

Minutes of the

METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Thursday, March 5, 2020

Committee Members Present: Cecily Harris, Rick Theisen, Tony Yarusso, and Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson, liaison to the Council.

Committee Members Absent: Anthony Taylor, Todd Kemery, Jeremy Peichel, and Bob Moeller

CALL TO ORDER

Without a quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:05 p.m. on Thursday, March 5, 2020.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Yarusso asked for approval the March 5, 2020 agenda by consensus. He noted that because there was not a quorum present there may be a need to start with information items. **The agenda was approved.**

Chair Yarusso postponed asking for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2020 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. In the event that a quorum becomes present, the minutes could be approved at that time; otherwise, this could wait until the April meeting.

PUBLIC INVITATION

Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District provided a copy of the Parks & Trails Fact Book to members that is put together by Three Rivers Park District.. He noted it is a nice resource that he refers to often.

INFORMATION

Overview of the System Additions Project – Colin Kelly, Parks Planning Analyst and Dan Marckel, Planning Analyst

Kelly and Marckel gave an overview of the system additions project outlined in the materials provided.

Harris asked how frequently are the system additions looked at? Marckel stated they are looked at when the Regional Park Policy Plan is updated, however they may be added at anytime through master plan amendments. Chair Yarusso stated that it is generally a four year update schedule.

Chair Yarusso explained what bridging facilities are and how their role is to attract new people into our parks.

Atlas-Ingebretson discussed the importance of programming, and how they enable park and trail access. Also, she discussed making our facilities available to communities for them to use.

Harris asked who holds the public hearing for the Regional Parks Policy Plan update? Mullin responded that the hearings are held at the Community Development Committee Meetings. Harris inquired whether it would be possible for MPOSC to join the Community Development Committee at their meeting? Mullin said he thought so but would look into it.

Atlas-Ingebretson suggested more education to the Council Members about the role of MPOSC. She discussed the importance of engaging with other groups like

Trust for Public Land, Youth Core, etc. and asked how are we engaging them around innovative practices.

Chair Yarusso asked if other agencies, for example the DNR, have ever turned over land, such as a Wildlife Management Area, to be added to the regional system. Marckel talked about the complexity of this discussion.

Chair Yarusso added that we've talked about parks moving from local to regional, but asked have we ever had state park land converted to regional? Mullin discussed conversations of state trails being given back to local control but noted this is usually in greater Minnesota.

Atlas-Ingebretson discussed the importance of getting more participation in our work. She stated often no one shows up to public hearings.

Chair Yarusso talked about the success of past Policy Plan updates, and the large quantity of written comments that we've received, in addition to the hearing.

BUINESS

2020-88 Vermillion River Greenway Regional Trail (Hastings) Master Plan, Dakota County – Colin Kelly, Parks Planning Analyst

Chair Yarusso noted that while there is not a quorum present, the Committee Members present could agree, by consensus, to make a recommendation to the Council on this business item.

Kelly gave a presentation on the Vermillion River Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan outlined in the materials provided.

The consensus of the commission was to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Anoka County's Vermillion River Gateway Regional Trail (Hastings) Master Plan.
2. Require Dakota County, prior to initiating any new development of the regional trail corridor, to send preliminary plans to the Metropolitan Council's Environmental Services Division Assistant Manager.

INFORMATION

Draft Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission 2020 Workplan – Emmett Mullin, Manager Regional Parks and Natural Resources

Mullin reviewed the Draft 2020 MPOSC Workplan and noted that it will evolve as the Commission moves through the year.

Chair Yarusso stated that the work plan is a resource for Commissioners to understand what to expect for the coming year, but noted there are items that may evolve that don't happen every year. He discussed having this report "owned by the chair" so that it becomes part of the Chair's Report as it is an evolving document. Mullin stated he sees this report as a 'play book' but felt it would be helpful to keep it in the forefront.

Atlas-Ingebretson discussed Legacy funds and the importance of keeping the Commission informed about this. Chair Yarusso indicated he would like regular updates on the status of Legacy funds.

Harris discussed the possibility of subcommittees for MPOSC. She also discussed enrichment activities that she has seen on other commissions that she serves on.

Mullin stated that park tours are an enrichment activity. He also noted there is a Bdote tour for Council Members currently scheduled in May 2020 that he thought MPOSC members may be interested in.

Atlas-Ingebretson discussed a funding/budget training for commissions. Chair Yarusso noted that this is done with new members. Mullin noted this could be offered again if commissioners wanted it.

REPORTS

Chair: Chair Yarusso stated they are doing interviews next week for two vacancies.

Chair Yarusso noted that the February minutes will be approved at the April MPOSC meeting.

Commissioners: Harris attended the Art Shanty on Lake Harriet and stated it was very fun. She also reported that she is volunteering on the Gateway Regional Trail in Scandia and noted they are hoping for funding from the Capital.

Staff: Mullin reiterated that they are planning a Bdote tour which will be an all day tour. It will be May 29, 2020 from 8am-4pm. If interested, he asked commission member to let staff know.

Mullin reported that the Bonding Bill is moving forward and that the Council's \$10M request will be presented by Chair Zelle at the House Capital Investment Committee. He noted that the implementing agencies are requesting \$15 million dollars.

Mullin discussed Representative Mason's bill regarding re-writing the Legacy allocation statute for the metropolitan Regional Parks System – with 50% of the Parks and Trails Legacy funds being required to be spent on conservation work.

Mullin stated staff are looking to move the April 2, 2020 MPOSC meeting due to staff conflicts and stated staff will be sending a poll to Commissioners. Chair Yarusso suggested adding July 2nd to the poll to determine if there would be a quorum for that meeting or if it also needs to be rescheduled.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary