

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

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

**January 14, 2010
(Date postponed from January 5 and again from January 7, 2010)**

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chuck Haas, Richard Jabs, Barb Schmidt, Billy Dinkel, Tom Gamec, Wendy Wulff, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

ABSENT: Bob Moeller, Daniel Shlaferman

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Haas called the meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:06 p.m. on January 14, 2010.

OATH OF OFFICE

Chair Haas postponed the oath of office to Doug Baines, new Commissioner for District A, as he was unable to attend this meeting. Mr. Baines plans to attend the meeting on February 16, 2010 and be sworn in at that time.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Beckman noted that item #6 regarding the Amendment to Trout Brook Regional Trail Master Plan, City of St. Paul will need to be delayed until the February 2, 2010 meeting.

Commissioner Jabs motioned and Commissioner Gamec seconded to approve the January 14, 2010 Agenda with that above mentioned amendment, as well as the December 1, 2009 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 five-minute presentation).

None.

BUSINESS

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

In accordance with the terms of the MPOSC bylaws, Chair Haas appointed Richard Jabs as Vice-Chair subject to approval by the Commission. His term would commence on January 7, 2010—the first meeting of the Commission in January.

It was moved by Schmidt and seconded by Gamec to recommend that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission approve the appointment of Richard Jabs as the Commission's Vice-Chair for 2010. **The motion carried.**

Update to 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan

Introduction, Policies and Strategies - Ann Beckman, Manager-Regional Systems Planning and Growth Strategy

Beckman introduced Linda Picone, who was contracted by the Council to assist in writing the final draft of the updated 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

Beckman discussed the structure and noted that we are working towards a web-based document. She described the contents including:

- Introduction (full introductions provided as reference for this meeting)
- Policies and Strategies (outlined provided as reference for this meeting)
- System Plan Changes
- Implementation

Beckman stated that there will be two meetings in February (2nd and 16th) and outlined the 2030 Parks Policy Plan Update (Update) timeline. She stated that we hope to have a document ready for recommendation on March 2, 2010. It would then go to the Community Development Committee in April. Changing the policy plan does require a public hearing that would occur in May and then it could be adopted in June. She reminded everyone that because we are making changes to the system, we will need to send out System Statements to local communities that are affected.

Beckman walked through the Introduction. She described how the Update is used more broadly with the 2030 forecasts.

Beckman discussed the four goals of the 2030 Regional Development Framework including:

- Work with local communities to accommodate growth in a flexible, connected and efficient manner.
- Plan and invest in multi-modal transportation choices, based on the full ranges of costs & benefits, to slow the growth of congestion & serve the region's economic needs.
- Encourage expanded choices in housing location & types, and improved access to jobs and opportunities.
- Work with local & regional partners to reclaim, conserve, protect and enhance the region's vital natural resources:
 - o Encouraging the integration of natural resource conservation into all land planning decisions.
 - o Seeking to protect important natural resources and adding areas to the regional parks system.
 - o Working to protect the region's water resources.

Dinkel asked who decides what should be saved for parks. Beckman stated that it is a collaboration of MPOSC, Community Development Committee, the Met Council, communities and the regional implementing agencies.

Youngquist stated that a number of years ago the DNR and the Met Council did some mapping identifying areas to be preserved. A digital map was sent to communities prior to them doing their comprehensive plan updates.

Beckman showed planning areas on a map describing developed communities, developing communities and rural or agricultural areas.

Beckman defined the 2030 Regional Development Framework as the initial chapter and unifying theme of the Council's Metropolitan Development Guide. She stated that it is the umbrella statement of regional policies, goals and strategies to inform the Council's system plans for transportation and aviation, wastewater services, and regional parks.

Beckman discussed the three strategies in which the local comp plans are reviewed for including:

- Conformance with metropolitan system plans;
- Consistency with Council policies; and
- Compatibility with adjacent and affected governmental units.

Youngquist discussed the percentage of comp plans reviewed to date (about 90%) that comply with the Regional Parks Policy Plans.

Beckman discussed policies and strategies. She noted that the intent of all of this was not to change policies but to make them more clear. Beckman continued through policies and strategies and asked for questions as they come up.

Beckman began with the policies and strategies regarding siting and acquisition:

Schmidt questioned strategy #3 and asked 'what' do new trails, etc. have a priority over. Beckman responded that staff will have to take another look at this.

Beckman next discussed the policies and strategies regarding finance.

