

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

**MEETING OF**  
**METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION**

**April 1, 2008**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Glen Skovholt, Barb Schmidt, Gary Botzek, Richard Jabs, Emily Barbeau, Robert Wicklund, Daniel Shlaferman, Dan Wolter, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

**ABSENT:** Jesse Reinhardt, Bob Moeller

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Skovholt called the meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:11 p.m. on April 1, 2008.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES**

Commissioner Barbeau motioned and Commissioner Schmidt seconded to approve the April 1, 2008 Agenda and the March 4, 2008 minutes. **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:**

**(2008-75) Request for Acquisition Opportunity Grant to partially finance Butler Trust parcel in Empire Wetlands Regional Park, Dakota County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks**

Stefferd did a PowerPoint presentation describing Dakota County's request for a \$1.7 million grant from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to partially finance the acquisition of the 456-acre Empire Wetlands Regional Park portion of the Butler Trust parcel. He noted that this request is consistent with the conditions under "Option 2: Revised Rules", adopted by the Council on January 9, 2008. Stefferud stated that Dakota County is working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the University of Minnesota to acquire and collaboratively manage a 4,000 acre site called Vermillion Highlands. The Butler Trust property makes up 816-acres and provides the critical connection between the 475-acre Vermillion River Aquatic and Wildlife Management Area and the 2,840-acre Vermillion Highlands Research, Recreation and Wildlife Management Area.

Chair Skovholt asked if all the land will be protected. Steve Sullivan, Dakota County replied that the DNR is still looking at some additional properties to acquire for protection.

Skovholt asked how much of the land will be available for hunting/fishing. Sullivan noted that there would be approximately 3,600-acres. He also stated that 2,800-acres will have non-traditional recreational uses. Sullivan noted that a master plan will be coming forward soon.

Botzek stated that he supports the proposal.

Skovholt asked if there will be a joint master plan for the entire area. Sullivan stated that there will be and the intent is to have it done by the end of the year. He stated that the DNR, the U of M, and Dakota County staff are working collaboratively on it.

Commissioner Schmidt motioned and Commissioner Jabs seconded to recommend:

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1. That the Metropolitan Council authorize a grant of \$1.7 million comprised of \$1,020,000 of Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund revenue and \$680,000 of Metropolitan Council bonds from the State Acquisition Grant Account in the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund. The grant must be matched with \$566,666 of Dakota County funds to partially finance a portion of the 456-acre Empire Wetlands Regional Park as part of the Butler Trust Parcel shown on Attachment 2.
2. Notify Dakota County, that if the County has to solely finance the \$2,873,334 due on September 30, 2008 for the remainder of the Empire Wetlands Regional Park acquisition from the Butler Trust, its total contribution would be \$3,440,000 for the park or 28.8% of the \$11.94 million purchase price. Therefore, the amount the Metropolitan Council would consider reimbursing the County in a future regional parks CIP would be \$455,000 to be consistent with the 25% net cost match requirement under "Option 2: Revised Rules" for a Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant. 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.

**The motion carried.**

**(2008-76) Request for reimbursement consideration authorization to acquire 30 acre inholding parcel in Spring Lake Park Reserve, Dakota County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks**

Stefferd did a PowerPoint presentation describing the request for reimbursement for the acquisition of a 30-acre inholding parcel in Spring Lake Park Reserve (known as the Wicker Parcel). Because the County is asking for the maximum amount it can receive for the Butler Trust parcel, they can't obtain any more Acquisition Opportunity Grants from the Metro Council until after June 30. Consequently, the County requests that the Metro Council consider reimbursing the County for this acquisition in a future regional parks CIP.

Stefferd further described staff's recommendation to relocate the house/outbuildings and two adjacent large homes when they become available for purchase onto three 3-acre lots on parkland that are adjacent to other residential land next to the park, and to sell the lots and houses then using the proceeds to recoup the cost of acquiring them along with the 48 acres of land they used to occupy.

Barbeau asked if 3-acres is a minimum lot size. Stefferud stated that it was.

Sullivan pointed out that there is still some logistical work that needs to be done with the township.

Schmidt stated that she would like to amend the second recommendation to read that Dakota County 'attempt' to recoup its costs...

Commission Schmidt motioned and Commissioner Barbeau seconded the amended recommendation that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Allow up to \$1,443,500 of costs incurred by Dakota County for acquiring the Wicker property in Spring Lake Park Reserve to be eligible for reimbursement consideration in a future regional parks capital improvement programs under the conditions stated in Recommendation 2. 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. Requests Dakota County attempt to recoup its costs, and thus reduce the Council's reimbursement amount in Recommendation 1, of acquiring the Wicker parcels by relocating the structures on the original Wicker property to a new 3-acre parcel of park land in Spring Lake Park Reserve and selling the buildings and 3-acre parcel under the following conditions:
  - a. The 3-acre parcel is at the edge of the park's current boundary.
  - b. The 3-acre parcel is adjacent to other houses or land zoned for housing and have road access.

