

**Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission
Meeting Minutes for November 25, 2015
Sartell City Hall**

Approved 12/23/15

Members Present: Rita Albrecht; Jannik Anderson; Rick Anderson; Mike Hulett; Al Liefkort; Marc Mattice; Keith Nelson; Bryan Pike; Tom Ryan; Tom Schmitz; Barry Wendorf; LuAnn Wilcox

Members Absent: Tim Kennedy

Staff/Consultants Present:

Renee Mattson, Executive Director
Joe Czapiewski, System Plan Coordinator
Jeff and Kathy Schoenbauer, Strategic Plan Coordinators

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

2. Motion by Nelson, second by Mattice: Approve the minutes of October 28, 2015. **Motion carried**

3. Approval of the Treasurer's Report

Renee submitted a summary report of the three operating grants with the last entry date of 11/17/15.

Motion by Nelson, second by Pike: Approve the Treasurer's Report. **Motion carried**

4. Approval of the Agenda

A typographical error was noted under 7.4 - The word *Grand* should be *Grant*

Motion by Hulett, second by R. Anderson: Approve the agenda as amended. **Motion carried**

5. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance (none)

6. Unfinished Business

6.1 - Updated Procedures and Policies for Secretary

Renee submitted revisions for the duties of Secretary under Section II.C.2 of the Operating Guidelines to read: *In addition to regular Commission duties, transcribes minutes where appropriate, provides approved minutes to the system coordinator for posting on commission web site and to Executive Director for posting on <http://www.legacy.leg.mn.us/gmrptc>, totals receipts and expenses of the Commission, ETeam and DPC for approval by Commission at monthly board meetings and sends expense recap to Executive Director, and other clerical duties. The Secretary/Treasurer shall be compensated for transcription of the minutes at a rate agreed upon by the Commission.*

Motion by Ryan, second by Schmitz: Approve the revisions of Secretary/Treasurer duties as submitted. **Motion carried; Wilcox abstained**

7. New Business

7.1 - Project Funding FY16 and FY17

The Executive Director and Consultants met twice at length to consider project funding proposals and evaluate them based on criteria from the *Strategic Plan* and apply additional selection criteria as determined by the Commission. A list of twenty projects identified as *High Value Top Priority* (attached as addendum to these minutes) was agreed upon by the consultant team and then presented to the Evaluation Team (ETeam) for review and comment. Three of these projects were described as "prototypes" to be regarded as "test cases" that will be evaluated according to the outcomes they achieve. The thorough vetting process with broad and deliberative scrutiny provided commissioners a list of quality, legacy worthy projects and assurance to move them forward with confidence.

Acknowledging that projects in this funding cycle are being evaluated prior to completion of the *Statewide System Plan*, members discussed the independent merits of each project. Concerns were expressed about the appropriateness of some specific line items, such as capital equipment purchases and construction of athletic amenities. There is also concern that some project components do not conform to regional park and trail standards as proposed, although mitigating factors may exist. It is understood that such particulars will be dissected by the Executive Director in consultation with advisors and returned for further discussion and action by the Commission. Any changes to the funding proposals that are deemed necessary will be addressed in the terms of the project contract.

Members discussed a communication plan with regard to the announcement of projects selected for recommendation to the Legislature. The Commission also reconfirmed the fluidity of its processes, in recognition of the ongoing transfer of administrative authority from the DNR to the Commission, and is taking suggestions from various stakeholders under advisement. The intention of the Commission is to solicit and facilitate more involvement by the District Planning Committees (DPCs), consider regional geographical and demographic differences for integration into statewide planning, and to focus evermore resources toward *Connecting People and the Outdoors*.

Motion by Hulett, second by Schmitz: Recommend the list of twenty high value top priority projects to the Legislature for funding in the amount of \$14,170,209. **Motion carried**

The Commission considered additional projects to utilize the remaining \$2,339,646 in the appropriation. Under discussion were seven projects described as "worthy" with some conditional reservations.

A motion by Ryan to vote on each of them individually died on the floor for lack of a second.

Members requested information and opinions from the consultants as to the urgency, readiness, and significance of each of these projects. At the conclusion of inquiry, members concurred on the selection of three of them to move forward, with stipulations and modifications to be addressed prior to, or included in, the execution of contracts. These projects will be designated for FY 2017 funding to assure that issues identified are resolved and readiness can be confirmed.

Motion by Wendorf, second by Schmitz: Recommend Gull Lake Trail Phase 2, Sunrise Prairie Trail Rehabilitation, and Sunrise Prairie Trail Segments F & G to the Legislature for funding,

with budget modifications and phased construction to be determined in consultation with the grantees and within the limits of available funds. **Motion carried**

7.2 - Funding Plan to Legislature

The Commission directed Renee to draft the report to the Legislature for discussion and action at the December meeting, per the content of discussion held under 7.1. The Executive Summary shall include: a description of the timeline and process used to reach funding recommendations; that staff, consultants, ETeam, and commissioners were in unanimous support of the recommendations; project prioritization meeting notes are available for reference upon request; define exactly what's being built.

7.3 - System Plan 2016

Jeff submitted *Working Draft 2016 System Plan Discussion Topics* as a basis for conversation and direction. The intention of the plan is to define the vision of what the statewide system of parks and trails will look like, described in five-year increments. It will illustrate an integral connection with DNR and Met Council facilities and collaborative programming, and the relationship to properties managed by the federal government. The ultimate goal is a significant increase in usage/visitation among the general population, measured in the frequency and quality of recreational experiences for individuals and new user groups.

Key aspects include:

- Identifying gaps: location, amenities, accessibility
- Progressive pro-action: outreach, supporting local partners, development of master plans
- Performance measurement and research
- Adherence to standards; connectivity; sustainability

Members provided input regarding elements to be included in the plan through a roundtable discussion that Jeff took under advisement. He and Kathy will synthesize the discussion and present a draft to the Commission at the December meeting.

7.4 - Grant Administration Looking Ahead

Renee raised the logistical issues and timeline of transitioning grant administration work from the DNR to the Commission. Currently, 2.5% of the GMRPTC appropriation (\$423,000 over the biennium) is retained by the DNR to administer project contracts and monitor compliance. DNR Commissioner Landwehr supports the eventual autonomy of the Commission. Renee will initiate conversations with Elizabeth Weyfel and others in this regard, and the Legislative Subcommittee (Rita, Keith) will consult with appropriate legislators.

7.5 - DPC Summit Meeting

The Commission will hold a DPC summit for members from all districts on Saturday, January 30 in Little Falls. Members discussed the purpose, agenda, and logistics for the summit and will solidify plans at the December meeting. The regular meeting of the Commission will be held from 9:00 a.m. to noon, and the summit will be held from noon to 3:00 p.m.

8. Executive Director's Report

No written report was submitted. Items of note were included in the Treasurer's Report and other agenda.

9. Items from Members

Bryan inquired about terms and expirations of DPC members. Al asked Renee to reference documents in this regard and report back. Expiring terms for seven of the commissioners was discussed.

Al suggested that meetings be shortened to three hours because much of the Commission's work is now handled by the Executive Director, and administrative processes are in place. Commissioners will also be spending more time in their districts to conduct and coordinate outreach, and interface with partners. Keith suggested that instead of shortening meetings they be held every other month. The issue will be taken up at the January meeting, as will the election of officers.

Rita summarized agenda topics for future discussions:

- Develop protocols regarding Joint Powers Agreements
- Define Park and Trail Development Standards
- Delineate rehabilitation/reconstruction projects from ongoing operations and maintenance
- Establish guidelines for appropriate projects under *Connecting people and the Outdoors*

Members also discussed the communications plan in general, and the press release regarding projects recommended for funding specifically. These matters will be addressed in the broader context of a comprehensive marketing plan as part of the *Statewide System Plan*. The Executive Director will produce and distribute press releases at her discretion. Major announcements, including projects selected for funding and issues of statewide significance, will be reviewed by the Communications Subcommittee (Mike, Barry) prior to release. All information disseminated to the public will be provided to commissioners prior to publication.

10. Consent Agenda

Rita reviewed and submitted the bills and claims as follows:

- Commissioners expenses	1,939.85
- JFC Strategic Services	6,429.43
- Trinity Creek Consulting	8,498.97
- Amazon Web Service	288.82
- Houston Engineering	5,280.00
TOTAL	22,437.07

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

11. The next Commission meeting is scheduled for December 23, 2015 at Sartell City Hall.

Motion to adjourn was made by Pike, second by R. Anderson. **Motion carried**

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