

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

MEETING OF
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION
Held at the Elm Creek Park Reserve Chalet

September 11, 2007

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Glen Skovholt, Barb Schmidt, Gary Botzek, Robert Wicklund

ABSENT: Richard Jabs, Daniel Shlaferman, Emily Barbeau, Lars Erdahl, Michael Rainville, 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 4:10 p.m. on September 11, 2007.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Wicklund recommended (as there was not a quorum to take formal action to approve) to approve the September 11, 2007 agenda and the August 7, 2007 minutes. Commissioner Schmidt seconded the recommendation. All present were in favor of approving the agenda and minutes.

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:

Mississippi River Regional Trail—North Alignment Master Plan, Anoka County - Jan Youngquist, Senior Planner-Parks

Jan Youngquist gave a PowerPoint presentation discussing a master plan for the Mississippi River Regional Trail Northern Alignment submitted by Anoka County.

John VonDeLinde, Anoka County Parks added that this trail planning has been ongoing for several years working with Sherburne County, National Park Services, the Department of Natural Resources, the cities of Anoka and Ramsey, and the Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization.

Commissioner Botzek recommended (as there was not a quorum to take formal action to approve) that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Mississippi River Regional Trail Northern Alignment Master Plan (Referral No. 20057-1).
2. Require that prior to development of new trail segments, final plans be sent to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment to ensure the integrity of the interceptor system.
3. Suggest that Anoka County consider the use of porous asphalt in the construction of the trail system to allow for proper runoff drainage, storage and infiltration.

Commissioner Wicklund seconded the recommendation. All present were in favor of approving the recommendations.

The group discussed the suggestion to use porous asphalt and the success other agencies have had.

Murphy-Hanrehan Park Development Master Plan update, Three Rivers Park District - Jan Youngquist, Senior Planner-Parks

Jan Youngquist gave a PowerPoint presentation discussing the development master plan for the Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve for Metropolitan Council review and approval that was submitted by Three Rivers Park District.

Youngquist stated that Council staff appreciates the mission of this master plan—to protect and enhance the natural resources and semi-primitive nature of the park reserve. However, in recognition of the Council's *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, and looking at this issue from a broad-range regional policy perspective, staff does not feel that it is appropriate for a park master plan to dictate future regional trail planning, especially that affects two other implementing agencies. Just as the Metropolitan Council does not bind a future Council to provide park funding, a park master plan should not bind future regional trail connection planning. With the large scale expansion of the regional park system proposed in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, this is an issue that may present itself again in the future. By potentially binding future trail planning through this park master plan, a precedent may be set with potential future unintended consequences.

Jonathan Vlaming, Planning Manager for Three Rivers Park District, explained the challenges associated with constructing a regional trail through the interior of the park reserve, due to the steep topography in some areas, as well as natural resource sanctuaries to be preserved.

Commissioner Botzek inquired whether there were public hearings associated with this master plan. Mr. Vlaming indicated that no public hearings were held and that public input was gathered through surveys conducted over the course of three years.

Commissioner Wicklund commented that this park reserve was always intended to be lesser developed than others and that paved roads and trails may not be appropriate for the area. With regard to the recommendation of striking language in the master plan (see Proposed Action/Motion number 1, as written in the attached memo), Wicklund questioned staff's concern of unintended consequences if the master plan language was left as-is. Jan Youngquist, Senior Planner-Parks, clarified that the concern of unintended consequences was not directed specifically to Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve, but was a broader policy issue. By allowing a park master plan to preclude interconnecting regional trails from entering the interior of a park, a precedent may be set. As the new regional parks and interconnecting trails called for in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* are developed, future park master plans may be inappropriately restrictive with unintended consequences to the regional system. These plans could cite the Council's approval of the language of this master plan as a precedent. The intent of the staff recommendation was to protect the integrity of the Policy Plan for future park planning.

The Commission discussed the two recommendations and the possibility of forwarding recommendation 1 to the Community Development Committee and remove recommendation number 2.

There was not a quorum of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. However, Commissioner Wicklund recommended and Commissioner Botzek seconded the following recommendation:

That the Metropolitan Council approve the Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve Master Plan (Referral No. 20010-1), subject to the following revision on page 21 of the master plan:

~~“Three Rivers Park District will work with Scott and Dakota Counties to accommodate regional trails. with the understanding that paved trails should be located on the periphery of the park reserve pursuant to this master plan.”~~

All present were in favor of approving the recommendations.

REPORTS

Chair: None.

Staff: None.

Commissioners: None

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, October 2, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. at the Washington County Service Center, Forest Lake (*note the location change).

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Skovholt adjourned the meeting at 5:12 p.m. and the Commission then toured the Elm Creek Park Reserve.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle, Executive Secretary

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