

# Minutes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



**Meeting date:** February 1, 2024

**Time:** 4:00 PM

**Location:** 390 Robert Street

## Members present:

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair, Tony Yarusso, at large | <input type="checkbox"/> Tess Bouska, District C   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anthony Taylor, District G |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monica Dillenburg, District A            | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacant, District D        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amanda Duerr               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Robert Moeller, District B               | <input type="checkbox"/> Chris Suerig, District E  | <input type="checkbox"/> Susan Vento, Council Liaison          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Cecily Harris, District F | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> = present                  |

## Call to order

Without a quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:00 pm.

## Agenda approved

Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. Agenda was approved by consensus.

## Approval of minutes

Due to a lack of quorum, approval of the December 7, 2023 minutes and January 4, 2024 minutes will be postponed until a future meeting where a quorum of this Commission is present.

## Public invitation

There was no one from the public wishing to address the Commission.

## Business

Appointment of Bob Moeller as Vice-Chair to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission for 2024.

The appointment of Bob Moeller was tabled for approval until the next scheduled meeting.

**2024-33:** System-wide, Regional Parks and Trails System Administrative Approval for Minor Long-Range Plan Amendments (Emmett Mullin, 651-602-1360 and Tracey Kinney, 651-602-1029)

Emmett Mullin, Senior Manager and Tracey Kinney, Senior Planner, presented the staff report to the Commission.

Commissioner Anthony Taylor asked about similar Council programs to the proposed regional parks and trails administrative process. Mullin responded that the Council's Local Planning Assistance (LPA) Team uses an administrative process for minor comprehensive plan amendments.

Lisa Barajas, Executive Director of Community Development, also noted that the Council's Environmental Services Division uses an administrative review process for certain minor local water management plan amendments. These proposals do not rise to the level of policy decisions. Commissioner Taylor asked how the criteria was developed. Mullin responded that the criteria was

based on a review of past plan amendments that occurred over the last five years.

Commissioner Amanda Duerr noted that based on her review, the proposed administrative process appears reasonable. This process seems akin to a consent agenda. Chair Yarusso responded that having an MPOSC consent agenda is a possibility that he would like to explore.

Chair Yarusso asked how staff determine plan amendments that are political in nature. Council Member Vento responded that good examples of politically charged plan amendments are the ones with a lot of public conversation around them, such as the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Plan Amendment or the Summit Avenue Regional Trail Long-Range Plan. Yarusso asked what if an item is or becomes politically sensitive and Council staff is not aware of it. He suggested that staff could notify the relevant MPOSC District Member and Council Member of the administrative amendment proposal, with a request for known issues or public conversations about the proposal. Vento added that a file review of the proposal would help better understand the context of the request.

Yarusso asked how funding restrictions are addressed with a concern about the eligibility of proposals that remove portions of Council funding restrictions. Mullin responded that proposals with non-material funding restriction changes would be eligible for the administrative process. An example of such a proposal is the 0.09-acre design correction of the previously approved Cleary Lake Regional Park land conversion. Mullin noted that the GIS Improvement project has a few minor corrections that would qualify for the administrative process since the level of detail with the GIS Improvement Project is far more precise than is depicted in the long-range plans. For example, there was a 7-acre correction of a land record due to a surveying mistake for Scott County's Blakely Bluff Park Reserve.

Council Member Vento recommended piloting the administrative amendment process for a year, and then reassess it. She supports the administrative process proposal. Commissioner Taylor voiced support for this approach. Vento recommended a regular update to the Commission. Chair Yarusso asked about LPA's administrative amendment updates to the Council. Barajas responded that staff provide an annual update summary of all administrative approvals to Council Members.

There was not a quorum present at the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting, but Commissioners present recommended the item should advance to the Community Development Committee, sharing this summary.

## Information

Preliminary Local Forecasts to 2050 (Todd Graham, Principal Researcher, 651-602-1322)

Todd Graham presented the Preliminary Local Forecasts to the Commission. The Forecast provides data to assist the Council with better understanding the "Where, When and How" of how the region is changing over the next 25 years.

The new forecasts reduced their population estimates, with fewer recorded births. However, our region is expected to still gain 320,000 households over the next 25 years (2050).

There was a robust discussion about demographics and anticipated changes with numerous questions from the Commissioners.

2050 Regional Development Guide and Regional Parks Policy Plan Update (Colin Kelly, 651-602-1361, Tracey Kinney, 651-602-1029, Emmett Mullin, 651-602-1360)

Colin Kelly, Tracey Kinney, and Emmett Mullin presented the information item to the Commission. Council Member Vento encouraged staff to address water quality and availability. How to best inform people of issues like PFAS?

Commissioner Taylor suggested rethinking regional trails as more than just a place to bike. Provide more park-like amenities in corridors that have more space.

There were several questions about how the Council and agencies could better position themselves to leverage federal funding.



Commissioner Taylor encouraged joint promotion of regional park and trail opportunities to unlock economic benefits for local communities.

Commissioners recognized that climate and natural systems content seems to be elevated in the plan. That is a good direction.

## Reports

Chair Yarusso reported Equity Grant Program with funding recommendations forthcoming.

Commission Members

No report.

Council Liaison

No report.

Staff

Emmett Mullin shared an update on filling the District D vacancy, He expressed hope that a new Commissioner could be seated for the March MPOSC meeting.

The legislative session begins in February and will focus on capital investment.

## Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

## Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting of February 1, 2024.

Approved this 1st day of February 2024.

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### Council contact:

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