

Minutes of the

METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Thursday, May 7, 2020

Committee Members Present: Cecily Harris, Rick Theisen, Tony Yarusso, Anthony Taylor, Todd Kemery, Jeremy Peichel, Nate Rich, Lolita Davis Carter, Bob Moeller and Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson, liaison to the Council.

Committee Members Absent: None.

CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum being present via WebEx, Committee Chair Yarusso called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:03 p.m. on Thursday, May 7, 2020.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Yarusso asked for approval the April 9, 2020 agenda. It was motioned by Moeller and seconded by Harris to approve the agenda. Recording Secretary Dingle took a roll call vote.

Aye: 9 - Carter, Harris, Kemery, Moeller, Peichel, Rich, Taylor, Theisen, Yarusso
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

The agenda was approved.

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the April 9, 2020 minutes of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. It was motioned by Peichel and seconded by Theisen to approve the April 9, 2020 minutes. Recording Secretary Dingle took a roll call vote.

Aye: 9 - Carter, Harris, Kemery, Moeller, Peichel, Rich, Taylor, Theisen, Yarusso
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

The agenda was approved.

PUBLIC INVITATION

Chair Yarusso noted that the posted Agenda asked that anyone wishing to address the Commission should please email the Chair at mposc@tonyyarusso.org. Chair Yarusso read an email that he received from Julie Rappaport, SLP SEEDS on May 6, 2020 (attached).

BUSINESS

None.

INFORMATION

System Additions Process Update – Emmett Mullin, Manager Parks, Colin Kelly, Parks Planning Analyst, Jessica Lee, Senior Planner

Kelly gave an update on the system additions process as outlined in the materials provided.

Chair Yarusso asked what Commission members felt about having two meetings in June and viewing presentations offline. Moeller, Peichel, Kemery, and Harris

all said they were okay with having two meetings and viewing presentations offline. Harris asked if questions should be held until the meeting or sent to the implementing agencies.

Chair Yarusso stated he felt it depends on the question. If it is a clarifying question, they should contact the implementing agency ahead of time. If it is something that would warrant a discussion, then bring the question to the meeting, so that it is part of the minutes.

Atlas-Ingebretson felt it would be great to give questions in advance, but full access should be given on both questions and replies. She also suggested plan language in presentations.

Chair Yarusso suggested questions could be sent to staff to be answered at the meetings.

Chair Yarusso and Theisen both added they would like a second meeting as well as an opportunity to view the presentations before the meetings.

Mullin reiterated that staff would collect questions and forward them to the implementing agencies so they may respond at the meeting publicly. He stated that he would have a poll sent out regarding setting a second meeting in June.

Mullin discussed bridging facilities as outlined in the materials provided.

Chair Yarusso noted that he received an email with two letters attached commenting on Minor Boundary Adjustments and Bridging Facilities on May 6, 2020 from Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District (attached). He noted that Vlaming feels that some of the traditional ways these are planned and located may need to be looked at.

Harris shared an example of a bridging facility she helped plan for that was requested by a Tribal group for a prayer circle. She noted this wasn't recreational. She asked - is there a way to include participation of populations and recommendations from the public so it's not solely agency directed. Do groups know who to contact if they have an idea for using a park or trail facility?

Mullin discussed that there may be a variety of options to reach agencies with suggestions including ideas for ceremonies from Tribal groups.

Chair Yarusso asked - do the groups who have those ideas know how to get in touch with these agencies? Are we doing the right thing in terms of outreach?

Mullin felt we are all committed to reaching out to wider groups for engagement with work from the Equity Change Team. There is more work to do.

Kemery asked the following questions:

- What is the time frame for bridging facilities to show they are accomplishing goals?
- How do we measure success?
- What if the goal is not met?
- Can they be all non-capital?
- If nesting in an existing Regional Park, what is the advantage of calling it a bridging facility rather than calling it a new innovative part of the park?
- How will funding work? Is it one and done?

Mullin responded regarding the time frame that it should be more than one year. There should be a way or requirement to measure success. He stated one clear way to measure whether we are reaching the

desired populations is to look at visitor usage. The implementing agencies will need to address these questions, based on their intentions.

