

APPROVED

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Minutes for May 25, 2016

Sartell City Hall, Sartell, MN 56377

Commissioners in Attendance: Mike Hulett, Rita Albrecht, Barry Wendorf, Bryan Pike, Rick Anderson, Tom Ryan, LuAnn Wilcox, Peg Furshong, Jannik Anderson, Marc Mattice, Tim Kennedy, Keith Nelson

Commissioners Absent: Tom Schmitz

Staff and Consultants Present: Renee Mattson, Executive Director, Joe Czapiewski, System Plan Coordinator, Kathy and Jeff Schoenbauer, Schoenbauer Consulting

1. Meeting called to order at 10:11am by Chair Hulett

Chair Hulett welcomed our new District 3 Commissioner Peg Furshong who replaced Commissioner Lieffort. Introductions were made.

2. Approval of April 27, 2016 Meeting Minutes:

Motion by Wendorf

Second by Pike

Motion Approved

3. Treasurers Report:

Update on the grant amounts remaining in the two active accounts.

Motion by Wilcox

Second by Kennedy

Motion Approved

4. Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Mattice

Second by R. Anderson

Motion Approved

5. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance:

Ben Winchester, Researcher MN Extension Office

Xinyi Qian, Professor MN Tourism Center

6. Executive Director's Report:

The month of May was busy with legislative work with the lobbyist from Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails regarding the legislation that included new language that

would add another layer of administration to grants. That language was removed. There was also work done to support the funding request by the Parks and Trail Council. Much time was spent with LAC meetings, both for the work being done on the summer visitor intercept survey and the partners website. There was also an LAC meeting the day following the April Commission meeting at Itasca State Park that Commissioners Hulett and J. Anderson attended. This was the first meeting where the presentations by the partners (DNR, Met Council and GMRPTC) was made, GMRTPC was first up and there were excellent questions and comments by the committee members. June is the DNR presentation and Met Council is presenting in August.

The Power Point presentation made to the LAC will be available to the Commissioners on the Amazon Web Services (AWS) site as will all the important Commission documents. Placing the Commission documents at the AWS site will be a step toward the fulfilment of the request to maintain a history of the Commission.

The funding application for the FY2018 cycle will be ready on June 6. There will be a few changes made to better define what pillar(s) the grant request will meet. This allows for better tracking as we move forward.

Commissioner Wendorf inquired as to how we track and note the grants that were granted by the DNR in previous years. Mattson has a list that was provided by the DNR recently and will make note of those as well in the history documents.

There was discussion about the benchmarks in the 25 Year Legacy Plan; much note about counting, but as Commissioner Albrecht pointed out, not enough about the intrinsic value of parks and trails to Minnesotans.

Mattson met with MN DOT regarding trail counting and the new counters they have purchased for each of their districts. Tim Mitchell from DOT arranged the meeting with some folks at MN DOT and Greg Lindsey from the Humphrey School whose students prepared a Capstone paper for DNR for trail counting techniques. Mattson will talk with DNR and have a further conversation with Lindsey to see how GMRPTC and DNR might work together and use the same counting methodology.

There was also a brief update on the summer visitor intercept survey being conducted by the University. There has been some difficulty finding individuals to do the surveying. Mattson attended the training session conducted by the University. The survey work begins on May 30, 2016.

Commissioner Ryan expressed some concerns about how the survey is being done and the questions being asked.

7. Items from Members and Letters to the Commission:

- Commissioner Albrecht reported on the Paddle Day being hosted in three communities June 11-13, 2016. The DNR will host a trail planning meeting at the Pine Island State Forest on June 14, 2016.
- Commissioner Kennedy inquired about the Mountain Bike Trail System Plan; is that work being considered for the 2016 Work Plan? What does the build out look like when we account for all the trails in the state?
- Commission Ryan reported on the watershed recreation corridor idea related to the Zumbro River in District 6. There are strong partners in the district and Ryan will be meeting with the group to start the conversation.
- Commissioner Wendorf was pleased with the designation applications, strong applications for interesting projects.
- Commissioner Wilcox reported on the Children and Nature Network Conference being held at the Saint Paul RiverCentre that she will be attending. There is also a Minnesota River Paddle on June 11 that calls for every section of river to be paddled.
- Commissioner R. Anderson reports that the dedication of the legacy park project in Lyon County will be held on Friday.
- Commissioner Nelson reported that St. Louis County (largest county in land mass) passed an all-terrain vehicle ordinance allowing ATVs on the far right hand side of the road on all county roads to access trail connectivity on county land. This will open up 300 miles of trails. Nelson will provide anyone interested in the ordinance a copy. 80-90% of residents were supportive of the ordinance. 38 counties now allow ATVs on the right hand shoulder.
- Commissioner Furshong just attended a state Master Naturalist program and recently attended a Memorial Park (Granite Falls) task force meeting and toured Memorial Park, one of the projects GMRPTC awarded funding to. Granite Falls is entering into negotiations with the DNR Water Trails Program to put in a water park in at the top of the dam.