- c. Residential use of the 3-acre parcel should not adversely affect other recreational uses of Spring Lake Park Reserve.
- d. Residential use of the 3-acre parcel should not adversely affect natural resources in Spring Lake Park Reserve.
- e. Dakota County seeks approval from the Metropolitan Council to release any regional park restrictive covenant on the 3-acre parcel and requests approval from the State of Minnesota to sell the 3-acre parcel if the parcel was initially acquired with State bond proceeds.
- f. Proceeds from the sale of the 3-acre parcel and structures on it must be used to recoup subdivision and related sale expenses, plus expenses in acquiring the original 30-acre Wicker property and related buildings.
- g. The County shall report to the Metropolitan Council the County's costs in implementing this acquisition, relocation and sale plus the revenue it received from the sale. If the sale of the 3-acre parcel and related buildings generates more revenue than costs to acquire the original 30- acre Wicker property and its buildings, the additional revenue must be used to acquire more regional park land in Dakota County.

Schmidt asked why this land is so important. Stefferud pointed out the park boundary and noted that it is also all riverfront property.

Skovholt asked if there are any other in-holdings. Sullivan stated that there are six inholdings, two of which bisect the park.

Wicklund recalled past discussions regarding moving houses/buildings and it is usually not economically feasible. This however, he felt is a good solution, as these are nice homes and would be relocated adjacent to a regional park, enhancing their value.

Jabs asked about relocation costs: Sullivan stated that there would be closing costs and platting costs, but no relocation costs. Those would be essentially covered in the asking price, once the homes are moved.

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

Skovholt discussed the total reimbursements Dakota County will have going forward and noted that other implementing agencies are in similar positions. He stated it is important to note the large amount of dollars needed for our regional parks system.

**(2008-73) Request to broaden scope of acquisition grant SG-05-83 to match Federal trail grant for Rice Creek North Regional Trail and Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve, Anoka County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks**

Stefferud did a PowerPoint presentation discussing Anoka County's request to broaden the scope of the acquisition grant (SG-05-83) and to extend the grants duration for two years.

John VonDeLinde, Anoka County Parks gave additional information of the circumstances of the County's request.

Schmidt asked for more information regarding the request to extend the grant. Stefferud stated that the grant agreement also needs to be extended to June 30, 2010 to coincide with the termination of the Federal grant. Grant SG-05-83 is financed from a 2005 LCCMR recommended appropriation. The LCCMR staff has approved the change in scope of this grant subject to approval by the Metro Council.

VonDeLinde also referred to Attachment 3 (contained in the meeting packet) which is a correspondence from John Velin of the Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources conditionally approving change in work program for Grant SG-05-83.

Commissioner Botzek motioned and Commissioner Shlaferman seconded to recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize a change in scope of Grant SG-05-83 that allows the balance in the grant to be used to partially fund the match to a \$1,050,000 Federal Transportation Enhancement grant for constructing a portion of Rice Creek North Regional Trail, or to acquire additional land for Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve and to extend the duration of the grant to June 30, 2010. **The motion carried.**

**(2008-72) Request for reimbursement consideration on development costs at Silverwood Park Special Recreation Feature, Three Rivers Park District - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks**

Stefferdud did a PowerPoint presentation describing Three River's Park District's request for reimbursement consideration on development costs at Silverwood Park Special Recreation Feature.

Tom McDowell, Three Rivers Park District gave further details of the request and plans for the arts inspired park setting.

Boe Carlson, Three Rivers Park District discussed the benefits of the development. He stated that they are looking at water quality issues. He described the proposed visitor center to be built with B3 standards (buildings, benchmarks and beyond). Carlson discussed the park development project budget.

Skovholt asked if this is the first request for development funds. Carlson stated that it is. Until now, requests have been for acquisition only.

Commissioner Jabs motioned and Commissioner Wicklund seconded the recommendation that the Metropolitan Council consider reimbursing Three Rivers Park District up to \$12,056,000 for construction at Silverwood Special Recreation Feature as shown in **Attachment 2** in future regional parks capital improvement programs. 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.

Skovholt asked what the hope is for improving the lake's water quality. McDowell stated that the prognosis is encouraging.

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

## **REPORTS**

Staff: Stefferud discussed a spreadsheet showing the Conference Committee recommendations on the 2008 bonding bill and noted that they are recommending \$10.5 million dollars for the Metro Regional Parks CIP. It was noted that it is expected to pass in the House and the Senate but that the Governor may do a line item veto on parts of the bill or veto the entire Bonding Bill, since it exceeds his position by \$100 million.

Chair: None.

Commissioners: None.

## **NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, May 6, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. in Robert Room LLA.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Skovholt adjourned the meeting at 5:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle, Executive Secretary