

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, June 5, 2018

Committee Members Present:

Tony Yarusso, Mike Kopp, Bob Moeller, Margie Andreason, Rick Theisen, Catherine Fleming, Wendy Wulff

Committee Members Absent:

Anthony Taylor, Sarah Hietpas, Todd Kemery

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 5, 2018.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the June 5, 2018 Agenda. Kopp motioned, and it was seconded by Andreason to approve the agenda. The **Agenda was approved.**

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 1, 2018 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. It was motioned by Moeller and seconded by Theisen. The **Minutes were approved.**

PUBLIC INVITATION

Catherine Zimmer, Women Observing Wildlife, MN discussed statistics from a World Wildlife Report and noted that the amphibian population has declined 60% in the last 40 years. She asked for consideration of an increase of legacy dollars for conservation projects.

BUSINESS

Highway 5 Regional Trail Master Plan, Carver County, Review File No. 50208-1 - Raya Esmaeili, Local Planning Assistance

Esmaeili gave a presentation on the Highway 5 Regional Trail Master Plan from Carver County as outlined in the materials provided.

Chair Yarusso pointed out that although alternate routes may be planned, only one may be funded with regional funds.

It was motioned by Moeller and seconded by Kopp to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Highway 5 Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Require that Carver County, prior to initiating development of the regional trail, 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 Yarusso asked if the trail beyond the county line is still part of the search corridor? Staff indicated that they will look into this. After the meeting, staff confirmed that the trail alignment that runs into Hennepin County remains a search corridor.

Theisen asked about the likelihood of approval for the trail from the University of Minnesota Board of Regents. Marty Walsh, Carver County Park Director, stated that they are working closely with the University on a memorandum of

understanding that will evolve into a joint powers agreement. He said there is strong support for the trail at the Arboretum.

Chair Yarusso asked if there will be a permanent easement? Walsh stated that it will be an Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). Chair Yarusso asked if this fits into our policy plan? Mullin noted that he will look into it and follow up with Carver County. Mullin later confirmed that the Policy Plan encourages the use of JPA's when establishing trail alignments.

Chair Yarusso called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Request for Future Reimbursement for Five Projects from Dakota County - Deb Jensen, Senior Parks Finance Planner

Jensen gave a presentation on a request for future reimbursement for five development projects from Dakota County as outlined in the materials provided.

It was motioned by Kopp and seconded by Theisen to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve future reimbursement consideration for the five capital projects listed in Table 1 for Dakota County Regional Parks and Trails; and
2. 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 Regional Park Implementing Agency to reimbursement.

Chair Yarusso called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Spring Lake Park Reserve, Sorg Trust II, Dakota County - Deb Jensen, Senior Parks Finance Planner

Jensen gave a presentation on a park acquisition opportunity fund grant request from Dakota County for Spring Lake Park Reserve outlined in the materials provided.

It was motioned by Andreason and seconded by Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$1,594,630 to Dakota County to acquire the Sorg Trust parcels along Hillary Path in Nininger Township for Spring Lake Park Reserve;
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 \$1,750,553 from its share of a future Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program for costs associated with the Sorg Trust 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 Yarusso called for a vote. **The motion carried**, with one opposition.

INFORMATION

2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan (RPPP) Update, High Level Overview of the Draft Plan – Emmett Mullin, Manager (Regional Parks and Natural Resources), and Dan Marckel, Planning Analyst (Regional Policy and Research)

Mullin and Marckel gave a RPPP update and a high-level overview of the draft plan as outlined in the materials provided.

Theisen asked how they get the big picture view from the feedback received? Marckel discussed the validity of outreach work along with past studies and how the information was compiled. He stated they've used best practices for community engagement.

Mullin added that they've done surveys at parks with users who were predominantly Caucasian, which is why Council staff conducted more targeted outreach with specific communities of color as well as other underrepresented groups.

Moeller discussed new tools available, for example, survey monkey for gathering qualitative data. He shared his concern with using antidotal information to base policy decisions on, and asked staff to look into more quantitative tools that may be available.

Chair Yarusso stated quantitative tools are not good at soliciting new ideas.

Fleming stated that if we're serious about equity and engagement and don't have enough money then we need to get more money.

Marckel noted future discussions will occur around a variety of forums regarding how to further equity and inclusion into the work of regional parks.

Chair Yarusso commented on the parks cost estimate to build out the system, wondering if this would be done in today's dollars? Marckel stated it is done in 2018 dollars. This is required by state statute and is used to bring this information to the legislature.

Mary Robison, Finance reviewed the new Program Guide.

Andreason asked if is this Guide is part of additional requirements between the Council and agencies? Robison responded that the Guide us intended to clarify day to day administrative policies of the parks grant programs

Libby Starling, Community Development discussed interest earnings on regional park system funds outlined in the PowerPoint provided. She reviewed ideas that are circulating on how to do use these funds in the future.

Fleming asked what the options for the funds are, including investing the funds? Starling discussed the Council's role and how it is not generally in investments.

Fleming asked if the Council can decide how to spend the money. Starling stated we are limited by statutory language around use and betterment in the regional park system.

Andreason asked if this committee is being asked to weigh-in on the process. Starling confirmed and stated this is to be a transparent process. She noted that the Council will make the final decision.

Wulff noted that there will be a Governor's election in November, so this may be deferred to a future Council.

Moeller asked how much money does the Council have to promote the overall Regional Parks System to the region. Mullin stated it is not a lot of money. He stated that we promote through the Regional Parks Map, the website, etc., and noted that the park implementing agencies conduct their own marketing efforts.

Theisen asked how much the actual amount varies year to year. Robison stated it averages around \$500,000/year but could vary between \$200-\$600k. Theisen asked about carryover. Robison responded that interest earnings are derived from a variety of funds and if not used, they would carry over from year to year.

Chair Yarusso pointed out that although a small amount, it has fewer restrictions for use.

Moeller suggested using money to solicit matching funds from businesses.

Marckel discussed equity.

Moeller discussed unclear verbiage and suggested editing to provide clarity/simplicity.

Andreason suggested expanding language 'continued use of toolkit' to reflections around what we have learned from the use of the toolkit, etc.

Fleming asked who liked the equity toolkit. Marckel stated that the implementing agencies used it as a discussion tool as the Commission were considering projects. Generally there is a feeling that these conversations are useful and could be better

REPORTS

Chair: Chair Yarusso discussed legislative action, noting that there was \$10 million in the bonding bill passed for parks.

Mullin noted that the Council is exploring if/how to match.

Commissioners: Fleming noted that there is a One-Water Summit in Minneapolis coming up.

Staff: Mullin introduced Tracey Kinney, new Parks Planner. He noted that the Amanda Lovelee will be our Parks Ambassador and will start on July 2.

Mullin noted that the July 3rd MPOSC Meeting has been rescheduled to Thursday, July 12.

Mullin discussed summer tours and noted there will be one in Dakota County in September and Scott County in October.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary