

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

Tuesday, December 3, 2013

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

Committee Members Absent: Carrie Wasley

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Johnston called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:05 p.m. on Tuesday, December 3, 2013.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

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

It was moved by Yarusso, seconded by Nyanwleh to approve the minutes of the November 12, 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 Above the Falls Regional Park Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board – Arne Stefferud, Manager Regional Parks and Natural Resources (for Tori Dupre, Senior Planner)

Stefferdud, in Dupre's absence) gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the request from MPRB for an Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for the Above the Falls Regional Park as outlined in the staff report.

Stefferdud noted that a part of the land will not be used for park purposes, so the grant is being reduced by \$100k and the MPRB will use money from their share of the FY 2014 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation. He noted that this is a change from the staff report and was brought to his attention just prior to this meeting.

Yarusso asked for clarification on the Legacy portion. Stefferud explained that there will be a portion that will not have a restrictive covenant on it so the MPRB can maintain flexibility on how this portion is used.

Schmidt asked if the land that is being purchased by MPRB is within the park boundary. Jennifer Ringold, MPRB stated that it is within the boundary. She clarified that the MPRB anticipates that this land will be used as park land but want to maintain flexibility.

Nyanwleh asked if these changes are in the staff report. Stefferud stated that they are not that this was a last minute change. He noted that this is not normally how it is done but feels comfortable that it is within the requirements of the park policy plan.

Nyanwleh asked if this will need to go back to the MPRB or will the minutes of this meeting, reflecting the changes of the request, be sufficient. Stefferud stated that if approved at this meeting it will go onto the Community Development Committee and the staff report for that committee will reflect the changes discussed at today's meeting.

Nyanwleh asked why there is no known support or opposition shown and asked if it was open to the public. Ringold explained that this purchase is within the Above Falls Regional Park Master Plan, which has included much public involvement and had much support. She noted that the money being given from the watershed shows support. She also stated that there is not a formal comment period required for grant requests.

Stefferdud outlined the amendments to the staff report that would be made to the proposed action.

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

1. Authorize a grant of up to \$85,370 from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account to Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to finance up to 75% of the costs to acquire approximately 22,650 square feet for the Above the Falls Regional Park. The grant should be financed with:
 - \$51,222 from the FY2014 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation, and
 - \$34,148 from Metropolitan Council bonds
2. Authorize the Community Development Director to sign the grant agreement and accompanying documents including the restrictive covenant.

Nyanwleh asked about the property's existing structures. Ringold explained that the landowner purchased land across the street and is moving his house. She noted he is very supportive and encouraging his neighbors to do the same. She stated that the purchase of his property has already been made.

Yarusso asked if we can award a grant when the land has already been purchased.

Stefferdud stated he was unaware that the land had already been purchased. He stated that grants are for prospective acquisition and this is why we have a separate policy on reimbursement. He explained that this would be inconsistent with the process/policy that we have in place.

Piper asked if we can table this and have staff do more analysis. Stefferud stated that it's never been done before and would require a variance to the rule.

Yarusso asked if there are any other funds that could be used. Stefferud noted that they have \$100k in Parks and Trails Legacy funds.

Moeller is not comfortable making a motion/decision with so many changes at this point.

Wulff suggested tabling or forwarding without a motion.

Ringold stated that she feels the MPRB would want to take a step back and work with staff to make sure they are acting within the rules and policies of the Metropolitan Council.

Nyanwleh stated that this raises the question of how many grants have passed in the past unknowingly that have already been closed on.

Stefferdud stated that this parcel is within the park boundary however it is not within the rules. He noted that staff was under the impression that it had not been purchased.

Johnston asked if tabling would be appropriate. Stefferud shared his concern and stated he would like to find out where the disconnect was.

Piper made a motion to withdraw her previous motion and it was seconded by Moeller.

Piper motioned to table this until our next meeting. Moeller seconded. Yarusso offered a friendly amendment to refer this back to staff prior to bringing it back to this group. Piper motion to add Yarusso's friendly amendment, it was seconded by Moeller. Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

INFORMATION

None.

REPORTS

Chair: None.

Staff: Stefferud thanked those who applied and also thanked those who will not be coming back for their service including Daniel Schlaferman, Seyon Nyanwleh, and Emily Piper.

Commissioners: Nyanwleh thanked fellow members and staff and stated that it has been a blessing to serve on this commission.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary