

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, April 4, 2019

Committee Members Present:

Rick Theisen, Tony Yarusso, Sarah Hietpas, Todd Kemery, Margie Andreason, Bob Moeller, and Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson, liaison to the Council

Committee Members Absent:

Anthony Taylor, Michael Kopp, Catherine Fleming

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4, 2019.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the April 4, 2019 Agenda. It was motioned by Andreason and seconded by Hietpas to approve the agenda. The **agenda was approved.**

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2019 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. It was motioned by Theisen and seconded by Yarusso. The **minutes were approved.**

PUBLIC INVITATION

None.

BUSINESS

2019-68, Grant Project Scope Change, Mississippi River Regional Trail to Lake Byllesby Regional Park, Dakota County - Sam Johnson, Grants Administrator

Johnson gave a presentation on the request from Dakota County to change the scope of a grant for Mississippi River Regional Trail to Lake Byllesby Regional Park as outlined in the materials provided.

Andreason asked about the equity toolkit evaluation and how it was applied. Johnson discussed the outreach that Dakota County did to determine what people valued and what they wanted. He noted that there were targeted workgroups held with audiences that were identified as not regular park system users, to determine why that was the case.

Mullin discussed the equity toolkit questions.

Moeller clarified that because the trail is not being done, the money is being reallocated to other projects. Johnson clarified that the trail has not been cancelled – just delayed and therefore the money must be reallocated before the grant expires.

Jeff Bransford, Dakota County further clarified that the Master Plan for the Mississippi River Regional Trail dates back to the late 1990's. He stated they are still actively pursuing development for the 2-mile segment in Rosemount. The trouble has been with acquisition. They have realized they would not construct the trail before the bonds expired and thus the request to reallocate the funds was needed.

Atlas-Ingebretson discussed the equity toolkit questions. She asked how this commission gets to see the answers to those questions. Mullin stated that when the Parks and Trails Legacy Program or State Bond Program projects are

originally reviewed, there's an informational meeting where it is first discussed. The following meeting, the projects are presented as a recommendation. He noted this grant is a 'scope' change from a 2017 State Bonding project.

Chair Yarusso noted that typically we don't look at this level of detail when doing a grant scope change but more when the projects are being previewed/developed/approved.

Chair Yarusso asked if there was a motion. It was motioned by Kemery and seconded by Theisen to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve a grant project scope change for Dakota County grant agreement SG-22058 to modify the project from the Mississippi River Regional Trail construction project to the Lake Byllesby Regional Park construction improvements.

Chair Yarusso asked if there is a difference in identified underserved populations that we did not see in the previous project. Bransford stated there is no significant difference in the audience because both projects serve a broad population.

Chair Yarusso called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

INTRODUCTION

Chair Yarusso took a moment to introduce Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson, the new Council Member and now liaison to this Commission. The Commissioners introduced themselves and the areas that they serve.

INFORMATION

Equity Grant Program Update - Emmett Mullin, Manager Parks; Amanda Lovelee, Senior Outreach Coordinator; Dan Markel, Planning Analyst

Marckel and Lovelee gave an update of this program as outlined in the materials and presentation provided.

Theisen asked what's the likelihood that the \$300,000 will increase in the future. Marckel offered that this is the amount of funding available at this point, and recognized that during past meetings, groups including MPOSC have expressed concern.

Chair Yarusso noted that we have a new Council with the exception of two incumbents.

Chair Yarusso asked if a draft will be brought on May 2nd. Marckel stated that there will be scenarios presented. He stated that we want to focus on the missing pieces. There will be a focused discussion to get policy advice.

Chair Yarusso felt that a draft in May that is as close to the final document as possible would be helpful so that there are no surprises in June.

Andreason asked what is MPOSC's role in weighing in on the process with grant reviews? Marckel stated they will ask MPOSC to name some participants in the review process.

Kemery asked if all agencies put in a request, will they all get something? Lovelee stated that this will be a competitive grant program. One of the topics to be discussed will be whether there will be a 'maximum request amount'. She added that the review committee will then pick the projects to be awarded.

Moeller went back to the goal. He stated that one of the biggest problems we found with equitable usage is with awareness. He added others were with safety concerns and if visitors feel welcome. He asked how capital projects will accomplish this? He felt that marketing agencies or advertising agencies should be taking a crack at this. He doesn't feel that capital is the way to enhance equitable use of our parks system.

Chair Yarusso noted that this was brought up at our last meeting. He felt that this could be discussed further.

Atlas-Ingebretson stated she would like to hear the Commission's response to this.

Chair Yarusso pointed out that part of Atlas-Ingebretson's role is to bring the MOPSC discussion to the Community Development Committee level.

Mullin discussed work that has been done in developing this program. He discussed using the \$300,000 to start, as a foundation, to build a bigger, better program.

Andreason noted it is capital because of the restriction of bonds (where the money comes from and therefore what it can be used for), but she felt we could build on this. She liked that it is a pilot program that we can build on and learn from.

Moeller stated he hoped our opinions help inform the CDC and Council recommendation. He feels \$300,000 for capital isn't going to make an impact regionally.

Theisen stated that while he agrees, he feels that there has been thoughtful development of this plan. He feels that going forward we can promote using non-capital funds. Kemery agreed.

Regional Park Interest Earnings - Libby Starling, Deputy Director; Emmett Mullin, Manager

Starling and Mullin presented on Regional Park interest earnings to brainstorm and collect input on usage of interest earnings as outlined in the materials and presentation provided.

Hietpas suggested using it towards the betterment of equity.

Chair Yarusso discussed the history of these interest earnings being dedicated to North Mississippi because it was an underserved population. He felt it should be used for addressing equity going forward. Kemery agreed.

Theisen agreed and felt it could be decided upon year to year starting with this Equity Grant Program pilot.

Chair Yarusso asked Moeller if he was thinking in terms of hiring professional in marketing/advertising. Moeller affirmed and stated that he is thrilled to see this becoming regional money now. He asked again if there is something we can do yet this year in this pilot in the area of professional marketing/advertising help.

Chair Yarusso discussed studies being done and usage of consultants. He discussed using this money for more data collection.

Atlas-Ingebretson discussed the 25-year plan for these funds and the need to consider discussions for innovation with the implementing agencies and their boards.

Theisen stated he feels this may be a way to address equity issues sooner.

Moeller stated an RFP to the implementing agencies would get a fairly rapid response. He stated he would like to look at what they will propose.

Chair Yarusso asked if we know when the money will be available. Starling stated she believed doing something this summer would not be feasible. She talked about focusing on where there are areas/audiences that are underserved.

Atlas-Ingebretson stated she feels we have data that identifies populations that are underserved.

Kemery agreed and still has notes on this discussion from the past three years.

Hietpas stated she is against a formula approach. She felt the approach needs to be done regionally.

Theisen stated it won't be easy and it will be very controversial.

Chair Yarusso stated he feels it needs to have a central approach to benefit the region.

Andreason stated she feels the funds should focus on cross-agency projects.

Atlas-Ingebretson encouraged the group to work collaboratively.

Moeller discussed doing something this year would be such a worthwhile endeavor.

Chair Yarusso asked if the Equity Advisory Committee could help advise this group.

REPORTS

Chair: Chair Yarusso noted that there are 4 open seats on this Commission and stated that we will expect some new members soon.

Commissioners: None.

Staff: Mullin gave a legislative update. He noted that the implementing agencies have a bonding bill requesting \$10 million.

Mullin noted that interviews are scheduled for later this week for MPOSC Commissioners and the Council hopes to complete this selection by the end of this month.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary