

**Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission
Meeting Minutes for September 23, 2015
Sartell City Hall**

Approved 10/28/15

Members Present: Jannik Anderson; Rick Anderson; Mike Hulett; Tim Kennedy; Al Lieffort; Marc Mattice; Keith Nelson; Bryan Pike; Tom Ryan; Tom Schmitz; Barry Wendorf; LuAnn Wilcox

Members Absent: Rita Albrecht

Staff Present:

Renee Mattson, Executive Director
Joe Czapiewski, System Plan Coordinator

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair Al Lieffort

2. Motion by Nelson, second by R. Anderson: Approve the minutes of August 26, 2015. **Carried.**

3. Approval of the Treasurer's Report

Renee submitted a summary status report of the three operating grants.

Motion by Wilcox, second by Kennedy to approve the Treasurer's Report. **Motion Carried**

Commissioners requested that future reports include the percentage of funds spent and the percentage of funds remaining.

4. Motion by Hulett, second by Ryan to approve the agenda. **Motion carried**

Commissioner Ryan requested that "Items from Members" be formalized to include up to two minutes for sharing of information from each commissioner.

5. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance

Mary Koep, Brainerd (Did not request to address the Commission.)

6. Unfinished Business

6.1 - Funding Priority Criteria

Members discussed the practical and functional considerations of the funding criteria that was adopted at the August 26, 2015 Commission meeting in more detail. The adopted priority criteria is to use the rank and score of projects evaluated by the ETeam, and projects identified as having high impact, presenting unique or timely opportunities, and/or innovative focus. The Commission will also consider the location of projects so as to assure equitable statewide distribution of funding resources and recreational opportunities.

Renee suggested that Joe interject a presentation of agenda item 7.3, DMS Portal to Portal Review, to illustrate the information requested in the funding application that will inform Commission funding decisions. (See minutes under 7.3)

The Commission directed Joe and Renee to draft a synoptic statement of funding criteria to include those previously adopted and adding the following considerations:

- Well developed overall concept and project readiness
- Commitment to and ability to carry out long term operations and maintenance plan
- Substantiated need, demand, service to population centers or destination amenities
- Local share and/or other funding sources, particularly for large scale projects
- Collaboration, cooperation, coordination among stakeholders and funding sources
- Demonstrated knowledge of the *Parks and Trails Legacy Plan* and attention to addressing each of its "four pillars."

Future funding considerations will also include project suitability within the Statewide System Plan, increased attention to Connecting People to the Outdoors and rehabilitation/reconstruction needs of existing facilities within the system.

6.2 - Connecting People and the Outdoors

Renee met with LuAnn and brought the subcommittee draft recommendations to the Legacy Advisory Committee (LAC). She also had an informal discussion with Erika Rivers, DNR Parks and Trails Director, on this topic. All are in agreement that this should be a joint coordinated effort among the three Parks and Trails Legacy agencies. The Commission is pleased to have Renee initiate this dialog to *Coordinate Among Partners*. She was directed to construct a draft framework in consultation with the other agency administrators, and report back to the subcommittee.

Some thoughts expressed included a focus on population centers, especially schools, as avenues for local and introductory experiences. Per subcommittee recommendation, those experiences would progressively increase in immersive qualities and distance from home according to age and/or grade level. Members reiterated that a key initial strategy is providing transportation funding for school field trips.

7. New Business

7.1 - Contract extension with JFC Strategic Services

Al presented a modified work plan and implementation timeline proposal for the System Plan Coordinator. The primary objective will be completion of the *Statewide System Plan* by June 30, 2016 with a draft of the plan and funding strategy submitted no later than December 30, 2015. To accomplish this, Joe will coordinate and conduct District Planning Committee meetings and application workshops in each of the six districts, facilitate the work of the ETeam, manage the application processes and communicate with applicants. His work will be coordinated with, and under the direction of, the Executive Director.

Motion by Nelson, second by Schmitz: Approve the contract extension with JFC Strategic Services as submitted. **Motion carried**

7.2 - Contract extension with Schoenbauer Consulting

Members discussed what role and function Schoenbauer Consulting could provide upon the expiration of the current contract on November 30, 2015, and given that the Commission has hired an Executive Director. Some suggestions were: establishing metrics for performance and participation - evaluation criteria and research methodology; providing consultation, advice, and guidance to applicant agencies, especially with regard to Master Plans; assist with the

design and development of the Master Plan portal; periodic review and update of the Strategic Plan. AI asked members to provide additional comments to Renee, who will make recommendations to the Commission at its November meeting.

