

## Minutes of the Special Meeting of the METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Thursday, July 15, 2020

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

**Committee Members Absent:** Rick Theisen

### 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, July 15, 2020.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Yarusso asked for a consensus to approve the July 15, 2020 agenda. **The agenda was approved.**

Chair Yarusso noted there are no minutes to approve at this meeting.

### 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](mailto:mposc@tonyyarusso.org). He noted that no one wished to address the Commission.

### INFORMATION

**Regional Parks System Additions: Discussion on Draft System Addition Recommendation –** Emmett Mullin, Manager Regional Parks and Natural Resources, Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst

Mullin thanked everyone for their participation in this process and the extra meetings. He also thanked the implementing agencies for their work and cooperation. He reviewed the purpose of today's meeting and the timeline going forward as outlined in the presentation.

Kelly began with a system overview of existing, planned and search units outlined in the presentation.

Mullin reviewed the map showing the 2020 Regional Park System Addition Proposals including 28 proposals from 8 agencies. Proposals include 18 Regional Trail Search Corridor or Extensions of existing corridors; 4 regional park boundary adjustments; 3 proposed recommendations of regional status; 2 regional park search areas; and 1 bridging facility. Next, he reviewed the Council policy framework including natural resources, geographic balance, and equity.

Kelly reviewed the staff facilitated analysis of proposals and stated that 24 of the 28 proposed additions are being recommended for inclusion. He reviewed the summary of the staff-facilitated draft recommendations.

Mullin reviewed 2 regional trail search corridor proposals from Carver County that were not recommended for inclusion. He also reviewed 2 regional trail extension search corridors from Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) that were not recommended for inclusion.

Kelly reviewed the timeline included in the presentation.

Chair Yarusso noted the comments in the chat portion from TRPD. Kelly Grissman, TRPD stated this additional scoring criteria is very helpful. They'd love to submit additional information to better speak to the 3 priorities for the two proposals that are not yet supported by Council staff. She asked how they can best share that information?

Jonathan Vlaming, TRPD – chatted to please note that the location of the Diamond Lake Regional Trail to the west is incorrect. It is farther to the west.

Mullin stated when the proposals go out for public comment the IA's will have an opportunity to submit comments at that time. He stated he will check into Vlaming's comment regarding the trail alignment on the map.

Rich, in the chat, stated he wanted to circle back with Colin Kelly's description of equity for the "close to census tract" analysis on Purgatory not scoring a "high" for equity when we get to the discussion. Mullin stated the equity analysis looked at data from research and looked at demographic data from census blocks that are adjacent to the proposed unit.

Darcie Vandegrift, Metropolitan Council Research, stated that the review team looked at where the proposed trail intersected the nearest census tract.

Moeller commented on the Highway 5, Carver County proposal and asked about age and if that was a part of the evaluation. He asked if we want to add this information before we finalize. Mullin stated that it is largely up to the Commission, but staff are willing to receive more information.

Harris asked if a regional water trail policy is needed prior to the development of the two proposed "Water Trail" parks, and if so, when is that planned? Mullin stated that he checked in with the two agencies, Anoka County and Three Rivers, to ensure that the master planning schedule will work with the proposed 2021 timeline to develop the water trail policy. At this time, staff will work with the Commission, Council, and agencies to decide if this is a sub-classification of a regional park or if this is a new classification to be developed.

Harris inquired about the Commission being asked to reach out to share information about the Policy Plan Amendment/System Additions process with organizations or groups. Will Commissioners get a list of who to network with or reach out to. Mullin stated that staff will be working with the Commission in September to discuss this proposal – stay tuned.

Moeller discussed Purgatory Creek and asked Vlaming to expand on his concerns. Vlaming stated that the high, medium, low concept ratings for regional significance was news to them and they only learned of this scoring last Friday. He discussed the service area buffer and stated this trail meets and exceeds a high score for equity. He also discussed alignment of this trail and noted this is a 'search area'. He also noted this is the only trail proposed to connect east/west into Bloomington. He feels it fills a missing gap and therefore scores high for geographic balance. He discussed the bike trail potential and stated it was submitted to the Met Council 5 years ago. He is frustrated and doesn't understand why staff sees an issue. He feels the same with Gray's Bay Trail extension.

