

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

MEETING OF
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Meeting held at the Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes Park Reserve, Bloomington

June 5, 2012

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Barb Schmidt, Tony Yarusso, Bob Moeller, Jeff Lee, Daniel Shlaferman, Carrie Wasley, Emily Johnson Piper, Wendy Wulff, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

ABSENT: Seyon Nyanwleh

CALL TO ORDER

Following a tour of the Hyland-Bush-Anderson Lakes Park Reserve (beginning at 3:00 p.m.), Chair Wasley called the meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 5, 2012.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Commissioner Shlaferman motioned and Commissioner Piper seconded to approve the June 5, 2012 Agenda and the May 1, 2012 minutes. **The motion carried.**

PUBLIC INVITATION:

None.

BUSINESS

Analysis to Eliminate Local Match for Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grants, Change Maximum Grant Amount and Refine Grant Eligible Costs - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd discussed the request from Scott County that brought about this analysis. Scott County asked to have the Commission consider eliminating the 25% local match for Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grants. The analysis also concludes a recommendation to reduce the cumulative amount a park agency can receive in a fiscal year to increase the likelihood that grant funds are available since the grant award would increase. Also to allow acquisition costs about the cumulative amount to be eligible for reimbursement from the park agency's share of future Regional Park Capital Improvement Programs (CIP). In addition, the recommendation would be to refine the grant eligible costs to what is needed to acquire the land and eliminate use of the grant for minimal recreational development of the acquired land. Recreational development can be financed from a park agency's share of the Regional Parks CIP.

Stefferd reviewed the current rules and his analysis as well giving the history of match requirements for requests for Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grants as outlined in the memorandum provided.

Wasley asked for a table showing which agencies have received what amounts over the past 5 years. Stefferud stated that he could provide this.

Yarusso asked for spending by district. Stefferud stated that he could do this for acquisitions.

Piper asked why we ask for a 25% local match in the first place. Stefferud explained that this requirement was added prior to the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account. The prior Administration wanted to 'stretch' the dollars.

Shlaferman asked what the benefit is for agencies to 'have skin in the game'. Stefferud explained that agencies would work to keep acquisition costs low.

Yarusso asked if any agencies are opposed to this change. Stefferud stated that the Minneapolis Park Board asked that this item be tabled. He also discussed Greg Mack's comments outlined in an email, which was provided to Commissioners.

Wasley asked about the other agencies. The City of St. Paul passed out a letter voicing their opinions and opposition to eliminating a local match.

Piper asked the City of Minneapolis for their opinion. Jennifer Ringold, City of Minneapolis responded that they would like to look at the issue with the other park agencies and come back to the Commission as a united front. She felt there is strength in the agencies working together.

Wasley asked what the timeline would be for the process. Stefferud stated that this is just an introduction to this issue and explained the process.

Boe Carlson, Three Rivers Park District clarified that the past acquisition rule was that agencies would receive 100% - in the end. They would contribute 40% of their own money up front and that money would be eligible for future reimbursement.

Moeller felt that this issue was discussed at length when the rule was changed last time. He asked staff what Commissioner Schmidt's opinion was (as she had not arrived at the meeting yet). Stefferud stated that he had not discussed it with her and noted that the premise today is to put the idea on the table and noted that staff is looking for direction – not action at this time.

Moeller clarified that staff is in favor of going back to the 100%? Stefferud stated that they are.

Mark Themig, Scott County stated that they are in a unique situation in 'building' a park system. He noted that the Met Council will be proposing a budget when there is \$8 million in the acquisition account. He stated that Scott County is having trouble putting together the 25% local match. He feels we need to spend what we have in reserve prior to asking the Legislature for more money. He stated that this is a great opportunity to do something now. Themig also pointed out that the Legislature did drop the 25% local match requirement for greater MN.

Schmidt noted that for the first 25 years of the program, all grants were 100% and she agreed with Scott County that it is difficult for rural areas to find local match dollars.

Lee stated he feels this is a major change and suggested having the implementing agencies get together to discuss and bring back a group recommendation.

Yarusso asked if Scott County has considered a 'cap amount'. Themig stated they have not.

Yarusso asked how long would it take for the implementing agencies to come back with a recommendation.

Moeller feels this is the right thing to consider. Beckman noted that our Regional Administrator made the recommendation based on an issue raised by Scott County.

Wasley raised the question – why don't we blend funds. She asked for more history (i.e., why not remediation). Unless this is very time sensitive, she'd like more discussion before going forward. Beckman agreed and noted that the public hearing process is the last step.

Wulff stated that this proposal has no 'naturally limiting factor' on the use of the money (until it runs out). In addition, she is concerned about getting the best bang for the buck for our regional system. There needs to be balance other than who shows up first for the money. Stefferud noted that this is why there are different accounts - some are for 'pristine' acquisition only.

Ringold asked for a timeline from the Commission and stated that they are willing to meet with their colleagues.

Yarusso motioned to lay this item over to the August meeting and have staff work with the implementing agencies and bring back a proposal. Schlaferman seconded the motion. Without further discussion, Chair Wasley called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Moeller suggested having further discussion (for information only) at the July meeting as well.

Schmidt cautioned that we have done things one way for many years and then made a change. Another change makes it look like we are not sure what we're doing.

Master Plan Amendment of Boundary for Above the Falls Regional Park and Approval of FY 2012 and FY 2013 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Financed Grants, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferud gave a presentation outlining the Master Plan Amendment described in the memorandum provided. He discussed the costs for development and noted that here will be Master Plan Amendment in coming years. He noted that they are only asking for a boundary change and acquisition dollars for parcels B & C at this time.

Yarusso asked why parcel C was wanted for this park. Ringold stated that the landowner came to them with the desire to sell which created a great opportunity to expand the park. She discussed the future vision for the park.

Piper asked how common is it for an agency to reserve local dollars for property for development – not to be used in the Region Park. Stefferud explained that this is very unique and that he has never seen it done before.

Schlaferman asked do they see potential for further expansion. Ringold discussed the opportunity to connect to the area south (Boom Island) as well as other areas for expansion and trails. She discussed the high costs listed in the Master Plan and discussed the returns expected on the investments.

It was moved by Piper and seconded by Lee to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan Amendment regarding the Scherer Lumber Company Site (Referral No. 50024-1).

2. Approve the following grants from the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board's share of FY 2012 and FY 2013 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriations to finance the acquisition costs of Parcels B and C as depicted in Figure 2.

Parks & Trails Legacy Fund	Grant
FY 2012	\$1,469,000
FY 2013	\$1,429,970

Without further discussion, Chair Wasley called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Request for Big Marine Park Reserve, Washington County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferud discussed the request from Washington County for a grant to fund the acquisition of the Knauff parcel as described in the memorandum provided.

Yarusso made a motion and it was seconded by Shlaferman to recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize a grant of up to \$329,550 from the 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 2.65 acre Knauff parcel as depicted in Figure 1 for Big Marine Park Reserve. The grant should be financed with:

- \$197,730 from the 2009 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Appropriation
- \$131,820 from Metropolitan Council Bonds

Chair Wasley opened it up for discussion and invited Mr. Reibel, owner of an adjoining property who requested an opportunity to address the Commission, up to speak.

Mr. Reibel stepped forward and passed out an article from the St. Paul Pioneer Press, as well as a letter from May Township and proceeded to briefly outline his history with the township as well as Washington County. He noted that he "never" intends to sell his property to the County and pointed out several other parcels where he claims the owners "never" intend to sell. He told the Commission that regardless of the Master Plan boundaries, he felt that the acquisition of this property was a waste of money.

John Elholm, Washington County stated that they were approached by the Knauff family as willing sellers. He noted that the original owner of that property had also claimed he would 'never' sell to the County. After his death, his heirs have indicated their wish to sell the property.

Yarusso stated that considering any parcels outside the parcel for sale in this case would be outside the 'domain' of this agenda item. Beckman concurred that this was correct.

Wasley asked about the road easement that Reibel spoke of. Elholm stated that the master plan talks about two options to access this parcel using existing roadways. He noted that Washington County maintains and easement to the roadway that goes through Mr. Reibel's property.

Wasley agreed with Yarusso but acknowledged Mr. Reibel's frustration. She asked Elholm if he has any thoughts on how to solve this problem. Reibel suggested using land that is already owned by Washington County for the planned campground and leave the east end of the lake alone. Elholm noted that Reibel's suggestion has been discussed at a public hearing.

Wulff stated that she wished that Washington County could come to some kind of agreement with the current land owners.

Steve Sullivan, Dakota County commented that master plans are developed with due technical process, public process, and political process with the intent of providing a regional park. He noted that not everyone is always in agreement and that acquiring land for a regional park is a 'patient process' as it can take many, many years to acquire and then develop a park.

Without further discussion, Chair Wasley called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Request for Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve, Anoka County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd reviewed the request from Anoka County as outlined in the memorandum provided.

