

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION**

Thursday, November 4, 2021

Committee Members Present: Assata Brown, Cecily Harris, Monica Dillenburg, Robert Moeller, Tony Yarusso, Cana Yang, Jeremy Peichel, and Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson, liaison to the Council

Committee Members Absent: Todd Kemery, Anthony Taylor

CALL TO ORDER

The Recording Secretary did a roll call for a quorum.

Present – 7 (Brown, Dillenburg, Harris, Moeller, Peichel, Yang, Yarusso)

Absent – 2 (Kemery, Taylor)

With a quorum being present via WebEx, Commission Chair Yarusso called the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:02 p.m. on Thursday, November 4, 2021.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Yarusso asked for a consensus to approve the November 4, 2021, Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission agenda. The agenda was approved by consensus.

Next, Chair Yarusso asked for a motion to approve the October 7, 2021 minutes. Peichel motioned, and it was seconded by Brown to approve the October 7, 2021 minutes of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting.

The Recording Secretary issued a roll call vote.

Aye – 7 (Brown, Dillenburg, Harris, Moeller, Peichel, Yang, Yarusso)

Nay – 0

Abstention – 0

The motion was approved.

PUBLIC INVITATION

Chair Yarusso stated that no one pre-registered to speak today. As a reminder, if you wish to offer public comment at a virtual meeting, please pre-register by emailing public.info@metc.state.mn.us. You may also send us your comments by email.

BUSINESS

2021-296 Eagle-Bryant Lake Regional Trail Master Plan, Three Rivers Park District – Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst

Kelly gave a presentation on the Eagle-Bryant Lake Regional Trail Master Plan on behalf of Three Rivers Park District (3RPD) as outlined in the materials provided.

Chee Yang, Parks Planner, presented the development concept and estimated costs as well as the proposed action outlined in the materials provided.

Peichel asked why 3RPD proposes to divide the trail into two – are there any negative impacts or implications for funding? Maggie Heurung, 3RPD responded that the decision to split the trail emerged out of the master planning process. Communities felt a stronger identity to the proposed two trails and the regional park they link to than they did the one longer trail. Kelly Grissman, 3RPD, also provided insights that having a stronger community identity will ultimately make the two trails easier to implement. For instance, there will be

smaller groups of partners to come to consensus on the final arrangements. She did not express concerns about the funding as a result of this change.

Harris appreciated the engagement that was done and asked about underrepresented groups in the planning process, including women. Mullin noted that the 2016 visitor study showed that white, older men are the predominant user of regional trails. He stated staff are in the midst of a 2021 visitor study now and trail visitor use will be an important thing to watch.

Dillenburg applauded the master plan and shared her concern regarding people who are not happy with the trails behind their property and asked what 3RPD is doing to avoid encroachment on the trail. Heurung said the concerns were largely along Baker Road and noted the trail will likely be in the right of way so in the front yards. This also means that 3RPD will not need to purchase land from residents but may need to purchase permits allowing access to the area during trail construction.

Grissman said 3RPD clearly denotes property with signage and avoids encroachment concerns to the greatest degree possible. She noted they also work with individual landowners when this is a problem. She stated people want to do the right thing and often don't realize they were encroaching into the right-of-way.

A motion was made by Moeller and seconded by Dillenburg to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Eagle-Bryant Lake Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Acknowledge Three Rivers Park District's intent to split the Eagle-Bryant Lake Regional Trail Search Corridor into two distinct but interconnected regional trails – the Eagle Lake Regional Trail and the Bryant Lake Regional Trail – which will be formally documented in the next update of the Regional Parks Policy Plan, anticipated in 2024.
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.

With no further discussion, Chair Yarusso called for a vote. The recording secretary issued a roll call vote.

Aye – 7 (Brown, Harris, Dillenburg, Moeller, Peichel, Yang, Yarusso)

Nay – 0

Abstention – 0

The motion was approved.

2021-297 Spring Lake Park Reserve Master Plan, Dakota County – Tracey Kinney, Senior Planner

Kinney gave a presentation on the Spring Lake Park Reserve Master Plan from Dakota County outlined in the materials provided.

Sue Vento, Council Liaison, commented on this hidden gem in Dakota County.

Peichel discussed ravine stabilization issues and asked what the limits to actions on adjacent land to the park reserve are to help with these issues and other related water issues. Is there a place for these plans in the Master Plan? Mullin responded that the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area corridor which has specific guidelines building requirements. Lil Leatham, Dakota County, stated they do have one inholding where they would like an easement or to acquire land for stabilization purpose. She also discussed working with property owners on a voluntary basis to focus on conservation.

Peichel asked about friend's groups or other such groups that can help Dakota County with their conservation work. Leatham stated she was not sure about these group. Niki Geisler, Dakota County's new park director, stated she could look into this.

A motion was made by Dillenburg and seconded by Peichel to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Dakota County's Spring Lake Park Reserve Master Plan.

With no further discussion, Chair Yarusso called for a vote. The recording secretary issued a roll call vote.

Aye – 7 (Brown, Harris, Dillenburg, Moeller, Peichel, Yang, Yarusso)
Nay – 0
Abstention – 0

The motion was approved.

2021-298 Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund (Muehlenhardt) –
Jessica Lee, Senior Parks Planner

Lee gave a presentation on the Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve acquisition request outlined in the materials provided.

Moeller gave his support.

Chair Yarusso asked if there is legal access to the property? Lee stated, for purposes of the appraisal, there was a question of legal access due to the area being floodplain forest, however, once the land is acquired, it will be adjacent to county owned property and therefore accessible. Alysa Delgado, Scott County noted that there is not an issue with legal access to the property.

Chair Yarusso also asked for clarification on preference to structures on the property noted in the purchase agreement. Lee stated there are no structures on the property, that this reference was stock language about structures in the appraisal template. Delgado confirmed. Chair Yarusso suggested staff may want to look at it before it goes to the Community Development Committee. Delgado will look into this.

A motion was made by Moeller and seconded by Harris to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve a grant of up to \$25,650 to Scott County, using funding from FY2021 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund, to acquire the vacant 15-acre Muehlenhardt property for Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve.

Chair Yarusso clarified that Scott County is not requesting future reimbursement. Lee confirmed.

With no further discussion, Chair Yarusso called for a vote. The recording secretary issued a roll call vote.

Aye – 7 (Brown, Harris, Dillenburg, Moeller, Peichel, Yang, Yarusso)
Nay – 0
Abstention – 0

The motion was approved.

INFORMATION

Equity “Nudge” – Ramsey County Parks Ordinance Update Process - Amanda Lovelee, Parks Ambassador, and Guest, Kris Lencowski, Ramsey County

Lencowski shared Ramsey County’s efforts to update their park ordinances using an equity focus. He stated they did an internal equity review with wide public engagement. He also discussed partners engaged in the process.

Peichel asked about park hours. Lencowski discussed current winter hours of 30 minutes prior to dawn and 30 minutes after sunset are problematic in the wintertime due to it getting dark so early.

Chair Yarusso asked about public water access hours, as Ramsey County operates their own public water accesses. Lencowski stated they did not get many comments on this topic. As such, they are not looking to change these at this time. Chair Yarusso noted most water accesses are owned by the DNR outside of Ramsey County.

Chair Yarusso discussed decriminalization of minor offenses and asked about legal representation that would not be afforded to some people due to this change. Lencowski stated Ramsey County is looking into this and noted there is an appeal process built into this process.

Vento asked about engagement and feedback from seniors and disabled. Lencowski stated they did not tract age or disability in the survey process but focused on racial equity. He commented that he felt they

had good engagement from seniors in public engagement process and also did reach out to Courage Kinney regarding hearing from the disabled community.

REPORTS

Chair: Chair Yarusso welcomed Council Member Susan Vento who is replacing Council Member Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson. Also, he cautioned folks to be aware of controlled hunts being held in regional parks this time of year.

Commissioners: None.

Staff: Mullin stated he is excited to see bison reintroduced into a Regional Park. Dakota County is the first agency to accomplish this feat. Mullin shared an opportunity with Commissioners to participate in a couple workshops in December and January to help with the creation of the 2050 Metropolitan Development Guide. He will send out information regarding this opportunity and asked Commissioners if interested or have questions, please let him know.

Council Liaison: Vento stated she is excited to be a part of this group.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed the meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary