

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

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

**November 1, 2011**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chuck Haas, Daniel Shlaferman, Seyon Nyanwleh, Emily Johnson Piper, Carrie Wasley, Jeff Lee, Barb Schmidt, Wendy Wulff, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

**ABSENT:** Bob Moeller

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Haas called the meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:03p.m. Thursday, November 1, 2011.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES**

Commissioner Wasley requested to change the order of the agenda, moving item #6 to be moved up to become item #3. With that amendment, Commissioner Wasley motioned and Commissioner Piper seconded to approve the November 1, 2011 Agenda and the October 4, 2011 Minutes. Chair Haas called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

**PUBLIC INVITATION:**

None.

**BUSINESS**

**Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Rule Change - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks**  
Stefferud gave a brief history and background of the Acquisition Opportunity Grant Fund. He then described the rule change proposed and gave a summation of the accounts status. He discussed the reasons for changing the maximum amount an agency can receive in a State Fiscal Year as described in the memorandum provided.

Wasley clarified that there is only 8 months left until funds would be lost. Stefferud noted that this was correct. Wasley asked if we have ever lost funds. Stefferud confirmed that we have not.

Piper clarified that the money would go back into the trust fund balance. Stefferud stated that it would.

Haas asked if this would give the implementing agencies (IA's) more flexibility and opportunity to act. Stefferud stated that it would. Wasley noted that this would give the IA's expanded opportunities.

Nyanwleh asked if it is good or bad if the money goes back into the trust fund. Stefferud stated that it could be considered bad, as it tells the legislature we aren't able to spend what they've appropriated and therefore they may choose to appropriate a lesser amount in the future. He noted that ENRTF is restrictive in what it can be spent on (i.e, land cannot have any structures on it).

Nyanwleh felt putting money back into the trust fund was a good thing, as he felt it would be there for future uses. Stefferud explained that the money is appropriated by the legislature and would not be

immediately available if a future need arose. There would be future appropriations, but no guarantee of how much those would be.

Haas stated there may be instances where you thought money was spent but the owner changed his/her mind and suddenly the money is not spent.

Lee spoke in favor of the recommendation. He stated that there are a lot of lands to be acquired according to the 2030 Parks Policy Plan and feels this rule change will help enable IAs to do just that.

Steffered summarized that there will be a need for acquisition funding.

Wasley noted that legacy funding has only been around for a couple of years and noted that we can approve now and revisit the rule next year, or as needed.

It was motioned by Wasley and seconded by Schmidt to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the following change to the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Rules effective immediately:

The maximum grant(s) available to a park agency is \$1.7 million from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Acquisition Account and \$1.7 million from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account during the July 1 to June 30 time period.

Steffered gave some history of how this fund came into being.

Nyanwleh stated for the record that he is against this as he did not hear from any IA's that there has not been a need for more money.

Mark Themig, Scott County spoke to the benefits Scott County would see with this change. Their challenge is their master plans have not been completed as they are a relatively new agency (independent of Three Rivers for only the past 5 years). He noted that they have definite needs.

Steve Sullivan, Dakota County noted that they still have 20% of land yet to be acquired as well as a new vision of greenways – about 200 miles. He noted that they're going after Federal funds which require a 20% match. He also noted that due to lower land prices, they have been aggressive with trying to purchase in-holdings. They are working to realize the regional policy plan vision.

Wulff clarified this and summarized what these dollars would enable agencies to do.

Nyanwleh stated that after hearing from Scott and Dakota Counties he respects their need and position, however, he still maintains his decision to vote against this rule change. He stated he feels money in the trust fund is a good thing and it will be there if needed. Piper clarified that without legislative appropriation this money would not be accessible to IA's. Stefferud confirmed this is correct.

Without further discussion, Chair Haas called for a vote. All were in favor with the exception of Nyanwleh. **The motion carried.**

### **Crystal Lake Regional Trail Master Plan, Three Rivers Park District - Jan Youngquist, Planning Analyst-Parks**

Youngquist gave a presentation on the Crystal Lake Regional Trail Master Plan.

