

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

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

**Committee Members Present:** Barbara Schmidt, Dean Johnston, Bob Moeller, Carrie Wasley, Wendy Wulff, Council Liaison

**Committee Members Absent:** Emily Piper, Seyon Nyanwleh, Daniel Shlaferman, Tony Yarusso

**CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Johnston called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:55 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7, 2013.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

Without a quorum present, Committee Chair Johnston postponed the approval of the Minutes and asked the Commission to accept the Agenda by consensus.

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

None.

**BUSINESS**

**Rum River Regional Trail Master Plan, Anoka County** - Jan Youngquist

Youngquist gave a presentation outlining a request from Anoka County to approve the Rum River Regional Trail Master Plan. She reviewed the background, rationale, and funding outlined in the staff report provided. She also discussed know support/opposition and review by other Council Divisions.

Moeller asked what kind of time frame is expected. Youngquist stated that trails are typically done as the County Roads are upgraded.

Karen Blaska, Anoka County Parks stated ideally it would take 10-20 years, however it may take longer.

Wasley asked if this item could wait, as there is not a quorum to approve it at this time. Blaska stated that it could.

Wasley made a motion to table this item until the July meeting. It was seconded by Moeller. **Motion carried.**

## Request for Reimbursement Consideration for Dakota County Regional Park and Trails Projects - Jan Youngquist

Youngquist reviewed three projects proposed by Dakota County outlined in the materials provided. They include:

- Whitetail Woods Regional Park Construction
- Mississippi River Regional Trail – trailhead construction
- Mississippi River Regional Trail – Spring Lake Park engineering

Youngquist pointed out that the County plans to move forward with these projects mid-summer, so this is a time sensitive request.

Johnston asked for a consensus of the Commission to forward the recommendation that the Metropolitan Council consider reimbursing Dakota County up to \$6,303,480 from its share of future Regional Parks Capital Improvement Programs for the following projects:

1. Whitetail Woods Regional Park construction \$5,453,480  
Site grading, access drive, parking lot, play area, trails, sledding hill, site furnishings, utilities, landscaping, signage, picnic shelter, restroom building, camper cabins and associated phase 1 improvements.
2. Mississippi River Regional Trail-trailhead construction \$450,000  
Parking lot, bathroom building, utilities, signs, landscaping, trails, site furnishings and miscellaneous site amenities to serve the regional trail at Swing Bridge Park in Inver Grove Heights.
3. Mississippi River Regional Trail -Spring Lake Park engineering \$400,000  
Design and engineering for regional trail from Schaars Bluff picnic area to the western park boundary.

However, 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.

The Commission voted in favor, by consensus (4:0) to forward the recommendation to the Council.

## Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Spring Lake Park Reserve (Reis Parcel), Dakota County – Tori Dupre

Dupre outlined a request from Dakota County for a Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant to finance up to 75% of the costs to acquire the 56.3 acre Reis parcel for the Spring Lake Regional Park described in the staff report provided.

Wasley asked if there are just foundations for the grist mill, house and the saw mill left on the property and what will happen to them. Steve Sullivan, Dakota County Parks responded that this site is a very interesting site and gave some history behind it. He talked specifically about the house, which is in good condition, and the saw mill and noted that both have some interesting stories. The County has not yet decided how they will be utilized but felt they may offer significant public benefits. Wasley stated that she hopes they are able to keep the buildings.

Moeller clarified the location of this parcel and asked if it is just below Schaars Bluff. Sullivan stated that it is and noted that it will provide public access to 3,200 feet of Spring Lake shoreline.

Johnston pointed out that this item is time sensitive and asked for a consensus to forward the following recommendation to the Council.

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Authorize a grant of up to \$379,106 from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account in the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Dakota County to finance up to 75% of the costs to acquire the 56.3-acre Reis parcel for the Spring Lake Park Reserve. The grant should be financed with:
  - \$227,464 from the FY 2013 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation
  - \$151,642 from Metropolitan Council bonds
2. Consider reimbursing Dakota County up to \$126,369, its share of the acquisition costs, from the County share of a future Regional Park Capital Improvement Program. However, 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.

The Commission voted in favor, by consensus (4:0) to forward the recommendation to the Council.

**Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park (Premier Banks Parcel), Scott County – Tori Dupre**

Dupre outlined a grant request from Scott County for Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park described in the staff report provided.

