

Minutes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Meeting Date: June 2, 2022

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members Present:

- | | | |
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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair, Tony Yarusso, At-large | <input type="checkbox"/> Assata Brown, District D | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anthony Taylor, District G |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monica Dillenburg, District A | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jeremy Peichel, District E | <input type="checkbox"/> Todd Kemery, District H |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Moeller, District B | <input type="checkbox"/> Cecily Harris, District F | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Susan Vento, Council Liaison |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cana Yang, District C | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> = present, E = excused |

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:12 pm.

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 Dillenburg, seconded by Moeller to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2022 regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

Public Invitation

None.

Business

Appointment of Cecily Harris as Vice-Chair to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission for 2022 - Tony Yarusso, MPOSC Chair

It was moved by Chair Yarusso, seconded by Dillenburg, that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission approve the appointment of Cecily Harris as the Commission's Vice-Chair for 2022.

In accordance with the terms of the MPOSC bylaws, Chair Yarusso stated that he is appointing Cecily Harris as Vice-Chair subject to approval by the Commission. The term would commence on June 2, 2022 and go to the first meeting of the Commission in January 2023.

Motion carried.

2022-143: Luce Line, Medicine Lake, Shingle Creek, and Northeast Diagonal LRT Regional Trail Master Plans, Part 1 of 2, Three Rivers Park District, Part 1 of 2 - Colin Kelly and Chee Yang, Parks and Natural Resources

Kelly gave a presentation on the regional trail plans for Luce Line, Medicine Lake, Shingle

Creek, and Northeast Diagonal LRT as outlined in the materials provided.

Dillenburg discussed visitor safety and asked what is the plan, particularly for Shingle Creek Regional Trail? Kelly discussed the challenges at Shingle Creek, primarily with crossings, and plans to have the trail go up and over busy roadway crossings.

Danny McCullough, Three Rivers Park District, responded that in terms of crime, they do have park police and park service officers as well as volunteers on the trails that help deter crime and promote safe use.

Taylor asked if there are perceptions of safety issues from the engagement. McCullough stated, yes, they heard that a lot. The number one thing they heard was to improve general access to the trail and the number two was safe crossings. They also heard a need for improved wayfinding.

Taylor asked about a new 80-acre development in Brooklyn Park next to Shingle Creek and wondered if they are working with developers to leverage new trails? McCullough stated yes, they are planning to work with developers. Taylor asked if it was mandated. McCullough was not sure and noted that the development process was between the developer and the city but assured the Commission that Three Rivers is at the table.

Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District discussed the importance of being forward thinking with trail planning and securing the corridor ahead of the development. Taylor agreed and noted that wider trail widths would promote greater safety, including pedestrian safety.

Moeller wondered if Communities' Planning Commissions ever get together to discuss best practices in terms of trail development and enhanced standards.

Dillenburg asked, how much does the city help with operations and maintenance (O&M). McCullough explained that Three Rivers is the primary agency responsible for O&M however they do work with the city for winter plowing of trails.

Grissman discussed the factor of what percent of trail is for recreational purposes versus transportation purposes and discussed a financial partnership with local communities.

Chair Yarusso discussed the Met Council's role as this relates to transportation and possible funding opportunities.

Council Member Vento discussed that as we move into the future, we will see more transportation use on our trails. The division between recreational use and commuter use is often overstated. Regional trails serve both uses.

Grissman stated that all regional trails are integral to the transportation network and should be eligible for Federal funding.

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Moeller, that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Luce Line Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Medicine Lake Regional Trail Master Plan.
3. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan.
4. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Northeast Diagonal Regional Trail Master Plan.
5. Require Three Rivers Park District, 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.

Chair Yarusso asked about wayfinding particularly for the Luce Line Trail that is managed across three agencies (Three Rivers, MN DNR, Minneapolis). How do we cross promote this trail? McCullough stated that they outline responsibilities in their master plan and use coordinated wayfinding.

Grissman pointed out that the different managing agencies use different surface materials on their trails.

Motion carried.

2022-142: Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grey Cloud Island Regional Park (Wald), Washington County - Jessica Lee, Parks and Natural Resources

Lee gave a presentation on a request from Washington County for a PAOF for Grey Cloud Island Regional Park.

Chair Yarusso asked when will a portion of the park be available for public use?

Sandy Breuer, Washington County Parks stated that while this acquisition creates a larger block of parkland, there is still a lot of work to be done prior to opening the park. Currently, there is not enough room for recreational activities, access, or parking. Several residential properties remain to be acquired, like this acquisition, and the mining activities are still active.

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

1. Approve a grant of up to \$385,590 to Washington County to acquire the 3.82-acre Wald property located at 11500 Grey Cloud Trail South, Cottage Grove, for Grey Cloud Island Regional Park.
2. Authorize the Community Development Director to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

Motion carried.

2022-141: Amendment to the 2019 Pilot Year Regional Parks System Equity Grant Program Fund Distribution Plan - Jessica Lee, Parks and Natural Resources

Lee gave a presentation on an amendment to the 2019 Pilot Year Regional Parks System Equity Grant Program Fund Distribution Plan as outlined in the materials provided.

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Yang, that the Metropolitan Council amend the Regional Parks System Competitive Equity Grant Program 2019 Fund Distribution Plan to allow for an additional one-year extension for the awarded grants.

Motion carried.

2022-144: Annual Metropolitan Regional Parks Operation and Maintenance Allocation - Heather Giesel, CD/MTS

Giesel gave a presentation on the annual Metropolitan Regional Parks Operation and Maintenance allocation as required by State Statute and outlined in the materials provided.

Chair Yarusso asked why the use study is not done yet and if the legislative deadline needs to change. Lisa Barajas, Community Development Director stated that the timeline is very tight and how last Legislative session, the Council had a request to amend the deadline. It did not pass. Yarusso noted that the MPOSC approval of this item tells the Council that this process was done correctly, and they recommend Council approval.

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Taylor that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission reports to the Metropolitan Council the Regional Parks System state fiscal year (SFY) 2023 Operations and Maintenance Funding requests.

Motion carried.

2022-139: Rush Creek Regional Trail, Land-for-Facilities Exchange, Three Rivers Park District - Tracey Kinney, Parks and Natural Resources

Kinney gave a presentation on a land for facilities exchange requested from Three Rivers Park District for Rush Creek Regional Trail as outlined in the materials provided.

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



1. Approve the Rush Creek Regional Trail Land-for-Facilities exchange described in the body of this report.
2. Approve the consent to easement on 0.439 acres of land and consent to temporary easement on 5.40 acres of land within the Rush Creek Regional Trail corridor, as illustrated in Figure 3, in exchange for two grade separated trail crossings.
3. Require Three Rivers Park District, prior to initiating any new development of the regional trail corridor, to send preliminary plans to the Metropolitan Council's Environmental Services Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager.

Taylor noted that this exchange along a regional trail was easy to approve because of the benefits to the visitors and the system. Park exchanges are not always as easy.

Motion carried.

Information

1. Regional Parks System Competitive Equity Grant Program Timeline Update - Jessica Lee, Parks and Natural Resources

Lee gave an update on the Equity Grant Program grant rounds from 2019 and 2021. She discussed a proposal to wait an additional year to host the next grant cycle. Due to the lack of funds, staff propose to wait a year to continue the program.

Taylor asked, is it worth waiting a year and asked if the program will lose momentum.

Lee noted that the current grants will expire in the Spring of 2024 and the new grants will be available at that time.

Mullin noted the amount of funding will almost double if we wait. Staff was concerned about the delay; however, they feel the benefits to waiting exceed running the process in 2023.

2. Regional Parks System Historical Cultural Study – Project Update - Jessica Lee, Parks and Natural Resources

Lee gave a project update on the Regional Parks System Historical Cultural Study as outlined in the materials provided.

Chair Yarusso discussed the importance of getting better about communicating what is unique about the regional parks system, and how it differs from local, state, and county parks.

Council Member Vento suggested working with MN Historical Society as they were a big help with the Friends of the Mississippi River and the establishment of the Mississippi National River and Recreation area.

Moeller encouraged us to build a vision for a connected system of parks and trails. Do we tell this story clearly enough? A picture tells more than a vision statement.

Reports

Chair

Chair Yarusso discussed developing a list of topics that the Committee cares about, so that staff can have the items sorted out. He is looking for Commissioner ideas, especially when we have shorter agendas that allow us to pick up other important topics.

Chair Yarusso asked the Commission if they want paper printouts at meetings. Secretary Dingle stated that she will have packets printed out for meetings and will have one to two extra for visitors.

Chair Yarusso stated that a bonding bill was not passed during the regular Legislative Session, and we are still waiting to hear if there will be a special session.

Committee Members

Taylor discussed the DNR launching their first all-terrain track chair – very exciting. He also hoped to hear more about state funding for nature-based programming. Taylor then discussed the first Bill of Rights for outdoors or nature.

Council Liaison

None.

Staff

Mullin stated we are still hopeful for a special session at the legislature. He also thanked Commission Members for their attendance in person.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 6:30 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 June 2, 2022.

Approved this 02 day of June 2022.

Council Contact:

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