

**Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission
Meeting Minutes for January 28, 2015
Sartell City Hall**

Approved 2/25/15

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

Members Absent: Al Liefert

1. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Rita Albrecht

2. Motion by Pike, second by Hulett: Approve the minutes of December 17, 2014. **Carried.**

3. Approval of the Agenda

Additions to the agenda: 6.5 - DPC Operating Guidelines; table item 6.2; discuss meeting schedule.

Motion by Schmitz, second by Anderson: Approve the agenda as amended. **Carried.**

4. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance

Karen Umphress, Amateur Riders Motorcycle Association
Alan Mathwig, Amateur Riders Motorcycle Association and American Motorcycle Association
Nancy Hanson, Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association and MRTUA
Robert Jacobson, All-Terrain Vehicle Association of Minnesota
Rick Langness, Minnesota 4-Wheel Drive Association
Dan Larson, Representing Minnesota 4-Wheel Drive Association
Tony Kieffer, Representing Minnesota 4-Wheel Drive Association, Land Use Issues
Joe Czapiewski, JFC Strategic Services (serving the commission as System Plan Coordinator)

Guests introduced themselves and provided background information about their organizations. They presented data regarding trails, trail uses and users, trends, and beneficial economic impacts. They discussed the involvement of these user associations in trail site research, system design, procurement of easements, mapping and signage, enforcing responsible trail use, and ongoing maintenance. Their desire is to partner with the Commission to support the development of a comprehensive *Statewide System Plan*, and advocate for the use of Legacy funds for motorized recreation and multi-use trails. Having been frustrated at the state level, they want to coordinate their efforts regionally, and seek to dialogue with the District Planning Committees.

Commissioners asked for information on specific trails, compatibility and seasonal variations for multi-use trails, and other design considerations. Members expressed full support for including off road motorized recreation in the *Statewide System Plan*, commitment to taking the lead in coordinating that initiative, and value the integral input of these associations in development of the plan. The Commission, however, does not generate projects. Project proposals must be authored by townships, cities, or counties. They are encouraged to partner with other jurisdictions and user group associations. The Commission also advised that, despite its willingness to coordinate the system design, Legacy funds for Greater Minnesota cannot meet the funding needs for acquisition, development, or operations, and it will be necessary to utilize other funding streams. The Commission expects to play a lead role in facilitating interagency planning and coordination, and in developing qualitative proposal, design, and evaluation criteria.

5. Unfinished Business

5.1 - Election of Officers

Motion by Nelson, second by Hulett: Move the current slate by unanimous ballot. **Carried.**

Motion by Wendorf, second by Anderson: Amend the Operating Guidelines under *E. Periodic Organization* to reflect that officers shall be elected annually in January. **Carried.**

5.2 - Communication Plan

Joe discussed the communication plan he developed for a new web site that will be more robust and will have more control and capacity than the page provided through the Legislative Coordination Commission (LCC). It will include commissioner e-mails, social media, and press releases, which will be managed and maintained by JFC Strategic Services. He expects the system will cost \$2,100 to design and \$600 per month to maintain. The list serv will still go through the LCC page and be administered by the secretary.

Motion by Pike, second by Ryan: Accept the Electronic Communications Proposal from JFC Strategic Services, dated 1/22/15.

Friendly amendment by Nelson, second by Albrecht: Need a contract addendum through 6/30/15; clarify that it is a month-to-month agreement and that all intellectual property is owned by the commission. (Amendment was accepted by motion authors.)

Motion carried.

Motion by Ryan, second by Wendorf: Formal periodic status review of all contracts will take place in June and December each year and Commissioner Nelson will lead the review.

Carried.

5.3 - System Plan

Motion by Bruins, second by Pike: Table this discussion until the February meeting due to the absence of the Chair. **Carried.**

5.4 - Information Management System

Joe reported that Houston Engineering is working on the online applications system and planning on completion in March. He hopes to be able to thoroughly familiarize himself with the system so that he can explain it and provide training at the DPC meetings.

6. New Business

6.1 - Review of ETeam issue 1, 2, and 10

#1: The ETeam expressed that some applicants for regional designation need assistance from the Commission to improve the quality of their applications. It is understood that the web-based system will alleviate the difficulties that confronted both applicants and evaluators during the test run. The web-based system will be particularly helpful to small jurisdictions that lack the availability of professional park planning staff.

Once a park or trail receives regional designation status, applicants, especially small jurisdictions, may need assistance in developing the unit master plan. The online system will provide tips, tools, and techniques, and the Commissioners will be available for consultation, but the DPCs "drive the system." DPCs will identify unique opportunities and significant features that fit the system plan, independent of scores and criteria. The Commission may provide regional workshops to assist applicants in understanding and navigating the process, and tailoring projects to fit plans and criteria. The contemporary challenge is to bring forth worthy projects that fit a *Statewide System Plan* which is being developed concurrently.

