, especially investments/strategies to increase users/visits. Investments in development of trails and connections, community engagement, removal of barriers, to create a positive experience for all users.

Chair Commers thanked MPOSC chair Yarusso, MPOSC members, CDC members, especially Committee member Wulff for being a liaison between both committees, and staff.

A request for a red-lined copy of the plan was requested.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Michele Wenner
Recording Secretary