8. New Business:

8.1 System Plan and Work Plan 2016

Jeff Schoenbauer introduced the updated 2016 System Plan and Work Plan. Chair Hulett commented on the Connecting People to the Outdoors piece in the plan. We will be working with our partners at DNR and the Met Council on this clearly, rather than going it alone. Commissioner Ryan noted connecting people is a difficult piece to grasp as far as how do we adequately do this. There was discussion about how to best do this piece, but agreement that we need additional research and collaboration.

Commissioner Furshong questioned how NGOs can access funds as they're often the

“boots on the ground” doing the work. Clarification was made about what entities are allowed to access grants; cities and counties.

Commissioner Nelson noted that GM will never be able to show the same numbers as the metro area, the population base is just not there. However, we can highlight work we do that helps assist the disabled get into the outdoors, we should show how we positively impact our park users and it's not all numbers, it's experience.

Discussion continued with the various aspects of the plan and how to best articulate the importance of the work GM does by building out the system for the benefit of all Minnesotans. Suggestions on changes to the plan were made by the Commissioners and noted. Commissioner Ryan requested we articulate our Core Values, which are not just numbers.

At this point Past Chair/Commissioner Al Liefkort joined the meeting.

Individual District Initiatives Discussion

D1 – There are three applications from Duluth. The Prospector Trail is a good prototype project. Motorized trail network is important in this district.

D2 – Bemidji Area Regional Planning and Brainerd Lakes Regional Planning, Bemidji is a regional center and Brainerd Lakes is more nebulous larger lakes region. Inclusiveness of Native Americans, inclusivity in general. Wildlife recreation is a public value.

D3 – Concern for the far southern part of the District, what can we do there? More outreach is needed. Heartland Trail Corridor planning, what is a state trail, what is a regional trail. Willmar Area Regional Planning, city park versus regional park.

D4 – Regional trail system plan within the District. Swim beach opportunities, is a standalone swimming beach regional? Outdoor Recreation Council, can this be pulled together? Should this be taken to the LAC for action? They already have a Youth Subcommittee, works in concert with the Connecting People to the Outdoors piece.

D5 – Casey Jones Trail is similar to the Heartland Trail, state versus regional, get the project moving along. MN DNR is working on a Master Plan for the Minnesota River. The Prairie Plan guides much of the work of the DNR in this area.

D6 – Commissioner Ryan suggested from input at DPC meetings, communities in the District are interested in loop routes for biking as opposed to linear trails. Work with Southeast Minnesota Active Regional Trails (SMART) CEDA, both doing good work and we can/should engage with them. Water trails in the district are under discussion.

Southern Minnesota water trail; Zumbro River. Regional park density with Rochester's growth.

At this point Commissioner Furshong had to leave the meeting.

8.2 Presentation by Xinyi Qian – Extension Professor MN Tourism Center

Xinyi discussed demographic trends in tourism. Minnesota and the nation experienced great population growth in the 1990s. Since 2000 however the population growth rate has slowed, both nationwide and in the state. There is population growth now in the Rochester to St. Cloud corridor.

There are obviously some outdoor activities that draw greater numbers of participants in our less populated areas; hunting, snowmobiling, ATV use.

Population growth since 2000 has been primarily non-white and/or Hispanic. There is lower involvement in outdoor recreation by non-white residents. A quarter of the demand of the white population.

Minorities venture out in big groups because they feel more comfortable as a group. Minority populations may not venture out as much either due to a lack of transportation.

Life stage transcends race and ethnicity.

Minnesota's population base has grown older, there has been an increase of two years, from 35.4 to 37.4 as a median age.

Income is a deterrent to outdoor recreation as well.

Xinyi mentioned Greg Lindsey's work in biking related studies.

Motion by Nelson to accept the report as given by Xinyi Qian

Second by Wilcox

Motion Approved

Commissioner Mattice inquired as to how to get more people of color for more diversity at meetings. Xinyi suggested that getting in touch with the local advocacy groups for ethnic populations, as well as local universities and colleges for their assistance in posting the information. She also suggested reaching out to the Extension offices in the counties.

Joe gave a brief recap of the applications for regional designation. 43 applications were received, down from past years, which was to be expected. By district; D1 – 11, D2 – 10, D3 – 6, D4 – 7, D5 – 6, D6 – 1, Multi District – 2.

9. Consent Agenda:

Commissioner Mattice reviewed and submitted the following expenses for payment:

Consulting Services Total	\$25,014.50
<u>Commissioner Expenses</u>	<u>\$3,511.33</u>
TOTAL	\$28,525.83

Motion by Kennedy

Second by J. Anderson

Motion Approved

10. Next Meeting and Agenda Items:

June 22, 2016 Sartell, Minnesota

Future meetings will be moved around to places where we have funded parks and trails.

Motion by Albrecht to close the meeting for the purpose of Executive Director Review

Second by Mattice

Motion Approved

Signed: _____ Date _____

Mike Hulett, Chair