

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, December 2, 2014

Committee Members Present:

William Weber, Robert Moeller, Sarah Hietpas, Anthony Taylor, Carrie Wasley, Wendy Wulff, Council Liaison

Committee Members Absent:

Barbara Schmidt, Dean Johnston, Rick Theisen

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Moeller called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:03 p.m. on Tuesday, December 2, 2014.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Vice Chair Moeller asked for motion to approve the agenda of the December 2, 2014 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. Wasley motioned and it was seconded by Weber. Agenda was approved.

Vice Chair Moeller asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2014 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. Weber motioned and it was seconded by Hietpas. Minutes were approved.

PUBLIC INVITATION

Invitation to interested person(s) to address the Commission on matters not on the agenda.

None.

BUSINESS

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Request for Above the Falls Regional Park, 1828 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board – Tori Dupre, Senior Planner

Dupre gave a presentation of the request for a Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant for property for the Above the Falls Regional Park as shown in the materials provided. This would help enable a continuous greenway along the river as outlined in the Master Plan.

Dupre reviewed the eligible acquisition costs and expenses and noted the Minneapolis Park Board approved this acquisition at their November meeting. This item will go before the Council at its meeting in January.

Weber asked about the \$1.9 million balance – when does the fiscal year end. Dupre stated that with Washington County's request (next on the agenda) the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund portion of the balance will be zero, however there are still Metro Council Bonds available. She stated we are not running out of money.

Weber motioned and it was seconded by Hietpas to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Authorize a grant of up to \$1,421,250 from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account to Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to finance up to 75 percent of the costs to acquire a parcel at 1828 Marshall Street NE for Above the Falls Regional Park. The grant will be financed as follows:

- \$852,750 from the Fiscal Year 2015 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation, and
 - \$568,500 from Metropolitan Council bonds
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board will provide up to \$473,750 to finance the required local match, or up to 25 percent of the total acquisition costs.

2. Authorize the Community Development Director to sign the grant agreement and accompanying documents including the restrictive covenant.

Vice Chair Moeller called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Request for Big Marine Park Reserve, 17980 Margo Ave., Washington County – Tori Dupre, Senior Planner

Dupre reviewed the request from Washington County for Big Marine Park Reserve outlined in the materials provided. She stated that this acquisition is consistent with the Master Plan. She reviewed the planned park boundaries and noted that there is a residence on the property that will be rented until such time as the land will be developed for parkland.

As stated before, Dupre noted that this will use the balance of the FY2015 Parks and Trails Legacy appropriation in the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account. She noted that there are still Met Council bonds (\$1.45 million) that can be used for acquisition.

Weber asked when this money will run out. Dupre noted that the next Legacy appropriation will be on July 1, 2015 and will be matched (40%) with Met Council Bonds. She then discussed three pending acquisition that are currently known of. Weber shared his concern that we could run out of money before July 1, 2015.

Wasley asked if this money will sunset. Dupre stated that it's a three year timeline. Stefferud added that it will be available until 7/1/18 unless the Legislature agrees to extend the deadline. Wulff added that the Metro Council bonds in the account are not sunsetted.

Wulff asked how much money is in the Environmental Natural Resources Trust Fund for pristine land acquisitions. Stefferud stated that there is \$2.5 million (\$1.5 million ENRTF and \$1 million Met Council Bonds).

It was motioned by Hietpas and seconded by Wasley to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Authorize a grant of up to \$470,039 from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account to Washington County to finance up to 75 percent of the costs to acquire a parcel at 17980 Margo Avenue for Big Marine Park Reserve. The grant will be financed as follows:
 - \$271,781 from the Fiscal Year 2015 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation, and
 - \$198,258 from Metropolitan Council bonds

Washington County will provide up to \$156,679 to finance the required local match, or up to 25 percent of the total acquisition costs.
2. Authorize the Community Development Director to sign the grant agreement and accompanying documents including the restrictive covenant.

Vice Chair Moeller called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Metropolitan Regional Parks System Prioritized Project List for Parks and Trails Legacy Fund--Fiscal Years 2016-17 – Arne Stefferud, Manager Regional Parks and Natural Resources

Stefferud reviewed the prioritized list of projects to be submitted to the House and Senate Committees as outlined in the materials provided. He gave a legislative history of the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund and discussed how the prioritized project list was prepared. He reviewed projected allocations provided in the staff report as well as the prioritized project lists.

Wasley asked if these lists will go to the Metropolitan Council for approval. Stefferud confirmed and stated that this is the funding request. Wulff noted that the lists will come back if there is money left over, etc.

Stefferud reviewed other funds leveraged for these projects discussed in the staff report. He then gave the rationale for the prioritized project list.

Hietpas asked what happened last time. Stefferud explained that in 2013 the House proposed more funding for the Metro Regional Parks and less for the DNR State Parks which was not consistent with the Governor's recommendation and the Senate bill. But the conference committee agreed to the Governors' recommendation and the Senate bill.

Moeller asked what happens if the Implementing Agencies change their prioritized list. Stefferud stated they will need to work with the Legislature as well as us since the appropriation law may list the projects. That's what happened in the 2013 appropriation law. The 2013 law was amended in 2014 to change what Carver County wanted to do with part of its appropriation.

Stefferud reviewed staff's recommendations.

Weber asked about equity and how that plays into the IA's prioritizations. Stefferud stated that the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan has not been adopted yet, so it was not taken into account.

It was motioned by Weber and seconded by Wasley to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the attached Metropolitan Regional Parks System Prioritized Project List for Parks and Trails Legacy Fund--Fiscal Years 2016-17 and submit this list to the chairs and ranking minority members of the Minnesota Senate and House of Representatives committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment and natural resources fund and the parks and trails legacy fund.

INFORMATION

Video: Regional Parks and Growing Diversity – Raintry Salk, Research Analyst

Salk showed a video that captures some of the stakeholder sessions and focus group work.

Wasley asked what the next steps are. Salk responded to continue the focus groups this fall and also next February.

Weber asked who the intended audience for this video is. Salk stated that Communications is trying to convey what we've been hearing through our outreach process.

VanderSchaaf noted that this was shown at the Committee of the Whole and was very well received.

Laurie Hedland, resident of Eagan discussed food in the parks and also reaching out to Asian people and persons of color.

Weber discussed the support for the Regional Park system eroding if we don't engage more with diverse populations. Moeller added that funding for this system may be under pressure if we're not supporting all those who contribute to taxes.

REPORTS

Chair: None.

Commissioners: None.

Staff: Youngquist gave an update on the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan. She noted that there was to be a report on the comments but it has not been completed yet due to the large volume of comments received. She stated that the Public Hearing report will come on January 6th to the Commission for its consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary