

**Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission  
Meeting Minutes for December 23, 2015  
Sartell City Hall**

**Approved 1/30/16**

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

**Members Absent:** Tom Schmitz

**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 Liefert**

**2. Motion** by Nelson, second by Albrecht: Approve the minutes of November 25, 2015. **Carried**

**3. Approval of the Treasurer's Report**

Renee submitted a summary report of the three operating grants, dated 12/23/15. Members reiterated the request that the report include the percentage of funds expended and the percentage of funds remaining. It was also requested that the report be separated according to fiscal year and categorized by budget line (rather than showing each expenditure).

**Motion** by Ryan, second by R. Anderson: Approve the Treasurer's Report. **Motion carried**

**4. Approval of the Agenda**

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

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

**6. New Business**

**6.1 - Discussion and Approval of Project Funding Ranking Order**

Renee distributed a list of the funding recommendations approved by the Commission at its November 25, 2015 meeting, in the prioritized order agreed upon by the consultant team. Renee noted an adjustment made to the approved expenditures because the 2.5% for DNR grant administration had not been accounted for. The discrepancy was taken out of the request for Sunrise Prairie Trail Segments F & G (#15). Renee met with Audrey Mularie (DNR grant staff) and received approval for the list and budget.

Schoenbauer Consulting provided a narrative *Legislative Funding Recommendations and System Planning Update* which included supportive documentation for the report to the Legislature. Members discussed this at length under agenda item 7.1. Renee said that PDF files of all *Requests for Regional Designation* that were approved by the Commission (i.e. are included in the *Statewide System Plan*) will be accessible online to legislators, commissioners, and the public for anyone seeking additional information.

It was requested that the projects be listed in priority order separately for each fiscal year, rather than in total, noting that the legislature has already appropriated funds for FY16. A breakdown of projects by districts was provided for information, but will not be included in the report to the legislature.

**Motion** by Ryan, second by Pike: Accept the prioritized list of approved projects, dated 12/22/2015. **Motion carried**

## **6.2 - Budget Discussion and Approval for Calendar Year 2016**

Members discussed the breakdown of funding requests and percentages funded by district, which will be used to inform outreach and engagement strategies for the Commission. It was noted that approved projects are justifiably heavier near regional population centers, but that future funding will be more widely distributed geographically as the system is developed. The Commission also anticipates, and will initiate, more integral partnering, especially with the DNR. Improved channels of communication and collaboration will be a priority going forward.

## **7. Unfinished Business**

### **7.1 - Strategic Planning and Initiatives**

Jeff introduced *Key 2016 Strategic Planning Directions and Initiatives* and solicited feedback from the commissioners. He defined a shift from a passive role of accepting applications for designation and funding, to a more proactive role in filling gaps and meeting needs through outreach and engagement, including a more active dialogue with District Planning Committees (DPCs). The Commission will be perceived less as a granting agency and more as building a well-integrated and comprehensive system of parks and trails. He sees strategic assessment of each district as a top priority. Al asked for input from members via roundtable discussion.

Key points from the discussion:

- Strengthen designation applications and funding requests by identifying gaps and providing mentoring, especially to smaller communities, and give more consideration to small, but locally significant sites and projects that fit the criteria.
- Advocate for system integration of motorized trails where most appropriate and there is the most demand. Acknowledge their importance to constituents and, in turn, their legislators.
- Devise and initiate strategies and logistics for partnering with state and national agencies, user groups and affiliate associations, especially with regard to DNR facilities which have been deemed as low priorities in the state system. Seek out and facilitate cooperative arrangements, joint powers agreements, or land ownership transfers as desirable.
- Asset mapping, facilities inventorying, and active outreach to include all regionally significant parks and trails in the *Statewide System Plan*, regardless of their development status (i.e. from conceptual to complete).
- Refine definitions and strategies for *Connecting People and the Outdoors* as providing intentional program interventions and direct recreational experiences, rather than "if you build it, they will come." Redefine partnering in this regard to include media outlets, the commercial recreation industry (providers, retailers, manufacturers), and nonprofit organizations. Address the mechanics of providing funding to public schools.

- Invite proposals to develop loop trail systems that may include portions of state or national trails, county and state roadways or right-of-ways, or traverse city streets, necessitating interagency planning and cooperation (DNR, MNDOT, etc.).
- Develop and implement objective performance measurements that allow for unique attributes and subjective considerations by addressing the value added and adherence to the four strategic directions prescribed in the *Parks and Trails Legacy Plan*. Differentiate the physical plan from the experiential plan accordingly. Graphically illustrate the anticipated shifting emphasis among the "four pillars" over time.

## **7.2 - District Planning Committee Meeting January 30, 2016**

Joe distributed the proposed agenda for the *Statewide Joint DPC Meeting and DPC Guidance Discussion* for information and feedback. The purpose of the meeting is to communicate the Commission process, tools, and strategies; to energize and engage DPCs; and to begin district assessments that will inform and shape the district system plan. Renee said that a preparatory information packet will be mailed prior to the meeting.

Members offered comments regarding the content, flow, and facilitation of the meeting, which Joe took under advisement. They agreed that DPCs should understand that their role is informative and not authoritative. The Commission seeks their input to identify existing facilities and opportunities, and their assistance in engaging more communities through representative agencies. They will "generate ideas and strengthen partnerships" as a "clearinghouse."

## **8. Executive Director's Report**

Renee submitted a written report of meetings she held during the month of December.

### **8.1 - Draft of Legislative Information Piece**

The draft report to the legislature was not made available to the members, but two copies were circulated at the meeting for brief preview and comment. It included a map of the Commission districts, designated parks and funding projects, and frequently asked questions. Renee indicated there would also be an insert with the strategic plan criteria and funding criteria, but that was also not available for preview.

### **8.2 - February Legacy Advisory Committee (LAC) Meeting**

Renee said she is preparing a presentation on the work process and product of the GMRPTC for the February 25 LAC meeting, which will be held in a facility that has received Legacy funding in the past. Commissioners are encouraged to attend. Al offered that it be held in Douglas County. Renee is soliciting video clips from the new recipients, along with testimonials regarding the value and necessity of Legacy funds for accomplishing their projects.

### **8.3 - Press Announcement**

Renee distributed copies of a press release announcing the FY16 and FY17 grant recommendations. The agencies with funded projects received it with their letters, along with a sample press release to adapt and send to local media. Renee was reminded to include that these projects are funded by the voters of Minnesota through the *Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment*. Members reiterated the request for receipt of courtesy copies of press releases prior to, or along with, distribution to the public.

## 9. Items from Members

Al reported that he sent a letter on behalf of the Commission, asking for five million dollars under Minnesota Statute 85.019.

## 10. Consent Agenda

Rita reviewed and submitted the bills and claims as follows:

|                            |                  |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| - Commissioners expenses   | 2,259.20         |
| - JFC Strategic Services   | 6,410.58         |
| - Trinity Creek Consulting | 9,332.88         |
| - Clerical Services        | 600.00           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>18,602.76</b> |

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

## 11. Next Meeting and Agenda Items

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2016 at the Little Falls Initiative Foundation. Agenda to include: 2016 Meeting Schedule; Election of Officers; Agreed Upon Rate for Secretary.

**Motion** to adjourn was made by Nelson, second by Wilcox. **Motion carried**

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