Schmidt asked about strategy #6 that talks about acquisition but doesn't mention development. Beckman agreed that it should.

Dinkel commented on strategy #7 and asked about trails that may become LRT in the future. Beckman noted that we make sure that we get 10 years of usage (if it's an interim use) before we put regional investment into developing a trail.

Haas asked about the language in strategy #7 distinguishing trails that may be used for transit and asked if we mean trails that may be converted to transit. Beckman stated that this is vague for a reason.

Gamec stated that if there is a regional trail that is replaced with LRT we lose links to the trails. He asked, if at the time of acquisition, could enough land be acquired so that the two may co-exist. Beckman will check with transportation staff regarding the language here. Youngquist stated that this may come up where we have former railroad corridors that have been converted to trail corridors and are typically owned by the regional railroad authority and leased by the park agencies. She stated that our Transportation Policy Plan has a policy to preserve those for future transit if needed. She noted that these corridors may go back to a railroad corridor at some point.

Haas clarified that strategy #7 deals with when Council resources have been used to develop a trail and it can be converted back to transit. Beckman stated yes that when there is interim usage we want to make sure that we get 10 years of usage – otherwise it is not an effective use of Council resources.

Jabs discussed requiring a planning process that looks at alternatives and then decides what the best use is in the long term with that possibility of 10 years being the minimum. Beckman agreed that this is a good point and could possibly be added to trail evaluation criteria.

Schmidt questioned if the trail was in and later there was a proposal for LRT usage, would there be mitigation required. Beckman didn't believe so, as future LRT trails have been identified.

Haas agreed with Jabs comments and stated that maybe 10 years is not getting the region's monies worth. He asked if there is the possibility of creating a condition similar to how we handle easements. Beckman stated that we can do more work on this.

Dinkel discussed the pressure of developing along LRT corridors and concern that transportation folks can come in a take park property for their development. Youngquist discussed the policy of removing land from the regional park system and that there must be an equally valuable land exchange in order to allow this. Beckman stated that with trails, it's not the amount of land but rather the connections they provide.

Wulff agreed with Jabs and stated that 10 years doesn't seem very long as pavement lasts a lot longer than that. Youngquist noted that some of these trails have not been paved knowing that they may be reclaimed.

Beckman discussed strategy #8 and noted that we should add 'and develop' to the language.

Haas questioned the language in strategy #8 and asked Beckman to check with the Foundation as this language seems broader than their mission statement. Beckman will check into this.

Beckman next discussed policies and strategies regarding planning.

Beckman next discussed policies and strategies regarding recreation activities and facilities.

Haas asked if we can encourage cooperation between parks people and transportation – is this considered. Beckman stated that this is part of the comprehensive planning process. Youngquist stated that most road projects require an environmental assessment that is reviewed by the Metro Council if a regional trail is involved. Youngquist noted that Anoka County is a good example where this is being done.

Wulff discussed TAB talking about requiring trails along all highways, however dropped this idea as they didn't want to see all trail dollars going to this and many folks would rather travel in nicer areas and no along the highway.

Beckman discussed having two categories of trails – linking and destination trails.

Beckman next discussed policies and strategies regarding system protection.

Dinkel asked for some examples of 'negative impacts'. He is concerned that we don't allow high density development next to a park and yet we want high park usage. Beckman stated that we have a policy for compatible land uses in or adjacent to regional parks. The environmental review process will determine if there will be an impact to the park. Gamec talked about buffering areas between homes, trails, and/or parks. Haas stated we are not talking about high density but compatible land use. For example, you wouldn't want a gravel pit next to a regional park.

Youngquist discussed how comprehensive plans are looked at to make sure lands within master plan boundaries are guided for future land use.

Haas commented on strategy #2 stating that "placed" should be "replaced".

System Plan Changes - Jan Youngquist, Senior Planner-Parks

Youngquist discussed proposed system changes using maps and descriptions detailing the changes that were passed out at the meeting.

Youngquist stated that we will go into more specific detail at the February 2nd and 16th meetings. Staff analysis and recommendations will then be presented to this commission.

