

**Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission**

**Minutes for December 28, 2016**

Sartell City Hall, Sartell, MN

**APPROVED**

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

**Commissioners Absent:** Mike Hulett, LuAnn Wilcox

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

**1. Meeting called to order at 10:03 by Vice Chair Ryan**

**2. Approval of November 23, 2016 Minutes:**

**Motion** by Nelson

**Second** by Pike

**Motion Approved**

**3. Treasurer's Report:**

**Motion** by Schmitz

**Second** by R. Anderson

There will need to be transfers between budget categories to resolve shortfalls in some of the categories. The reimbursement rate for mileage will go down from .54 to .53.5 in 2017 and that change will be made on the Commissioner reimbursement forms and circulated prior to the January meeting.

There were questions about the process of the DMS and are we confident the new site will be what we hope and what we need it to be. Both Renee and Joe are pleased with the work to date and feel the new site will be everything we specified going in. All the information that has been entered into the previous DMS will be pulled in to the new site with no further work needed on the part of the original applicants.

**Motion Approved**

**4. Approval of Agenda**

**Motion** by Pike

**Second** by Furshong

Commissioner Pike asked to amend the agenda to include an action item on the Tioga Recreation Area. Item moved to the first item under Old Business 9.1 and to move the other items to follow.

**Motion Approved**

**5. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance:**

**None**

**6. Executive Director's Report:**

The contract with the web developer is moving along well. Joe and Renee have weekly phone meetings to assess the progress. We've been pleased with the progress thus far and feel we are on track to launch the new site on February 1, 2017.

The first draft of the new Legislative report was circulated for review and comment. The 2017 report will be called the Policy and Planning Report 2016. Inserts to the report may be added as needed. Two inserts are the Funding and Protocol process. Mattson has already met with Senator Ruud and Representative Gunther, both are favorable to the Commission and raised no concerns about approving the funding recommendations as presented by the Commission. Mattson also met with the Senate Analyst who will be writing the bill with the Funding Recommendations.

Vice Chair Ryan asked who from the Commission should be meeting with the legislative committee members. The consensus from the Commissioners was to have a few members at each meeting to show support and it is also important to speak with one voice and arrive with an agenda for the meeting.

Regarding the Legislative report there was a suggestion made to include an introduction to the new Legislators with a welcome and information about the work of the Commission.

Mattson circulated the committee list in both the House and Senate related to Legacy funding. Commissioners were encouraged to review the list and make contact with their representatives to urge support for the funding recommendations as presented by the Commission.

## **7. Items from Members and Letters to the Commission**

Commissioner Furshong informed the Commission that on January 27 from 9am to 3pm at UW Morris there will be a town hall meeting/water summit called by the Governor. There will be a panel around food systems and a panel around urban impact.

Commissioner Schmitz mentioned the Minnesota River Valley is meeting. He missed the first call but there is another one scheduled for January.

Commissioner Nelson has heard concerns in his district about motorized trails and a lack of motorized trails that have been designated thus far.

## **8. System Coordinator's Report**

There have been several phone calls and personal meetings with applicants in the districts to clarify and provide input following the funding applications and recent designations, as there always is. He is very busy now getting geared up for the 2017 process. He has been very involved in the DMS redevelopment and system planning work.

## **9. Old Business:**

### **9.1 Tioga Recreation Area**

Commissioner Pike reported on the meeting that took place in Cohasset on December 22 at the request of city representatives. In attendance were Commissioner Pike, System Plan Coordinator and Executive Director, city staff and trail supporters. Pike described the project and how the city is committed to funding the project to enable them to start construction in the spring and not lose the time. They are ready to move forward with their design work without aid from the Commission. Their request is to change the funding award to include the word "construction" so they have flexibility with the funds.

**Motion** by Pike to add "construction" to the \$50,000 grant for Tioga Recreation Area to the original funding award for design and engineering.

**Second** by Kennedy

**Discussion**

Commissioners voiced hesitation to make such a change now after the funding recommendation has been made. Much discussion ensued about the wording change.

**Motion Failed**

**Yea – Pike, Kennedy**

**Nay – Albrecht, Ryan, Mattice, R. Anderson, J. Anderson, Wendorf, Nelson, Furshong, Schmitz**

**9.2 Connecting People to the Outdoors**

Vice Chair Ryan introduced the topic by noting that this item has been on the agenda previously but due to time constraints and busy meetings has not been fully discussed. Ryan noted he committed an hour of discussion to the topic at this meeting.

Long discussion ensued about the various ways to address the three points outlined in Commissioner Wilcox's memo to her committee.

Commissioner Wilcox is not able to attend the meeting but committee members Kennedy and J. Anderson will lead the discussion about the committee's recommendations. A memo sent to the CPO committee by Wilcox introduced the items for discussion and was read into the record by Ryan:

1. Requirement that a minimum 1% and a maximum 10% of acquisition and development projects include a plan for Connecting People to the Outdoors, which will include press releases, and may include a kickoff event, marketing, signage, school field trips, initial programming, and/or related public engagement strategies.
2. To amend the Strategic Plan by adding a classification and funding criteria for Connecting People to the Outdoors, and make funding available to all cities and counties, including those without designated facilities.
3. To enter into contract with a consultant to serve as Outdoor Recreation Coordinator who will provide oversight for funded Connecting People to the Outdoors projects, engage with a broad body of stakeholders and partners, coordinate publicity and programming, and assure the delivery of direct outdoor recreation experiences to wide and diverse populations.

Kennedy noted that while we talk about connecting people, what are we trying to accomplish? We see the trend of fewer young people in parks and trails, how do we reverse this trend and strategize to change this pattern?

J. Anderson noted we talked a year ago, about working more closely with the DNR and Met Council and Mattson encouraged waiting until we had more of a plan with those groups. It's time to act and move ahead so the committee can do its work.

Nelson thought the recommendation to tie projects to CPO as stated in #1 is a good method to encourage CPO work.

Albrecht noted there is still a need to have a firm assessment of what is allowed in statute for CPO expenditures.

Schoenbauer suggested master plans be more program specific as to how they tie CPO in to their projects.

J. Anderson noted a recent LAC meeting where the Met Council presentation included the physical structures also need to be accessible to connect people.

Furshong wondered if the Master Plans can include marketing and programming. Czapiewski clarified that both are included as requirements to be addressed but perhaps we have not given

them good direction or set a strategic tone. There is room for growth within the master plans to make sure dollars are spent on CPO and leveraged back to the facilities that we are helping people build. It comes down to what are we trying to achieve with these dollars.

Nelson commented we need to follow what the DNR will approve and qualify in the grants we recommend as they are the agency that executes the grants on our behalf.

Nelson, the same people are showing up at the parks and we're missing a segment of the population; the economically disadvantaged as an example.

Furshong questioned if we do similar to what the Arts Council does with requiring recipients to sign and note the Legacy grant. We do this through the contract with the DNR, similar is required of recipients. Furshong also suggested that we could have a place on our website where there are examples of programs that have been successful so other could pattern what they do after already successful programs.

Schoenbauer suggested we are all doing the same old, same old and we need to think more creatively to bring people in, particularly minority groups.

R. Anderson noted he helped write the 25-Year plan and that you can't engage people who do not want to be involved. It needs to change with our generation and this isn't limited to minorities not being engaged, it's more than that. For years on the LAC this issue was addressed and still they could not come up with a good answer to this problem.

Mattson noted that our establishment of purpose is to "undertake system planning and provide recommendations to the legislature for grants funded by the parks and trails fund to counties and cities outside of the seven-county metropolitan area for parks and trails of regional significance". Therefore, we are unable to do number two on the recommendations as legislatively we cannot grant to non-designated parks or trails. But we can certainly apply a formula of a percentage of the funds to CPO. Met Council just passed a resolution requiring their 10 implementing agencies to spend the following percentage in the next biennium's:

5% 18-19

7% 20-21

10% 22-23

With target audiences:

Youth

Young adults

Families with children

Racial and ethnic minorities

New immigrants

Older adults

Wendorf stated the easiest thing we can do is item #1 to make a requirement that they have signage, a marketing plan, an initial event. #2 as part of a strategic plan, we've funded one project already Connecting People to the Outdoors as the prototype in Wright and Stearns County. It will be interesting to see what the demographic is at the outcome of that project. #3 is the most intriguing, not necessarily contracting with a consultant for the entire state but by district. That person could be the point person for the marketing and outreach. And make it a percentage of the budget each year.

Schoenbauer stated we're clueless about what people really want.

Mattson stated what people want is what they're doing, they like their wireless devices and they're sedentary. That's what they want. How do we change behavior if they're happy with what

they're doing? There is no magic bullet to change an entire generation(s) patterns. What does Schoenbauer suggest the research be to show us what it is that people want to do? Give us a firm example of what it is people want. We need to develop a habit of doing outdoor activities, like going to church or reading.

Ryan, we've had this discussion before and we know we won't solve all the ills within this Commission. Ryan is interested in movement. Here are some suggestions for moving forward.

- At Chester Woods, they do not have enough kayaks and paddle boards to satisfy all the rentals people want. What about block grants of a nominal amount to purchase recreational equipment.
- Block grants to hire college interns managed by the staff, similar to Wright and Stearns Counties, but on a smaller scale.
- Block grants for inner city transportation for people that don't traditionally come in to our parks or are challenged to do that.

We cannot keep giving these organizations grants every time they ask, but they need to become self-sustaining. But we can help them get there.

We need to stop talking about it and do it. More time will be set aside in Little Falls to discuss further.

### **9.3 Moving Forward – Schoenbauer**

Ryan asked Schoenbauer to present to the Commission his concerns that he has shared over the last few months. And while he does not agree with all of them, he does agree with some of them. And like Schoenbauer, we all want the best for the constituents we represent. Ryan asked him to come and help us fix these concerns moving forward.

Schoenbauer meeting notes attached and reactions from Commissioners and Staff follow.

*Ryan*, we have challenges but we haven't done anything wrong. We went out, we got the funding, but the overwhelming preponderance of making an error can be overwhelming too. What advice do you have when we are all volunteers, we all have full time jobs; how do we prioritize?

*Schoenbauer*, what you need to do is intrinsically different than what you are used to doing. You're right, you're not doing anything wrong, its recognizing what is working and what is not and adjusting along the way. Find people that can help, that have the skills you need to look at projects, the right talent to support you.

*Pike* we need to figure out the gaps, what is out there already? How does it fit within the larger context? We can't fund every campground, we need to prioritize. Where is the highest and best use?

*Furshong*, honored what Jeff has shared but has a different look. Prior to the Commission she served on the Memorial Park Task Force and that park is much more than a campground. If you ask the community, they will say it's not a campground. The small towns evaluate their assets, and the community looked at this as a way to refresh and improve what they have in the community. The small towns put their requests together looking at what their natural asset is and develop it to bring people there. No, they may not be there already but they see the opportunity to develop something to bring people in to the community. We need to be measuring the same way as we look at projects.

*Nelson*, came to the commission without any expertise in parks but felt since day one the charge was to get something done. Not talk about doing something, but doing it. The people of

Minnesota wanted to be taxed to make changes and we're doing that, we're investing and improving our parks and trails. The communities in which we are investing believe we are making good investments. We have the best advice we can get and we need to rely on that, and the path we are on as a commission is a good one.

*Schoenbauer*, don't misconstrue what I'm saying, you're not running the truck in the ditch, I'm suggesting you can do better. You need to spend so there is a value to the public. Granite Falls Memorial Park is a wonderful resource, but the goal is to add insights to the larger picture and add more value to the park and increase use beyond what you're anticipating. Ask them if they're thought more broadly/

*Pike*, it's the sustainability of the funding recommendations because we don't have enough to fund all the requests. We need to sustain our activities for the long haul.

*Albrecht*, we've been doing okay, but we have a bit of a cloudy vision. We have different visions. We don't have all the answers to the questions because we don't know what the question is. Exactly like the CPO discussion. We don't know the question we're trying to answer. We're flying blind because we don't have all the information we need to make decisions; trends, research, evaluation, that type of thing. We could be at risk of losing the trust of our partners. We need to think more about partnerships. There are parks that were designated when similar parks were not. We need to be fair and equitable as we go along.

*Ryan*, wanted Schoenbauer to give us an opportunity to road map. He presented for our consideration. It is our charge to determine what to do with the information.

#### **9.4 Criteria for Funding**

*Mattson*, we were called together by Chair Hulett as an Ad Hoc Committee; including Mattice, Kennedy, Wendorf and Czapiewski. The notes for consideration are a result of a conference call and subsequent emails back and forth. Much of this has been seen before, with addition items of eligible and ineligible expenses.

*Kennedy*, a lot of time was spent discussing how we can better tell our constituents what is eligible and what is not to provide better direction.

*Ryan*, are the first items the same, with some wordsmithing? Mattice – correct.

*Wendorf*, this is a way to give the applicant very informed information about what is expected and what is required. For land appraisals for instance, for deed restrictions. It's a document that at the end lets the applicant know exactly what is required of them. As far as the scoring, he is not comfortable with scoring.

*Nelson*, agrees that eligible and ineligible are important. But include language that notes this "includes, but not limited to". This is a document in the works.

*Albrecht*, it would be helpful to have a comparison of this document and what existed before. Or is there nothing that existed? Mattson, we had the criteria from last year that we used, which is in the previous Legislative update.

*Czapiewski*, the funding criteria does link to the master plan.

