

**Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission**  
August 26, 2015 10:00am – 3:00pm  
**Sartell City Hall**  
**125 Pinecone Road North, Sartell, MN 56377**

**MINUTES**

1. Call to order – Chair
2. Approve minutes of July 22nd, 2015 Meeting
  - Motion by Commissioner Anderson, second by Commissioner Wendorf, to approve minutes.
3. Approval of Treasurer’s Report Chair Lieffort presented the budget with note that grant expenses are in two categories, System Planning Grant and Capacity Grant.
  - Motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report Commissioner Wendorf, second by Commissioner Hulett. Motion carried
4. Approve the Agenda:
  - Commissioner Hulett requested clarification on Agenda Item 6.3 with regard to ETeam members, terms, replacement of members and continuity of team
  - Motion to accept the agenda by Commissioner Wilcox, second by Commissioner Mattice. Motion carried
5. Acknowledge Commissioners in Attendance:
  - Rita Albrecht, Rick Anderson, Tim Kennedy, Michael Hulett, Al Lieffort, Marc Mattice, Keith Nelson, Barry Wendorf, LuAnn Wilcox, Tom Schmitz and Jannik Anderson were all present.
  - Commissioners not in attendance, Bryan Pike and Thomas Ryan
  - Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance:
  - Joe Czapiewski, Kathy Schoenbauer, Jeff Schoenbauer, Executive Director Renee Mattson, Council Member Mary Koep from City of Brainerd.
6. Unfinished Business:
  - 6.1 Executive Director Contract Ratification
    - Copies of the draft contract were distributed by Chair. Terms of the contract are the terms discussed with the Chair and Executive Director with input from Commissioner Albrecht and Commissioner Hulett.
    - Commissioner Albrecht reviewed the contract changes; greater specificity in the deliverables and review process most notably.

- Discussion about specific paragraphs and language in the contract, with changes made regarding communication between ED and Chair in Section V. Liaison between Executive Director and Commission.
- Commissioner Wilcox moved to strike the contract wording in Section V.

**Motion** by Wilcox, second by Nelson: strike after the comma “all communications are discussed with the Chair”, leave “all actions resulting from contact other than with the Chair must be approved by the Chair and the Commission. Motion passed.

Question from Commissioner Nelson about annual review and the input from all board members. Clarification from the Chair: the Commission will review the deliverables at six months and one year. Deliverables will change during the contract by mutual agreement of the Commission and ED. The first review of the deliverables will happen in February 2016.

Commissioner Albrecht discussed VI. Terms and Conditions. Some items were removed as they did not strictly apply to the contract.

J. Subcontractor Payment remains in the contract to ensure the Commission does not pay for services twice. This item remains for the duration of this contract but may be reviewed in the next contract.

Commissioner Nelson suggested striking Section I, Commissioner Hulett moved to strike everything in Section I except the first sentence.

**Motion** by Hulett, second by Albrecht, strike everything in Section I except the first sentence. Motion passed.

Commissioner Hulett inquired whether the Bemidji City Attorney could review the contract. Commissioner Albrecht felt it was outside the scope of what the Commission could request of Bemidji. Discussion on legal counsel for the contract and determination that legal review is unnecessary.

**Motion** by R. Anderson, second by Nelson to ratify the contract of the Executive Director with changes as discussed. Motion passed.

## 6.2 Funding Priority Criteria

- Part of the Legislative language clearly states:  
“By January 15, 2016 the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission shall submit a report that contains the Commission’s criteria for funding from the parks and trails fund...” Must also outline the criteria for the selection process.

- What is the criteria we will use to determine what designated properties get funded? Discussion led by Jeff and Kathy Schoenbauer.
- Four options for funding criteria have been presented.
- 19 candidates from 2014 and six from 2015.
- Must be a consistent focus on selecting high quality projects to fund.
- Recommendation from Schoenbauer's for Funding Priority Criteria; out of the four recommendations presented, combination of Option 1 Rank and Score and Option 4 High Impact and Innovative Project Focus.
- Once Funding Criteria has been determined, how is the funding distributed, percentage basis or other?
- Discussion ensued about scoring of applicants, geographical distribution of applicants and readiness of applicants to apply for funding.
- Discussion about the needs for programming to engage interest in getting people outdoors. Defer further discussion at Agenda Item 6.4.
- Important to review the Funding options with regard to the guidelines established in the Strategic Plan.
- Important to have excellent talking points to describe why we have selected and funded the projects when speaking to the stakeholders, public and legislators.
- Necessary to also include the smaller communities with less resources for Master Planning and small staff. Outreach is critical.
- Is there a set aside of money to Connect People with the Outdoors and to assist with Master Planning?
- There should be inclusion in our recommendations for the two projects that have been legislatively designated for this round of funding which helps with the geographical distribution.
- Scoring (designation) application and funding application will determine the ranking of funding. With designation allowing for application of funding and the actual amount of funding for a project based on the funding application submitted.
- District Planning Committees are important as we continue to keep them apprised of what we fund and what we are allowed to fund, particularly when legislators call to ask their input.
- This Funding Priority Criteria method is for this round and may be changed in the future as necessary.