7.3 - DMS Portal to Portal Review

Joe provided an overview of information to be requested in the funding application. It begins with migrating all information from the Designation Application and integrates details from the Master Plan. It asks for detailed implementation plans and related costs, and identification of all funding sources, past, present, and future. To justify the Commission's confidence in the project, it requires the applicant agency to demonstrate its ability to manage and maintain the facility, and attract people. Members discussed the needs and nuances of the funding application portal, which Joe will take under advisement.

7.4 - Scoring Review Case Study

Joe provided a demonstration of the ETeam ranking process for Regional Designation Applications, using four examples for illustrative purposes. The process involves independent review and ranking (high, medium, or low) of applications by individual ETeam members, after which the team meets to discuss the applications and reach consensus on ranking. Feedback on each application is documented and communicated to the applicants. Highest ranked projects are then scored against the criteria, and discussed to reach consensus.

Members complimented the honing of the process for efficiency, efficacy, and objectivity. Some concern was expressed that the criteria biases against population centers (cities) using city streets for trail route connections. There were also applications for parcels too small in size and lacking unique recreational features to achieve regional significance, but could possibly link with adjacent properties to improve the proposal. Joe commented that a well-developed conceptual plan, with good descriptions and good connections, receives a higher rank and score from the ETeam, than "flowery" hyperbole.

The question was raised as to an appeal or secondary review process, especially if special circumstances were present. Barry said that Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council allows three days to conduct a review process for applications they have questions or concerns about. Applicants are given 15 minutes to respond in person directly to the council in defense of the application. They do not use an independent evaluation team.

7.5 - Master Planning Overview

Joe distributed a chart for applicants that illustrates what information is required in the Master Plan and how the information is used by the Commission in its decision making processes. The chart will serve as the starting point for designing a Master Plan portal to assist applicants.

7.6 - DPC October Meeting Schedule

The schedule of October DPC meetings will be finalized during the week following this Commission meeting. The agenda will include a review of the application cycle outcomes, funding priorities, a review of the current system, and an open time for feedback. Following the meeting, Renee and Joe will be available to consult with applicants having high ranked projects regarding their funding applications. DPC members will not be involved in those consultations and Commissioner involvement is optional.

7.7 - Application Deadline for Next Funding Cycle

Members determined an October 30, 2015 deadline for funding applications, with the portal open by October 1. The portal for Regional Designation applications will be open February 1 through April 29, 2016, with DPCs meeting together for a summit in January or February and application workshops taking place during the month of March. The updated Regional Designation portal will be reviewed, and final revisions made, by the Commission at its January meeting.

8. Executive Director's Report

Members received a written report with the meeting packet which was filed with the minutes.

Renee added a request of \$3,000 to \$3,750 for production of an overview map to illustrate the location of state parks, national parks, regional park systems, and trail systems at all levels. Acknowledging that an appropriation was made to the University of Minnesota for a parks and trails systems inventory, the Commission does not expect the results of that endeavor within the necessary time frame for presentation to the Legislature. The Commission requested that Renee detail the request and submit a written proposal for discussion at the October meeting, and to assure that the work product is proprietary to the Commission.

The Commission directed Renee to set a date and location for the DPC Summit.

9. Items from Members

Mike shared that he and Al had received communications from a group in opposition to the Pelican Rapids to Perham Trail, expressing that County Commissioners and planners had been unresponsive to their concerns. The policy of the Commission is to evaluate projects on the merits of applications only, and not the concerns of constituents. Renee will draft a policy statement in this regard.

10. Consent Agenda

Renee reviewed and submitted the bills and claims as follows:

- Commissioners expenses	2,672.34
- JFC Strategic Services	5,789.83
- Schoenbauer Consulting	3,505.00
- Houston Engineering	6,777.00
- Trinity Creek Consulting	8,382.38
TOTAL	27,126.55

Motion by Nelson, second by Wendorf: Approve the consent agenda as submitted. **Motion carried.**

Motion by Schmitz, second by R. Anderson: Change the signatory on expense vouchers from the Chair to the Executive Director. **Motion carried**

11. The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for October 28, 2015 at Oxbow Park.

Motion to adjourn was made by Wilcox, second by Hulett. **Motion carried.**

*All motions are carried unanimously unless otherwise noted. Motions which are not unanimous are recorded in the Vote Tally Journal.