

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

MEETING OF
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

May 6, 2008

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Glen Skovholt, Barb Schmidt, Gary Botzek, Richard Jabs, Emily Barbeau, Robert Wicklund, Daniel Shlaferman, Bob Moeller, Jesse Reinhardt, Dan Wolter, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

ABSENT: None.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Skovholt called the meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:01 p.m. on May 6, 2008.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Commissioner Jabs motioned and Commissioner Wicklund seconded to approve the May 6, 2008 Agenda and the April 1, 2008 minutes. **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:

Chair Skovholt discussed changing the order of the agenda and discussing (2008-74) Clarifying non-reimbursement local match requirement for Park Acquisition Opportunity Grants awarded under Option 2: Revised Rule after the discussion of (2008-127) Proposed Park Acquisition Opportunity Grant rules to be effective from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

(2008-127) Proposed Park Acquisition Opportunity Grant rules to be effective from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009 - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd discussed the background regarding the current rules for distributing Park Acquisition Opportunity Grants that went into effect on January 9, 2008 and expire on June 30. There are two options for agencies to request a grant:

Option 1: 40% grant with 60% CIP reimbursable match. An agency can request up to \$1 million and must apply this option for any additional grants

Option 2: 75% grant with 25% non-reimbursable match. An agency can request up to \$1 .7 million. As noted in the previous agenda item, 50% of the acquisition cost's funding gap would be eligible for CIP reimbursement consideration.

Moeller asked, are we changing the rule on Carver County and would this be more burdensome for Carver County. Skovholt noted that previously, they had their choice of options. Moeller asked are we grandfathering in decisions that were already made. Skovholt noted that the rules expire on June 30.

Botzek asked how long the list of acquisitions that are eligible for reimbursement is. Stefferud discussed the history of the Parks Policy Plan and past eligibility for parks. Schmidt discussed grants.

Wicklund noted that we treat acquisitions differently than development funds and shared his concern with the growing reimbursement bill and also with a future Council that may wish to 'clean the slate'.

The Commission received input from regional park agency staff regarding the proposal. In summary an analysis of that input proposes that for the period from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009 that only Option 2 Rules be continued, but for costs above \$2,267,000 a park agency could request Metro Parks CIP reimbursement consideration on 75% of those costs if they were financed by the park agency. This change in the proposal results in all agencies having their Regional Parks System acquisitions financed at the same ratio of Metropolitan Council grants and potential Metro Parks CIP reimbursement grants (75%) with the remaining 25% financed by the park agency from its own funds, or other sources.

The Commission discussed the idea for park dedication fees and noted that even a modest amount per new household could generate a lot of dollars.

Steffered shared comments from implementing agencies not able to attend.

Skovholt asked for comments from Commission members.

In summary, input from regional park agencies and discussion by the Commission on this matter covered the following proposals:

1. Continue Option 1 and Option 2 rules for the July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009 period. The premise for this proposal was that higher cost acquisitions placed a disproportionately greater burden on park agencies that had smaller property tax bases to finance the acquisitions. Retaining Option 1 allowed park agencies to get a smaller grant now (\$1 million under Option 1 versus \$1.7 million under Option 2) in exchange for the potential to be reimbursed for costs above \$1 million through the Metro Parks CIP if those costs were initially financed by the park agency. The weakness in this proposal is that if an agency provided local funds to qualify for obtaining a Park Acquisition Opportunity Grant under Option 1, the agency has already levied a property tax to finance that local share. Therefore claims that property taxes would rise if agencies must provide a non-reimbursable local match as called for under Option 2 is not true.
2. Modify Option 2 Rules by allowing 75% of the costs above \$2,267,000 financed by the park agency to be eligible for Metro Parks CIP reimbursement consideration. This change in the proposal results in all agencies having their Regional Parks System acquisitions financed at the same ratio of Metropolitan Council grants and potential Metro Parks CIP reimbursement grants (75%) with the remaining 25% financed by the park agency or other sources. This approach can be applied equitably to all acquisitions regardless of their costs.

Skovholt stated that this item will be brought back to our next meeting for action.

(2008-74) Clarifying non-reimbursement local match requirement for Park Acquisition Opportunity Grants awarded under Option 2: Revised Rule - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

This item was tabled and will be brought back to our next meeting as its action may be dependent on action taken on item 2008-127 discussed above.

(2008-84) Request for reimbursement consideration authorization for construction of Dakota Rail Regional Trail, Three Rivers Park District - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Steffered discussed the request from Three Rivers Park District that the Metro Council consider reimbursing them \$2,415,000 for construction of the Dakota Rail Regional Trail. The Metro Council's Environmental Services Division has reviewed the construction plans as required under Metro Council agenda item 2006-388. Staff

recommends approval of the reimbursement consideration request because it consistent with reimbursement policy criteria.

Wicklund asked why the bridge modification costs are not included in the request. Boe Carlson, Three River Park District stated that these are historical trestle bridges and Hennepin County has provided matching dollars to help with the modifications.

