

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

MEETING OF
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

January 6, 2009

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Glen Skovholt, Chair, Barb Schmidt, Gary Botzek, Richard Jabs, Robert Wicklund, Daniel Shlaferman, Bob Moeller, Mark Peterson, Billy Dinkel, Dan Wolter, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

ABSENT: None

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Skovholt called the meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:03 p.m. on January 6, 2009.

NEW MEMBERS

Chair Skovholt swore in two new members: Mark Peterson and William (Billy) Dinkel. Introductions were made.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

A note: the Agenda stated to approve the January '9' Agenda and it should read January 6. Commissioner Wicklund motioned and Commissioner Schmidt seconded to approve the January 6, 2009 Agenda and the November 10, 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.)

Greg Mack, Director of Ramsey County Parks talked to the Commission about the Legacy Bill (sales tax increase of 3/8 of a cent, effective in July). He stated that the implementing agencies have been meeting regarding this and he passed out a summary generally agreed upon regarding the distribution and use of constitutionally approved parks and trails funds. He discussed the importance of consistent and reliable distribution of these funds to agencies.

Botzek noted that the House has put together a committee today to set policy on looking at how these funds will be distributed.

BUSINESS:

Appointment of Richard Jabs as Vice-Chair to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission - Glen Skovholt, Chair

Chair Skovholt, in accordance with the terms of the MPOSC bylaws, appointed Richard Jabs as Vice-Chair (subject to Commission approval) for a term of one year beginning January 6, 2009 through the first meeting of the Commission in January 2010.

A motion was made by Commissioner Moeller and seconded by Commissioner Botzek to recommend that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission approve the appointment of Richard Jabs as the Commission's Vice-Chair for 2009. **The motion carried.**

Information Item: 2008 Regional Park System Visitor Study—ISG Consulting - John Kari, Planning Analyst

Kari briefed the Commission on the 2008 Regional Park System Visitor Study discussing the goals and objectives of the survey conducted by Information Specialists Group, Inc and also described the methodology. Kari introduced Jay Schaefer, from IGS. Schaefer discussed the sampling plan and gave an overview of the data. Over 7,000 residents were surveyed from June through August of 2008. He discussed the mix of overall findings as well as individual findings of parks and of trails.

Moeller commented that buses/rail are showing almost no contribution to visitors arriving at the park. Schaefer stated that some persons surveyed may have taken a bus and then ‘walked’ into the park, so when asked, they responded that they walked to the park. Kari noted these are trends that are explored. Schmidt asked if in future surveys, they could ask further if the answer is ‘walked’ to determine if public transit was used to get near a park.

Schmidt asked if the average number of persons per vehicle was similar to 1998. Youngquist stated that this was an interesting point; however she did not recall the number for 1998. She noted that she would look into this.

Moeller asked if the usage of looping trails vs. trails that ‘end’ could be differentiated. Schaefer stated that this data could be separated out.

Schaefer discussed recommendations for future surveys.

Shlaferman asked if we know if summer users do not use in the winter. Schaefer stated that seasonal usage was explored.

Schaefer noted that a full report will be forthcoming.

Moeller asked if the survey inquired about security concerns on the trails. Schaefer stated this was not.

Dinkel asked about the age of those surveyed starting at age 12 and how that was derived. Youngquist stated that they wanted feedback on teenage usage.

Dinkel asked if the responses from ‘non-taxpayer’ group (teens) could be separated. Schaefer stated that it could be.

(2009-5) Mississippi River Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment Realigning Trail from Hastings to Spring Lake Park Reserve , Dakota County (Referral No. 15553-5) - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferdud did a PowerPoint and discussed a request from Dakota County Parks for a Mississippi River Regional Trail Master Plan amendment that realigns the trail from Hastings to Spring Lake Park Reserve. He noted that this change was based on analyzing 4 alternative alignments and reviewed, with input from affected citizens and the Nininger Township Board. Stefferud stated that the Dakota County Board selected the Co. Rd. 87 and 125th Street alignment because it places the trail along roads that have lower traffic speeds and traffic volume, and it utilizes the adjacent natural resources of Spring Lake Park Reserve and private lands to increase the recreational quality of the trail. One landowner (Harrison Benjamin) has submitted 4 documents for the record opposing this alignment. Dakota County Parks Staff have prepared a response to Mr. Benjamin’s concerns which is also part of the record. The County has a \$696,000 federal transportation enhancement grant and \$375,000 of local funds to finance the \$1,071,000 cost for trail construction and right-of-way acquisition for this trail. The County intends to begin right of way acquisition and trail construction in 2009.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmidt and seconded by Commissioner Jobs to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the Mississippi River Regional Trail master plan amendment realigning trail from Hastings to Spring Lake Park Reserve, Dakota County (Referral No. 15553-5). **The motion carried.**

(2009-6) Park Acquisition Opportunity Grant Request to Purchase Land for Lebanon Hills Regional Park, Dakota County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd did a PowerPoint presentation and discussed the request from Dakota County Parks for a park acquisition opportunity grant to purchase land (a 1.1 acre inholding parcel) for Lebanon Hills Regional Park.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmidt and seconded by Commissioner Jabs to recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize a grant of \$17,400 from the State Acquisition Grant Account in the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Dakota County to partially finance the acquisition of the 1.1 acre urban parcel as part of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The grant should be financed with \$10,440 from the 2008 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriation and \$6,960 of Metropolitan Council bonds. **The motion carried.**

(2009-7) Change in Scope of Grant SG-2006-125 to Purchase Land for Eagle Lake Regional Park, Three Rivers Park District - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd did a PowerPoint presentation and discussed Three Rivers Park District's request to change the scope of grant SG-2006-125 (of \$225,000) to partially finance the cost to acquire a 0.37 acre inholding at Eagle Lake Regional Park. The Park District will provide \$125,000 of its own funds to fully finance the acquisition and is not requesting reimbursement consideration from the Parks CIP for that local match.

Botzek asked if there is any 'sunset' on the original grant. Stefferud stated that this agreement was for 3 years, but can be negotiated to be extended.

Dinkel asked about a road to be abandoned that the Park District would then acquire. He asked who pays for the removal of gravel or any improvements made. Boe Carlson, Three Rivers Park District responded that the Park District would.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wicklund and seconded by Commissioner Shlaferman to recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorizes a change in the scope of grant SG-2006-125 to partially finance the acquisition of the Weegman property for Eagle Lake Regional Park and directs Council staff to execute an amendment to the grant agreement that reflects this change in scope. **The motion carried.**

(2009-4) Request for Reimbursement Consideration of \$300,000 for Development at North Mississippi Regional Park, Minneapolis Park & Rec. Board - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd did a PowerPoint presentation discussing the request from Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board for reimbursement consideration (for up to \$300,000) for development at North Mississippi Regional Park. The Park Board would like to add a dock, restroom, picnic shelter, pavement and site improvements at the Camden Boat Launch. The funding for this request would come from interest earnings on Metro Council park bonds as required by State law. The Park Board would like the Metro Council to authorize a grant of \$300,000 for this reimbursement in spring 2009. However, the timing of when \$300,000 of interest earnings would be available for the grant is not known and cannot be guaranteed.

Wicklund questioned if it will be possible that there will be interest earned or even likely. Stefferud stated that it was but that there was no guarantee of when this would happen.

Moeller asked if there is any way of estimating when the dollars would be available. Stefferud stated that fiscal services may be able to provide an estimate, but would probably not feel comfortable doing this.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wicklund and seconded by Commissioner Jabs to recommend that the Metropolitan Council consider reimbursing \$300,000 to the Minneapolis Park & Rec. Board to add a dock, restroom, picnic shelter, pavement and site improvements at the Camden Boat Launch in North Mississippi Regional Park when that amount of interest has been earned on the Council's park bonds in accordance with State law. **The motion carried.**

REPORTS

Chair: None.

Commissioners: Botzek asked if we maintain a list of 'potential' liability regarding the number of reimbursement promised for consideration. Stefferud stated that we do.

New members discussed the reimbursement policy for educational purposes.

Staff: Ann Beckman reported that the Regional Parks Foundation will have its first board meeting at the end of February. The Foundation has a 26 member Board of Directors. It will be chaired by the Chair of the Metropolitan Council (Peter Bell). Two Metropolitan Council members will serve on the board, as well as Glen Skovholt. She stated that three conservation members will serve on the Board representing the Trust for Public Land, the Nature Conservancy, and the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota. The Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will also serve on the Board as an advisory member. In lieu of forming an advisory board to the park foundation, each of the ten park implementing agencies will have a representative on the board of directors of the Foundation. Nine community Board members will be appointed to represent a broad geographic base, and to provide links to the legal, business and philanthropic community.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, February 3, 2009.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Skovholt adjourned the meeting at 5:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle, Executive Secretary

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