

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
390 N. Robert Street, St. Paul, MN 55101

MEETING OF
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION
December 5, 2006

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Glen Skovholt, Michael Rainville, Barb Schmidt, Richard Jabs, Emily Barbeau, Robert Wicklund, Gary Botzek, Daniel Schlaferman

ABSENT: Lars Erdahl, Natalie Steffen, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Skovholt called the meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 5:04 p.m. on December 5, 2006.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES

Commissioner Jabs motioned to approve the, December 5, 2006 agenda and the November 14, 2006 minutes. Commissioner Rainville seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

PUBLIC INVITATION: Invitation to Interested Persons to Address the Commission on Matters Not on the Agenda (Each speaker is limited to a five-minute presentation.)

None.

BUSINESS:

Request for reimbursement consideration in a future regional parks CIP for Dakota Rail Regional Trail design/construction plans, Three Rivers Park District - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst

Stefferud gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the request from Three Rivers Park District for consideration by the Metropolitan Council to reimburse the Park District up to \$648,644 in a future regional park capital improvement program for final design/construction plans of the Dakota Rail Regional Trail.

Boe Carlson, Three Rivers Park District added that this has been a politically sensitive project. He discussed the design/development task force that put together recommendations for their Park Board.

Schmidt asked what the current estimated cost for the project is. Carlson stated that it is around \$5 million for the total construction cost including 13.1 miles of trails and several bridges.

Wicklund asked Carlson to talk about the opposition from one community regarding this project. Carlson discussed the opposition from Minnetonka Beach and noted that they have asked for some conditions, for example, having the Park District provide a police officer to patrol the trail once per hour. The Park District has responded to the City that they cannot meet their conditions, however they are continuing to try and work with the City while working on the design development. He noted that when the design is completed the Park District will allow for a comment period (30-days) for all jurisdictions involved. Carlson indicated that at this point they hope to get a determination of whether Minnetonka Beach is 'for' or 'against' the project.

Wicklund pointed out that many Minnetonka Beach City Council candidates that won in the past election ran on a platform against the trail. He stated that as this project goes forward, the Metropolitan Council may hear from citizens.

Beckman pointed out that the System Statements stated that this trail is planned and a public hearing was held. Carlson noted through discussions with the City, he felt they may offer a local trail that would only be used locally and that they feel this would satisfy the Comprehensive Plan.

Schmidt asked if there is any local support to the project. Carlson stated that a survey was done in Minnetonka Beach about two years ago and there was 50% support for the project. He stated that the folks that were adjacent to or near the trail were mostly against it and those further away from it were in favor of it.

Rainville asked how many homes are adjacent to the trail. Carlson stated that there are approximately 25 homes adjacent to the trail. He noted that of those 11 are within 25 feet of the trail, where some type of screening would be provided.

Schmidt pointed out that it has been proven that home values increase when there is access to a trail system.

Botzek stated that this land is still under the rail authority and could be converted to use for light rail. Carlson stated that although this is not in the 2030 Transportation Plan, that is a possibility.

Commissioner Wicklund motioned that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the request to consider reimbursing Three Rivers Park District up to \$648,644 for final design development and construction plans for the Dakota Rail Regional Trail in a future regional parks capital improvement program. However, the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.
2. Request Three Rivers Park District to submit construction plans detailing the exact location of the trail and any other pertinent information to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) to ensure that the proposed construction will not interfere with the operation of any MCES sewer interceptors.

Commissioner Shlaferman seconded the motion.

Rainville encouraged the Park District to keep communication with the City open.

With no further discussion, **the motion carried.**

REPORTS

Stefferd reported that he received an e-mail from the Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) requesting a 5 minutes summary of our request on 12/19/06.

Beckman noted that we hope to have Judd Schetnan, the Met Council's Legislative Liaison come to our meeting in January to discuss the Committees in the Legislature.

Beckman gave a brief report on the Private Funding for Regional Park Land Acquisition Committee. Letters have been sent to potential donors and/or influential individuals and interviews have begun. The feasibility study is expected to be completed in late January or early February. She noted they are also looking at other areas, nationally, that have done something similarly.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, January 9, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. at 390 N. Robert Street, St. Paul, MN in Room LLA. Skovholt stated that he would like to lay out 'big issues for 2007' at the January meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Skovholt adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandi Dingle, Executive Secretary