Chair Yarusso asked if any individual census tracks stood out and what this looks like – how many tracks are involved, etc. He also wondered about the size of census tracks.

Mullin reviewed the map of Purgatory Creek Regional Trail and asked Vlaming Three Rivers has explored the possibility of combining this extension with the western segment of Eagle Lake/Bryant Lake area. Regarding how the service area was factored into the equity analysis, he stated that staff looked at what census tracks were intersected by the trail and not a 1.5-mile search corridor.

Chair Yarusso stated he feels there is confusion with the 1.5-mile corridor and stated that this may be difficult to define as a search corridor, because it has the potential to move significantly during the master planning process.

Mullin stated that Council staff looks forward to exploring trail spacing, population density, geographic balance, and more over the coming years, in preparation for the next development guide update. Staff finds that the future growth of regional trails along with our system will be an important topic for further discussion.

Moeller noted there is a high preponderance of Somali population near Purgatory Creek and feels this trail warrants additional consideration.

Peichel stated as the region evolves and develops – will we want to look at a system subtraction effort, where we remove search areas as population changes or development doesn't occur. Peichel suggested the possibility of relegating current system addition proposals to local, county or even state levels. Chair Yarusso agreed that with limited resources, this needs to be part of the future conversation over the next few years.

Mullin asked about the alignment of the Diamond Lake Regional Trail search corridor. Vlaming stated this shows the original alignment from 5 years ago. It now goes along Long Lake – further west and is estimated to be about three miles. TRPD is actively master planning this trail and they have 3 alignments – all further west.

Chair Yarusso noted points from Grissman in the chat where she stated: Additional evaluation would occur at the master plan level - which MPOSC would have an opportunity to review and approve once complete. During the master planning process, Three Rivers would confirm the regional significance and further look at spacing, natural resources, equity, and cost. Without inclusion in the System Plan, we can't submit a master plan for further review by MPOSC.

Chair Yarusso stated he is hearing general themes of equity analysis and how to deal with data and census track questions in the future.

Moeller asked staff to respond to issues raised by Three Rivers Park District and Highway 5 questions. Mullin stated he'd be happy to discuss offline but noted recommendations would come in August and then they would be open to public comment.

Chair Yarusso suggested staff look at the 1.5-mile service area issue and whether that changes anything. Mullin felt that if staff used a 1.5-mile service area analysis, then the Purgatory Creek analysis would change.

Chair Yarusso noted in the chat that Harris asked - What about the 2020 census? What if there are some surprises? Vandegrift responded that it would not be possible for staff to use the 2020 census data for this system addition conversation. We are using American Community Survey data for this analysis.

Chair Yarusso asked whether we have a way to check back once that information is available to see if decisions made were the right ones. Vandegrift stated it would be used for the next round of system additions. She added she would be happy to report back on any significant changes or new learnings.

Chair Yarusso asked if there could be an opportunity for a future information item to discuss further.

Vandegrift asked if there is any specific data the commission would be interested in learning more about. Chair Yarusso responded that looking at the current system addition proposals, he would like to know whether there are any surprises or big changes in new data collected, including Census 2020 data, that would help the commission in the future.

Chair Yarusso asked if there is any additional information requested from staff. He noted that Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson apologized for missing the meeting due to a scheduling conflict with a Council meeting today. She noted that she is willing to share comments from commissioners, agencies, or staff with the Council, and will take time to listen to the recording of this meeting.

Mullin stated staff will bring the recommended proposals back to the August 6, 2020 meeting with the recommendation to launch the public comment period.

## REPORTS

**Chair:** None.

**Commissioners:** None.

**Staff:** Mullin stated the 2<sup>nd</sup> legislative special session is going on right now and they are trying to pass a bonding bill, along with a number of other important efforts. He will keep the Commission apprised if this results in action.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Sandi Dingle  
Recording Secretary