

# Minutes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



**Meeting Date:** October 6, 2022

**Time:** 4:13 PM

**Location:** 390 Robert Steet

## Members Present:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair, Tony Yarusso, At-large</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monica Dillenburg, District A</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Moeller, District B</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cana Yang, District C</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Assata Brown, District D</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jeremy Peichel, District E</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cecily Harris, District F</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anthony Taylor, District G</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Todd Kemery, District H</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Susan Vento, Council Liaison</li><li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> = present</li></ul> |
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## Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order.

## Agenda Approved

With no comments or changes to the agenda, the agenda was approved by consensus.

## Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Moeller, seconded by Harris to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2022 regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

## Public Invitation

Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District, provided an updated publication called the “Parks and Trails Factbook.” This is an ‘old school’ tool filled with fun facts he felt Commissioners may enjoy. A second document was provided called the “2040 System Plan” which was approved by their Board two years ago. It gives Commissioners an idea of where the Park District would like to go over the next 20 years. He noted he would love an opportunity to come back to the Commission to give a short presentation on the topic at a future meeting. Commissioner Moeller stated he would like that.

## Business

1. None

## Information

1. MPOSC Roles Discussion, Continuation from the September 1, 2022 Meeting (Emmett Mullin and LisaBeth Barajas)

Mullin continued the presentation from the last meeting. He stated the purpose of this presentation is to enable Commissioners to ask questions and explore their roles.

Referencing the Project Lifecycle table included on multiple slides, Harris asked if the Commission can ever give a formal recommendation. Mullin explained that this Commission is

one of the Council's advisory commissions and its recommendations go to the Community Development Committee (CDC) on an advisory level, however, it is the Council that makes final decisions based on the advice they receive.

Harris asked if the CDC sees the same presentation that we see and is it then repeated at the Council? Mullin noted that if an item is passed unanimously here at MPOSC, it often goes to the CDC on the consent agenda. He noted the CDC relies on this Commission to vet items however, if it is presented to the CDC, it is a shorter presentation. Vento discussed the vital role of all of the different advisory commissions to the CDC and the Council and noted that summaries are prepared for Council members, so they are fully aware of the discussions surrounding recommendations made.

Chair Yarusso discussed the Regional Parks Policy Plan which is 'a chapter' within the Regional Development Guide.

Chair Yarusso also discussed some areas, i.e., the Operations and Maintenance Report that is formally adopted by this Commission and presented to the Council.

Peichel asked about master plans that seem to come to the Commission in their final draft form and asked if there is a way for this Commission to have an opportunity to help inform their content prior to them coming to the Commission in their final draft form.

Moeller stated he feels master plan processes are pretty interactive from a Commission standpoint in terms of Commissioners asking questions, offering advice, and playing things back and forth with the implementing agencies. He feels it is a pretty fluid process and the Commission plays an active role.

Mullin pointed out that the role of the Commission is to ensure that the master plan meets the requirements of the Regional Parks Policy Plan and then recommending approval if that is the case.

Barajas noted that when looking at master plans and interpreting policy, this is an area where input from this Commission is vital. If policies are not clear or need refinement, this is done by this Commission when updating the Regional Parks Policy Plan. Creating clear policy written in plain language is an expectation that the Commission has expressed as well as the implementing agencies.

Chair Yarusso discussed the representations on this Commission from the different districts and encouraged Commissioners to engage in public input on master plans when they are open for public comment in their areas. If Commissioners would like to connect with agency staff, please reach out to Mullin for assistance.

Mullin discussed when Adam Arvidson (Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board) came to the Commission for input on a master plan prior to submitting it for approval. Mullin noted he could invite other agencies to do that if they felt it would be helpful. Peichel felt that would be beneficial.

Dillenburg asked for more specifics of her role outside of the Commission meetings – duties other than reading the materials provided, etc. Mullin stated that one role is being connected to the implementing agencies in your area and he offered to help facilitate that if needed. Second, he noted that the Regional Parks Policy Plan is the Commission's greatest area of influence, and he would love input on what could be added or clarified within it, to help it to be a clear document.