Mullin responded to the question regarding nesting in an existing facility, the benefit may be that the agency would create a facility to bring people in – welcome them, help them learn new outdoor skills, then people would connect to other parts of the park.

Regarding funding, Mullin stated if it's been approved in a master plan, then it is eligible for regional funding. In particular, Parks and Trails Legacy funds may be used for programming.

Chair Yarusso responded regarding measuring success and he stated that we are talking about increased usage by underserved populations – more equitable usage. He felt it could be measured by user surveys.

Regarding nesting, a bridging facility will have its own master plan and may result in a more detailed master plan and specific outreach.

Carter Davis asked if there is a COVID 19 infrastructure response plan for bridging facilities. Mullin discussed attempts to create common directions.

Atlas-Ingebretson stated this is a great opportunity to capitalize on what needs to be innovated to accommodate areas we have not been before. She stated this is a great opportunity to creatively seek new ways to encourage people who do not have great access to the outdoors to get outdoors.

Moeller agrees with expanding utilization of our parks and trails facilities. He doesn't like the term bridging facility and feels one way to increase utilization is to increase awareness of our current facilities. Also, he feels if we site a bridging facility, then they need to be counted. He fears they may end up using funding that is not part of parks and trails, for example, cross-country facility aimed at the Hmong population. He asked how this is different from normal programming.

Chair Yarusso discussed the definition of a bridging facility and whether it is "bricks and mortar" or more about programming and outreach.

Mullin acknowledge Moeller's concern with not funding local parks.

Taylor discussed Three Rivers Park District's comments and felt our vision for bridging facilities matches their powerful vision. He feels the ideas of bridging facilities are very clear and intentionality is critically important. Identifying the key audience is an essential step. He stated he feels that regional parks are neighborhood parks for some. He feels bridging facilities may be a way to connect to state parks – as a steppingstone -- not just other regional parks, and asked if this is something that has value to us? He also felt there is likely a need to count visitors at bridging facilities. Mullin responded that the idea of a Regional Park System being interconnected with the State Park System is good.

Taylor felt that we need to count participation at bridging facilities and then asked should their visitation be rewarded with funding. Mullin stated the current annual use estimate doesn't identify particular parks and trails at an individual level, only at the system and agency level.

Chair Yarusso stated that besides demographic, it would be interesting to know what brought a person there and where they've been before. He cited and encouraged members to look at pages 72 and 73 that discuss building facilities and special recreation features in the Regional Parks Policy Plan that was recently sent to Commission Members.

Jessica Lee discussed boundary adjustments as outlined in the PowerPoint provided.

Mullin posed the question of whether boundary adjustments should be allowed only as part of the Regional Parks Policy Plan System Addition process, or whether boundary adjustments could be made with simply a master plan amendment.

Chair Yarusso discussed two concerns. One – the policy requirement that we estimate costs to complete the system and the fiscal impacts of amending a boundary. Regarding siting and acquisition strategies we look at recreation, natural resources, geographic balance and therefore need to look at from a wholistic view.

Moeller expressed the concern that waiting four years for reviewing a proposed boundary adjustment could result in an opportunity to fall through.

Chair Yarusso felt a boundary doesn't mean that we already have it. A master plan is a long-term plan for what we want to see acquired in the future. He stated a one size fits all number doesn't make sense and discussed options specifying 20 acres or a percentage as well as dollar amounts. He stressed the need for system level oversight.

Peichel asked if master plans have a variable amount of cost and if addition is within this, he asked if it could be considered minor.

Chair Yarusso stated there are some valid reasons for minor boundary adjustments like general acquisitions of land or utility adjustments.

Mullin agreed and stated a threshold for adjustments is important – as well as regional balance and costs.

This topic will be shared with the Community Development Committee on May 18, 2020. A draft plan will be out in August and there will be an opportunity for people to provide public comment.

REPORTS

Chair: Chair Yarusso reminded Commission Members should watch for a poll regarding multiple meetings in June.

Commissioners: Taylor stated he is working with Bikes for Essential Workers Program where bikes will be donated to help essential COVID-19 workers with transportation. He stated they still have about 150 bikes and asked members to let him know if they know anyone who needs one.

Kemery asked if meetings would change to in person meetings anytime soon? Chair Yarusso stated it is not known yet.

Kemery asked about 'field trips.' Chair Yarusso stated that it hasn't been discussed yet. Mullin stated they are on hold for now but wanted Commission Members to know that he knows it is a priority.

Staff: Mullin reiterated what the Chair said regarding a second meeting in June. He added that it will most likely be a WebEx meeting. He added that it is essential that all Commission Members watch the agency videos about the proposed system additions as well as read the agency proposals prior to the June meetings.

Mullin reported that the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund will be reduced, but the good news is it is less than first forecasted.

Mullin also stated that staff have renewed their Minnesota Recreation and Park Association Membership. He noted that all MPOSC Commission Members have a complimentary membership as well.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary

From: [Tony Yarusso, MPOSC Chair](#)
To: [Dingle, Sandi](#)
Subject: Fwd: Met Open Parks and Spaces
Date: Thursday, May 07, 2020 4:11:47 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Julie Rappaport** <julierappaport@slpseeds.org>
Date: Wed, May 6, 2020 at 3:10 PM
Subject: Met Open Parks and Spaces
To: <mposc@tonyyarusso.org>

Dear Chair Yarusso,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee, and for providing a Regional Parks Equity Toolkit.

Open Parks and Spaces has seen the multiple benefits that Gale Woods Farm provides to our metropolitan residents and beyond. Tamarack's Garden is a bit closer to inner city and low-income youth that are underserved generally, outside of a field trip to Gale Woods Farm.

SLP SEEDS would like to start a discussion on an 1st Tier Urban Farm that is, like Gale Woods, provisional and educational (for all ages).

We have over 9 Food Bank Gardens in St. Louis Park at this time and have taught over 5000 children of all ages about sustainable food growing designed for beauty and resiliency. We have also inspired and supported many local school gardens. Our Park and Rec Edible Playground programs we've designed have been replicated around the Metro by Park/Rec program directors who have heard of and called upon us to query how to start such Edible Playground programs in their city parks.

Please consider setting a time to meet (appropriately) with SLP SEEDS and discuss potential partnerships that could effectively raise park attendance of minorities, elders and immigrants from 1st tier suburbs.

Respectfully,

Julie Rappaport
SLP SEEDS, Founder
www.slpseeds.org
Facebook.com/SLPSEEDS
Sustainable Educational Edible District/Citywide Service and Stewardship
612-867-3877

"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow!" ~ Audrey Hepburn

- Knowing about the parks. "A lot of people are not really aware of regional parks."

- Language. “I really want to go there, but it’s hard because of the language barrier.”
- Lack of transportation options. “If we don’t drive, we don’t have a way to go.”
- Religious practices. “We pray five times a day, and women are supposed to have a little cover when they pray outside.”

1. What is the population breakdown for your jurisdiction by race, ethnicity, age, national origin, ability status and income?
2. Which population segments above& are currently underserved by the Regional Parks System?
3. Which of the underserved populations identified will this project better serve?
4. What specific aspects of this project will help to better serve the targeted populations identified?
5. Exactly how will you verify the target populations are better served?

From: [Vlaming, Jonathan](#)
To: [Tony Yarusso \(mposc@tonyyarusso.org\)](mailto:tonyyarusso.org)
Cc: [Atlas-Ingebretson, Lynnea](#); [Nate Rich](#); [Todd Kemery \(takemery@msn.com\)](mailto:takemery@msn.com); [Rick Theisen \(rmtheisen1@comcast.net\)](#); [Bob Moeller \(bob@moeller.us.com\)](mailto:bob@moeller.us.com); [Cecily Harris](#); [Jeremy Peichel](#); [Lolita Davis Carter \(ldaviscarter@outlook.com\)](mailto:ldaviscarter@outlook.com); [Anthony Taylor \(createbalance@gmail.com\)](mailto:createbalance@gmail.com); [Dingle, Sandi](#); [Mullin, Emmett](#); [PublicInfo](#)
Subject: RE: May 7, 2020 MPOSC Meeting Testimony from Three Rivers Park District
Date: Wednesday, May 06, 2020 11:04:46 AM
Attachments: [MPOSC Testimony Three Rivers May 7 on Boundary Adjustments.pdf](#)
[MPOSC Testimony Three Rivers May 7 on Bridging Facilities.pdf](#)

Dear Chair Yarusso,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony with regard to items on the Agenda for the May 7 MPOSC meeting.

Three Rivers is submitting two testimonies (attached): one for the Boundary Adjustments item, and one for the Bridging Facilities Item. Embedded after the Boundary Adjustments testimony is a Reference document that provides an index of all of the existing Policy Plan language related to park boundary adjustments. The reference item is intended for Commission use in their discussion, and is not intended to be read out loud.

Full disclosure with regard to the Boundary Adjustments issue: Three Rivers is currently in the process of negotiating a 27-acre acquisition at Gale Woods Farm with a willing seller. The property is undeveloped and surrounded on three sides by Three Rivers property. The Council requires a Master Plan amendment – which is understandable since the original Master Plan from 2000 focused only on the original gift of land, and we can do that. However, Three Rivers is being told by Council staff that since the acquisition is greater than 20 acres, it needs to be identified in the System Plan Update. The Update is currently slated for final adoption in mid-December of this year, but realistically could end up being pushed into 2021. The Update requirement and timeline creates a hardship for the willing seller, who wishes to close as soon as possible, and who must close prior to the end of the tax year. Consequently, the acquisition is in jeopardy. I'd like to resolve this current issue, and make sure that future acquisition opportunities are not inadvertently impacted as well.

I am copying all Commission members and the Council Member Liaison so that they have access to the Reference document and testimony prior to the meeting. I am also submitting this to the Public.info@metc.state.mn.us email as instructed by the Agenda.

If you or any other Commission Members or Council Member/Liaison Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson have any questions, I encourage you to feel free to call me on my cell phone. I can be reached at 612-490-5220.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Jonathan Vlaming

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Vlaming', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Vlaming
Associate Superintendent -
Planning, Design & Technology
Three Rivers Park District
3000 Xenium Ln N
Plymouth, MN 55441
Wk: 763-694-7632
Cell: 612-490-5220

5/5/2020

**Three Rivers
Park District
Board of
Commissioners**

Tony Yarusso
Chair, Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

RE: Minor Boundary Adjustments Testimony from Three Rivers Park District

Dear Chair Yarusso:

Marge Beard
District 1

Three Rivers does not support the proposed amendment to Chapter 5 that would require park unit boundary adjustments over 20 acres to be formally recognized in the System Plan.

Jennifer DeJournett
District 2

The System Plan is updated every 4+ years. Park boundary circumstances and opportunities are more timely than that, and are often dependent on a willing seller who may not be able to wait until the System Plan is updated or amended, a requirement that would add several months on top of the already required Master Plan Amendment process. Acquisition opportunities have the potential to be lost if the language is adopted.

Daniel Freeman
Vice Chair
District 3

The System Plan is the highest-level plan. It was meant to identify existing and planned parks and trails units, along with search areas for new parks/trails. The System Plan's "*Regional Parks System boundary adjustments*" (P 51) component is in conflict with the existing Master Plan policies, which are the appropriate level for making boundary adjustment decisions.

John Gunyou
Chair
District 4

Existing Policy Plan language specifically recognizes that the Master Plan is responsible for defining park boundaries and size (Pages 28, 68, 82, 83 – See **Reference 1**). The Master Plan Amendment process requires full review and approval by the Metropolitan Council. It effectively and efficiently addresses boundary adjustments.

John Gibbs
District 5

Instead of making a major amendment to Chapter 5, the more appropriate solution would be to strike the problematic boundary adjustment component from the System Plan.

It would be my pleasure to discuss this in more detail with MPOSC. Thank you for your consideration.

Steven Antolak
Appointed
At Large

Respectfully,



Jonathan Vlaming
Associate Superintendent

Gene Kay
Appointed
At Large

C: Emmett Mullen, MPOSC Members, Council Member/Liaison Atlas-Ingebretson

Boe Carlson
Superintendent

Reference 1: Policy Plan language related to Master Plan boundary adjustments

Note: The following is not meant to be read at the MPOSC meeting. It is provided to Commission members as a useful index of all language contained in the existing Policy Plan with regard to boundary adjustments of existing parks. Text is verbatim, pertinent language highlighted in yellow

Page 22.

Metropolitan Council Role

Regional Parks System legislation directs the Council to take the lead role in providing for a Regional Parks System that will complement the recreational open space opportunities provided in the area by the federal, state, and local units of government. State law directs the Council to determine which parks and trails in the seven-county area are included in the Regional Parks System and to generally identify areas that should be acquired for the Regional Parks System. The Council is charged with determining whether these lands are regionally important and would collectively provide a balanced system of outdoor recreation for the region. See page 29 later in this chapter for an overview of key Minnesota legislation.

Page 28.

System Plan

The Council has the responsibility to prepare a system plan for the Regional Parks System. The system planning process begins with the Council identifying "generally the areas which should be acquired," as required by the 1974 Metropolitan Parks Act. The Regional Parks Policy Plan includes the system plan, which identifies the regional parks and trails that are included in the Regional Parks System.

The Council reviews the system plan portion of the Regional Parks Policy Plan every four years as part of the policy plan revision process and may add or delete planned elements to the system. Additions or deletions to the system proposed outside the regular plan review process are substantial revisions to the policy plan. Identification of specific boundaries and detailed planning for individual units of the system are addressed in master plans for each unit. The master plans are prepared by the regional park implementing agencies.

Page 29.

Amending the Policy Plan

The Council will amend the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan only for a substantial revision. A substantial revision is defined by the Council as (1) a proposed revision that is intended to or could have the effect of changing the direction or intent of adopted Council policy, (2) addition or deletion of a policy, or (3) addition or deletion of a system element.

Page 51.

Regional Parks System Plan

There are six components that make up the System Plan, which all together comprise the vision for the Regional Parks System in 2040:

- Existing Regional Parks System facilities
- Planned Regional Parks System facilities that are not yet open to the public
- Regional Parks System boundary adjustments
- Regional Park search areas
- Regional Trail search corridors
- 2040 system additions

Page 55.

Regional Park Boundary Adjustments

The 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan recommends master plan boundary adjustments for one regional park to protect high-quality natural resources and provide recreational opportunities.

The proposed boundary adjustment is included in the 2040 System Plan and described in Table 3-7.

Table 3-7: Master Plan Boundary Adjustments

Regional Park Implementing Agency	Regional Parks System Unit	Estimated Acreage	Description	Map #
Carver County	Baylor Regional Park	100	Acquire approximately 100 acres of land adjacent to Eagle Lake, including lakeshore	BA1

Page 60.

Revisions to the Regional Parks System Plan

Minnesota Statutes, section 473.147, subd. 1, states that:

The Metropolitan Council, after consultation with the [Metropolitan] Parks and Open Space Commission...and after appropriate public hearings, shall prepare and adopt a long-range system policy plan for regional recreation open space as part of the Council’s Metropolitan Development Guide...The policy plan shall identify generally the areas which should be acquired by a public agency to provide a system of regional recreation open space comprising park district, county and municipal facilities, which together with state facilities, reasonably will meet the outdoor recreation needs of the people of the metropolitan area and shall establish priorities for acquisition and development.

Page 68.

Siting and Acquisition – Strategy 3: Council-approved master plans

Priorities for land acquisition are set by regional park implementing agencies in Council-approved master plans.

Page 82.

