

Minutes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Meeting Date: January 5, 2023

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Steet

Members Present:

Chair, Tony Yarusso,
At-large

Monica Dillenburg, District A

Robert Moeller, District B

Cana Yang, District C

Vacant, District D

Jeremy Peichel, District E

Cecily Harris, District F

Anthony Taylor, District G

Todd Kemery, District H

Susan Vento, Council Liaison

= present

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order.

Agenda Approved

Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. Agenda was approved by consensus.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Harris, seconded by Taylor to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2022 regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

Public Invitation

Nobody signed up to address the Commission on matters not on today's agenda.

Business

1. **2023-9:** Southwest Regional Trail and Mississippi River Bluffs Regional Trail Long-Range Plan Amendments – Tracey Kinney

Kinney gave a presentation on Carver County's Southwest Regional Trail and Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail long-range plan amendments as outlined in the materials provided.

Chair Yarusso asked if it will connect to Miriam Junction? Marty Walsh, Carver County confirmed.

Harris asked how acquisition costs are established. Walsh noted that there has been an appraisal done on a portion of the trail and that is where the estimates come from.

Peichel asked for details about the wayfinding being proposed. Walsh discussed a pilot being done now in shared locations like the library, and noted they will also do wayfinding at trail head locations.

Peichel asked about links to local businesses, i.e., McDonalds. Walsh confirmed and discussed other links to local businesses as well.

Peichel discussed the promotion of the trail system as a mode of transport to local

businesses, etc.

Chair Yarusso asked about other grant opportunities, i.e., safe routes to schools. Walsh confirmed that those will be sought and may be eligible.

Taylor asked about concern for safety or other barriers. Walsh shared that there are a number of trail visitors that are new to Minnesota and the United States and discussed Carver County's desire to increase familiarity with the area to increase feelings of safety. Taylor discussed opportunities to build relationships with desired communities. Walsh discussed programs where they work with youths, school districts, etc.

It was moved by Peichel, seconded by Harris, that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Southwest Regional Trail Long-Range Plan Amendment.
2. Approve the Minnesota River Bluffs Long-Range Plan Amendment.
3. Require Carver County, prior to initiating any construction of new or updating of existing paths, trails, bridges, or any other construction project, to send preliminary plans to the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager.

With no further discussion, Chair Yarusso called for a vote. **Motion carried.**

2. **2023-10:** Big Marine Park Reserve Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (Reibel), Washington County – Jessica Lee

Lee gave a presentation on the Big Marine Park Reserve Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award for Washington County as outlined in the materials provided.

Peichel asked about the use of eminent domain and its implications on a grant request that may be denied due to lack of funds where eminent domain was not used.

Chair Yarusso discussed the politics involved and how the different Boards and Agencies make the determination to use eminent domain. He discussed bringing this up at our Regional Parks Policy Plan revision discussion and talked about it being a strategy of last resort.

Taylor asked if there is confidence in implementing agencies to measure community response to such strategies. He noted eminent domain makes us uncomfortable. He asked if there was public outrage when this was done? He discussed public process that is done and our need to have trust in the park agencies' process.

Peichel stated it would be nice to have a budget or some foresight of acquisition funds for future requests.

Chair Yarusso reminded commissioners that this program operates on first come, first served. Lee noted we have over \$10 million in funding available at this time. She continued, at this time, there is adequate funding, so at this point, the forecast is good. Historically, we use all our acquisition funding and don't let it lapse.

It was moved by Harris, seconded by Taylor, that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$649,594 to reimburse Washington County for the acquisition of the 1.22-acre Reibel property located at 14621 Margo Avenue in Scandia for Big Marine Park Reserve.
2. Authorize the Executive Director of Community Development to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

With no further discussion, Chair Yarusso called for a vote. **Motion carried.**

Information

1. Parks and Trails Legacy Fund FY2024/2025 Biennium Projects Overview and Equity Highlights, Part 2 of 2 – Jessica Lee and Implementing Agency Partners



Lee discussed Parks and Trails Legacy Fund FY 2024/2025 Biennium including projects overview and equity highlights – Part 2 of 2, as outlined in the materials provided.

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board – Adam Arvidson, reviewed 9 projects and outlined their equity focus area – the Luce Line Trail.

Harris asked if the existing Luce Line Regional Trail goes away with the new alignment. Arvidson responded that it would be kept and become part of the local trail system.

Anoka County – Karen Blaska, discussed three projects outlined in the materials provided and discussed their equity highlight – Bunker Hills Park Improvement.

St. Paul Parks and Recreation – Paul Sawyer discussed 11 projects outlined in the materials provided and discussed their equity highlight – Point Douglas Regional Trail design.

Chair Yarusso asked about community engagement with the Somali community. He wondered how the Somali community would have knowledge of the trail. Sawyer stated the engagement was for the regional trail that is not yet constructed. There is a local trail in place now.

Ramsey County – Kris Lencowski discussed their 9 projects and discussed their equity highlight – Tamarack Nature Center Volunteer Coordinator.

Three Rivers Park District – Jonathan Vlaming reviewed 17 projects outlined for their agency summary and discussed their equity highlight – Parks to People Master Plan for bridging facilities.

2. Summit Avenue Regional Trail Long-Range Plan, Process Check-in and Opportunity for Advice (Tracey Kinney, Alice Messer, and Mary Norton)

Kinney explained that she's been working with the City of St. Paul with their long-range master plan for Summit Avenue Regional Trail. Andy Rodriguez, Alice Messer and Mary Norton introduced themselves and gave a presentation on the Summit Avenue Regional Trail long range plan including their process and purpose. Also, they shared both the support and opposition received to date as outlined in the presentation provided.

Harris asked who's responsible for trees and sidewalks? Norton responded the City. Harris asked, what will keep e-bikes and scooters off the sidewalks? Norton stated if they provide a safer space such as a protected trail, she feels they will use that.

Peichel discussed snow removal and asked, how would this affect sidewalks? Rodriguez stated there would need to be dedicated equipment to maintain sidewalks and bikeways.

Chair Yarusso asked if there were comments that were new or surprising? Norton discussed the many themes that they heard.

Chair Yarusso asked whether there is significant opposition to the location and design of the current proposal. Norton stated both.

Taylor discussed the outreach and intentionality of process done by the City as well as opportunities to continue the conversation.

Chair Yarusso suggested they make sure the final plan shows how this is a regional trail and how it will benefit the region.

Reports

1. Chair

Chair Yarusso noted that the Vice Chair will be appointed at a future meeting when all other appointments have been made to the Commission.

2. Committee Members

Peichel noted the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) expires at the end of 2024 and asked commissioners to call their legislators to get this renewed.



Taylor discussed the Great Northern Festival at Silverwood Park coming up – January 25-February 5, 2023.

3. Council Liaison

None

4. Staff

Mullin noted that interviews for Districts D, E, F, G, H are being conducted for MPOSC next week.

Legislative session began and Mullin noted this is a biennial budget year. Governor's recommendation will come out later in January. More info to come in February.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting of January 5, 2023.

Approved this 2nd day of February 2023.

Council Contact:

Sandi Dingle, Recording Secretary
Sandi.Dingle@metc.state.mn.us
651-602-1312