Harris noted she gets out into the park agencies every couple of months and speaks with the director to help her familiarize herself with what is going on with the agency, and that she finds such visits and interactions to be beneficial.

Chair Yarusso stated he felt it would be helpful to have all master plans in a central location for Commissioners to look at if they choose. Not all agencies have them available on their websites. Barajas stated that perhaps staff could look at keeping a list of where to find the master plans online and keeping that list up to date.



Moeller noted that prior to the pandemic he would attend some park board meetings, etc. and suggest staff ask the agencies to let Commissioners know when meetings/events are happening in their districts. He found this helpful in the past and will be getting back to doing that.

Chair Yarusso discussed the idea of creating a consent agenda for MPOSC, as done with other commissions, and the possibility of doing that with this commission.

2. 2050 Regional Development Guide including the Regional Parks Policy Plan: Invitation for input (Emmett Mullin, Mike Larson, Colin Kelly)

Mullin noted that this process of developing the 2050 Regional Development Guide (2050 RDG) is just beginning and is something that will go from now until 2025. Today marks the beginning of gathering input to help inform that process.

Larson stated he will be managing the values, vision and goals process for the 2050 RDG outlined in the presentation provided.

Harris discussed land acknowledgement and gave the example of renaming of parks, lakes, etc. that have been happening and if there is a need to provide guidance in this document for this process.

Vento posed questions around how much the pandemic and climate change will alter the way we plan for the future and how we go about it. Larson noted that these types of things have and will have a profound impact on how we go forward and that's why we believe scenario planning will be an important tool as we move forward.

Moeller discussed sociological forecasts and its importance especially as it relates to economics and our park sensitivities as we plan for addressing the needs of new populations. Larson appreciated the comment and discussed youth cohorts being formed to participate in the planning process.

Chair Yarusso discussed the importance of maintaining long-term relationships with some stakeholders for ongoing public engagement. Larson stated that staff has considered some of this and noted one concern is consistent continuity of membership with youth organizations.

Kelly discussed the regional Parks Policy Plan Update (RPPP) process as outlined in the presentation provided.

Harris asked if there is consideration for demographics and noted where she lives is very different than Minneapolis. Mullin noted that one of the suggestions from the surveys was to get out and talk to the different park boards and learn from them and noted that he is looking forward to doing that.

Moeller agreed with Harris's comment. Peichel suggested that it may be beneficial for Commissioners to go with staff in their represented areas to meet with the agencies/boards.

Vento shared her concerns that smaller cities and townships do not have a lot of staff for planning and stated it may be beneficial to offer some guidance in those circumstances.

Chair Yarusso discussed defining regional parks and trails versus local, state, etc. and looking at their definitions and comparing roles. He discussed the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission and building a relationship where there may be a unified ask at the Legislature for funding, etc.

Mullin noted that the RDG and RPPP topics will be coming back to this Commission throughout the planning effort.

Chair Yarusso discussed population estimates and service areas indicating where parks are needed. While parks are larger in the outer ring of suburbs due to land availability, it would be interesting to know where there are needs regardless of land availability.

Moeller noted it would be interesting to see where there is agreement of focus between this group and the agencies as seen through this survey. Also, where are there differences that we



ought to be paying attention to.

## Reports

1. Chair - Chair Yarusso noted that some of the Commissioners have their terms ending soon and will be posted by the Council. Please let us know if you are not interested in applying for your post. Also, if you are not interested in reapplying, please let us know if you are willing to serve until a new Commissioner is appointed.

Chair Yarusso noted that he will not be at the November meeting and Vice Chair Harris will lead that meeting.

2. Committee Members – None.
3. Council Liaison – None.
4. Staff – Mullin reported that he and Commissioner Moeller went to the Lake Waconia Service Center groundbreaking, and it was excellent.

Chair Yarusso commented that opportunities for hybrid meetings are still being looked at, especially during inclement weather events.

## Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 6:05 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 October 6, 2022.

Approved this 03 day of November 2022.

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### Council Contact:

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