

**Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting
Nordic Center at Lake Elmo Park Reserve
1515 Keats Ave North
Lake Elmo, MN 55042
April 25, 2013
9:30 am – 2:30 pm**

M I N U T E S

Members present: Rick Anderson, Kathy Bergen, Bob Bierscheid, Nancy Hanson, Brian Hubbard, Chuck Kartak, Dwight Morrison, Glenda Phillipe, Tom Ryan, Wayne Sames, Jan Shaw Wolff, Jenny Smith, Tom Stoa, Barry Warner, Tony Yarusso
Agency Liaisons: Courtland Nelson, Arne Stefferud, Laird Mork
Guests: Randall Vogt, Co-chair, Wheels on Trails; Mike Kimball, City of St. Paul.
Staff: Laurie Young, Colin Kelly

**1. Welcome and Overview of Lake Elmo Park Reserve –
John Elholm, Washington County Parks Director**

John Elholm, Washington County Parks Director, welcomed the Legacy Advisory Committee (LAC), and gave an overview of the Washington County parks and trails system. The development of the Nordic Center at Lake Elmo Park Reserve was made possible by park and trail legacy funds, as was the installation of the low-profile LED lights illuminating the adjacent cross-country ski trails. Recent campground redevelopment at St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park was also made possible by legacy funds.

Modification of Agenda and Comments on the Minutes

An addition was made to the agenda before #6: “Is the Direction in Which We’re Headed Consistent with us Becoming a Relevant Organization?” Recorded as 6b in these minutes.

There were no additions or changes to the minutes.

2. Legislative Update

Arne Stefferud, Laird Mork, and Courtland Nelson gave a summary of the content and status of House File No. 1183 and Senate File No. 1051 (i.e., the Legacy Funding bills).

The following comments were made about the House File 1183:

- There is a large amount of detail included. The bill is very specific and includes a list of projects to be funded.

Next Meeting:

6/27/13, 9:30 am – 2:30 pm. Hartley Nature Center. 3001 Woodland Ave, Duluth, MN.

Committee Actions Required

Review the draft text for the web site and draft talking points. E-mail Lynnea with suggestions for additions, changes and other comments by May 23rd

Review the comments under the agenda item (Is the direction in which we are headed consistent with us becoming a relevant organization?
Send comments to Lynnea by May 23rd.

Send Laurie your lodging requests for the meeting at Itasca in August – (one night or two?) and room preferences by May 9th.

Staff and Liaison Actions Required:

Courtland will share the outcomes/ recommendations from the meeting with representatives from Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Coalition and DNR regarding implementation of a Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission and its administration by DNR.

Courtland will talk to Lynnea about connecting with Representative Kahn, conference committees, and/or other legislative members. Courtland will set up a meeting with Representative Kahn as appropriate.

Courtland will develop a list of deliverables and a process or set of alternatives for how to proceed with the role of the LAC relative to addressing statewide trail issues.

Laurie will send future meeting dates via an Outlook appointment.

Laurie will send the talking points electronically to committee members.

- Concerns with a specific list include the lack of opportunity to move dollars around as needed due to cost overruns or projects that can't be implemented.
- The allocation in this bill is 43% metro, 37% DNR, and 20% Greater Minnesota. The LAC supports the recommendation of the Legacy Funding Committee; a 40-40-20 allocation.
- The bill includes language for the formation of a Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (Sec.8. page 80.)
- The DNR is directed to provide administrative support for the Commission. DNR needs funding to carry out this role.
- There is no funding included in the bill for support of the LAC and its work.

The following comments were made regarding the Senate File 1051:

- The Senate bill mirrors the Governor's recommendation. It hasn't been heard in Committee yet.
- A letter to the Senate signed by the DNR, Metropolitan Council, and Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Coalition will be resubmitted to the Senate Committee, endorsing the 40-40-20 allocation.
- There was a meeting between representatives from Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Coalition and DNR regarding implementation of a Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission and its administration by DNR should the legislation pass. The following recommendations were made by that group:
 - Adequate funding is needed for the administration of the Commission.
 - An adequate amount of time is needed for the Commission to get up and running.
 - The competitive grant program should continue and earmarks should be avoided.

Action: Courtland will share the outcomes/recommendations of this meeting with the committee

3. Subcommittee Meetings

Subcommittees met from 11:00 until noon.

4. Subcommittee Reports

Benchmark Subcommittee

The importance of transparency was stressed.

Three sets of benchmarks will be developed for:

- the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee;
- *Parks and Trails Legacy Plan* five year priorities; and
- Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Coalition.

Two handouts were distributed, including:

- "Legacy Committee Funding Recommended" and
- "There is a Need for a Common Metric for Valid Comparison".

The following issues came to light in the development of these handouts, a beginning of the development of benchmarks:

- There is a need for common metrics for valid comparisons. For example, DNR is investing in Taking Care of What We Have. The Metropolitan Council emphasizes Create Opportunities. Are each of the implementing agencies interpreting the strategic directions in the same way? There is a need to clarify definitions.

