

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

MEETING OF
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

December 7, 2010

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Chuck Haas, Barb Schmidt, Doug Baines, Tom Gamec, Jeff Lee, Bob Moeller, Daniel Shlaferman, Wendy Wulff, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

ABSENT: Billy Dinkel, Richard Jabs

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Haas called the meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:01 p.m. on December 7, 2010.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Commissioner Gamec motioned and Commissioner Lee seconded to approve the December 7, 2010 Agenda and the November 9, 2010 Minutes. Chair Haas called for a vote. Commissioner Baines abstained. **The motion carried.**

PUBLIC INVITATION:

None.

BUSINESS

Grand Rounds Missing Link Regional Trail Master Plan, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board – Jan Youngquist, Sr. Planner - Parks

Youngquist gave a presentation for the Grand Rounds Missing Link Regional Trail Master Plan. She noted that it was originally submitted in March 2009.

Youngquist discussed several issues surrounding the master plan, including:

- Parkway use by trucks and buses.
- Railroad yard bridge crossing.
- Industrial land uses.

Youngquist discussed land acquisitions proposed and estimated development costs. She summarized her presentation with staff's conclusions and recommendations.

Youngquist noted that comments were emailed just prior to this meeting encouraging the Commission to table this item referencing Stinson Parkway. She noted that there is no relation to the Parkway and Missing Link boundary and shared a letter from Nick Eloff clarifying that Stinson Parkway is not part of the Missing Link route.

Haas clarified that the Commission is looking at the trail component only of the master plan, which does not include Stinson Parkway. Youngquist stated that this is correct.

Baines asked about acquisition costs and if the Commission should be concerned with the high costs. Youngquist explained that the Commission is looking at only 8 parcels that involve the regional trail corridor and also that only a portion of these parcels are needed for the corridor. This portion is all that would be considered for reimbursement.

Baines asked about 'clean up issues'. Youngquist explained the caveat included in the fourth recommendation which states that if the Metropolitan Council concludes that the land should be added to the regional park system, this does not imply the Council will grant park funds to clean up the site. Cleanup will be subject to the criteria outlined in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

Haas asked if Baines was concerned with the overall cost or how much the Metropolitan Council is funding. Baines explained that he feels the cost is aggressive and is uncomfortable with the City being able to make the acquisitions.

Moeller asked if the Commission should be concerned with the cost or whether the master plan makes sense. Youngquist stated that part of the Council's review is to look at acquisition costs; however, the estimated costs are just that, estimated. We have no way of knowing what the actual costs will be once the land becomes available.

Haas stated for clarification that each implementing agency gets a 'slice' of the pie, however, this Commission does not have a say in what/how they spend their appropriations, as long as their request meets our criteria. Youngquist stated that this is correct.

Gamec asked about costs involved for the interim route identified along 29th Avenue SE. Youngquist stated that the costs would be minimal.

Gamec asked about the costs of parcels 19 and 20. Youngquist stated that reimbursement would only be for the portion of those parcels used for the trail corridor.

Wulff questioned the 100 foot right of way (ROW) and stated that this would seem inclusive of the road as well. Youngquist stated that this plan is very unique and is based on staff recommendations. She noted that it is not just a trail but inclusive of associated greenway on either side of the trail.

Haas agreed with Wulff's concern that trail money is being used for transportation (roadways).

Wulff added that the trail will be surrounded by parkland and is concerned with the responsibility of spending tax dollars when there are areas in the metro that do not even have trails.

Beckman noted that the regional visitation will be high and noted that the master plan meets the regional definition and also is similar to what has been done in other areas of the region.

Youngquist commented that it is pretty amazing that this is the only area where there is a need for land acquisition and 'overall' makes it seem minimal.

Lee asked if Industrial Boulevard is also a 100 foot ROW. Youngquist stated that it is 80 feet, while not ideal, is sufficient.

Wulff asked if the 100 foot ROW includes the road. Youngquist stated that it does. Wulff asked if we approve 100 foot ROW, are we setting precedence to pay for roads.

Beckman stated that there are many issues and we'll need to, as much as we can, identify why we are granting 100 feet in some cases.

Moeller asked if there should be language that speaks to ROW that would say a minimum of 'x' and a maximum of 'x' depending on.....

Youngquist stated that this has been a complicated plan and a lot of different determining factors went into this recommendation.

