

# Minutes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



**Meeting date:** November 2, 2023

**Time:** 4:00 PM

**Location:** 390 Robert Street

## Members present:

Chair, Tony Yarusso,  
at large

Monica Dillenburg, District A

Robert Moeller, District B

Cana Yang, District C

Tess Bouska, District D

Vacant, District E

Cecily Harris, District F

Anthony Taylor, District G

Vacant, District H

Susan Vento, Council Liaison

= present

## Call to order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:07pm.

## Agenda approved

Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. The agenda was approved by consensus.

## Approval of minutes

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Moeller to approve the minutes of the October 5, 2023, regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

## Public invitation

Sean Gosiewski, South Minneapolis Resident stated he was excited about the upcoming Metropolitan Council Regional Parks System Historical Cultural Study and suggested reaching out to indigenous groups to share information. Chair Yarusso noted that staff are still early in this process.

## Business

1. **2023-260:** West Mississippi River Regional Trail, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (Coutolenc), Three Rivers Park District (Jessica Lee)

Lee gave a presentation on the West Mississippi Regional Trail, park acquisition opportunity fund request from Three Rivers Park District as outlined in the materials provided.

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Moeller, to recommend that that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$480,000 to Three Rivers Park District to acquire a 1.1-acre parcel located at 16590 Dayton River Road in Dayton, MN, for the West Mississippi River Regional Trail.
2. Authorize the Community Development Director to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

Chair Yarusso called for a vote.

**Motion carried.**

2. **2023-261:** Battle Creek Regional Park Long-Range Plan, Ramsey County (Colin Kelly)

Kelly gave a presentation on the Battle Creek Regional Park Long-Range Plan, submitted by Ramsey County as outlined in the materials provided.

Moeller asked, are there amenities, designs, etc. to meet the needs of emerging populations, particularly the communities that live near the park. Kelly discussed the County's plans to add additional programming that was focused on a range of learning opportunities within this plan. Ben Karp, Ramsey County further discussed additional programming being explored.

Chair Yarusso asked whether this plan completely replaces the former one, or what additional amenities and facilities are being added as new. Scott Yonke, Ramsey County Parks stated that this plan completely replaces the original plan that was developed in 1981.

Bouska asked about preserving and caring for the natural resources of the park and asked, will there be funding for things like water testing? Chair Yarusso responded that the MN Department of Health does fish testing and supplies data on fish consumption.

Mullin discussed an active Pigs Eye Task Force that is looking at the environmental contamination and pollution at the site. The scope of the study includes the Park and areas outside of it.

It was moved by Moeller, seconded by Dillenburg, to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$480,000 to Three Rivers Park District to acquire a 1.1-acre parcel located at 16590 Dayton River Road in Dayton, MN, for the West Mississippi River Regional Trail.
2. Authorize the Community Development Director to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

With no further discussion, Chair Yarusso called for a vote.

**Motion carried.**

**Information**

1. Equity Nudge: Recommendations for the 2050 Regional Parks Policy Plan from region-wide Young Leaders Collaboration (Darcie Vandegrift and Mulki Haile)

Haile and Vandegrift gave a presentation on the Young Leaders Collaboration that was done in the Spring of 2023 as outlined in the materials provided. Additionally, they had a number of discussion questions for the Commissioners.

Chair Yarusso discussed wanting better data regarding winter use and considerations for winter management and programming. He felt it calls out the importance from a policy perspective, programming for winter activities.

Dillenburg discussed the importance of education for our youth and teaching them the importance of preservation of the natural world, as the youth will be needed to care for these resources at some point in the future.

Chair Yarusso discussed ideas for region-wide programming that the Council could provide, i.e., citizen science program.

Taylor asked, what organizations did the youth come from and feels we should look at support at a family level. He stated the need for supporting these organizations that provide family connections and programming. He also asked what we learned from the disabled community. He discussed the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights that the Governor put forward.

The Commission discussed a finding regarding pollution being a barrier to park usage from

the youth perspective. This includes noise pollution.

2. Regional Development Guide, including the Regional Parks Policy Update (Colin Kelly, Tracey Kinney, and Emmet Mullin)

Kelly, Kinney, and Mullin gave an update on the Regional Development Guide (RDG) including the Regional Parks Policy Update (RPPP) as outlined in the materials provided.

Chair Yarusso discussed clarifying system changes and asked, how do we recognize indigenous people who have roots in the area but may no longer live in the immediate area. He discussed the need to think broadly about service areas and measuring non-local visits. He would like to see some recognition exploration around the regional nature of our system.

## Reports

1. Chair

Chair Yarusso noted that we are still looking for commissioners to help with the Competitive Grant Program to review Applications. Dillenburg stated she could help.

2. Committee Members

None.

3. Council Liaison

None.

4. Staff

Mullin stated staff are actively working on recruiting to fill open seats. Commissioner interviews are planned for later this month.

## Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

## Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting of November 2, 2023.

Approved this 07 day of December 2023.

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### Council contact:

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