**Motion** by Kennedy to use Option 1 Ranked Score and Option 4 High Impact Innovative Focus as the basis for the first round selection, second by Schmitz. Commissioner Schmitz requested that a second level of review for geography as a consideration. Anderson seconded the friendly amendment, Kennedy accepted the friendly amendment to the motion. Motion passed.

Chair Lieffort left the meeting and Vice Chair Albrecht took over meeting at this time.

### 6.3 Comments to Applicants following the H/M/L round

- Joe Czapiewski led discussion
- Letters were sent to all 85 applicants in this round on August 5.
- There have been questions to Joe as well as Commissioners regarding the ranking process.
- There will always be applicants that do not compare well to the criteria.
- Commissioners had feedback and questions from projects in their areas that scored low or medium.
- Discussion relative to the cost necessary to fund Master Plans to move projects from application to the scoring phase.
- A Master Plan requirement in the Strategic Plan is to ensure consistency of projects moving forward to the funding phase.
- Should there be a criteria for projects that have an existing and mature Master Plan versus projects that are new and are submitting a new Master plan?

Lunch -1/2 hour is allocated for this break; **submit expense vouchers upon reconvening.**

### 6.3 Comment to Applicants following the H/L/M round continued Chair Liefert resumes Chairing meeting

- Form letter was a good start but applicants are in need of more, we need to have a good partnership of responses between staff, consultants and Commissioners.
- There is a ranking review document that shows how projects ranked in each District.
- Each Commissioner will work with people in our district to further explain how the ETeam arrived at the conclusions they did.
- System Plan Coordinator work with Commissioners to help applicants understand whether to apply again or not.
- Is there a way to access individual applications on the web site to look at the applications? Joe, yes, he will send a pdf of the application to Commissioners.
- In some cities in Minnesota the city park does serve as the regional hub, but that does not meet our regional requirements.
- There is a round of DPC meetings scheduled for October and applicants with questions could have the answers at those meetings.
- System Plan Coordinator attends the DPC meetings the Executive Director will also attend the DPC meetings in October.

- Commissioner Hulett discussed the ETeam evaluation of members, terms of service and the annual evaluation of the members as per our policy manual. How will we do that evaluation?
- Chair: We will schedule an annual evaluation session, which we have not previously done.
- When will the evaluation for ETeam be scheduled?
- Wendorf: How will we evaluate the ETeam if we haven't seen the applications?
- Chair: We will review their geographic representation on the Team.
- Wilcox: What is in the procedures manual that outlines what we can evaluate them on?
- Chair: How do the evaluations line up with the 25-year plan and the four pillars?
- Hulett: We should rely on the ED and consultants to provide the evaluation process for the ETeam. We should periodically change the mix of the makeup of the ETeam.
- Chair: One of the deliverables of the ED contract is to review the policy manual for necessary updates.
- Nelson: We have a list to provide to the legislature by January 15 so we should make these updates after the New Year. Some of the ETeam members have changed since the inception due to their retirement and moves within the state.

#### 6.4 Connecting People and the Outdoors – Discussion

- Wilcox: Report handed out and explained/reported/discussed. In the past this topic when raised has not generated much feedback.
- This is a proposal based on a percentage of the total amount of funding available to the Commission, 10% is suggested.
- Proposal suggests hiring a coordinator.
- For the programming events piece there are a number of elements. There are models of programs already existing that could be used as a starting point.
- J. Anderson: ways to involve people to interact while using their mobile devices. Both events and programs within parks.
- Kennedy: Getting people into parks and trails is as important as building or improving new parks and trails. Increasing participation is important.
- Chair: Do we allocate a percentage of our funding to Connecting People to the Outdoors?
- Hulett: How do we connect people all over Minnesota, it feels overwhelming.
- How does this position work and coordinate with the Met Council and the DNR who are doing similar work?

- Nelson: Deliverability of this funding piece is something we should task our Executive Director with.
- Executive Director: There are other organizations we can partner with potentially to pool resources and programs. For example Explore Minnesota Tourism, Education Minnesota and others.
- Wilcox: There are other organizations nationally that have models we can look at.
- Schmitz: Will we provide the funding piece for this cycle for this program?
- Wilcox: Those that receive funding could be required to disseminate information via press release and other media.
- Chair: It would be difficult to have a grant program in this cycle for Connecting People to the Outdoors.
- Chair: Revisit at the next meeting.

#### 6.5 Data Management System (DMS)

- Discussion led by Jeff Schoenbauer.
- Designation Portal is 95% ready to go.
- Necessary to know what parks are out there, what investment has been made and what funding requests might be made in the future.
- With Commission approval the remainder of the system, including the Funding Portal, can be built out and the Funding Portal will be ready to go on-line on October 1, 2015.
- ED: If we can let Houston Engineering know following the August 26, 2015 Commission meeting Houston can have the Funding Portal ready by October 1. The estimate is \$8,000 to complete this portion.
- There is a new contract with DNR for the next appropriation, there are grant funds available to pay for this portion.