Moeller made a motion and it was seconded by Piper to recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize a grant of up to \$268,072 from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Acquisition Account in the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Anoka County to finance 75% of the acquisition costs to acquire the 85 acre Preiner parcel as depicted in Figure 1 for Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve. The grant should be financed with:

- \$110,547 from the 2009 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriation
- \$ 50,296 from the 2011 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriation
- \$107,229 from Metropolitan Council bonds

Without further discussion, Chair Wasley called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Request for Blakely Bluffs Park Reserve, Scott County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd gave a presentation and reviewed the request from Scott County as outlined in the memorandum provided. He noted that this parcel does have a home and outbuildings that will be used for park purposes in the future.

Themig noted that the homeowner lost the home in foreclosure and it is currently 'bank owned'.

Schmidt discussed the interest to be paid to the Community Development Agency and asked if that could come out of another fund. Stefferud stated that this is an unusual situation.

Moeller made a motion and it was seconded by Yarusso to recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize a grant of up to \$448,370 from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account in the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Scott County to finance 75% of the acquisition costs to acquire the 84 acre Wells Fargo parcels as depicted in Figure 1 for Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve. The grant should be financed with:

- \$269,022 from the FY 2012 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Appropriation
- \$179,348 from Metropolitan Council Bonds

Without further discussion, Chair Wasley called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Amend Four Fiscal Year 2012 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Grants to Anoka County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferd discussed a request from Anoka County to amend four grants as outlined in the memorandum provided.

Schmidt made a motion and it was seconded by Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize amendments to the following grant agreements with Anoka County:

- 1) Reduce grant SG-2011-100, Mississippi West Regional Park boat launch from \$400,000 to \$382,000.
- 2) Expand the scope of grant SG-2011-101, Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve day camp redevelopment to include funding for roadway improvements, and storm water drainage restoration and improvements because the grant is large enough to finance this additional work.
- 3) Reduce grant SG-2011-104, Volunteer Resource Development Coordinator from \$80,000 to \$65,000.
- 4) Increase grant SG-2011-103, Conservation Corp of Minnesota from \$108,000 to \$141,000 with the reductions from grants SG-2011-100 and SG-2011-104.

Without further discussion, Chair Wasley called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Change Scope of Grant SG-2011-123, Scott County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferud discussed the request from Scott County to change the project scope of a grant as outlined in the memorandum provided.

Moeller made a motion and it was seconded by Lee to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve a change the scope of grant SG-2011-123 to Scott County so that the \$291,000 grant can be used for work related to phase 1 development of Spring Lake Regional Park (removal of Co. Rd. 81 from the park, construct 3 miles of trail, a parking lot, restroom building and an off-leash dog park, plus natural resource restoration).

Yarusso asked why the original project was not being done. Themig explained that this is an opportunity to combine this grant with other funding that has been secured for Spring Lake Regional Park Phase 1 Development that will deliver a better, more comprehensive project.

Without further discussion, Chair Wasley called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Summary of Parks Portion of 2012 Unified Capital Budget Amendment - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferud gave a summary of the parks portion of the 2012 Unified Capital Budget Amendment for information and referred to Tables 1 to 3 contained in the memorandum provided. He pointed out various exceptions of grant placeholders which would not be included in the recommendation as follows:

Page 6 - \$198,000 for Theodore Wirth Regional Park (master plan is being updated at this time)

Page 9 - \$1,130,000 for Three Rivers Park District

Page 10 - \$1,281,000 for Anoka County (many projects listed for 'flexibility')

Page 11 - \$125,000 for Dakota County (Lake Marion – Master Plan, not yet approved)

Lee made a motion and it was seconded by Schmidt to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the regional park grants listed in Tables 1 to 3 with the exception of grant placeholders as part of the Metropolitan Council's 2nd Quarter Unified Capital Budget Amendment.

Without further discussion, Chair Wasley called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

REPORTS

- **Chair** – None.
- **Commissioners** – Yarusso reported that the Rice Creek Trail had many trees down, etc and stated that he has looked into the matter and Anoka County reported that they will be doing some clean up over the next two weeks.
- **Staff** – Ann Beckman announced that she will be leaving the Council and this will be her last meeting. Commissioners and implementing agency personnel thanked her for her service.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be July 10, 2012 beginning at 4:00pm in Room LLA at the Metropolitan Council.

OTHER

Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District introduced himself and announced that Boe Carlson has taken another position with the Park District and he will be replacing Boe as the Associate Superintendent - Planning, Design & Technology.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle
Executive Assistant
Community Development