

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

MEETING OF
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

June 2, 2009

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Chuck Haas, Chair, Richard Jabs, Daniel Shlaferman, Bob Moeller, Robert Wicklund, Gary Botzek,

ABSENT: Mark Peterson, Billy Dinkel, Barb Schmidt, Dan Wolter, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Haas called the meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:05p.m. on June 2, 2009.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Chair Haas noted that the minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Community Development Committee and the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Meeting of May 18, 2009 are enclosed for informational purposes and will note be 'approved'.

Commissioner Wicklund motioned and Commissioner Jabs seconded to approve the Amended June 2, 2009 Agenda and the May 18, 2009 MPOSC 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:

(2009-190) Adoption of rules for Park Acquisition Opportunity Grants - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd discussed rules that are due to expire on June 30th. The proposal is to continue to use these same rules on a permanent basis with a grant limit per agency of \$1.7 million per State Fiscal Year (July 1 to June 30).

Jabs asked if there have been any complaints. Stefferud responded that there have not.

Haas shared Barb Schmidt's comments and noted that she was not able to attend today's meeting. Schmidt was concerned with the less than equitable formula. She had hoped that the Commission would discuss this later in our policy plan discussion and noted that she would like to see only a one year extension of the rules at this time. Her concerns were that in large acquisitions, agencies end up having to contribute large sums of money.

Stefferd reiterated that 25% of cost is the agency's contribution. It was discussed to cap the amount at \$500,000 per agency.

Haas stated that if the total is greater than \$2.2 million, the agency can apply for 75% reimbursement. Stefferud stated that this is true.

Botzek agreed with Schmidt's comments. He stated that we need to look at reimbursements historically and also the revenue with the new constitutional amendment, as revenue is looking better.

Wicklund has no problem with reviewing this again but stressed that there will always be issues. He noted that it may not be possible to always give, what has always been given.

Botzek motioned and Wicklund seconded to recommend that the Metropolitan Council adopt the following rules for awarding Park Acquisition Opportunity Grants for an additional year:

1. Grants from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund may only be awarded to finance a portion of the cost to acquire land within Metropolitan Council-approved master plan boundaries, and only after the requesting regional park implementing agency has used available acquisition grant funds previously provided by the Metropolitan Council.
2. Any interest cost on a contract for deed or other timed payment plan is not eligible for grant funding. The value of a discounted sale (i.e. the difference between the appraised value and a reduced sale price) is not counted as part of the cost to acquire land and is not included as part of a local match to the grant.
3. Grants from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund may finance a portion of the actual cost to acquire land after deducting any Metropolitan Council grants and other grants used to finance a portion of the cost as follows:
 - i. The Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant finances 75% of the net cost of acquiring the land which is defined as the purchase price—not the appraised value; legal fees, appraisal costs and other closing costs incurred by the park agency; the property tax equivalency payment due to the city or township; and stewardship costs.
 - ii. A maximum contribution of 25% of the net cost of acquiring the land up to \$567,000 that is financed by regional park implementing agency funds or other sources is not eligible for Regional Parks CIP reimbursement consideration by the Metropolitan Council. Seventy-five percent (75%) of a contribution above \$567,000 that is financed with regional park implementing agency funds is eligible for Regional Parks CIP reimbursement consideration by the Metropolitan Council.
4. The maximum amount of Park Acquisition Opportunity Grant funds available to a park agency is \$1.7 million per State Fiscal Year (July 1 to June 30).

REPORTS

Chair: None.

Commissioners: Botzek informed the Commission that he will be resigning as he has sold his home and will be moving out of the metro area. He thanked the Commission for the opportunity and stated that he enjoyed working with everyone on the Commission and staff as well.

Staff: Stefferud summarized the recently enacted legislation regarding the constitutionally dedicated Parks and Trails Fund and its implications for regional parks and trails in the Metro Area and the rest of the State.

Last November, an amendment to the State's constitution was approved by voters which increased the sales tax 3/8ths percent and dedicated that tax into 4 Funds. The 4 Funds are called:

Outdoor Heritage Fund	Clean Water Fund
Parks and Trails Fund	Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund

The tax and dedicated funds are in effect for the next 25 years.

14.25% of the tax revenue is placed into the Parks and Trails Fund.

Appropriations from the Parks and Trails Fund must “support parks and trails of state and regional significance” and, appropriations from the Parks and Trails Fund must “supplement - not supplant traditional funding sources.”

The legislation enacted on May 22 will accomplish the following objectives:

\$650,000 is appropriated to the University of Minnesota and the MN Dept. of Natural Resources to collaborate with park agencies, and outdoor recreation interest groups to inventory existing state and regional parks and trails, identify opportunities to enhance and develop new parks and trails where needed, plus link these parks and trails together within realistic financial resources. An internet based user guide will be developed to market and promote these parks and trails. Plus a 10 year strategic plan and 25 year long-range plan will be prepared which must include a proposed a definition of parks and trails of “regional significance”, budgets for ongoing maintenance, a trail plan that stresses trail connectivity and commuter use as well as recreational use, plus non-State financial contributions to these parks and trails.

About \$8.9 million is appropriated for a statewide competitive grant program for parks and trails of regional significance. Grants must be matched with 25% of non-State funds. These grants can be used for land acquisition, development, restoration and maintenance purposes.

Finally, about \$27.8 million was appropriated to the DNR and the Metropolitan Council each to support the State Parks and Trails System and the Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System.

Annual reports to the Legislature regarding expenditures and use of these appropriations must be prepared.

The key components of this legislation for adjacent counties includes participation in the statewide parks and trails inventory, framework and plans plus applying for any statewide competitive grant funds. Your park departments will be contacted by the Univ. of MN and/or DNR later this summer regarding this collaborative planning effort and grant program. We look forward to working with you on the collaborative planning effort which will help shape the future of all State and regionally significant parks and trails to the year 2034.

NEXT MEETING

July 7, 2009 – Business meeting, followed by a tour at the Weinkaupk House—Lake Rebecca Park Reserve.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Haas adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

TOUR

John VonDeLinde welcomed the Commission, made introductions and led the group on a bus tour of Bunker Beach and the campground at Bunker Hills Regional Park, and Rum River Central Regional Park.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle, Executive Secretary

Q:\parks\2009\07072009\6-2-2009 MPOSC minutes.docm