- The question of whether there is equitable treatment in all four strategic directions needs to be addressed and “equitable” needs to be clearly defined. Compounding the issue are regional differences that affect how the public thought Legacy dollars should be spent.
- Do we have benchmarks on what we’re getting back? Things we wouldn’t have gotten if it weren’t for the Legacy Amendment?
- There is a need to both define metrics that serve the broadest number of citizens possible and clearly articulate them so they’re easily understood. If our charge is to look closely at the numbers and communicate them, at what level and what in what form?

Youth Engagement Subcommittee

Brian Hubbard summarized the committee’s draft work plan.

- Create surveys to assist in developing youth and adult partnerships in collaboration with convening sponsors of the Legacy Advisory Committee to promote and coordinate the implementation of the 25-year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan that help us better reach our target markets.

How will we do this?

- Work together with one Youth Participatory Evaluation expert from the [MN Alliance Youth with Youth](#) and one evaluation expert from a sponsoring agency of the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee.
- Develop Youth Board in collaboration with Minnesota Alliance with Youth and Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee-Youth Engagement Sub Committee to assist in development and implementation of the survey together with evaluation experts.

Who are the intended audiences for the surveys?

- The first survey will be distributed to Park and Trail organizations and providers. A second survey developed for youth and young adults ages 12-25 years old.

What are the themes of the survey?

- Involve youth (12-18 years old) and young adults (18-25 years old) in advisory committee planning efforts.
- Include youth and young adults in participatory planning and evaluation processes for facility and program development.
- Include youth and young adults in training parks and trails staff in professional development practices.

Funding Subcommittee

How to get recommendations of the funding committee incorporated into the legislative discussion. The presence of LAC members in the discussions could be useful.

The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan recommends how Greater MN can start to gather data to answer the questions of visitation and other metrics.

The recommendation was made to invite legislators to one or more of our meetings. Interactions with legislators may help to educate them on the existence of the Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee and build relationships.

It would be helpful for the committee to be involved in conference committee discussion.

Action: Courtland will talk to Lynnea about connecting with Representative Kahn, conference committees, and other legislative members. Courtland will set up a meeting with Representative Kahn as appropriate.

6a. Five-Year Celebratory Event, and Linking Legacy Advisory Committee to the Legacy Work (via website, etc.)

Tabled

6b. Is the Direction in Which We're Headed Consistent with us Becoming a Relevant Organization?

This item was added to the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. The question was posed to the committee and the following responses were given:

- Don't know if we are, but we've got to be relevant.
- The committee is beginning to focus on possible roles of the committee. We took a fair amount of time getting organized. Have we been influential so far, in terms of the legislature? Not so much. Might be more significant with relation to the three entities. It is still pretty early. Continue to focus more. Pick out a few things we can have influence on. Begin to build credibility and visibility. Try to make some more connections with legislators.
- The LAC plays a role in answering the question, "are these projects consistent with the *Legacy Plan*?" The LAC's focus is on the implementation of the *Legacy Plan*. However, it's not necessarily the role of the LAC to determine or recommend specific funding levels.
- The influence of the committee has been minimal in terms of legislation. They've played a more significant role in advising convening sponsors.
- The focus has been on, "What's our piece of the pie?"
- But, is anybody listening? The implementing agencies may be connected and paying attention, but it doesn't matter much if nobody else is listening.
- Perspective of one of the few private sector people on the committee: Need to regularly ask, "what value am I bringing to the project? What are we doing today to bring value to the discussion we're having?" We've had the discussions about protocol. That's good. But we need to ask ourselves, "what is our task?" We need to bring value to the discussion or we are going to go away.
- There's a difference between where we are now and where we are going. We can bring together clearer information from all of the convening agencies. I'd hope that we don't have as much involvement in the funding discussion going forward. (Important now with 40-40-20 discussion.) The benchmarks discussion is an important one. Going into 2035, for example, how do we communicate to the public that we have done good work and the amendment should be renewed? Other focal points for future discussion could involve the ratio of funding toward parks vs. trails. What are the gaps?
- The purpose of this organization, by my perspective, is not to meddle in the working budgets of each of the convening agencies.
- Greater MN now has *The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan*. That's significant progress and forward movement.
- I don't have a clear vision for where we're going. We're supposed to oversee the implementation of the plan. What is our role? Not necessarily advocacy, but that's important. The funding discussion is not necessarily the focus. I still don't know where I can be most helpful and value added. Here to help, but I don't know what to do.
- This group, in a nonthreatening way, allows for the three groups to communicate openly. That is a very good thing. My compliments.

- The communication amongst the providers has been good. This may be the start of developing a statewide program.
- What I think I'm hearing from some of the comments is that we're coming out of "the fog" of all of the "dull stuff". We'll learn more once the Legislature provides us with their direction. I feel like we're kind of on the launch pad.
- We're becoming more relevant with regard to the subcommittee's work. The benchmark work is at the crux of the purpose of this committee. There are specific tasks related to connecting with youth. We're really starting to pick up some momentum today. We need to remember that creating something from nothing takes time.
- A question: Do the three convening agencies get together at other times besides this?
Yes. We have dialogue that is germane and timely. Lately that's been focused on legislative issues.
- If the Legislature can decide that a particular split, say 40-40-20 is appropriate, it would set this group and the convening agencies free to focus on topics more germane than funding.

