

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

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

May 1, 2012

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

ABSENT: Tony Yarusso

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wasley called the meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:00p.m. Tuesday, April 3, 2012.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Chair Wasley noted that she was changing to order of the agenda. With that amendment Commissioner Moeller motioned and Commissioner Shlaferman seconded to approve the May 1, 2012 Agenda. **The motion carried.** Commissioner Lee motioned and Commissioner Schmidt seconded to approve the April 3, 2012 Minutes. **The motion carried.**

PUBLIC INVITATION:

None.

BUSINESS

Whitetail Woods Regional Park Master Plan, Dakota County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks
Stefferud gave a presentation of the Dakota County Whitetail Woods Regional Park Master Plan as outlined in the materials provided. He discussed the schematics of the development of this park. He noted there were 3 alternative development concepts and discussed the public process that took place prior to selecting this plan.

Piper shared her concerns about a shooting range and feels more consideration should be given to this. She then asked how this park compares to what is offered at Lebanon Hills. Steve Sullivan, Dakota County Parks, responded that this park would be located in the center of Dakota County to accommodate growth. He then compared the amenities, e.g., the campground – there are no cabins in Lebanon Hills. He noted that Lebanon Hills has a visitor use center, but no large community gathering spot. He then discussed the versatility of the layout at Whitetail.

Lee asked if this connects with Northcreek Greenway. Sullivan stated it would be a hub along a greenway system connecting several greenways.

Nyanwleh asked if there will be any athletic fields. Sullivan stated that city parks provide these amenities.

Nyanwleh asked if residents asked for a dog park. Sullivan stated that this will replace one that is a few miles away and offers 20 acres. Nyanwleh asked why they would have a dog park but not athletic fields.

Sullivan discussed the municipal system that accommodates local use. As for athletic complexes, they tend to be destination areas within cities and not of regional use. They have found municipalities do a great job at providing these types of amenities. He discussed why regional parks are a good fit for dog parks, as they provide more acreage.

Moeller discussed Lake Minnewashta Regional Park dog park that is very wilderness based and spectacular.

Lee clarified that Regional Parks do not have athletic facilities. Stefferud responded that regional parks provide natural resource based recreation and noted that although they may have a ball field; it is intended more for small 'pick up' games.

Schmidt discussed recreational hierarchy of park providers planning for parks, e.g., regional parks – natural resource based.

Piper clarified that these types of amenities could be found in a regional park. Stefferud said yes, but noted these are not for league play or formal play.

Wulff asked about modifying gun range use, as she understands, it is very popular – asked how Sullivan sees the conflict being managed. Sullivan discussed the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) next to the park and augmented benefits to the park leveraging with the DNR. The downside is there will be times when it is hunted. As for the shooting range, it is managed by Empire Township and it is already limited in use. They will continue to work with the Township to ensure that it remains limited in hours and days used. What is unique about this park is it's in partnership with the DNR and gives us a much larger preservation of land.

Wasley asked if there are any regional parks that allow hunting. Stefferud explained that there are many that do 'controlled hunts' and noted that the parks are closed at that time.

Wasley asked how the forecasted usage was arrived at. Sullivan explained how they arrived at usage based on other regional park usage.

Nyanwleh asked if there will be an area for model airplanes. Sullivan stated that there is an interim location in Spring Lake Park. He stated there is no intent for that usage in this park.

It was moved by Schmidt and seconded by Moeller to recommend that the Metropolitan Council approve the Whitetail Woods Regional Park Master Plan (Referral No. 50024-1). Without further discussion, Chair Wasley called for a vote. **The motion carried, with Nyanwleh abstaining.**

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Request for Rush Creek Regional Trail, Three Rivers Park District - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Stefferud gave a presentation outlining the request from Three Rivers Park District for a grant for Rush Creek Regional Trail.

Shlaferman asked if the entire trail corridor was acquired. Boe Carlson, Three Rivers Park District stated that this portion connects Elm Creek to Crow Hassan. He noted that they've acquired a little more as the buffer to the trail.

Wulff stated that this is great as it is both cost effective and a cooperative effort.

It was moved by Piper and seconded by Shlaferman to recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize a grant of up to \$255,750 from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Acquisition Account in the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Three Rivers Park District to finance 75% of the acquisition costs to acquire 5.87 acres from the City of Brooklyn Park as depicted in Figure 1 for Rush Creek Regional Trail. The grant should be financed with:

- \$153,450 from the 2009 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund appropriation
- \$102,300 from Metropolitan Council bonds

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

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Request for Baker Park Reserve, Three Rivers Park District - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Steffered described the request for a 1 acre acquisition for Baker Park Reserve as outlined in the staff report provided.

Wulff asked the point of acquiring and tearing down the house on the edge of the park. Carlson stated that it is within the boundary of the master plan for this park. He explained that there are some 'management' issues with this property. He noted that it is the only house in the area. The acquisition of the parcel would bring the Park District right up to the County Road. There is concerned that a new owner could create a 'mini castle' that would be too expensive to acquire in the future. This is a small home at a good price point.

Wasley asked if they've discussed contacting redevelopment authority to see if the house could be moved. Carlson said they have not. They will salvage materials and may work with the Fire Department to do a controlled burn.

Wasley discussed looking at different ways of disposing of the house that may benefit others. Moeller stated that Hennepin County Land Trust may be willing to move the house and he would be happy to work with Carlson on that. Carlson agreed to look into the matter.

Wulff pointed out that Maple Plain has not received Livable Communities Grants because they have no housing component. She encouraged/suggested following up on ways to reuse the house.

It was moved by Moeller and seconded by Lee to recommend that the Metropolitan Council That the Metropolitan Council authorize a grant of up to \$211,875 from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account in the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Three Rivers Park District to finance 75% of the acquisition costs to acquire the 1 acre Benjamin parcel as depicted in Figure 1 for Baker Park Reserve. The grant should be financed with:

- \$127,125 from the FY 2012 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation
- \$ 84,750 from Metropolitan Council bonds

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

Scheduling June, July, August and September MPOSC Meetings and Tours - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Steffered reviewed the proposed tour sites outlined in the memorandum provided.

Wulff noted that she has Environment Committee on the 2nd Tuesday, so she may not be able to attend.

It was moved by Nyanwleh and seconded by Shlaferman to accept the proposed meeting dates/times outlined by staff in the memorandum provided. Without further discussion, Chair Wasley called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

REPORTS

- **Chair** – None.
- **Commissioners** – None.
- **Staff** – None.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be June 5, 2012 beginning at 3:00pm in the City of Bloomington – location and directions to be included with the June 5 agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle
Executive Assistant
Community Development