Wasley asked if this item is time sensitive. Stefferud responded that it is.

Moeller clarified areas shown on the map to be acquired and asked if this is a significant acquisition for this park. Mark Themig, Scott County stated that it is a major acquisition within this park.

Moeller asked what type of access will there be. Themig discussed two access points from the county road to the west. He also discussed a land easement through a development that could be planned.

Wulff asked when the fund will run out of money. Stefferud responded that a request for \$2.25 million will be submitted and matched with \$1.5 million in Council bonds totaling \$3.75 million. This money will be available July 1. He further clarified that we can use Parks and Trails Legacy money if the fund runs out along with Council bond match.

Johnston asked for a consensus on the recommendation that the Metropolitan Council:

Authorize a grant of up to \$983,489 from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Acquisition Account to Scott County to finance up to 75% of the costs to acquire the 148-acre Premier Bank parcel for the Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park. The grant should be financed with:

- \$590,093 from the 2012 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriation
- \$393,396 from Metropolitan Council bonds

Consider reimbursing Scott County up to \$327,830, its 25% match, from the County's share of a future Regional Park Capital Improvement Program. However, 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.

The Commission voted in favor, by consensus (4:0) to forward the recommendation to the Council.

## INFORMATION

### 2013-157 Unified Capital Program Amendment 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter - Arne Stefferud

Stefferud gave an update on the Unified Capital Program Amendment. He discussed the meeting of the Community Development Committee held on June 3, where this matter was discussed and is outlined in the staff report provided for this Commission. He discussed the proposed action that will go before the Council on June 26, 3013 and also gave some background information including reducing funding commitments, increasing funding commitments, and changes in current year expenditures.

Wulff shared her concern with how fast acquisition dollars are being spent and wondered if we should be requesting more money. Stefferud stated we can bring this item back to the Commission in July.

Moeller asked if staff could provide a visual to show the Commission the different 'buckets' of money available and how much is left. Or, he suggested a summarization of this. Schmidt suggested a chart.

Stefferud described a bar chart that could be put together to provide a visual. He then discussed the ability to ask for more money for the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

Johnston clarified that this topic will be discussed at our next meeting.

Sullivan commented that it is important to capture opportunities when they are there and asked the Commission to consider whether the Council has some undedicated bonding dollars that could be appropriated for acquisition opportunities. He discussed the possibility/anticipation of an increase in acquisition requests next year.

Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District agreed with Sullivan and stated that this is a really good time to buy property. He urged the Council to consider dedicating \$1.5 million (of undedicated bonding dollars) to acquisition.

Stefferud stated that staff can lay the options out for discussion of this Commission and the Council. Because this would be an amendment to the Parks Policy Plan, it would require a public hearing, which is a three month process.

Moeller asked about forecasting future needs and felt a long range discussion would be helpful. Stefferud stated that there is a wild card and that would be willing sellers. We can't forecast when land will become available for sale and what the acquisition cost will be since it is based on decisions by willing sellers.

## REPORTS

**Chair:** None.

**Commissioners:** None

**Staff:** Stefferud noted that the Legislature has adjourned and gave a quick update.

### **Omnibus Minnesota Legacy Bill**

Parks and Trails Fund – The formula distribution is 40% metro regional parks, 40% DNR state parks and 20% for Greater Minnesota Regional Parks. This was the allocation formula recommended by the governor. Metro regional parks will receive \$33.7 million for the biennium for capital improvements.

## **Omnibus Environment and Natural Resources Finance Bill**

\$5,670,000 of Lottery in Lieu of Sales Tax (Natural Resources Fund) per year was allocated for metro regional parks operations and maintenance. These funds work toward meeting a legislative goal of assisting the regional park implementing agencies (counties and three of the larger metro area cities) with the cost of operating and maintaining the park facilities.

Stefferd also noted that the implementing agencies are putting together a proposal for the Lessard Council for \$6 million.

Stefferd stated that the bonding request for 2014 will be between \$10.5-11 million.

Stefferd noted that the park agencies will be meeting at Silverwood Park on June 24 from 4-6pm to talk about Thrive MSP 2040 which may include ideas for the update to the regional parks policy plan. He stated that Commissioners are welcome to attend.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Sandi Dingle  
Recording Secretary