Action: The Committee should review the comments above and send additions to Lynnea.

7. Proposed Role of the Legacy Advisory Committee Regarding Statewide Trail Issues – Courtland Nelson

Courtland summarized the potential role of the Committee and the rationale behind its involvement as follows:

- Being involved in the statewide trail issue is an opportunity for this organization to get involved in one specific aspect of our collective responsibility. It takes up a good portion of the *Legacy Plan*. It is fundamental to our work. There are few opponents and a relative lack of barriers.
- There are some guidance points that the LAC could develop with regard to future funding needs. Having some benchmarks that we can hold all of ourselves accountable for would be good.
- Appropriate for this group to display some leadership. We want to move the dial and display success.
- Many related issues/components: Tourism/economic development, new and improved activities in state forests (motorized, non-motorized, etc.), skill-building activities, etc.
- We are asking that this group sponsor a series of regional trail summits. We seek advice on the plethora of trail issues (trails to trails, trails to parks, trails to communities, access, rehab, etc.).
- Develop guidance on the metrics for assessing systems. The three agencies are all interested.
- Another role of the committee would be to provide review and input on priorities.

The following comments were made and questions asked by the committee in response to the proposal:

- It makes sense for this organization to go to the regions and connect with the public on this issue.
- The needs of one location are different than others. We see this as an opportunity to provide specific regions or localities direction as to how to go forward with trail issues.
- Would local municipalities be involved in preparing content for or staffing workshops?
Input by local units of government would be essential.
- If we go forward with this, we'll need to be clear about what the intent is when we host the events. We don't want the public to misread it or be confused by it. There are a lot of other studies going on (e.g., MnDOT and Hennepin County's respective Bicycle Plans).
- This needs to be in collaboration with local interests about contemporary issues. What are the things that people are interested in and will bring people out? We don't want this to be superficial. We want this to be useful to each of the convening agencies.
- When should the LAC decide whether we are going to take on this project?

Courtland responded that it would be about a 12 month endeavor for planning, implementation, and evaluation/analysis. Next July ('14) as an end date.

- But we can't decide whether we're going to do it unless the Legislature allocates dollars for it? Courtland responded that funding would help, but the DNR could fund it regardless.
- What can we do to increase the completion and connectivity of trails, regardless of who owns it? A "hub and a spokes" concept in the TC area, for example.
- Some right-sizing of the state trail system should be addressed as well.
- While this is interesting, I am concerned about the time commitment. Specifically, the percent of time we'll be spending in committee meetings. We need to leave enough time in our agendas to weigh-in on regional parks and trails issues.
- I like it. It's relevant. Sets up a format, potentially, for everything this committee does.
- Offers support. Should connect with local interests ahead of regional summits. Should consider a longer timeframe (i.e., two years) so that discussions within convening agencies can take place.
- Perhaps just a portion of the LAC would be actively or heavily involved?
- All of the overall committee should be involved in at least some way, shape or form.
- This would take up a lot of our time. I'm not sure one "shot" will get it done. I'd like to see something that really works.
 - Agencies would be doing the bulk of the preparation work. LAC would be more about advising and feedback.
- Who is the audience? Is this for staff, Parks and Trails professionals, others?
 - There would be some discussion with the Parks and Trails professionals. There has to be a public part of it.
- We don't want this to completely consume our time. Keep it at a high level. Four regional meetings and one in the metro. On a given day, ask three basic questions (i.e., issues, opportunities, constraints) in two different forums (i.e., parks and trails professionals; user groups and the public).
- Would the regional meetings replace the regular meetings of the committee? I come back to this idea of a subcommittee that goes to each of the regional meetings, along with others that may be available.

Conclusion to the conversation: There does seem to be consensus that taking some role in trails is a good idea, but we don't know the specifics. The committee committed to working on trails, but there will be conversations to come about how to move forward.

Action: Courtland will prepare draft deliverables and possible approaches as to how to proceed prior to the next LAC meeting.

8. Talking Points and Strategies for Building Awareness of the Legacy Advisory Committee

The report of the Communications Subcommittee was given.

A handout with the text for a draft website was distributed. The subcommittee is looking for feedback: Do we want to include bios? What information should be included with the member listing (i.e., title and appointing agency)?

Action: E-mail Lynnea if you have comments or suggestions for the website.

A handout of "Talking Points – Legacy Advisory Committee" was distributed. The subcommittee is looking for feedback:

- Knowing we've got multiple audiences, the focus is on three: 1) general public, 2) legislators, 3) parks and trails professionals/staff. We want messages appropriate to specific audiences.
- Shouldn't be purely informational; seek input. ask people to do something that furthers our mission.

- Add talking points that address the funding issue.

Action: E-mail Lynnea with additions and identify which talking points should be targeted for which audiences.

Action: Laurie will send this handout to the committee electronically.

9. Survey Results Update – Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson

Tabled

10. Adjourn