#2: Evaluators used their best judgment when applications did not clearly address the prescribed criteria. The Commission directed Joe to instruct the ETeam to evaluate applications based solely on objective information provided by the applicant, not to make assumptions. Subjective analysis is the purview and prerogative of the Commission, in consultation with the DPCs.

#10: The ETeam asked for clarity and direction regarding criteria pertaining to "Quality Natural Resources." Members expressed some ambiguity and subjectivity as to defining "quality," especially in the *Special Use* category. A given natural resource may be of poor or marginal quality in certain aspects, but be an ideal destination for a particular reason or activity. In some cases, serving a given outdoor recreation need ("special use") may be more important than its location in a "natural and scenic setting." The Commission will consider these in a broader context, including unique situations and destination features that may be outside of established criteria. Some special uses may fall under the strategic directive of Connecting People to the Outdoors, and some may be better aligned with the objectives and criteria of other funding sources.

6.2 - Mission Statement - tabled to February meeting

6.3 - Legislative Update

Tom R. was in consultation with Elizabeth Wefel (lobbyist for MN Parks & Trails, a.k.a. Coalition), and provided a report to the Commission. A primary concern is that the allocation cycle of the Commission is not "in sync" with the legislative appropriations calendar during the transition from DNR administration to that of the Commission. It was suggested that Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Legacy funds be appropriated to the DNR Commissioner for FY 2016 and allocated in accordance with the recommendations of the GMRPTC. To align GMRPTC processes and cycles with the legislative calendar, the Commission will deliver FY 2017 recommendations in January 2016; FY 2018 and FY 2019 in January 2017.

6.4 - Commission Openings

The Commission received a copy of a letter of recommendation addressed to the governor from Representative Metzen on behalf of Bob Kowalski for appointment to the Commission. The letter did not specify to which seat Mr. Kowalski had applied or in which district he resides, although there are no restrictions as to location of residence for service on the Commission. The timing of receipt of the letter would indicate it was in reference to the At-Large seat, but the letter was not dated. In any case, the governor makes appointments, not the Commission.

6.5 - DPC Operating Guidelines

Members discussed revisions that would clarify the role of the DPC as advisory. DPCs assist in developing *District Master Plans* which inform and integrate the *Statewide System Plan*, and play an essential role in local outreach and feedback.

AI will send a current version of the Operating Guidelines to commissioners. Joe and AI will draft revisions for discussion at the February meeting. Members agreed that the Operating Procedures should be posted on the web page.

6.6 - Meeting Schedule

Tom S. said that Wednesdays are not good for him, so he offered to poll members as to what other day of the month would work best for everyone, and check on availability of Sartell City Hall. Members noted that the fourth Wednesday was chosen after a lengthy discussion last year, and it might be best to wait until the new commissioners are appointed before making any changes.

7. Consent Agenda

No monthly budget summary report was provided.

Marc reviewed the bills and claims as follows:

- JFC Strategic Services	3,937.96
- ETeam expenses	3,398.00
- Commissioners expenses	1,370.50
- Extraneous expenses - Chair	887.02
- City of Bemidji	4,517.96
- Schoenbauer Consulting	21,556.52
- Clerical (1/15; + retro 9/14)	1,500.00
TOTAL	37,167.96

Some members were hesitant to approve the ETeam expenses without seeing the voucher form and questioned the amount because it was more than twice that of the only other ETeam request received. Upon discussion, the consensus was to move approval.

Motion by Nelson, second by Bruins: Approve the consent agenda in the amount of \$37,167.96
Motion carried.

8. Items from members

Mike asked for suggestions as to the wording and design of the recognition plaque for outgoing commissioners.

Tom R. reported that he and Al attended the Legacy Advisory Committee (LAC) celebration on January 15. A point of emphasis that he took away: not all projects have to be "megabucks, big hitters, or rock stars." Especially with regard to Connecting People to the Outdoors, smaller price tags can result in big outcomes. Similarly, some key small acquisitions or developments could have a significant impact on the entire parks and trails system.

LuAnn requested that the Commission discuss and adopt policies related to *Connecting People to the Outdoors* at the February meeting. She offered to solicit ideas and bring a draft to launch the discussion. Tom R. asked that sufficient time be allotted to bring this to a resolution.

Tom R. asked that members submit an estimate of the hours spent on commission work since its inception.

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2015.

Motion to adjourn was made by Bruins, 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.