

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, March 6, 2018

Committee Members Present:

Tony Yarusso, Margie Andreason, Mike Kopp, Bob Moeller, Catherine Fleming, Wendy Wulff

Committee Members Absent:

Todd Kemery, Sarah Hietpas, Anthony Taylor, Rick Theisen

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 4:01 p.m. on Tuesday, March 6, 2018.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the March 6, 2018 Agenda. Moeller motioned, and it was seconded by Andreason to approve the agenda. The **Agenda was approved.**

Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2018 meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. It was motioned by Fleming and seconded by Yarusso. The **Minutes were approved.**

PUBLIC INVITATION

Holly Jenkins, Wilderness in the City, spoke regarding the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan (2040 RPPP)* update. She discussed stewardship and feels there is a lot of room to improve this and strengthen the language in the 2040 RPPP. Jenkins discussed buckthorn removal at Lebanon Hills Regional Park and how it was becoming a dying forest. She felt this never should have happened and spoke to her concern that it was allowed to happen. She encouraged Commissioners to look at how we are protecting our natural resources.

Moeller asked if they have found a way to keep buckthorn from coming back. Jenkins responded and discussed the work they are doing and noted that there is a Natural Resource Plan being developed for Lebanon Hills.

Steve Sullivan, Dakota County Parks, spoke about the awareness that has occurred and also the commitment that arose from this. He discussed Legacy grants that were received last year for natural resource restoration and the resulting program. He noted that restoration is very expensive whereas maintenance is much less so.

BUSINESS

None.

INFORMATION

Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area and the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update – Jan Youngquist, Planning Analyst (Regional Parks), and Dan Marckel, Planning Analyst (Regional Policy and Research)

Youngquist introduced Matt Bowman and Jennifer Shilcox from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and provided some background and fun facts about the Mississippi River.

Bowman discussed protections put in place for the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) in the 1970s in the form of an Executive Order. He discussed rulemaking that took place and the responsibilities for the regional park agencies. Bowman also discussed the different districts within the corridor and the standards outlined in the rules including standards specifically for recreational facilities.

Youngquist discussed a meeting with the DNR, Met Council and the implementing agencies to discuss the requirements for regional park and trail master plans, and grant applications. She discussed the next steps and drafting language for the RPPP.

Fleming asked questions regarding the Upper Harbor project and how this relates to the bonding for that project. Youngquist discussed the question of how much of the property will be for development and how much will be for the park. Bowman stated that he doesn't know the details of this particular project. He stated that each park agency guides development decisions, so it will depend in which agency jurisdiction this property is located.

Youngquist stated that the bonding would most likely be a joint issue between the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Wulff asked for an example regarding the new rules. Bowman stated that the rules will accommodate for non-conforming uses (what is already there).

Shilcox explained that as cities update their Comprehensive Plans, they will need to update their ordinances to comply.

Wulff asked if there are any big changes. Shilcox stated 'not really' and noted they provide more clarity. The rules before were vague.

Youngquist added that the DNR worked with the implementing agencies during the development of the rules.

Moeller asked how MPOSC interacts with the rules. Youngquist stated that MPOSC sees master plans and it is at a very high level (not specific) so we make sure the implementing agencies are complying with the rules during the master planning process.

Moeller recalled the debate over trail widths that this commission had. Youngquist stated that these rules were written for cities and their land use planning. Chair Yarusso noted that this commission does not make requirements to this level of specificity.

Youngquist stated that this is a partnership opportunity. She noted that when agencies have funding requests we can require that they have complied with the rules.

Sullivan asked MPOSC members to keep in mind that there will be needs for variances to some of these rules and gave examples of why this would need to occur.

Youngquist noted that this is an overview but stated there are more conversations to have and noted there will be more information to come.

Follow-up on Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Roles Discussion from January 2 2018 Meeting – Libby Starling, Metropolitan Council Community Development, and Steve Sullivan, Dakota County Parks

Starling (filling in for Emmet Mullin) discussed the Commissioners' roles and reviewed the duties outlined in state statute (included in the meeting materials). She discussed how, as an advisory board, the review and recommendations of MPOSC help to inform the Community Development Committee and the Metropolitan Council.

Sullivan spoke to the process over the years and the value of the discussion among this group. He discussed the funding that agencies receive and noted that it is a coordinated effort of MPOSC and the implementing agencies working together.

Fleming stated that this group seems passive. She stated she does not see this group as being proactive. She questioned community involvement and asked if this commission has line item veto authority. She asked how MPOSC is accountable for what is approved.

Chair Yarusso stated that when we talk about the RPPP, that is where we have authority. He explained that we review requests/plans to see that they comply with our RPPP. He felt the difficulty lies in what should be in the RPPP.

Wulff discussed the RPPP but cautioned that as we are looking at changes, we need to be mindful that cities are in the middle of their comprehensive plan updates. She also pointed out that this group is an advisory board to the Council and the Council relies on this group to vet all requests and master plans.

Moeller discussed the importance of updating the RPPP. He also discussed the importance of master plans and felt we may not give these plans enough time to see if they are consistent with the RPPP. Regarding communicating with the implementing agencies, Moeller felt commissioners could do more.

Chair Yarusso noted that commissioners are the piece that can act regionally.

Patty Freeman, Scott County, felt that putting commissioners' roles in writing was good to see. She responded to Fleming's concern regarding community engagement and discussed what they do in Scott County. She stated it starts at the staff level and leadership team and lots of long-term planning. She discussed the master planning process and how much community engagement they conduct. She noted that they have a Parks Advisory Board that serves as ambassadors to their parks. She stated that for Scott County, community engagement is very serious, arduous and ongoing.

Fleming spoke to specific complaints that she's received on specific projects and this is where her concern comes from.

Moeller noted that he's been invited by Scott and Carver Counties to go on tours of their parks and he finds that to be very beneficial.

Chair Yarusso noted (regarding master plans) that some of the content is directed at MPOSC and much in these plans does not pertain to this group. He stated that guidance from staff on what we need to vet more closely would be beneficial.

Sullivan discussed master plans and how they are a key agency deliverable, i.e. Natural Resource Management Plans are being done in conjunction with Master Plans. He discussed needs assessments and stated that they are going to look harder at public needs. He feels that master plans are fundamental to what implementing agencies do and what the MPOSC does and is the foundation to the success of the system.

Andreason commented that this conversation was helpful to understanding what our role, as commissioners, is.

REPORTS

Chair: Chair Yarusso noted that the Legislature is in session and that although \$15 million was requested, it is not in the Governor's bonding request.

Chair Yarusso discussed changing the dates of the April 3 and July 3 meetings due to scheduling conflicts and the July 4 holiday. An email will be sent to Commissioners polling them.

Commissioners: Andreason acknowledged and applauded the name change of Lake Calhoun to Bde Maka Ska and reminded all Commissioners of the need to support this.

Fleming stated that there are a number of grass roots groups that are doing community gardens and urban agriculture and she will be presenting a paper to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Staff: None.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary