

**Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission
Meeting Minutes for September 24, 2014
Sartell City Hall**

Approved 10/22/14

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

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

2. Motion by Hulett, second by Pike: Approve the minutes of August 27, 2014 as written. **Carried.**

3. Approval of the Agenda

Motion by Wilcox, second by Ryan: Approve the agenda as written. **Carried.**

4. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance

Jeff and Kathy Schoenbauer, Schoenbauer Consulting LLC
Joe Czapiewski, JFC Strategic Services (serving the commission as System Plan Coordinator)

5. Unfinished Business

5.1 - District Planning Meetings Update

Joe submitted "DPC Discussion Highlights - August 2014" for comment and approval. It outlined key themes and conclusions drawn from the DPC meetings, revealing both similarities and differences among the districts. It also identified issues pertaining to the three classification groups. While there were enough consistencies to validate the process, there was also enough variation to identify priorities unique to each district.

Trails:

Much discussion ensued, particularly around the subject of motorized trails. State statute prohibits motorized use on trails designated for non-motorized use, and vice versa (although the same trail could have motorized use during one season and non-motorized during another season). Issues around multiple use trails, potential use conflicts, safety and enforcement were discussed. Jeff noted that the City of Houston is sponsoring legislation to create a statewide motorized trail system plan. Commissioners agreed on the need to integrate motorized trails into the overall funding and system plan, and that the scope of the trails plan be expanded beyond paved trails to include horse trails and unpaved trails. The Commission will seek clarity on the use of legacy funds for motorized trails, will support efforts to create a statewide motorized trail system plan, and will include motorized and Grant-In-Aid trails as a layer in the GoMN inventory.

Commissioners acknowledged that trail use diminishes the further the trail gets from population centers, and that regional trail development should be directed toward connections to state trails, shorter distances, and loops that serve local communities. Trails that enable pedestrian access to water resources and wildlife observation sites will be an important consideration in the system plan as well (e.g. boardwalks, viewing platforms, overlooks).

Natural Resource-based Regional Parks:

Joe said that some applicants for regionally-significant designation struggled with whether their project should be under this classification or under Special Recreational Feature Parks. The Evaluation Team (ETeam) will be helpful in sorting these out, but Jeff explained that the special feature category is for unique situations and special use amenities.

There was some concern that there is a bias against prairie restoration and that regional parks in this classification will be in competition with state parks. Commissioners agreed that all landscapes have their own unique characteristics and value, and that regional natural resource parks should fill gaps in the state parks system.

Special Recreational Feature Regional Parks:

These are unique locations that provide destination attractions, often for special use purposes. Much of the discussion in this classification was in regard to identifying emerging trends, anticipating new and non-traditional recreational activities, and attracting/serving young people. The statewide system will need to incorporate new uses and trends in both planning and marketing efforts, and engaging user groups will be key.

Motion by Albrecht, second by Bruins: Accept the *DPC Discussion Highlights - August 2014* with citation noting JFC Strategic Services as the source. **Motion carried.**

Keith suggested that all documents entered into the record follow the same protocol: draft version with source and date; discussion at Commission (or DPC) meeting; approval/adoption by motion; posted on the web page. Further discussion defined the ETeam as strictly advisory and that approval of their project evaluations lies with the Commission. The Commission will also devise a communications plan to ensure consistency and adherence to open meeting laws (see discussion under item #8).

5.2 - Project Proposals Evaluation Team (ETeam) Update

Al reported that the ETeam had an introductory teleconference meeting and held its first in person meeting on September 11 at Sartell City Hall. That meeting was an orientation to the materials, evaluation criteria and process, and the roles of the team members.

Joe reported that the ETeam will convene again on October 16 to first "triage" the approximately 90 applications received for regionally significant designation into "high, medium, and low." They will then commence scoring those in the high and medium groupings against the criteria.

Joe and LuAnn also reported that there were significant problems with the forms, instructions, process, submittal and receiving of the applications. Jeff agreed that these procedures will undergo revisions accordingly, and that this was essentially a test run to establish a baseline for the Statewide System Plan. Commissioners discussed these issues and requested specific changes for Schoenbauer Consulting to address.

After the ETeam completes its work, the next step will be to determine which projects are or will be seeking funding through the DNR this fall, and/or to the Commission in 2015. The list will also be shared with the DNR grants staff to determine which projects are currently under consideration. A prioritized list of projects will then be submitted to the legislature, along with a

report on the Commission's work over the past year, and a summary of the initial Statewide System Plan. Members discussed suggested inclusions for the report at length. Schoenbauer Consulting will submit an outline at the October meeting, and a final draft at the November meeting. The Commission will adopt the project list and approve the initial system plan at its December meeting. District Master Plans will be designed by the DPCs beginning in January 2015, and the aggregate will comprise the Statewide System Plan which will be prepared and adopted by September 15, 2015.

5.3 - 2015 Legislation

Al reported that he appointed Tom R., Keith, and Rita to the Legislative Subcommittee of the Commission. They will craft the language to include the following, per discussion by the Commissioners: a compliance policy; contracting with the DNR for grant administration and monitoring; a description of the project selection process, including objective external review; proposed administrative structure, staffing, and a request for 7% of the appropriation for administrative costs; firm commitment to the 40-40-20 appropriation split among the three granting authorities; the right of the Commission to decide about local matching fund requirements on a case by case basis; a statement about the mission and independent nature of the Commission's focus on Greater Minnesota.

The subcommittee will also conduct inquiry with state agencies and officials regarding the administrative structure and business model best suited to conduct the work of the Commission.

6. New Business

6.1 - Sub-group to coordinate with partners

The Commission will work with recreational use associations, professional alliances, and other potential advocacy groups to educate and inform them about the efforts of the Commission in service to Greater Minnesota. A sub-group will coordinate and facilitate these relationships, and develop a strong partnership with the GMRPT Coalition.

7. Consent Agenda

Rita reviewed the bills and claims as follows:

- Ink Sport Press	563.11
- Houston Engineering	9,438.50
- JFC Strategic Services	8,945.22
- Schoenbauer Consulting	3,389.60
- DPC member expenses	3,539.26
- Commissioners expenses	3,827.41

Motion by Albrecht, second by Hulett: Approve the consent agenda in the amount of \$29,703.10
Motion carried.

Members discussed the need for a monthly financial report and requested it be a regular agenda item. Al will ask the City of Bemidji Finance Director to provide a monthly statement.

Motion by Ryan, second by Schmitz: Request the fiscal agent submit a monthly financial statement to the Chair. Friendly amendment by Pike: Approve payment for additional staff time. **Motion carried.**

8. Items from members

8.1 - Communications Plan

Further discussion regarding the communications plan led to the appointment of Mike, Barry, and Anita to the communications sub-committee, which will consult with LuAnn and report back at the October meeting.

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for October 22, 2014.

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

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