

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

MEETING OF
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

December 4, 2007

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Glen Skovholt, Barb Schmidt, Gary Botzek, Dan Wolter, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

ABSENT: Richard Jabs, Daniel Shlaferman, Emily Barbeau, Jesse Reinhardt, Bob Moeller, Robert Wicklund

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Skovholt called the meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:15 p.m. on December 4, 2007 without a quorum present (due to poor weather conditions).

SWEARING IN OF NEW MPOSC MEMBERS

Due to inclement weather, many of the Commission members, including those to be sworn in, were unable to attend the meeting. Chair Skovholt postponed the swearing in of new members to the January 8, 2008 meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Due to a lack of a quorum, a motion to approve of the December 4, 2007 Agenda was not made. The general consensus of those present was to accept the Agenda as presented. A motion to approve of the November 13, 2007 minutes was postponed until the next meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, when/if a quorum is present.

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:

Orientation for MPOSC Members on Parks Program - Jan Youngquist, Sr. Planner-Parks, Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Chair Skovholt stated that this item would be moved to the January 8, 2008 MPOSC meeting when the new members are present. Materials will be re-distributed at the January meeting.

Evaluating Land Acquisition Opportunity Fund Distribution Rules - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd discussed letters received from three of the Implementing Agencies: City of St. Paul, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and Carver County Parks.

Skovholt re-capped the discussion from the November 13, 2007 MPOSC meeting.

Stefferd reviewed Carver County's letter and noted that their main concern is regarding the 25% local match and its impact on the 2008 budget process. They suggested that if the proposed Acquisition Opportunity Fund requires a matching amount, that there be a transition period established allowing agencies in the midst of acquiring land be allowed to complete the acquisition under the existing rules.

Steffered went on to discuss the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's letter and noted that they are in favor of the policy adjustments being considered. There were concerned with a change in the policy that would eliminate the IA's ability to determine their funding priorities by allowing reimbursement from future CIP allocations.

Steffered noted that the letter from the City of St. Paul held similar comments.

Skovholt asked for any additional comments from IA's present that did not submit written comments.

Randy Quale, Bloomington Parks and Recreation stated that their position is similar to the others and noted that they would like the option to still be allowed to ask for reimbursement of the 25% local match.

The entire group agreed on raising the limit to 1.7 million dollars.

Skovholt noted that this proposal is for six months and that it may then be reconsidered. He suggested that one option would be to give the IA's the option of going with the old policy (60/40) or allowing them to choose the new option being proposed.

Botzek asked if the purpose behind the policy changes is primarily for 'debt management' (i.e., reduce future reimbursement costs for the local match). Stefferud stated that they are and also to have local entities providing to local parks that benefit the locals.

Skovholt stated that he is comfortable with the proposed changes knowing that we can look at the policy again in 6 months.

Mark Themig, Scott County Parks stated that they are in support of the proposed policy changes.

Skovholt noted that this item will be discussed at the Community Development Committee on December 17, 2007 and at the Council Meeting on January 9, 2008.

Steve Sullivan, Dakota County Parks stated that they support the increased amount (to \$1.7 million) and also stated that he felt an 'either/or' scenario for IA's might be a good test over the next 6 months to see what agencies want.

Skovholt pointed out that without a quorum the Commission is unable to forward this item with a formal action, but stated that they would be sending it on to CDC with a recommendation of the Commission.

The Commission present all agreed to forward the recommendation as follows (without formal action):

1. That the Metropolitan Council adopt the following rules for distributing grants from the Acquisition Opportunity Fund. The rules are effective from their date of adoption to June 30, 2008.
 - A. The amount a park agency can request from the Fund is \$1.7 million for the period beginning when these rules are adopted to June 30, 2008.
 - B. The Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant will cover a maximum of 75% of acquisition costs.
 - C. The 25% local match of an acquisition is not eligible for reimbursement consideration via a future regional parks capital improvement program (CIP).
 - D. Any local match above 25% of acquisition costs is eligible for reimbursement consideration in a future regional parks CIP.

2. That the Metropolitan Council reconsider the rules cited in Recommendation 1 in 2008 after the Legislature has considered an appropriation of Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund revenue to the Acquisition Opportunity Fund.

Schmidt stated that it would be good to make it clear that there is not enough money available to grant and we have to be pro-active. Botzek agreed.

REPORTS

Chair: None.

Staff: None.

Commissioners: None.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, January 8, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. in Robert Room LLA. Note: date change due to the New Year's Holiday.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Skovholt adjourned the meeting at 5:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle, Executive Secretary

U:\PARKS\2007 Minutes\1204-2007 minutes.doc