Acquisition Master Plans

In some cases, a regional park implementing agency has an opportunity to acquire – or protect under an option to purchase – land that is not currently designated as regional recreation open space by the Council in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan. In addition to informing the Council in writing of the land acquisition or option to purchase before it occurs, the regional park implementing agency is responsible for drafting an acquisition master plan or master plan amendment that focuses solely on the land required to establish the unit or adjust an existing Council-approved master plan boundary. The Council must approve the acquisition master plan prior to acquisition.

Page 83.

Amending a master plan

Minnesota Statutes, section 473.313 requires master plans be developed by the park implementing agencies consistent with this plan; however, it does not specify when revisions are necessary. The regional park implementing agency will submit a master plan amendment to the Council to change its original proposal for acquisition and/or development, or when the agency has developed significant additional details that needs to be reflected in the master plan. The Council may

approve or reject the master plan amendment for cause and return the plan to the regional park implementing agency for revisions to address the Council's concerns.

Regional park implementing agencies must provide an opportunity for the general public and affected local units of government nearby the particular park or trail to participate in the process to amend a master plan. With regard to financing the construction of recreation and visitor support facilities proposed in a master plan, it is important that there is sufficient detail about the facility in the master plan and that the regional park implementing agency is ready to construct the facility when funds become available. If a master plan amendment is needed before funding the construction of a facility, the regional park implementing agency must provide the general public and affected local units of government an opportunity to participate in the process, as well.

There are several reasons when master plan amendments are required to demonstrate how changes to the Regional Parks System remain consistent with the Council's expectations as outlined in this plan. They include:

- Improvements that substantially differ in type, size, scale or cost from those in the Council-approved master plan and the adopted capital improvement program to meet expanded local recreational demands or satisfy above-average quality standards (see Planning – Strategy 4, later in this chapter)
- Changes to a park or trail boundary
- Significant changes or additions to a regional park concessioners agreement (see Chapter 7: Recreation Activities and Facilities – Strategy 1)
- Proposals for placement of telecommunications towers on Regional Parks System land (see Chapter 6: System Protection – Strategy 5)

The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and Council will then review the master plan amendment for consistency with the conditions of this policy and either approve, modify, or reject the master plan amendment.

5/5/2020

**Three Rivers
Park District
Board of
Commissioners**

Tony Yarusso
Chair, Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Marge Beard
District 1

RE: Bridging Facilities Testimony from Three Rivers Park District

Dear Chair Yarusso:

Jennifer DeJournett
District 2

Three Rivers supports the concept of bridging facilities. The proposed language is a good start, but needs to be refined through additional work with the ten Implementing Agencies to achieve consensus.

Daniel Freeman
Vice Chair
District 3

Due to development patterns prior to its creation, Three Rivers has very few regional parks within the ten fully developed cities around Minneapolis (the "First-Tier"). For the past six years, Three Rivers has been working to better engage and serve these communities, in part through the development of bridging facilities such as Sochacki Park and the Crystal-MAC Environmental Area. These efforts, along with our Parks on the Go! Program, bussing program, and targeted educational programs within the communities, have been paying off. First-Tier residents' awareness of Three Rivers' park system increased from 45 % in 2013 to 75 % in 2018 according to our resident surveys.

John Gunyou
Chair
District 4

Three Rivers will be submitting a Special Recreation Feature Search Area application that encompasses the First-Tier cities within its jurisdiction. Three Rivers and the communities will work together to create a comprehensive Master Plan, possibly with several bridging facilities proposed at different strategic locations to best meet the shared needs of the local residents, their communities and the Regional Parks System. This is a different concept than what has historically been recognized in the Regional Parks System.

John Gibbs
District 5

It would be ideal and empowering if the Bridging Facility language supports what Three Rivers envisions. I ask you to give this grand experiment your full consideration.

Steven Antolak
Appointed
At Large

It would be my pleasure to discuss this in more detail with MPOSC. Thank you!

Respectfully,



Gene Kay
Appointed
At Large

Jonathan Vlaming
Associate Superintendent

C: Emmett Mullen, MPOSC Members, Council Member/Liaison Atlas-Ingebretson

Boe Carlson
Superintendent