**Motion** by Schmitz to approve Houston Engineering contract for up to \$8,000 to complete the Funding Application, second by Nelson. Motion passed.

### 7. New Business:

#### 7.1 Funding Request Resolution Form

- There must be a division of government, either city or county, requesting these funds.
- Resolution Request Form will confirm the entity understands the process for designation and funding request.
- Discussion as to the details of signatures and numbering of the applications.

**Motion** by Albrecht to approve the Funding Request Resolution form with changes as noted, second by Schmitz. Motion passed.

## 7.2 Ranking Designation Review

- Chair: Clarity necessary to how we handle high ranked projects that are not yet scored. How do we report this to the legislature?
- ED: How do we recognize the projects that ranked High, but cannot be scored because they did not submit a Master Plan? It is important to note these high ranking projects to fully flesh out the geographic designations of these projects statewide.
- It is important to list all the projects that could potentially be funded in the future, that will be designated. How best to do this?
- J. Schoenbauer: Have a category "Designated Pending" that shows projects that have ranked high and only need a Master Plan to be scored.
- Schmitz: Anything that ranks High in any years should be in the system plan. Different designation for those that are scored and those that receive funding.
- We cannot score without a Master Plan. They may be in the system but cannot be scored.
- Projects may be placed in a Pending list and once they complete the steps they may be scored.
- Nelson: While we state we cannot score without a Master Plan that was done in 2014. If we are going to rank we must go back to the entities to help them get scored and move forward.
- Albrecht: Of the 19 designated in 2014 how many did not have a Master Plan?
- Chair: Do we rescore the 2014 designees who did not have a Master Plan? We go back to them and ask them to complete the application form to enable them to go on to the funding application phase.
- All applicants for 2014 knew that they would be required to submit a Master Plan if they wanted to be scored and move to the funding application.
- Wendorf: Moving forward designated parks and trails are one color, pending designations are another color and in the future a third color designates those projects that have received funding.
- ED: We do need to decide before we move forward on the designations, if we will set aside funds for grants for the completion of a Master Plan for communities need one.

- Discussion held regarding amounts or percentages for application of Master Plan funding.
- Kennedy: Differences exist between small communities and large communities and their ability to fund a Master Plan. How do we provide comparable assistance based on a community size and resources?
- Chair: We are required to provide a list of projects to the legislature, and it is *conceivable* that we could provide a list that has a funding request for an entity requesting funding for a Master Plan.
- All projects in 2015 that were ranked *are* eligible to apply for funding for their projects; they submitted the required Master Plan.
- Discussion as to a percentage of funds available to fund Master Plans or a set amount to fund Master Plans.
- Kennedy: In the future the Commission might decide priorities have evolved and Master Plans may be approved as being a project that is funded.
- We are taking applications, projects to be determined.

**Motion** by Schmitz to approve the ETeam ranking schedule for 2015, second by Kennedy. Motion passed.

#### 8. Items from members and letters to the Commission:

- One letter to the Chair from the St. Louis County and Lake County Regional Rail Authority in response to the letter from August 5, 2015. Read into the minutes of the August 26, 2015 meeting.
- Nelson: It is important to include the two entities from whom we have received designated funding requests by way of legislature authority to fund those projects. The two projects should be included in our Designated Projects report.
- Albrecht: In the future at a Commission meeting a philosophical discussion of the ways the Commission differs from the Met Council. In a way we can present to the legislature ways in which we differ and why.
- Albrecht: At a future meeting we also hold a budget discussion and also discuss our need for legal counsel and perhaps using the Governor's office for this. And also a DPC meeting together as a one day meeting to flesh out what we are and what we do as well as networking opportunities.
- Joe: We might do this all together meeting with the DPC in February after our report to the legislature.

- Wilcox: DPC are anxious to have more input and be more involved. Also, when will we deal with Joe's contract that expires on September 30? Will we deal with this in September? Chair: yes.
- Hulett: DPC can help the applicants with their applications and the question of Master Plans. Everyone in the room would be helpful in disseminating the information.

9. Consent Agenda:

JFC August Expense	\$ 6,082.68
SC Inc. July Expense	\$ 2,951.86
Renee Mattson August Expense	\$ 8,593.98
Houston Engineering	\$ 2,625.00
O. William Bruins	\$ 110.00
Commissioners Meeting and other expenses	<u>\$ 3,140.33</u>
TOTAL	\$23,503.85

Motion by Albrecht, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Schmitz to approve Consent Agenda. Motion carried.

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10. Items from members

- Service Award to O. William Bruins District 6 Commissioner, October 2013 to May 2015.
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11. Next Meeting –September 23, 2015.

Motion by Wilcox to adjourn.