Barbeau asked if the land the trail is on is leased. Carlson stated yes, they have a 20 year lease. Schmidt asked if 20 years would be the typical 'life' of the trail. Carlson responded that it would be.

It was motioned by Commissioner Wicklund and seconded by Commissioner Moeller that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Consider reimbursing Three Rivers Park District up to \$2,415,000 for construction at Silverwood Special Recreation Feature as shown in **Attachment 2** in future regional parks capital improvement programs. 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.
2. Submit comments from the Metropolitan Council's Environmental Services Division shown in **Attachment 3** to insure that the trail's construction does not interfere with the operation of any MCES sewer interceptors.

(2008-119) Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary master plan review and request for Park Acquisition Opportunity Grant to acquire 3 parcels, City of St. Paul - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferdud gave background on the submission from the City of St. Paul of a master plan for the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary as an amendment to the Bruce Vento Regional Trail master plan. This additional land for the nature sanctuary was included in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* under the "conversion" category (p. 61 of policy plan). The City requests \$572,469 from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Grant Fund to finance 75% of the costs to acquire this land under "Option 2-Revised Rules". The master plan amendment and grant request are consistent with applicable Council policy and recommended for approval. The Council's Environmental Services Division has asked that conditions be placed on the acquisition grant to protect its access and use of a wastewater control structure adjacent to the land being acquired.

The master plan amendment to the Bruce Vento Regional Trail (Referral No. 20232-1) includes the following trail and park additions:

- Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary (including properties proposed to be acquired)
- Bruce Vento Regional Trail Connector
- Payne /7th Trail Access
- Eastside Heritage Park (Formerly Phalen Arcade Park)
- Phalen Boulevard Regional Trail Connector

Jody Martinez, City of St. Paul noted that they are working on concepts for the development of a nature interpretive facility and also have a RFP in place. She noted that they are working with the National Park Service on this project.

It was motioned by Commissioner Barbeau and seconded by Commissioner Jabs that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Master Plan Amendment to the Bruce Vento Regional Trail (Referral No. 20232-1) with the exception of the Phalen Boulevard Regional Trail Connector trail spur adjacent to Cayuga Street.

2. Request an additional master plan amendment from the City of St. Paul for the following items if the City intends to seek funds from these development and acquisition projects through the Metropolitan Regional Parks capital improvement program:
 - a. Development costs including connection to utilities for constructing the nature interpretive facility at the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary
 - b. Development costs including connection to utilities for the Bruce Vento Regional Trail Connector that includes a bridge crossing over active railroad tracks and Warner Road as a link to the Sam Morgan Regional Trail.
 - c. Development costs to link the regional trail along Phalen Boulevard (not the spur along Cayuga Street) to the proposed Gateway State Trail near the intersection of Phalen Boulevard/ Pennsylvania Avenue and the realigned I-35 E.

3. Authorize a grant of \$572,469 from the Land Acquisition Account of the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to the City of St. Paul to partially finance the acquisition of parcels 32-29-22-42-0042, 32-29-22-42-0021, and 32-29-22-42-0023 for the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary if the Council approves the master plan amendment recommendation 1 and places the following conditions on the acquisition grant:
 - a. That the City of St. Paul grant to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) perpetual controlled access to the 3rd and Commercial Street wastewater control structure for routine maintenance and back up disposal of wastewater during flood conditions at the MCES Metro Plant.
 - ~~b. That the City of St. Paul grant Metropolitan Council Environmental Services a permanent easement of about one acre of land—exact amount to be determined by the City and MCES—for constructing and operating odor control improvements on the 3rd and Commercial Street wastewater control structure.~~

4. Request the City of St. Paul to work with the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Division to site odor control improvements for the 3rd and Commercial Street wastewater control structure, and provide easements on land needed for the odor control improvements.

Scheduling off-site MPOSC meetings/tours for summer 2008 - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferud discussed that the MPOSC has conducted off-site meetings and tours at regional park system units in the summer. Based on what the MPOSC has toured in the past 5 years and in consultation with park agencies, here is a recommended set of meetings/tours for the Commission to consider scheduling.

June 3—Phalen-Keller RP, St. Paul and Ramsey County

July 1 **or** July 8—Minnehaha RP, MPRB

August 5—Tony Schmidt RP, Ramsey County

The Commission agreed to the above schedule and noted that the July meeting would be on July 8 (rather than July 1).

REPORTS

Staff: Stefferud discussed the e-mail from Wendy Underwood regarding appropriation for O&M moneys and using Lottery in Lieu money to replace a cut in the General Fund appropriation.

Chair: None.

Commissioners: Jesse Reinhardt tendered his resignation effective immediately due to a new job and relocation that has him moving out of his district.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, June 3, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. at Phalen Golf Course Clubhouse, St. Paul.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Skovholt adjourned the meeting at 5:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle, Executive Secretary

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