*Mattice*, clarified the scoring of a park of trail does not affect the funding application.

*Mattson*, we need something more firm and instructive to share with our constituents.

*Albrecht*, feels we are not specific and direct enough in the statements as they are presented now.

*Czapiewski*, there are ties to the goals and objectives we are seeking in designation applications and the master plan.

*Ryan*, this is a document for our constituents to use when applying for funding? Yes, this is a tool to help applicants craft their applications.

*Mattice*, this is a starting point, a template. It's something for you to react to and we will go back and rework based on the discussions today.

*Pike*, it's a highly competitive process and these criteria need to be met for consideration. If an applicant includes ineligible items, then they should have less consideration because they didn't follow the process. Ryan asked Pike to make the statement he felt was important to include in Item #7. Pike "Significant ineligible costs as part of your funding application will jeopardize funding consideration"

*Mattice*, this verbiage can be included in the preamble where we describe the grant and what it is. The narrative.

*Furshong*, it's a good idea to be more specific. It does not feel appropriate to vote on projects in our district. It is important to speak about them, but not vote on them.

*Ryan*, we spent a considerable amount of time discussing this issue. We will be discussing this more at the January meeting.

*Mattice*, we want to discuss how we word the application to encourage applicants to submit funding requests for projects that are non-traditional, to let them know we look at out of the box projects. Ryan, is that our prototype projects?

*Wendorf*, the wording that Commissioner Nelson used, "but not limited to". Also, a date on the working document and an annual review of the funding criteria.

*Schoenbauer*, his concern is strategic thinking. If we need a campground in some part of the state because there is a demand. How does the criteria address this?

*Mattice*, maybe we issue an RFP. We don't see the gaps right now, we don't see the facilities, our plan is not complete.

*Schoenbauer*, if there is a true system plan, you know what you're missing and what the priorities are. Then you can do things in a certain district.

*Mattice*, that's where the RFP would come in, to get at what is missing in districts.

*Schoenbauer*, this doesn't separate out the good from the bad, it's just picking parks.

*Mattson*, if this isn't working, then what suggestion do you have for us that it can be what it is you're looking for? Tell us what it is exactly you're getting at.

*Schoenbauer*, there is a need to do what you're doing now. When it's working well it's very much like what Commissioner Mattice was talking about. The projects in the master plans may dictate the projects in a particular year. The long-range plan is to work to a more perfect outcome. And Commissioner Nelson is right, people expect us to get something done.

*Ryan*, asked if the committee has enough to work with now? When do you want to bring this back to the Commission? Mattice and Wendorf suggested the February meeting is the meeting to bring the document back to the Commission.

*Wendorf*, do we want to keep the scoring points?

*Furshong*. Include CPO in the criteria as well. Wendorf pointed out that CPO is included in the criteria as part of the four pillars. Furshong thinks it should be addressed separately in each proposal, rather than being a part of the pillars. It's important and it should be made so in the applications.

*Ryan*, suggests that we do not include scoring in the criteria.

*Nelson*, be more specific about the appraisal required. Also, project urgency, we can only move so fast and our recommendations need to be approved by the legislature, so it's difficult to say project urgency.

*Mattice*, under CPO, can you put some thoughts down about how we deal with CPO then, because every project can be a CPO and we need to be more specific.

#### **9.5 Financial Assistance for Master Plan/Other Work in Districts**

Deferred to a future meeting due to time constraints. Commissioner Nelson reminded the group that we did make a decision about Master Plans and took a vote, so we would need to reverse the vote. Mattson should confirm what action was taken and report back.

Further discussion took place regarding how we deal with this item.

When this item comes back to the Commission it should come back as a Discussion item rather than an Action item, per Commissioner Nelson.

### **10. New Business:**

#### **10.1 January Commissioner's Workshop Agenda**

The Little Falls meeting will be dedicated to "where have we been and where are we going". There was discussion about whether to include the ETeam or is better for the Commission to take care of the business at hand first and then have a dialog with the ETeam at a future date when we have made the changes we wish to make. A decision was made to not include the DPC for this meeting as well, for the same reasons as the ETeam. It was suggested there are administrative items that could be helpful to the Commissioners and we should discuss that at the meeting as well. Leave the Friday evening time for socializing and getting to know each other better.

### **11. Consent Agenda:**

Consulting Services	\$77,948.29
Commissioner's Expenses	\$2,061.06
<u>DPC Expenses</u>	<u>\$54.00</u>
Total	\$80,063.35

**Motion** by Mattice

**Second** by Schmitz

**Motion Approved**