Beckman suggested the Commission could use language in their recommendation encouraging the use of 100 foot ROW where necessary, but less when able.

Wulff stated that she is still concerned that the Council is paying for the road as well as the trail and felt that we don't do that anywhere else in the region.

Lee feels that 100 feet would be more of an asset/benefit to a trail.

Baines stated if you consider all 20 parcels (\$18-20 million) \$13 million is for the corridor only. He asked if the city acquires the land and then comes back and asked for reimbursement. Youngquist stated that her understanding is that the Park Board would like to develop both the local park and the regional trail corridor and is intent on acquiring all the land. She noted that reimbursement would only be considered for land acquired for the trail corridor itself.

Moeller suggested adding language that would state 'not to exceed 100 foot ROW', rather than base the corridor on 100 foot ROW, to encourage the Park Board to use less when they're able to.

Moeller stated that he would move to approve the following recommendations, with this added language. Gamec seconded.

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Grand Rounds Missing Link Master Plan and Addenda 1-2 (Referral No. 20523-1).
2. Require that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board submit an updated master plan with revised acquisition and development costs to the Metropolitan Council once the location of the railroad yard bridge has been selected and the trail route through the Southeast Minneapolis Industrial Area (SEMI) has been determined.
3. Require that prior to development of the regional trail and associated parkway, final plans be submitted to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment to ensure the integrity of the regional interceptor system.
4. Require that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board submit the results of Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment on parcels proposed to be acquired using regional parks funding. If the Metropolitan Council concludes that the land should be added to the regional park system and will help finance its acquisition, this does not imply that the Council will grant park funds to clean up the site. Funding for environmental cleanup will be subject the criteria outlined in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.
5. Advise the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to work closely with the Metropolitan Council during implementation of the master plan to coordinate safe crossings and connections to the Central Corridor LRT and to accommodate future transit routes.

Youngquist commented that we're trying to define how much land would be eligible for reimbursement and stated that the corridor will not be engineered at the time of the land acquisition.

Moeller stated that his intention is to acknowledge work and thoughts behind the recommendation of 100 foot ROW but wanted to suggest that money could be saved if less than 100 feet could be considered.

Lee stated that he felt this is a discussion for when the Park Board comes back to us for reimbursement.

Wulff reiterated her concern that we're committing to pay for the road. Baines agreed and stated that we're in the trail business, not the road business.

Beckman talked about the history of the Metropolitan Council where other revenue streams have been used to enable 'cost sharing'. Stefferud stated that the recommendation to the Council could be to seek 'cost sharing' opportunities and only reimburse the portion of the trail corridor that is used for trail purposes.

Stefferd reminded the Commission that this only makes the Park Board eligible to request reimbursement in the future. It does not guarantee or award any dollars at this time.

Moeller suggested withdrawing his motion and tabling this until next month and asked that staff look at language that talks about cost sharing and ROW deemed necessary.

Gamec asked if this is similar to what was done on Victory Memorial Parkway. Beckman stated that this was considered.

Moeller tabled his motion. Gamec tabled his second. Haas asked for a vote. **The motion was tabled to the next meeting.**

REPORTS

- **Chair** – None.

- **Commissioners** – None.

- **Staff** – Stefferud noted that the next meeting would be January 4, 2011 and wondered if we would have a quorum. Sandi Dingle will poll members.

Beckman stated that this administration will not reappoint members until a new Governor is chosen and noted that all Council members will remain until such time. She asked that all Commissioners do likewise. The group agreed.

Stefferd gave a presentation on the Parks and Trails Legacy Amendment Funding for information only. He gave a website where the draft document can be found (<http://www.citizing.org/projects/parkslegacy>) and noted that there will be a workshop on 12/8 from 7-9pm.

Youngquist passed out the *2030 Parks Policy Plan* that will go to the Council tomorrow (12/8) for adoption.

Moeller stated that it has been a pleasure working with Council members, staff and Peter Bell and wanted to compliment all on their hard work and leadership. Schmidt seconded his sentiments and Haas asked if this was a motion, as he agreed. Gamec also concurred and shared his positive personal experience

working with Peter Bell. Haas also shared his enjoyment working with Peter Bell and noted that he will be missed here at the Council. The entire group agreed and 'passed the motion'.

NEXT MEETING

Sandi Dingle will poll members for a date in January 2011.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle
Executive Assistant
Community Development