

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

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

August 7, 2012

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Tony Yarusso, Bob Moeller, Carrie Wasley, Seyon Nyanwleh, Wendy Wulff, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

ABSENT: Barb Schmidt, Daniel Shlaferman, Jeff Lee, Emily Johnson Piper

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Wasley called the meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:45 p.m. Tuesday, August 7, 2012. The meeting was held at the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park following tour of Anoka County Riverfront Regional Park.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

With no quorum present, Vice Chair Wasley asked for a consensus to accept the agenda and table approval of the minutes until the next meeting.

PUBLIC INVITATION

None.

BUSINESS

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Request for Big Marine Park Reserve, Washington County - Arne Stefferud, Acting Manager—Regional Parks and Natural Resources Unit
Stefferud gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the grant request from Washington County as described in the memorandum provided.

Yarusso asked why this is a 'Priority A' and also if there are any immediate plans. John Elholm, Washington County responded there are 120 parcels in the Washington County system to be acquired. They are prioritized based on natural resource features. He stated that there are no immediate plans to develop this parcel.

Due to a lack of quorum, Moeller asked for a consensus to recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize a grant of up to \$353,996 from Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Acquisition Account in the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Washington County to finance 75% of the acquisition costs to acquire the 2.58 acre Croone parcel as depicted in Figure 1 for Big Marine Park Reserve. The grant should be financed with:

- \$212,398 from the FY 2012 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriation
- \$141,598 from Metropolitan Council Bonds

Chair Wasley called for a consensus and all members present, with the exception of Nyanwleh who abstained, agreed to forward this recommendation onto the Metropolitan Council.

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Request for Above the Falls Regional Park, Minneapolis Park & Rec. Board - Arne Stefferud, Acting Manager—Regional Parks and Natural Resources Unit

Steffered gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the grant request from Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) as described in the memorandum provided.

Wulff asked if this part of the park area is eligible for special funds. Stefferud stated it is not.

Yarusso asked if there needs to be any agreement in writing of when the building would be demolished. Stefferud explained that the building will be used as a maintenance building for approximately 10 years and then it will be removed.

Yarusso asked if the master plan calls for any uses that would be inconsistent with having this building on the property. Jennifer Ringold, MPRB stated this will be a great short term/near term use, until other developments within the master plan occur.

Nyanwleh asked what the current condition of the building is. Ringold stated that it is very good and therefore a great interim use for their staff.

Due to a lack of quorum, Moeller asked for a consensus to recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize a grant of up to \$608,814 from Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account in the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to the Minneapolis Park & Rec. Board to finance 75% of the acquisition costs to acquire the 1.74 acre parcel at 1720 Marshall St. NE as depicted in Figure 1 and Figure 2 for Above the Falls Regional Park. The grant should be financed with:

- \$354,561 from the FY 2012 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation
- \$ 10,727 from the FY 2013 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation
- \$243,526 from Metropolitan Council Bonds

Chair Wasley called for a consensus and all members present, with the exception of Nyanwleh who abstained, agreed to forward this recommendation onto the Metropolitan Council.

Proposed Rule Changes for Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grants - Arne Stefferud, Acting Manager—Regional Parks and Natural Resources Unit

Steffered gave a PowerPoint presentation based on discussions with all 10 regional park agency staff. He discussed the consensus modifications to rules for awarding Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grants as proposed in the materials provided.

Moeller asked why not eliminate the 25% match. Stefferud stated that we have made a commitment to the legislature in the past to providing matching dollars to the Legacy fund dollars. As a compromise, that 25% can be reimbursed to the implementing agencies in the future.

Yarusso clarified that these recommendations are coming from the implementing agencies with consensus. Stefferud confirmed.

Steffered cautioned that we do not want to damage credibility with the legislature. He discussed Rule 2 regarding grant eligible costs and stewardship costs and gave the rationale for it.

Steffered discussed Rule 3 regarding dealing with contaminated land (this is a new rule) where remediation plus land cost equals land value at which point acquisition dollars can be used. Also, if cost of acquisition plus remediation equals less than the certified appraised value, the difference can be counted towards the 25% match. He then reviewed grant eligible costs and Options 1 and 2 as well as the rationale for this rule.