Piper stated that she is excited about this trail and asked about light rail going up Bottineau – would that interfere with this trail? Youngquist noted that it has not been determined if Bottineau will be BRT or LRT.

Kelly Grissman, Senior Manager of Planning, Three Rivers Park District noted that they have been looking at this as a multi-model corridor and noted that LRT would be on one side of the road while the trail was on the other.

Haas asked about the issue of useful life of a regional trail. Youngquist talked about the discussion of this in the last Plan Update and noted that if they're along a rail line, they do not recommend paving.

Boe Carlson, Three Rivers Park District discussed the way they negotiate “buy back” or “pay back” options for return on investments made along corridors.

Youngquist noted that the funds are not guaranteed and that there are other sources of funding – not necessarily just the Metropolitan Council. Grissman discussed Hennepin County's investment to date.

Nyanwleh asked about review by MCES. Youngquist explained the reason behind this and stated it is to allow ES to assess the potential impacts to our interceptor system prior to initiating any projects.

It was motioned by Lee and seconded by Piper to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Crystal Lake Regional Trail Master Plan (Referral No. 50014-1).
2. Require that prior to development of new trail segments, final development plans be sent to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment to ensure the integrity of the interceptor system.

Without further discussion, Chair Haas called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

### **Spring Lake Regional Trail Master Plan, Scott County - Tori Dupre, Senior Planner-Parks**

Dupre gave a presentation on the Spring Lake Regional Trail Master Plan.

Nyanwleh asked about residents affected and their response.

Andy Hingeveld, Associate Planner, Scott County noted that surveys from the past 5-10 years show a strong desire for more parks and trails. He noted that they've held workshops and pointed out that the population is not there today, so they're hoping to prepare for the future needs as development occurs.

It was motioned by Nyanwleh and seconded by Shlaferman to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the Spring Lake Regional Trail Master Plan.

Without further discussion, Chair Haas called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

### **Reimbursement Consideration Request for Acquiring Land for Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, Washington County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks**

Stefferdud gave background history of the land exchange agreement with Washington County, the City of Cottage Gove, and the Metropolitan Council as outlined in the memorandum provided.

He noted that the County wishes to purchase the Anderson property with its funds now and either sell it to the City to help the City meet its land exchange obligation, or seek reimbursement from the Metro Council for this cost in a future Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program.

Haas asked what if Cottage Gove wants to purchase different land. John Elholm, Park Director, Washington County stated that is why they're requesting the option to ask for reimbursement from the Council – in case the City does not buy the land from Washington County. He noted that the City has recently purchased 9.8 acres on the east.

Commissioners clarified prior agreements, Cottage Grove's obligation, and Washington County's request to be eligible to request reimbursement – should Cottage Grove choose not to pay for this land. Stefferud confirmed.

It was motioned by Shlaferman and seconded by Nyanwleh to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve Washington County's regional parks capital improvement program (CIP) reimbursement consideration request for the costs to acquire the 4.86 acre Anderson property for Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park under the following condition:

The regional park CIP imbursement will be considered by the Metropolitan Council only if none or a portion of the Anderson property is acquired by the City of Cottage Grove to meet its land exchange agreement obligations under the Washington County/City of Cottage Grove/Metropolitan Council land exchange agreement for Cottage Grove Regional Park. The reimbursement amount will be based on the pro-rated cost of the net amount of the Anderson property acquired by Washington County minus any land acquired by Cottage Grove to meet its obligation under the land exchange agreement.

Without further discussion, Chair Haas called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

## **REPORTS**

- **Chair** – None.
- **Commissioners** – None.
- **Staff** – Youngquist noted that there will be a Wayfinding Workshop on Friday, November 4, 2011 and all Committee Members are invited to attend. Information provided.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be December 6, 2011 beginning at 4:00pm at the Metropolitan Council.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle  
Executive Assistant  
Community Development