Amend scope of FY 2010 Parks and Trails Fund grant SG-2009-043, Carver County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd discussed a request from Carver County to change the scope of a grant of \$205,000 that was financed from Fiscal Year 2010 Parks and Trails funds appropriated to Carver County. The County asked that the grant be amended to allow up to \$120,000 to be used to partially finance the match to a \$1 million Federal Transportation Enhancement grant to design and construct a trail in Lake Minnewashta Regional Park and a trail underpass of Trunk Highway 41 that would link to a City of Chanhassen trail. (The City of Chanhassen is also providing funds since the trail would be constructed with a portion of the federal grant too.) Any unneeded funds from the Lake Minnewashta RP trail and underpass project would be used as a match to \$1,729,000 of Federal Transportation Enhancement grant funds, Transportation Enhancement ARRA funds and Carver County Regional Rail Authority funds to construct the 6.9 mile segment and trailhead facility for the Dakota Rail Regional Trail. The County also requests that the grant expiration date be amended to March 31, 2012 to align with the expiration date of the federal Transportation Enhancement grant for the Lake Minnewashta RP trail and Trunk Highway 41 underpass.

Schmidt asked where the money for the original project will come from. Stefferud stated that the City of Chanhassen will provide funds as well.

Jabs asked what the Council's position referencing an article in the Star Tribune regarding 'free money'. Stefferud stated that Carver County was unable to attend today's meeting and he doesn't feel comfortable answering for them. Beckman stated that there were some misquotes in that article. Jabs stated that he was offended by the article because he feels there was due diligence done by staff and the County.

Schmidt motioned and Jabs seconded to recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize an amendment to grant SG-2009-043 to: (1) allow up to \$120,000 to be used to partially finance the match to a \$1 million Federal Transportation Enhancement grant to design and construct a trail in Lake Minnewashta Regional Park and a trail underpass of Trunk Highway 41 that links to a City of Chanhassen trail, (2) allow the remaining funds in the grant to match \$1,729,000 of a Federal Transportation Enhancement grant, Transportation Enhancement ARRA funds and Carver County Regional Rail Authority funds to construct a 6.9 mile segment and a trailhead facility for the Dakota Rail Regional Trail, and (3) extend the grant's duration to March 31, 2012. **The motion carried.**

Request to amend Scott County's FY 2010 Parks and Trails Fund project list and related amendment to Metropolitan Council's 2010 Unified Capital Improvement Program - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd discussed a request from Scott County to amend three grants. The first for the Cedar Lake Farm Development, Phase 1; the second for the preparation of the Scott County Regional Trail Master Plan; and the third for the Cedar Lake Farm Development Master Plan.

Jabs motioned and it was seconded by Schmidt to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the changes to Scott County grants described below as an amendment to the 2010 Unified Capital Improvement Program and authorize Council staff to execute appropriate grant documents.

Grant:	SG-2009-033, \$96,000
Purpose:	Cedar Lake Farm Development, Phase 1
Change:	That this grant be canceled and the funding reallocated to the trail and park system planning projects described in grants SG-2009-34 and SG2009-036 below.

Grant: SG-2009-034, \$25,000
Purpose: Prepare Scott County Regional Trail Master Plan
Change: Modify grant project description to update the Scott Regional Trail Master Plan and complete a master plan for the Spring Lake Regional Trail. Increase grant allocation to \$56,000.

Grant: SG-2009-036, \$75,000
Purpose: Cedar Lake Farm Development Master Plan
Change: Modify grant to fund a park system plan and development master plans for Cedar Lake Farm and Doyle-Kennefick regional parks. Increase grant allocation to \$140,000.

Dinkel asked if this was an unusual request. Stefferud responded that it was not in light of the fact that this is a new grant. Beckman noted that this request is in line with the policy plan to encourage master planning.

The motion carried.

Amending boundary of Spring Lake Park Reserve to acknowledge transferring land in the park for a Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources Wildlife Management Area, Dakota County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd discussed the request from Dakota County but noted that he was just informed of an issue of lifting restrictive covenants on land that the Council has a sewer easement on. He stated that this will need to be brought to the attention of our legal staff before going on to our Community Development Committee.

Beckman suggested tabling this item for now.

Jabs motioned to table the item to resolve the restrictive covenant issue and review at the February 16 MPOSC meeting. It was seconded by Dinkel. **The motion carried.**

REPORTS

Chair: Haas stated that he had an opportunity to meet Eliot Perovich, the first Chair of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. He noted that Arne Stefferud worked with him at that time.

Commissioners: Dinkel commented that St. Paul used heritage money for staff – in lieu of all the attention to wildlife portion in the news lately. We need to take this very seriously.

Wendy Wulff noted that the Council is interviewing candidates for the open position on the Commission.

Staff: Stefferud reminded the Commission of the second meeting planned for February 16, 2010.

NEXT MEETING

February 2, 2010.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle, Executive Secretary