Moeller asked about 'skin in the game' to make agencies more prudent in their process. He recommended that there be some sort of minimum match, i.e., 10% and suggested we not allow 100% funding (as described above, where the difference can be applied towards the 25% match). Stefferud agreed and stated this is why the match was required initially - to put 'skin in the game'.

Wulff agreed but felt that if there is a savings, the region benefits as well.

Yarusso agreed and liked the idea of some sort of local match however he feels if there is a donation that may be because of the work of an agency, they should be allowed to go to zero. Stefferud explained that land value donations are a separate transaction after the sale. Agencies must purchase land at the appraised value – they cannot negotiate with sellers, per state statute.

The question was raised, how can we consistently identify match dollars (that include donations). It was noted that 'skin in the game' equals acknowledgement of local benefit.

Moeller felt some amount (that could be eligible for future reimbursement) is more politically palatable.

Stefferud asked if the committee is asking for a minimum match of 10%. The committee agreed. Stefferud stated that he will bring language back to the September meeting that reflects this change.

Stefferud discussed Rule 4 (as outlined in the materials provided) and gave examples and rationale.

Stefferud discussed Rule 5 regarding multiple grant requests.

Yarusso asked what would happen if one needed to be deferred. Stefferud responded that the Council would need to make a decision and give proportionately. An agency could withdraw their request (and pay upfront themselves) and wait for more money and be reimbursed the full 75%.

Moeller asked if unfunded amounts (that would normally be funded) would/could carry over to the next fiscal year. Stefferud noted that this is a good policy question.

Wulff agreed in principal, but if it gets to the point where we're running out of money, we may need to look at amounts agencies may receive.

Stefferud discussed Rule 6 regarding effective terms of grants and rationale for this rule.

Wasley asked if we have a timeline consideration now. Stefferud stated that typically it's been one year, however there is no policy in place.

Yarusso asked if we would still have the ability to amend a grant with either an extension or a change in the scope of the grant. Stefferud stated yes, this is an option and discussed adding language regarding adjusting a grant for a cause.

Moeller clarified if full grant is not spent, are we saying we will pull that money back and they can't ask to change the scope of grant. Wulff explained that there are two pots of money. Stefferud stated he would add language and bring back to the next meeting.

Nyanwleh asked why the extra money is not given back. Stefferud noted that allotted money (each agency's share) is their share – money has been appropriate to them. They then come to us to get approval of how to spend.

Nyanwleh suggested a policy that does not 'split the pot'. Stefferud discussed the capital budget process.

Wulff pointed out that agencies are spending much more than what they are being given by us.

Nyanwleh asked if this is a Council policy. Stefferud stated that it is.

Nyanwleh stated he feels the Council should reconsider this policy and feels that unused money should be returned. Stefferud stated that the policy could be considered. He noted that the Parks and Trails Legacy money could not be used for anything else as its purpose is governed by state statute.

Stefferud discussed Rule 7 regarding temporary steps and gave examples. Moeller felt it's a good idea.

Wasley noted that due to time constraints further discussion of this item will be continued at the September meeting and all other items on the agenda will be tabled until the September meeting.

INFORMATION

Preparing for possible bonding appropriation for Metro Parks Capital Improvement Program in 2013 Legislative Session - Arne Stefferud, Acting Manager—Regional Parks and Natural Resources Unit
Due to time constraints, this item was tabled until the next meeting.

Distributing State Fiscal Year 2013 appropriations for Metropolitan Regional Parks System operations and maintenance - Arne Stefferud, Acting Manager—Regional Parks and Natural Resources Unit

Due to time constraints, this item was tabled until the next meeting.

REPORTS

- **Chair** – None.
- **Commissioners** – None.
- **Staff** – None.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 11, 2012 at the Lake Elmo Park Reserve. There will be a tour beginning at 3:00pm at the Nordic Center. The business meeting will follow beginning at 4:30pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle
Principal Administrative Specialist
Community Development