

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

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

**July 10, 2007**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Glen Skovholt; Barb Schmidt; Richard Jabs; Gary Botzek; Daniel Shlaferman; Robert Wicklund; Lars Erdahl; Michael Rainville; and Natalie Steffen, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

**ABSENT:** Emily Barbeau

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Skovholt called the meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:00 p.m. on July 10, 2007.

Skovholt noted that Jim Luger has retired and commissioners joined him in congratulating John Elholm, who was in the audience, as the new Washington County Park Director.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Jabs motioned to approve the July 10, 2007 agenda and June 5, 2007 minutes. Commissioner Schmidt seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

**PUBLIC INVITATION: Invitation to Interested Persons to Address the Commission on Matters Not on the Agenda** (Each speaker is limited to a five-minute presentation.)

None.

**BUSINESS:**

**Acquisition Opportunity Grant Request, Reimbursement Consideration in a Future Parks CIP and Boundary Amendment for Lake Waconia Regional Park, Carver** - Jan Youngquist, Senior Planner-Parks.

Youngquist discussed the background and noted that this was the site of one of the tours last summer: The Lake Waconia Regional Park master plan, approved by the Metropolitan Council in October, 2001, called for the relocation of State Highway 5 to facilitate development of the park. The highway bisected the park so a portion of the highway was relocated south of the park. Due to disagreements on the value of the land for the new right-of-way for State Highway 5 and the land where the former Highway 5 right-of-way was located, Carver County and the landowners entered condemnation proceedings to determine the value of the land. These parcels, which make-up 43.94 acres of land, will be referred to as the "Park/highway property." The Metropolitan Council authorized a grant of \$83,060 from the emergency land acquisition fund (now known as the acquisition opportunity fund) to Carver County at its August 11, 2004 meeting. This grant funded 40 percent of the County's total costs incurred at that time for the Park/highway property.

The county undertook condemnation proceedings because \$5 million of Federal Surface Transportation Project Funds for construction of the relocated highway were in jeopardy if land for the highway right-of-way was not acquired by September 30, 2005. Condemnation proceedings have now been completed. Carver County has spent a total of \$2,337,672 for the land and associated acquisition costs for the Park/highway property. The County has used \$1,335,568 of funds from five previous grants including the grant described above to partially fund the acquisition. The funding gap between the total costs and grant funds used is \$1,002,104. The County has requested that up to \$400,841 be granted from the Metropolitan Council's Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to finance 40 percent of the funding gap. The County has also requested that up to \$601,263 financed with County funds for the remaining 60 percent be eligible for reimbursement consideration in a future regional parks CIP.

The County opted to purchase 43.94 acres instead of the intended 39.04 acres because the configuration of the road and park boundaries made the remnants of the land economically unfeasible to develop. The severance damages would have cost the County nearly the same amount of money as buying the additional land. The County is requesting a master plan amendment to the boundary of Lake Waconia Regional Park to include this land, which is contiguous to the park.

Wickland questioned Marty Walsh, Carver County Park Director, about how they came out on the condemnation issue. Walsh responded that they came back closer to the numbers that we had and that a happy medium was reached.

It was motioned by Commissioner Rainville and seconded by Commissioner Erdahl that the Metropolitan Council:

- 1) Authorize a grant of up to \$400,841 from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Carver County to partially fund the acquisition of the Park/highway parcel in Lake Waconia Regional Park.
- 2) Allow up to \$601,263 of the acquisition costs of the Park/highway parcels to be eligible for reimbursement consideration in a future regional parks CIP. However, the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.
- 3) Approve a modified park boundary for Lake Waconia Regional Park as shown in Attachment 2 as an amendment to the 2001 Council approved master plan for the park, and direct staff to modify any acreage data for the park.

With no further discussion, **the motion carried.**

**Dakota Rail Regional Trail Master Plan, Carver County** - Jan Youngquist, Senior Planner-Parks.

Youngquist discussed the background. Carver County has submitted a master plan for the Dakota Rail Regional Trail for Metropolitan Council review and approval. The Dakota Rail corridor is 44 miles in length and runs from Wayzata around the northern bays of Lake Minnetonka, past Lake Waconia in Carver County, and terminates at Hutchinson in McLeod County. Youngquist stated that this Master Plan identified great opportunities for connections. Carver, Hennepin, and McLeod County Regional Rail Authorities acquired their respective portions of the railroad corridor in 2001 to preserve the corridor for future transit operations. The segment of the corridor in Carver County is 12.4 miles long and extends through the northern portion of the County. Carver County is leasing the Dakota Rail corridor from the Carver County Regional Railroad Authority, which will allow development of a regional trail. The leases will continue to be honored until such time as circumstances change. The Metropolitan Council approved the master plan for Three River Park District's 13.5 mile portion of the planned regional trail at its March 8, 2006 meeting. Approval of Carver County's master plan would complete the planning for the 25.9 mile segment of the corridor that lies within the Metropolitan Council's regional parks system area.

Schmidt asked whether this was a destination trail or a connected trail, and wondered where main parking would be for people coming from a distance. Marty Walsh responded to the questions.

Steffen requested clarification between Type 1 and Type 2 crossings. Discussion followed. Youngquist clarified that a Type 1 crossing is a high volume state highway, and Type 2 crossings are for intersections with county roads and high volume local roads, including signage and striping.

It was motioned by Commissioner Shlaferman and seconded by Commissioner Botzek that the Metropolitan Council approve the Dakota Rail Regional Trail Master Plan, Carver County (Referral No. 20027-1).

With no further discussion, **the motion carried.**

**Request for Reimbursement Consideration in Future Regional Parks CIP for Development of Rice Creek North Regional Trail, Ramsey County** - Jan Youngquist, Senior Planner-Parks. Youngquist discussed the background. The Rice Creek North Regional Trail is a pedestrian and bicycle trail running southwesterly along Rice Creek from Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve in Anoka County to Long Lake Regional Park in Ramsey County. The portion of the trail through the former Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) site is a key segment toward completion of the trail. In January, 1999, the Metropolitan Council approved an updated Rice Creek North Regional Trail master plan. In response to this Council directive, the National Park Service transferred 112 acres of the former TCAAP property to Ramsey County under the Federal Lands to Parks Program as part of the Rice Creek North Regional Trail in 2006. The Metropolitan Council authorized a \$450,000 grant from the 2006-07 Regional Parks CIP to construct the Rice Creek North Regional Trail on the TCAAP land. The County has completed the design/engineering work for the trail and received a very favorable construction bid on May 30, 2007. Ramsey County has requested that up to \$145,000 of projected expenses related to constructing the trail that would be financed with County funds be declared eligible for reimbursement consideration in a future regional parks CIP.

Rainville took this opportunity to thank Arne Stefferud for arranging the tour commissioners took two summers ago to look at this site, expressed that this makes it very easy for him to vote on this project, and further stated that it is always a good idea to get out into the community. Rainville then asked for an explanation about an archeological site referred to on the map. Greg Mack, Ramsey County Park Director, explained that there are no remnants, that small pottery chips were found, but nothing else has been detected.

Botzek questioned the rationale for having 12 foot trails are on both sides. Greg Mack, Ramsey County Park Director, responded that this was consistent with the Master Plan that was approved. Part of the issue is to provide access for all of the future development that is going to be on both sides of the street. The transfer is almost completed between the federal government and the city of Arden Hills.

Steffen asked if this was in the Rice Creek Watershed District. Mack responded that it was and that it had gone through all reviews by the Rice Creek Watershed District.

Skovholt asked when construction would start. Mack stated they should be able to mobilize in August. The bridge is the biggest issue. Skovholt expressed that this will be a real addition to the trail.

Schmidt asked for clarification on the two grant requests. Mack explained. Botzek noted that Representative McCollum was very instrumental in working with the delegation to transfer this portion of the land.

