

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

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

**May 24, 2010**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chuck Haas, Barb Schmidt, Billy Dinkel, Jeff Lee, Richard Jabs, Tom Gamec, Bob Moeller, Doug Baines

**ABSENT:** Daniel Shlaferman, Wendy Wulff, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Haas called the special meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:01 p.m. on May 24, 2010.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES**

Commissioner Baines motioned and Commissioner Gamec seconded to approve the May 24, 2010 Agenda and the May 4, 2010 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**

**Update to 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan – MPOSC Recommendations on Proposed System Plan Changes – CONTINUED - Jan Youngquist, Senior Planner, Parks**

Youngquist continued her discussion from the May 4, 2010 meeting looking at all proposed regional parks and trails or study areas that the MPOSC reviewed and noted that it is the intent to have the MPOSC take action to recommend changes to the regional park system as part of the draft for hearing version of the park policy plan.

**GROUP 5—DAKOTA COUNTY**

**P-2 Proposed Regional Park Study Area—Thompson-Kaposia-Kaposia Landing**

Youngquist gave an overview of the proposal noting that designation as a regional park study area does not guarantee that the park would become part of the regional parks system, but would authorize Council staff to work with Dakota County to conduct visitor-origin studies to determine the regional distribution of visitation to the park. Once these studies are complete, information will be provided to MPOSC and the Council for evaluation.

Baines asked what the amenities are. Youngquist responded that Thompson has the Dakota Lodge which can be reserved for parties, etc.; Kaposia has disc golf; and Kaposia Landing has 5,000 feet of shoreline along the Mississippi River. She noted that there is a mix of regional park amenities as well as local park amenities. Steve Sullivan, Dakota County Parks added that there are three picnic areas, two shelters, and biking/hiking trails in all

three parks. He stated that two parks have water access (Thompson Lake and the river), and there is a small ball field.

Youngquist stated that there is a total acreage of 230 acres.

Baines asked about future ball fields planned for Kaposia Landing, noting that would not be in line with regional park usage. Sullivan responded that the City of South St. Paul did the planning for that as a possibility; however he has had conversations with them and clarified that this could be eliminated or that portion of land could be removed from the regional park boundary proposal.

Commissioner Baines made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Jabs to recommend that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission accept the Dakota County proposal P-2 to be incorporated into the draft *Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

Baines noted that it is important that the City of South St. Paul understands that the ball fields would not be an appropriate regional park usage.

Lee asked if there is any clean up that needs to be done at Kaposia Landing. Sullivan stated that it has already occurred.

Chair Haas, seeing no further discussion, called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

#### **Proposed Deletion—Southwest Dakota County Regional Park Search Area**

Youngquist gave an overview of the proposal noting that a regional park search area was designated in the southwest portion of Dakota County in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, which was adopted 2005. The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* indicated that the regional park search area was subject to the outcome of the Dakota County Park System Plan, which was completed in 2008 and was incorporated into the County's comprehensive plan. The County completed an extensive planning process to develop its Park System Plan; a regional park in this area was not a component of the plan. The County is planning a greenway regional trail corridor in the area, which will provide opportunities for recreation as well as protection of natural resources.

Commissioner Baines made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission accept the Dakota County proposal to remove the Southwest Dakota County Regional Park Search Area from the regional parks system as part of the draft *Regional Parks Policy Plan*. Chair Haas, seeing no further discussion, called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

#### **T-5 Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor—Rosemount River Access Trail**

Youngquist gave an overview of the proposal noting that with inclusion into the regional parks system, this trail would qualify for regional parks operations and maintenance funding and upon Council approval of a master plan, would be eligible for acquisition and development funding through the regional parks capital improvement program. The City of Rosemount has developed a master plan for a segment of this trail from downtown Rosemount to the Mississippi River. Dakota County will plan the alignment of the trail to connect to Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The trail will provide connections between Lebanon Hills Regional Park in Eagan/Apple Valley, the proposed Vermillion Highlands Greenway Regional Trail, the planned Mississippi River Regional Trail and Spring Lake Park Reserve in Nininger Township.

