

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

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

**February 2, 2010**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chuck Haas, Richard Jabs, Barb Schmidt, Bob Moeller,

**ABSENT:** Billy Dinkel, Tom Gamec, Daniel Shlaferman, Wendy Wulff, 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 3:05 p.m. on February 2, 2010.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES**

Commissioner Schmidt motioned and Commissioner Jabs seconded to approve the February 2, 2010 Agenda and the January 14, 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).

Deb Alper from the Sierra Club North Star Chapter informed the Commission about a project they are doing called "Transit to Green Space". Their goal is to access city area parks without a car and share their efforts using a blog: [www.transittogreenspace.com](http://www.transittogreenspace.com).

She noted that the Sierra Club is an environmental group and so matching transit to green space is a good way to reduce pollution and also give access to parks for those who don't drive.

Jabs commended this work and asked if collaboration with schools has been done. Alper stated that it has and noted that all of the outings are listed on their blog. She also noted that they hope to plan more.

Haas stated that there is a visitor origin survey on the Council's website that the Sierra Club may be interested in looking at.

## **BUSINESS**

### **(2010-37) 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 (tabled from January 7 meeting) - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks**

Commissioner Schmidt motion and it was seconded by Jabs to take this item 'off the table'. **The motion carried.**

Stefferud gave a PowerPoint presentation describing a request from Dakota County Parks to amend the Master Plan that removes the boundary of Spring Lake Park Reserve to acknowledge transferring land in the park to the MN DNR for a wildlife management area.

Moeller asked if there is a downside to doing this. Stefferud stated that there is not and that this is what was envisioned as part of the park planning process and this is a win, win situation. This is aligning the master plan with the joint powers agreement.

Steve Sullivan, Dakota County Parks gave some context. He noted that the islands have been ignored for years and not managed appropriately. He stated that the goal of the master plan was to find the right agency to be stewards of the islands and the river. Sullivan feels that the DNR is appropriate as they are good at natural resource preservation as well as habitat restoration. They also provide protection of non-game species. He stated that they are better able to regulate hunting areas than the County as well.

Commissioner Jabs motioned and it was seconded by Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve an amendment to the Spring Lake Park Reserve development master plan and its boundary to allow the Mississippi River islands depicted on Figure 3 to be owned by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and managed under a joint powers agreement with Dakota County for wildlife management and other uses compatible with the wildlife management area. **The motion carried.**

### **Update to 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan Proposed System Plan Changes - Jan Youngquist, Senior Planner-Parks**

Youngquist led the group on a discussion of proposed system changes. Today's discussion was more in-depth, looking specifically at requests from St. Paul, Washington County, and Three Rivers Park District. She noted that these will not be acted upon today but are information items only. Staff will propose recommendations at a future meeting.

Youngquist asked Jody Martinez and Mike Hahm from St. Paul to join her and assist in answering any questions from the Commission. She then described the proposed changes from St. Paul.

Beginning with the request to identify Highland Park as a regional park study area, she noted one error in the packet provided. Highland Park is actually 248 acres (not 257 as listed).

Youngquist discussed visitation information. Martinez described updates to the park. She noted that with those, and with the closing of the Como pool, there will be an expected increase in visitation allowing it to be recognized as a regional park.

Youngquist described why golf course visitation is not counted. Schmidt asked what the acreage of the golf course is. Stefferud stated that it is 170 acres and explained the reason for counting this acreage is because of the winter use for cross country skiing.

Jabs questioned it not being accepted as a regional park in 2000 and asked what has changed that would make it more inclusive now. Martinez described the \$4 million in renovations that have been done and all of the upgrades.

Jabs asked what type of advertising has been done to promote the park. Hahm discussed the level of planning for this park that has taken place being of the same caliber as the planning they do for their regional parks.

Jabs asked about linking trails. Hahm stated that it is their goals to provide these.

Youngquist stated that we are asking to propose this as a study area to determine its feasibility as a regional park. We need to determine if visitors are drawing from the region (at least 40%) or if it is serve the locals. Youngquist reminded the group that this is only informational at this point.

Beckman explained that when the visitor origin survey would be done. She noted that it could be included, or funded separately from Parks and Trails funding.

Next Youngquist discussed the proposal to consider the designation of a regional trail search corridor along Ayd Mill Road. She gave background information and discussed the criteria for the regional trail. Schmidt asked if there is a more detailed map. Youngquist stated that she can provide one.

Next Youngquist discussed the proposal to consider the designation of a regional trail search corridor along Johnson Parkway. She gave background information and discussed the criteria for the regional trail. She noted that the linkages are likely to serve a regional audience.

Hahm noted that the City is serious about investing in this project.

Schmidt asked how much of the trail will be on the road. Martinez stated that the goal is to have if off road but acknowledged that portion will have to be on the road.

Youngquist invited John Elholm from Washington County to the table for the next portion of her presentation regarding proposals from Washington County.

Youngquist discussed the proposal to consider the designation of a regional trail search corridor between downtown Stillwater and Lakeland in the western portion of the County. She gave background information and discussed the criteria for the regional trail. Elholm noted that the north end of the trail would end at Highway 36.

Youngquist discussed the proposal to consider recognizing the proposed Point Douglas trail as a regional trail. She gave background information and discussed the criteria for the regional trail.

Youngquist invited Dennis Hahn and Boe Carlson from Three Rivers Park District to the table for the next portion of her presentation regarding a proposal from the Park District.

Youngquist discussed the request from Three Rivers Park District for the Metropolitan Council to consider the inclusion of "The Landing", formerly known as Murphy's Landing, as a special recreation feature in the regional parks system. She noted that The Landing showcases historic preservation of life in a river town in the 1800's.

Youngquist discussed criteria outlined in the Parks Policy Plan for special recreation features.

Haas asked about the purpose of the criteria regarding ‘draining funds’. Beckman stated that we don’t want other agencies to have to subsidize them.

Youngquist discussed visitation noting that it is low, however, because of special programming, The Landing draws a higher percent of regional (non-local) visits.

Hahn presented some slides and background on The Landing. He began with some history of The Landing and Three Rivers Park District’s acquisition of it in 2002.

Carlson discussed visitation elements noting that these are ‘program visits’ and are all intense person to person visits. He noted that the Park District Board has discussed dropping the entrance fee for people who would like to visit and walk through on their own.

Schmidt asked what recreational activities, besides picnicking, are there. Hahn stated that there are hiking trails and self guided interpretive opportunities. Carlson discussed other opportunities being discussed, for example, a river boat tour that would go from The Landing to Fort Snelling, as well as additional linking trails.

Moeller discussed local linking trails being planned for that will go from Victoria, to Chanhassen, to Shakopee, and out to The Landing. He noted that transportation enhancement grant shave been applied for.

**(2010-34) Amendment to Trout Brook Regional Trail master plan, City of St. Paul (Referral Number 20658-1) - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks**

Stefferud discussed an amendment submitted by the City of St. Paul for the Trout Brook Regional Trail master plan.

Stefferud discussed acquisition and development costs needed to implement the master plan, although approval of the master plan does not obligate future funding from the Regional Park CIP to finance those costs.

Stefferud discussed concern from MCES regarding construction close to interceptor (#8660) and requested that a detail set of plans be forwarded to MCES for review to determine whether an encroachment agreement will need to be obtained from the Metropolitan Council prior to construction.

Commissioner Moeller motioned and it was seconded by Commissioner Jobs to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the amendment to Trout Brook Regional Trail Master Plan, City of St. Paul (Referral Number 20658-1) and request that the City of St. Paul submit a detailed set of construction plans for the trail and nature sanctuary to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review to determine whether an encroachment agreement will need to be obtained from the Metropolitan Council prior to construction. **The motion carried.**

**REPORTS**

**Chair:** Haas noted that there will be an extra meeting in February on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will begin at 4pm.

**Commissioners:** None.

**Staff:** None

**NEXT MEETING**

February 16, 2010, beginning at 4pm in Room LLA.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle, Executive Secretary

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