It was motioned by Commissioner Rainville and seconded by Commissioner Jobs that the Metropolitan Council approve the request to consider reimbursing Ramsey County up to \$145,000 for constructing the TCAAP portion of the Rice Creek North Regional Trail as shown in Attachment 2 in a future regional parks capital improvement program. However, the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.

With no further discussion, **the motion carried.**

**Request for North Mississippi Regional Park Development Grant, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board** - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks. Stefferud discussed the background: The Metropolitan Council has authorized 16 grants totaling \$12,898,237 to acquire and develop North Mississippi Regional Park. Of this amount, \$11,698,237 is interest earnings on Council park bonds. In 1998 the Legislature expanded the boundary of North Mississippi Regional Park to include a trail segment along 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The trail portion extends approximately one mile west of the main park to Humboldt Avenue and Shingle Creek. In 2003, the Metropolitan Council approved an amended master plan for North Mississippi Regional Park to include trail development along 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue consistent with the legislation.

In 2002, the MPRB proposed additional future development projects for North Mississippi Regional Park that were estimated to cost \$3,260,000 at that time. Discussions with legislators to cap the open-ended appropriation were conducted. Since the actual costs for the additional improvements would be dependent on future inflationary factors, there was no support for proposing a cap in the amount that could be granted for the park.

The Council currently has \$348,825 in this special account that is unobligated and could be provided for a new grant. The uses proposed for the \$348,825 grant are consistent with the park's master plan. The Metropolitan Council needs to amend its 2007 Authorized Capital Program to include the \$348,825 grant for North Mississippi Regional Park so that the grant can be authorized for expenditure.

Skovholt noted that once that is transferred, the interest account is zero'd out. Stefferud responded that what is currently unobligated, will be obligated, and then as more money is earned, there probably will be another request from the Park Board. Stefferud further explained that Attachment 4, page 9, depicts what is left to be done in terms of 2002 dollars – with inflation, a hard number cannot be determined until the work is done. Erdahl asked if all of the projects were part of this single implementing agency or if some of the funds were spread across other agencies. Stefferud replied that Attachment 3, page 7, shows all of the previous grants that have been authorized. There were grants to Three Rivers Park District and Anoka County as well as the Mpls. Park & Rec. Board for this park. Botzek noted that all has come from the interest account except for some of the money out of LCMR. Stefferud then confirmed that the \$82,000 is interest on bonds that the Council issues for parks on capital improvements. Wicklund recalled that we were going to try to connect North Mississippi to the North Hennepin Regional Trail Corridor. Stefferud explained that the 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue Trail gets you to Humboldt Greenway which gets you to the North Hennepin Trail and is all in place now.

It was motioned by Commissioner Rainville and seconded by Commissioner Erdahl that the Metropolitan Council amend its 2007 Authorized Capital Program by adding a grant of \$348,825 to the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board for North Mississippi Regional Park for the following purposes:

Replace the remaining former Lyndale Avenue North pavement and curbing, construct new parking, picnic facilities, lighting, utilities, and landscaping from 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue North to 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue North. In addition, as funds permit, extend a separated bike path where it ends in the picnic shelter area and add open air picnic shelters.

With no further discussion, **the motion carried.**

**Request for Reimbursement Consideration in Future Regional Parks CIP for Site and Building Improvements of Wabun Picnic Area in Minnehaha Regional Park, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board -**

Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks. Stefferud discussed the background: The Wabun Picnic area in Minnehaha Regional Park is used for large group reservation picnic activities – up to 1,000 persons are accommodated. On January 28, 1993, the Metropolitan Council approved an updated development master plan for Minnehaha Regional Park and approved \$1 million in grant funds to begin implementing the master plan. From 1993 to 1998, grants totaling \$6,053,000 were authorized to renovate worn out facilities in the park – focusing on the Minnehaha Falls overlook, adjacent picnic areas, internal park roads and parking lots, trails, and associated utilities.

