

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Thursday, February 4, 2014

Committee Members Present:

Rick Theisen, Robert Moeller, William Webber, Anthony Taylor, Tony Yarusso, Sarah Hietpas, Carrie Wasley, Barbara Schmidt, Wendy Wulff, Council Liaison

Committee Members Absent:

Dean Johnston

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Vice-Chair Moeller called the regular meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 4, 2014.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Hietpas, seconded by Schmidt to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Wasley, seconded by Theisen to approve the minutes of the January 7, 2014 regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

PUBLIC INVITATION

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

None.

BUSINESS

(2014-xxx) Restrictive Covenant Agreement Replacement on Property Acquired for Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary – Arne Stefferud, Manager Regional Parks and Natural Resources

Stefferdud gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining a restrictive covenant agreement replacement on property acquired for Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary as described in the materials provided.

Stefferdud reviewed three points highlighted in the new restrictive covenant outlined in the staff report. He also discussed the rationale and staff's recommendation.

Yarusso clarified (referring to page 6, #2) they are still required to use the building as an interpretive center. Stefferud confirmed. Yarusso asked if other uses would include uses intended for park uses. Stefferud again confirmed.

Schmidt asked if there is a proposal coming for funding from the legislature for this. Virginia Palmer, representative for the City of St. Paul stated that she is not aware of any pending proposal for funding from the legislature.

Theisen asked for an explanation of #8 on page 7. Stefferud explained that this provision deals with wastewater easements (also in the current covenant).

Taylor asked if there are proposals for actual use. Palmer responded that there have been some meetings and outreach; however none have been identified at this point.

Taylor asked if there have been public proposals for the use of the building. Palmer stated yes, related to park purposes.

Theisen referred to page 6, #5 and asked if it is the City's intent to generate income with the use of this building. Palmer stated that the intention is to run or

manage the interpretive center in a way that breaks even but does not make a profit.

Taylor asked if there will be other uses permitted that will make a profit. Palmer stated that the City is not permitted to lease to private businesses.

Schmidt asked for further clarification of the trade. Stefferud explained that if the City renovates the building or replaces it and expands the usage beyond an interpretive center and other park related uses that do not support the regional trail and nature sanctuary, they may not seek funding for the building renovation or replacement through the Met Council Regional Parks CIP. The Met Council may be the fiscal agent for State funds appropriated to the City however. Stefferud explained that if they only use the building to support the trail and nature sanctuary then the City can request funding for the building through the Regional Parks CIP.

Palmer noted that the current building is too large to be used as an interpretive center and fund itself.

It was moved by Wasley, seconded by Theisen, that the Metropolitan Council approves the restrictive covenant agreement replacement on property acquired for the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary as depicted in Attachment 3 and authorizes the Regional Administrator to execute the agreement.

Motion carried.

INFORMATION

Introduction to the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan Scope and Process – Jan Youngquist, Planning Analyst; Rainry Salk, Senior Researcher; Dan Marckel, Planning Analyst

Youngquist reviewed the scope and process of updating the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan (RP3) and also why it is needed. She noted that this is one piece of Thrive MSP 2040. Other components include:

- Water Resources Management Policy Plan
- Transportation/Aviation Policy Plan
- Housing Policy Plan

Youngquist outlined the timeline expected for the update of the RP3 and noted that it needs to be updated every 4 years.

Marckel gave an overview of Thrive MSP 2040. He stated that the current version is called the Regional Development Framework. He reviewed what Thrive includes and its relation to the RP3.

Marckel gave a brief summary of regional outcomes and principles. The five outcomes included Stewardship, Prosperity, Equity, Livability, and Sustainability. The three principles included Integration, Collaboration, and Accountability.

Theisen asked if these outcomes are prioritized in any way. Marckel stated that they are not and are meant to be equal and inter-related in many ways as they complement one another.

Youngquist noted that the PowerPoint will be forwarded to all Commission members for reference. Marckel noted that they will also provide a link to the current draft of the Thrive MSP 2040 document and he noted that there will be a public comment period.

Salk reviewed four Thrive directions to be mindful of for RP3 going forward as outlined in the PowerPoint.

Youngquist discussed three main chapters of RP3 and reviewed potential policy additions/revisions as well as system plan additions/revisions. She discussed developing an Implementation Manual that would include the rules that regional park agencies must follow to implement the policy plan (taking them out of the RP3). This would streamline and be more responsive to changes needed as having them contained in the RP3 requires a public hearing process in order to make revisions. The Implementation Manual would complement the RP3.

Youngquist discussed integration with the Transportation Policy Plan and the Water Resource Management Policy Plan needed. She reviewed the 2040 RP3 timeline and noted that this Commission will need to have a draft plan ready for public hearing by the end of July 2014. She noted that this is an aggressive timeline and will require additional meetings of this Commission in April and May.

Youngquist discussed important considerations to inform 2040 RP3 including:

- Population forecasts and changing demographics
- Recreation activity trends
- Changing recreation preferences
- Existing user base
- Important differences among users
- Upcoming research results
- Community engagement

Youngquist specifically discussed regional population forecasts, age cohort population forecasts, population by race/ethnicity, and population by race/ethnicity and age.

Salk discussed trends in recreational activities outlined in the Powerpoint. She outlined the Metropolitan Council's research on equity.

Salk discussed racial and ethnic considerations research done and current efforts on research she has been doing through focus groups and noted that she will be bringing a presentation of her findings to this Commission in March. She also discussed community engagement and external stakeholder engagement that has been done and what will be done.

Youngquist discussed the RP3 process requirements outlined in the Powerpoint and internal collaboration planned.

Youngquist reviewed MPOSC policy topics and schedule provided in the meeting packet.

Wasley referenced the Water Management Policy Plan and asked what role the watershed districts took. Youngquist noted that Environmental Services (ES) is coordinating this update and is doing outreach and engagement. Wasley spoke to her concern over the White Bear Lake situation in particular. Youngquist stated she would follow up with ES staff but believes that ES staff are heavily involved.

Weber asked if Thrive MSP has fallen behind schedule. Marckel stated that it is behind but not too far from what was originally scheduled. He then discussed the interaction with system plans being done.

Wasley asked about 'no net loss' and if there has been any discussion of making this a regional policy. Marckel stated that this would be embodied in the RP3. Youngquist added that there is a system protection portion in our current policy plan that requires replacement on restrictive covenant land and noted that we want to 'beef' up this language in the updated RP3.

Theisen asked if we have lost land in the past. Youngquist responded that there has been removal of land, however that land was replaced. She discussed protection for park agencies, i.e., if a highway comes through, we can protect park land.

Schmidt stated that in the late 1960's there were projects that took park land.

Wulff discussed the importance of master plans that include environmentally sensitive lands.

Moeller asked about including goals in the plan; specifically with acquisition and also about equitable usage. Youngquist discussed indicators that will be developed here at MPOSC and those will be helpful in measuring the achievement of goals.

Wasley stated she feels signage is important and discussed language barriers.

Youngquist noted that some of what is being discussed may be required in the Master Planning process.

Moeller stated that he hopes that there will be enough 'grit' in this plan to obtain measureable outcomes.

Salk stated that to develop goals we need policy direction in which we can develop goals. She added that indicators from Thrive will force us to develop goals.

Steve Sullivan, Dakota County Parks asked about the February 18 public hearing to deal with amending the acquisition grant rules. Youngquist spoke to the need to amend the rules but reminded the Commission that the overall goal will be to remove these rules from RP3 so that a public hearing process is not required in the future to amend them when conditions change.

Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District commended staff for their concept of integrating their plans. He discussed trails as transit and the need to recognize this concept. He stated that trails are a viable form of transportation.

Weber asked for early drafts of all the plans in order to help facilitate integration. Staff noted they would email a link to the current drafts that are on the Council's website.

Marckel talked about a subgroup of Council Members working on Thrive.

Schmidt asked why the process is so different and what the intent is. Marckel stated that the 'new' Council wanted to take on/address challenges that the region will face over the next 30 years. Through much outreach and engagement, they've identified the outcomes and principles.

Weber asked staff to give this group a list showing where RP3 integrates with other plans specifically.

Weber commended staff to finding a solution to the St. Paul, Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary item discussed earlier in the meeting.

Proposed Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission 2014 Meeting Schedule – Arne Stefferud, Manager Regional Parks and Natural Resources

Stefferd reviewed the proposed meeting schedule outlined in the materials provided.

Moeller asked if staff is looking for confirmation on some of the earlier meetings listed. Stefferud confirmed.

Wasley noted that there were only two tours scheduled and asked about the possibility of a winter tour.

Wulff noted that changing the August 5 regular meeting (due to National Night Out) to August 12 would not work as it is primary election day. The group agreed to leave the August 5 meeting as is.

Moeller asked for a motion to change the March meeting from March 4, 2014 to March 11, 2014. It was moved by Wasley and seconded by Weber. Yarusso noted that he would not be able to attend on March 11. **Motion carried.**

Schmidt motioned and it was seconded by Hietpas to cancel the April 1, 2014 meeting and instead hold a Special Joint Meeting with the Community Development Committee followed by an MPOSC Meeting on April 7, 2014 and also to hold a Special MPOSC Meeting on April 22, 2014. **Motion carried.**

Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District passed out, for informational purposes only, a Parks and Trails Fact Book for Three Rivers Park District.

ADJOURNMENT

5:44 p.m.

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary