

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

MEETING OF
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

September 3, 2009

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Chuck Haas, Chair, Barb Schmidt, Richard Jabs, Daniel Shlaferman, Bob Moeller, Billy Dinkel

ABSENT: Mark Peterson, 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 4:01 p.m. on September 3, 2009.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

A note: the August 4, 2009 minutes did not show Billy Dinkel present and showed Gary Botzek absent (he is no longer on the Commission). Commissioner Jabs motioned and Commissioner Moeller seconded to approve the September 3, 2009 Agenda and the August 4, 2009 Minutes, with noted corrections. **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:

Information Item: Embrace Open Space Study on Park and Open Space Effects on Residential Land Values in Hennepin County - Jenna Fletcher, Embrace Open Space

Jenna Fletcher shared the results of a study conducted by Embrace Open Space (EOS) and discussed the top ten benefits of conserving land. She discussed multiple approaches used to measure economic benefits to land and the analysis done. Analysis methods included:

- enhanced property values
- visitor/recreational use
- ecosystem services

Fletcher discussed national data that shows economic benefits for properties near open space.

Fletcher discussed the open space that was evaluated and explained that while there is no definitive source on what constitutes 'open space' the best starting point is data from county and city assessor's offices. The Hennepin County study includes:

- Public parks and greenways
- Natural areas such as woodlands, wetlands, prairies and waterways
- Open space owned by charitable organizations
- Conservation easements in cluster developments

Discussed increased property values found in Washington County open space analysis.

Discussed why EOS did this study and the hopes to raise awareness to the value of preserving unprotected natural resources as rapid population growth occurs.

Discussed the methodology of regression analysis done and gave an overview of the results of the study in Hennepin County.

Beckman stated that this study has been beneficial to the Metropolitan Council and described its resource value as the Council works with cities. She noted that it is quantifiable data.

Shlaferman asked if any studies have been done on trails. Fletcher stated there have been and they have shown that they do make an impact.

Jabs asked about the 'fall out' of high income neighborhoods. Fletcher responded that because homes are generally larger and on 2+ acres they have, in essence, bought their open space. She noted however that if you double a lot size you won't double the increased value.

Information Item: Overview of Update to 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan - Ann Beckman, Manager of Regional Systems Planning and Growth Strategy

Beckman gave a brief update and noted that staffs are working on a web based document. She would like to include links and FAQ section. She talked about areas to be included, for example a discussion about the Regional Parks Foundation of the Twin Cities.

There was discussion regarding the question: how do we get a pool of funds together for acquisitions. Discussed looking at changes to the system, for example, trail realignments. Beckman stated staff would like to bring an overview of these system changes in October.

Beckman stated that staff would like to have a draft ready for the Community Development Committee meeting in December and ready for adoption by the Council in January.

Park Acquisition Opportunity Grant Request to Purchase 8.9 Acre Parcel for Carver Park Reserve, Three Rivers Park District - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferdud gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding request from Three Rivers Park District for an acquisition opportunity fund grant of \$719,400 to partially finance the acquisition of the 8.89 acre Hedtke parcel as part of the Carver Park Reserve.

Stefferdud discussed how the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant would be financed from the State Acquisition Grant Account. Sixty percent of the grant (\$431,640) would be from the 2008 State Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Appropriation and forty percent of the grant (\$287,760) would be from Metropolitan Council bonds.

Schmidt asked what this acquisition will do for the park. Boe Carlson, Three Rivers Park District responded that it will provide more of a buffer for the pet exercise area. It would also prevent development of this area that would be a significant impact to the park. It would also enable the expansion of natural resources.

Jabs asked about properties now developed that were once a part of the Master Plan and asked if they have been removed from the Park Reserve. Carlson stated that yes, they have.

Dinkel asked if there was any opposition. Carlson stated there was not.

Moeller motioned and it was seconded by Jabs to recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize a grant of \$719,400 from the State Acquisition Grant Account in the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Three Rivers Park District to partially finance the acquisition of the 8.89 acre Hedtke parcel as part of Carver Park Reserve. The grant should be financed with \$431,640 of 2008 State Environment and Natural Resources Trust Funds and \$287,760 of Metropolitan Council bonds. **The motion carried.**

Reimbursement Authorization for City of St. Paul Regional Park Projects Financed with FY 2011 Parks and Trails Fund Appropriation - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferud gave background regarding the request from the City of St. Paul. The City has three projects that will be financed from its share of the State Fiscal Year 2011 Parks and Trails Fund appropriation. The City would like to begin work on those projects prior to July 1, 2010 –which is the start date of State Fiscal Year 2011. The premise for the earlier start date is to align the work on these projects with the City’s calendar fiscal year and to insure that the work would be completed by June 30, 2012—the end date for work financed with the State Fiscal Year 2011 Parks and Trails Fund appropriation.

The Committee inquired about the use of the Parks and Trails Fund appropriation for financing staffing costs as well as capital costs. Council staff replied that the constitutional amendment language for the Parks and Trails Fund appropriation allows staffing (e.g. operations) as well as capital costs. Park agencies are using the Parks and Trails Fund grants to complement other revenue sources, which is consistent with the constitutional amendment.

Jabs motioned and it was seconded by Shlaferman to recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize the City of St. Paul to expend funds on the following State Fiscal Year 2011 Parks and Trails Fund projects under the stipulation that the County will not be reimbursed for its expenses from the FY 2011 Parks and Trails Fund appropriation until the appropriation is available and after execution of grant amendments or grant agreements for these projects:

1. \$923,000 to complete picnic shelter, park road realignment, utilities and lighting at Lilydale Regional Park that was begun with a \$1,455,000 grant in FY 2010.
2. \$610,000 for design and renovation at the Lily Pond in Como Regional Park. The City would like to have restoration of this historic element occur concurrently with the FY 2010 grant of \$250,000 to renovate the Joyce Killmer Memorial Fireplace.
3. \$60,000 for a volunteer coordinator position and \$52,000 for an Educational Coordinator position which the City would like to hire prior to July 1, 2010.

The motion carried.

REPORTS

Chair: None.

Staff: Beckman reported on the ‘Do Walk, Do Run’ conference attended by she and Jan Youngquist. She noted that Three Rivers Park District won an award for one of their regional trails.

Commissioners: Moeller asked the implementing agencies if they have any resources for guidance on development of non-regional trails.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, October 6, 2009.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Haas adjourned the meeting at 5:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle, Executive Secretary