The MPRB has awarded a bid to begin work under grant SG-2005-067 but also needs an additional \$3.1 million to completely fund the project. The Minnesota Veterans Home is providing \$300,000 since it benefits from renovation of Wabun Drive – an access road to the Veterans Home. The MPRB has proposed to finance the remaining \$2.8 million by cash flowing up to \$1,059,000 of its own funds in 2007 and early 2008 which it wants the Council to consider reimbursing in the 2008-09 regional parks CIP as part of the MPRB's allocation. The MPRB has also requested \$1,741,000 as part of its 2008-09 regional parks CIP allocation for this project.

Skovholt asked how high of a priority this was, and Stefferud responded that this is the first priority from the Park Board's allocation. Wicklund expressed that this is not any different than a standard reimbursement request.

It was motioned by Commissioner Rainville and seconded by Commissioner Wicklund that the Metropolitan Council approves the request to consider reimbursing the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board up to \$1,059,000 in the 2008-09 regional parks capital improvement program for partially financing the renovation of the Wabun Picnic Area in Minnehaha Regional Park as described in Attachment 1. However, the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.

With no further discussion, **the motion carried.**

## REPORTS

Chair: None.

Chair Skovholt then invited Stefferud to say a few words about the August meeting. Stefferud stated that initially an off-site meeting to be held at the Phalen Park Golf Course Club House had been discussed for August. However, we have to deal with a land exchange request on Nicollet Island in Central Riverfront Regional Park which will be controversial. Therefore, staff are recommending that we hold the meeting at Metropolitan Council in Chambers. There will also be four or five business items for that meeting as well – some could be moved to the September meeting, but the agenda will be full. In light of that fact, it is being recommended not to do a tour or an outside meeting at the August 7th meeting. Discussion followed. Commissioners agreed to this recommendation and decided to tour Elm Creek Park Reserve in September, Big Marine Park Reserve in October, with no tour in November. Skovholt further noted that the Phalen-Keller tour would then be postponed until next year.

Commissioners: None

Botzek questioned Stefferud about the Minneapolis proposal next month and asked if the staff recommendation was done. Stefferud responded that a portion of the proposal was done and that it was currently undergoing an extensive legal review due to litigation.

Ann Beckman, Regional Systems Planning & Growth Strategy Manager, discussed a handout that was distributed to commissioners – a letter dated June 21, 2007, to Peter Bell, Chair, from Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners. Beckman reminded commissioners about the Dakota Rail Regional Trail going through Minnetonka Beach and wanted to reaffirm the fact that the Dakota Rail Regional Trail goes through more than Carver County. These are complex issues that take considerable time for planning and negotiation on all levels. Three Rivers applied for their permit, and there are still some issues. We are trying to support Three Rivers in getting a trail permitted and built.

Skovholt asked for an update on appointments of the Council and Commission. Steffen responded that new Council members would be sworn in at the July 11 Metropolitan Council meeting. Beckman reported that the three new Council Members are:

Name	City	District	Metropolitan Council Committees
Brian Lundquist	Chanhassen	District 4	Management & Community Development
Sherry Broecker	Forest Lake	District 12	Management & Community Development
Kirstin Sersland Beach	St. Paul	District 14	Transportation & Environment

Chair Skovholt announced that Natalie Steffen is the new chair of the Metropolitan Council Community Development Committee. He asked Steffen if she would continue as the liaison to the MPOSC. Steffen responded that she is talking to Regional Administrator, Tom Weaver, about possibly not continuing in this role but that no decision has been reached. The commissioners congratulated Steffen on her new appointment as the CDC Chair. Beckman stated that more information regarding appointments would be available next month.

**NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, August 7, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. at 390 N. Robert Street, St. Paul, MN in Chambers.

**NOTE: Meeting location change to the Metropolitan Council Chambers.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Skovholt adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Jadwinski, Administrative Technician

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