

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

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

May 3, 2011

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Chuck Haas, Barb Schmidt, Jeff Lee, Daniel Shlaferman, Richard Jabs, Doug Baines, Tom Gamec

ABSENT: Bob Moeller, 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 4:01p.m. on Tuesday, May 3, 2011.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Commissioner Jabs motioned and Commissioner Schmidt seconded to approve the May 3, 2011 Agenda and the April 5, 2011 Minutes. Chair Haas called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

PUBLIC INVITATION:

None.

BUSINESS

Boundary Amendment to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park Master Plan and Amendment to Land Exchange Agreement for City/County Service Centers, Washington County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd discussed a request by Washington County to amend the boundary of Cottage Grove Ravine RP that adds 9.34 acres to the park. The County wants to include this land as replacement land elsewhere in the park that was converted to a County service center in 2004 under an agreement with the Metro Council. The land exchange agreement needs to be amended to include this land. Staff found this proposal is consistent with the original terms of the land exchange agreement and recommended approval.

Commissioner Jabs made a motion to recommend, and it was seconded by Commissioner Baines that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the addition of parcels 10A and 10B to the Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park master plan.
2. Authorize the Regional Administrator to sign the First Amendment to the Land Exchange Agreement between the Metropolitan Council and Washington County shown in Attachment 3 (distributed at the meeting).

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

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant to acquire 1 acre for Lebanon Hills Regional Park, Dakota County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd gave background on the grant request of up to \$442,763 to acquire a 1 acre in-holding (the Shaddock parcel) for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The grant would be funded from the FY 2011 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund and Metro Council bonds. There is a home on the parcel that may be moved or

torn down. Moving the house would reduce the total costs of the acquisition by about \$60,000 and subsequently reduce the grant by \$45,000. Staff recommends approving a grant with a provision that limits the Council's grant to financing 75% of actual costs since we don't know whether the house will be torn down or moved.

Haas asked about demolition and asked if the house could be used for training for the Fire Department and burned rather than torn down. Steve Sullivan, Dakota County Parks responded that they can look into this idea. He stated that they had heard back from a house mover who told them that the house could not be moved.

Commissioner Baines made a motion to recommend, and it was seconded by Commissioner Gamec that the Metropolitan Council authorize a grant of up to \$442,763 from the Parks and Trails Fund Acquisition Account in the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Dakota County to partially finance the acquisition of the 1 acre Shadduck Trust Property (1286 Carriage Hills Drive) in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The grant should be financed with:

- \$157,238 from the FY 2011 Parks and Trails Fund appropriation.
- \$285,525 Metropolitan Council bonds.

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

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant to acquire conservation easement on 1.1 acre for Lebanon Hills Regional Park, Dakota County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferud gave background on a grant request of up to \$13,275 to acquire a permanent conservation easement on 1.1 acre inholding (Urban parcel) for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The grant would be funded from the 2009 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriation and Metro Council bonds. The parcel includes 0.15 acres of shoreline and 0.95 acres of the unmeandered Holland Lake. Staff recommends approving the grant because it is consistent with the use of the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriation and the rules for park acquisition opportunity fund grants.

Commissioner Schmidt made a motion to recommend, and it was seconded by Commissioner Shlaferman that the Metropolitan Council authorize a grant of up to \$13,050 from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Acquisition Account in the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Dakota County to partially finance the acquisition of a permanent easement on the 1.1 acre Urban parcel in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The grant should be financed with:

- \$7,830 from the 2009 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriation.
- \$5,220 from Metropolitan Council bonds.

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

Phalen-Keller Regional Park Master Plan Amendment, City of St. Paul and Ramsey County (Referral No. 50007-1) - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferud discussed the master plan amendment, submitted by the City of St. Paul and Ramsey County, for Phalen-Keller Regional Park. Both entities jointly manage this park as one unit. The plan proposes acquisition of two parcels to resolve park road safety issues, plus renovation of some existing park facilities and developing some new facilities. The plan also proposes replacement of tennis courts in a part of the park that were there when the park was designated a regional park in 1974. Normally tennis courts are not provided in regional parks as they are a local park facility. However, the location of the courts is grandfathered in and has no impact on the natural resource based recreation facilities elsewhere in the park. The tennis courts are not eligible for a grant from the Metropolitan Council.

The plan also supports creation of a parkway on Highway 61 from MN Highway 36 south in Maplewood when this section of the highway is turned back to Ramsey County at a cost of \$5 million, and to create a parkway on Arcade Street south of Highway 61 to Wheelock Parkway in St. Paul at a cost of \$3 million. The plan proposes right and left turn lanes at park entrances, landscaped medians, improved signage and other site amenities. The Highway 61 segment was renovated with new pavement and curbing in 2010. Highway 61 has a speed limit of 50 mph, and Arcade Street has a speed limit of 40 mph. The plan proposes reducing the speed limit. Cost sharing of these improvements needs to be considered since the road has transportation benefits as well as park benefits.

Staff found the plan to be consistent with the requirements in the *Updated 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and recommends approval with recommendations that cost sharing be required for the proposed parkways on sections of Hwy. 61/Arcade Street since these road segments have transportation as well as recreational benefits.

Haas asked about the 'turn back' and if the highway would be completely 'turned back' to Ramsey County or would it be done in segments. Stefferud stated that it is done in segments.

Baines clarified that this is strictly an amendment to a master plan and not an obligation to pay for roads. Stefferud concurred.

Jabs asked if there are any issues with the recommendations and asked about the timeline on the 'turn back'. Greg Mack, Ramsey County Parks described 'turn backs' where state highways are turned back over to counties and he confirmed it is done in segments. Mack stated that there is an issue with an eagle nest and noted that they've been working with MnDOT for the most appropriate spot for the crossing with the least amount of disturbance to the nest.

Mack discussed the public involvement in the process.

Commissioner Baines made a motion to recommend, and it was seconded by Commissioner Jabs that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Phalen-Keller Regional Park Master Plan Amendment (Referral No. 50007-1).
2. Inform City of St. Paul that the proposed tennis court replacement costs are not eligible for Metro Regional Parks CIP funding but are grand-fathered into the park as they were there prior to the regional park designation and do not adversely affect the natural resource based recreation facilities.
3. Request submittal by the City of St. Paul of minor plan amendments on costs that had not been determined for:
 - a. Phalen Project 19a: Trail and adjacent East Shore Drive safety improvements
 - b. Phalen Project 19b: Traffic calming/safety measures on East Shore Drive
4. Request the City of St. Paul and Ramsey County submit a set of preliminary plans for park improvements in the areas surrounding Spoon Lake, the northeast corner of Keller Lake, and the northern portion of Phalen Lake to Scott Dentz of MCES for review and comment to ensure that MCES facilities will not be negatively affected by any construction practices.
5. Request the City of St. Paul and Ramsey County parks departments to work cooperatively with applicable street and highway departments on cost sharing for the proposed parkways on that

portion of Arcade Street/U.S. Highway 61 which borders the east side of Phalen Park and bisects Keller Park, plus the proposed tunnel under Highway 36.

6. Request Ramsey County to shift the proposed trail tunnel under Highway 36 further to the east 400 to 500 feet to eliminate disturbance to nesting bald eagles.

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

Change in scope of Grants SG-2010-095 and SG-2010-104, Winter Recreation Area at Lake Elmo Park Reserve, Washington County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd described request from Washington County to change in the scope of Grants SG-2010-095 and SG-2010-104 by deleting “remodel barn for trailhead” and inserting “constructing new trailhead facility”. The premise for this change is that costs from bids have been significantly higher than anticipated. To stay within budget, constructing a new trailhead facility is less expensive than remodeling a barn for the trailhead and constructing a road to the barn. The change in scope is consistent with the terms and conditions of the grant agreements. Staff recommends approval.

Commissioner Jabs made a motion to recommend, and it was seconded by Commissioner Baines that the Metropolitan Council authorizes an amendment to grants SG-2010-095 and SG-2010-104 which changes the scope of the grants as described in this memorandum.

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

Change in scope of Grant SG-2010-084, picnic shelter project at Keller Regional Park, Ramsey County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd described the request from Ramsey County to change the scope of Grant SG-2010-084 by replacing “redevelop parking area at Keller Island” to “

Additional Site Improvements for the shelter development and throughout the park:

- Trail – Redevelop trails for improved conditions and ADA access.
- Sidewalk Improvements – Redevelop sidewalks for improved condition and connections.
- Retaining Walls – Extensive grading for improved ADA access and shelter development required the use of retaining walls.
- Utility Connections – Modification to the water and electric utility connections are required due to extensive site grading for the shelter development.
- Landscaping/Site Restoration – Additional landscape enhancements and site restoration is required for improved trail and sidewalk connections, utility improvements and extensive grading for the shelter development.

The premise for this change is that another grant SG-2010-043 is not large enough to finance these costs along with replacing picnic shelters at Golf View and Round Lake and their associated site work. The change in scope is consistent with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement. Staff recommends approval.

Commissioner Baines made a motion to recommend, and it was seconded by Commissioner Gamec that the Metropolitan Council authorizes an amendment to grant SG-2010-084 which changes the scope of the grant as described in this memorandum.

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

REPORTS

- **Chair** – None.
- **Commissioners** – None.
- **Staff** – Beckman reported that we are waiting for appointments to occur.

NEXT MEETING

June 7, 2011 beginning at 3:00pm at Schaars Bluff Gathering Center, Spring Lake Park Reserve. A Tour of Spring Lake Park Reserve by Dakota County Parks Staff will follow the business meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle
Executive Assistant
Community Development