#### **T-6 Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor—North Creek Greenway Trail**

Youngquist gave an overview of the proposal noting that with inclusion into the regional parks system, this trail would qualify for regional parks operations and maintenance funding and upon Council approval of a master plan, would be eligible for acquisition and development funding through the regional parks capital improvement program. The proposed trail will connect Lebanon Hills Regional Park and the Minnesota Zoo to the proposed

Vermillion River Greenway Regional Trail in Farmington. The trail will travel through urbanized, suburban and rural areas in Apple Valley, Lakeville and Farmington and provide opportunities to connect to local parks, trails and schools.

Commissioner Gamec made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Baines to recommend that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission accept the Dakota County proposals T-5 and T-6 to be incorporated into the draft *Regional Parks Policy Plan*. Chair Haas, seeing no further discussion, called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

## **GROUP 6—SCOTT COUNTY**

Youngquist reviewed all of the proposals in Group 6 before the Commissioners took action as follows:

### **T-7 Proposed Regional Trail Extension—Big Rivers Regional Trail**

Youngquist gave an overview of the proposal noting that with inclusion into the regional parks system, this trail would qualify for regional parks operations and maintenance funding and upon Council approval of a master plan, would be eligible for acquisition and development funding through the regional parks capital improvement program. This request would extend the Big Rivers Regional Trail into Scott County, which would facilitate a continuous trail from Lilydale-Harriet Island Regional Park along the Minnesota River through Lilydale, Mendota, Mendota Heights, Eagan, Burnsville, Savage, and connect with the Minnesota Valley State Trail in Shakopee.

### **T-8 Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor—Prior Lake Outlet Trail**

Youngquist gave an overview of the proposal noting that with inclusion into the regional parks system, this trail would qualify for regional parks operations and maintenance funding and upon Council approval of a master plan, would be eligible for acquisition and development funding through the regional parks capital improvement program. The proposed trail will create a connection between the proposed Big Rivers Regional Trail and the Minnesota River in Shakopee and the Scott County West Regional Trail and Lower Prior Lake in Prior Lake.

### **T-9 Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor —Louisville Trail**

Youngquist gave an overview of the proposal noting that with inclusion into the regional parks system, this trail would qualify for regional parks operations and maintenance funding and upon Council approval of a master plan, would be eligible for acquisition and development funding through the regional parks capital improvement program. A portion of this proposed trail, along with Carver County's proposed trail T-16, consists of the Union Pacific railroad corridor. Opportunities to acquire a dedicated corridor, especially one that crosses a river between two counties, are rare. With other jurisdictions expressing interest in utilizing portions of the corridor in addition to the trail, acquisition of the Union Pacific railroad corridor could provide opportunities to share acquisition costs, as well a result in a number of other public benefits.

### **T-11 Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor —Elko New Market-Blakeley-Doyle Kennefick Trail**

Youngquist gave an overview of the proposal noting that with inclusion into the regional parks system, this trail would qualify for regional parks operations and maintenance funding and upon Council approval of a master plan, would be eligible for acquisition and development funding through the regional parks capital improvement program. This trail would provide a connection between the planned Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park and the proposed Elko New Market-Blakeley Trail in Elko New Market.

### **T-12 Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor — Elko New Market-Blakeley Trail**

Youngquist gave an overview of the proposal noting that with inclusion into the regional parks system, this trail would qualify for regional parks operations and maintenance funding and upon Council approval of a master plan, would be eligible for acquisition and development funding through the regional parks capital improvement program. The trail would traverse the southern portion of Scott County connecting the Blakeley Bluffs Regional

Park Search Area on the west, Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park, and would extend approximately 2 miles into Dakota County to connect to the proposed Chub Creek Greenway Regional Trail. Dakota County has suggested that Scott County lead the planning efforts for the trail segment that is within Dakota County during Scott County's master planning process for the trail.

### **T-13 Proposed Regional Trail Extension —Blakeley Bluffs Trail**

Youngquist gave an overview of the proposal noting that with inclusion into the regional parks system, the proposed trail from Blakeley Bluffs Regional Park Search Area to the border between Scott and LeSueur counties would qualify for regional parks operations and maintenance funding. Upon Council approval of a master plan, Scott County would be eligible for acquisition and development funding for the trail through the regional parks capital improvement program. A trail connection in LeSueur County to Ney Nature Center would not be eligible for regional park funds, since it is outside of the Metropolitan Council's seven county jurisdiction. The trail would facilitate a connection between the Blakeley Bluffs Regional Park Search Area and Ney Nature Center in LeSueur County.

Moeller asked if it is the Commission's task to judge on the reasonability of the proposals passing. Youngquist stated that by recognizing the areas as search areas, then a master plan would be developed and they would be eligible for regional funding.

Moeller clarified that the Commission is 'not' guaranteeing any funding at this time.

Commissioner Moeller made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Lee to recommend that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission accept the Scott County proposals T-7, T-8, T-9, T-11, T-12 and T-13 to be incorporated into the draft *Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

Schmidt stated that the proposals need to be identified as search areas. Youngquist stated that the language could be changed.

Commissioner Moeller made an amended motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Lee to recommend that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission accept the Scott County proposals T-7, T-8, T-9, T-11, T-12 and T-13 to be included in search areas incorporated into the draft *Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

Baines asked who keeps track of the balance of the system. Beckman stated that this is a critical issue with changing demographics, rail/transit connections, etc. Haas clarified that as an implementing agency comes before the Commission they will have an allocation of funds and it is up to the agency to prioritize which are the be developed first. Beckman stated that is correct and noted that this help ensure 'balance'.

Schmidt asked if staff has involvement in trail search corridors similar to their role in park search areas. Youngquist stated that it is different.

Moeller stated that his purpose for approving the search areas is to allow the agencies an opportunity to do their 'due diligence' and funding 'could' come later.

Youngquist discussed the difference with developing vs. fully developed areas.

Chair Haas, seeing no further discussion, called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

### **GROUP 7—CARVER COUNTY**

Youngquist reviewed all of the proposals in Group 7 before the Commissioners took action as follows:

### **T-10 Proposed Regional Trail Extension—Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail**

Youngquist gave an overview of the proposal noting that with inclusion into the regional parks system, this trail would qualify for regional parks operations and maintenance funding and upon Council approval of a master plan, would be eligible for acquisition and development funding through the regional parks capital improvement program. This request would extend the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail further southwest into Carver County, which would facilitate a continuous trail through Hopkins, Minnetonka, Eden Prairie, Chanhassen, Chaska and Carver. The trail may provide opportunities to connect to the new Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and to proposed regional trails that would cross the Minnesota River into Scott County.

### **T-16 Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor—Union Pacific Corridor Trail**

Youngquist gave an overview of the proposal noting that with inclusion into the regional parks system, this trail would qualify for regional parks operations and maintenance funding and upon Council approval of a master plan, would be eligible for acquisition and development funding through the regional parks capital improvement program. This proposed trail, along with a portion of Scott County's proposed trail T-9, consists of the Union Pacific railroad corridor. Opportunities to acquire a dedicated corridor, especially one that crosses a river between two counties, are rare. With other jurisdictions expressing interest in utilizing portions of the corridor in addition to the trail, acquisition of the Union Pacific railroad corridor could provide a number of public benefits as well as opportunities for cost-sharing.

### **T-17 Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor —County Road 10 Trail**

Youngquist gave an overview of the proposal noting that with inclusion into the regional parks system, this trail would qualify for regional parks operations and maintenance funding and upon Council approval of a master plan, would be eligible for acquisition and development funding through the regional parks capital improvement program. The trail will traverse fast-growing portions of Carver County and provide connections between several regional parks system facilities, including the Southwest Regional Trail Connection, the proposed Twin Cities and Western Regional Trail, the Carver County North-South Regional Trail Search Corridor, the Dakota Rail Regional Trail and the Luce Line State Trail.

Commissioner Baines made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission accept the Carver County proposals T-10, T-16 and T-17 to be incorporated into the draft *Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

Gamec discussed the possibility of a regional trail becoming a light rail corridor. Youngquist stated that there are two trails in Three Rivers Park District currently leasing land for regional trails that are identified as future light rail lines. She noted that these trails are not paved. The hope is that future light rail and a regional trail could co-exist.

Dinkel asked if existing trails could be 'taken' to be converted to light rail. Youngquist explained that the Transportation Policy Plan identifies future light rail lines. She also noted that many of our regional trails are on former railroad beds, which have a large right of way.

Dinkel expressed concern with developing a trail only to have it 'taken' away thereby wasting funding for that development. Haas discussed the criteria for a 10 year usage plan before money is spent on a trail.

Youngquist further stated that when a light rail project is proposed an environmental impact study is done. Therefore these issues would be looked at and there would need to be mitigation.

Chair Haas, seeing no further discussion, called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Youngquist noted that Anoka County would like to bring a proposal to our next meeting.

### **Review of policy revisions in Chapter 2 - Ann Beckman, Regional Systems Planning and Growth Strategy Manager**

Beckman reviewed minor changes made due to comments from the Commission at the May 4, 2010 MPOSC meeting.

Moeller asked about signage language and if this has been added stating that it is a local responsibility. Beckman noted that there are funders (i.e., HealthPartners) working with the Regional Parks Foundation of the Twin Cities to provide funding to assist in addressing this. Beckman noted that language could be added noting that signage is an important element.

Beckman stated that all changes will go into Chapter 3. She noted that at our June 8<sup>th</sup> meeting Anoka County has a proposal and there will also be a draft of Chapter 3 and 4 to review. The final draft will come back to the Commission in July before the public hearing which will be sometime in August.

Beckman asked the Commission to email any further changes.

### **Annual Use Estimate of the Metropolitan Regional Parks System for 2009 - Jan Youngquist, Sr. Planner—Parks**

Youngquist presented the 2009 estimated visits to each regional park and trail unit in this report. The estimated visits are used in formulas for determining the park agencies' share of appropriations for the following:

- 1) The Metropolitan Council's regional parks capital improvement program
- 2) Grants from Land and Legacy Parks and Trails Fund appropriations
- 3) To partially finance the costs to operate and maintain the Metropolitan Regional Park System.

Moeller commended Youngquist on this report and asked how usage is measured along linear trails. Youngquist described the methodology used for trails (spreading counter all along the trails).

Haas stated that this was a great report.

## **REPORTS**

- **Chair** - Haas reminded the Commission that the next MPOSC meeting will be on June 8, rather than June 1, will start at 3pm, and will be our first summer tour.
- **Staff** – Beckman reported that a memo was provided regarding the history of Special Recreation Features for Commissions.
- **Commissioners** – Baines reported that he attended the Polar Bear demonstration at Como Park and stated that it was fabulous. Haas thanked the implementing agencies for the invites. Dingle reminded the agencies when sending time sensitive materials they should be sent directly to the Commissioners. She will send a roster with contact information.

Lee – noted that there will be a National Park and Recreation Association Convention here this fall (October 23-26) and asked if the Commission is involved. Beckman noted that this is an effort by the implementing agencies. Boe Carlson, Three Rivers Park District stated that it is being hosted by Minneapolis. He stated that he will make sure MPOSC members are aware of all events.

## **NEXT MEETING**

June 8, 2010. The meetings will start at 3pm at Clarence Wigington Pavilion, Harriet Island—Lilydale Regional Park followed by a tour. Directions will be included with agendas sent prior to each of these meetings.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle, Executive Secretary

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