



Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trail Commission

Stearns History Museum

Minutes for January 25, 2023

APPROVED

Commissioners Present: Rick Anderson, Barry Wendorf, Bryan Pike, Tom Stoa (virtual), Jen Foley, Tim Engrav, Brad Bonk, Jonathan Wolf, Peg Furshong and Beth Pierce (virtual)

Commissioners Absent: Reid Huttunen

Consultants Present: Renee Mattson - Executive Director, Joe Czapiewski – System Plan Coordinator, and Tess Dandrea - Administrative Assistant (virtual)

1 Meeting Called to Order by Chair Anderson at 10:05am

2. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance:

Welcome by Amy Degerstrom, Development Director of Stearns History Museum which was built in 1984 and has 80 acres and 2.5 miles of trails.

3. Approval of Agenda for January 25, 2023, Minutes from November 23, 2022, and Treasurer's Report through November 2022

Motion by Wendorf

Second by Engrav

Motion Approved

4. Executive Director's Report:

In addition to written report, Mattson stated the Legislative session opened January 3, 2023. She has had numerous meetings and an unexpected call to answer some questions in the Senate Environment, Climate and Legacy Committee as related to how a 50% match in LCCMR would affect us.

5. System Plan Coordinator's Report:

Added to his written report, Czapiewski stated he is being contacted with questions related to designation applications.

A discussion of the Evaluation team included a functioning alternate, diversity considerations and should appointments be staggered, and there be term, or lifetime, limits? At the October meeting, the question is asked what does ETeam future look like maybe we should start the conversation earlier. Add to work list discussion.

6. Items from Members and Letters to the Commission:

Pierce joined the meeting virtually at 11:00am

Pike – Who has served on this commission for over 10 years, did not seek reappointment to the District 2 seat. Commissioners stated they are grateful for his long tenure and service to the Commission and he will be missed.

Engrav, Bonk, Wolf, Furshong, Foley, Stoa, Pierce - nothing to add

Wendorf – Isanti Parks had 35 riders attend the annual Freezer Burn Fat Bike Race

Anderson – tomorrow is the second trail planning group meeting. Lots of interest in getting a regional trail designated.

7. New Business:

7.1 2023 Work Plan

What is it what we want to accomplish this year in our strategic plan that we need to focus on? Discussed historical designated facilities status, new designation process, Master Plans, and how to measure outcomes.

What are the roadblocks to facilities, especially smaller ones, to apply and or complete the process? Archeological surveys have become expensive and are a roadblock for some. We could make a policy to allow organizations to apply for pre-application dollars for archeological surveys, and or boundaries etc.

We will evaluate ourselves on outcomes. A form was handed out that listed work topics including spring and summer tours, updating criteria, DEI research and outreach development. Policy considerations regarding climate change, maintenance and operations should be considered but should be specific. We need to make strategic partnerships. If we are we looking to build Art in parks perhaps we could partner with Arts and Heritage. We could write a grant and have it run through the Arts Council. (we are working with the Arts Council through the PTLAC)

SPRING AND SUMMER TOURS

Have traditionally been district level workshops but interest in them is fading. Staff thinks spending more time one-on-one with applicants, or potential applicants is a better use of their time. We need to encourage facilities, especially

smaller ones, to apply and or complete the process.

Archeological surveys have become expensive and are a stumbling block for some. We could consider a policy change to allow people to apply for pre-application dollars for archeological surveys or boundaries etc.

FUNDING APPLICATION UPDATES/CRITERIA

We could design a special one-time grant application and encourage applicants to have the entire facility reviewed and have them consider a larger picture. Also discussed including a minimum grant amount, maybe starting at \$25,000.

Also build in a time-limit for completion, and have a match, say 80/20%, or 75/25%, so they have skin in the game. Flexibility is needed as the goal is to reduce risk for us, and them, in the event of unforeseen issues. We might need to have criteria attached.

FUNDING APPLICATION UPDATES CONTINUED

Policy Considerations: Reduce risk policy for contingency. Discussion regarding what happens to over, or under, used funds? Would the funds come back to us? Could they use unspent contingency funds towards rest of plan, or as a part of their match? Max of 10% could be used toward equipment etc. Renee and Joe will update the application materials and bring to March meeting or a committee can be formed.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

For CPO grants should it read, they must consider accessibility? If not included they must provide rationale why. Better facility/project area pictures with description of what funding will change. Encourage a project manager for construction projects.

INSTRUCTION CLARIFICATION CONSIDERATIONS

Provide trail maintenance plan and detailed information and graphics to depict plan.

Consider timeline to reinvest in mountain bike trail refresh. More detailed information is needed for some natureescape playground requests. If grant recommended, they need to begin permitting, SHPO and THPO work. Must post Legacy Amendment and GMRPTC signage. Twice annually applicants must complete a grant status update, separate from the DNR updates.

7.2 Track Wheelchair Grant Award

Three applications for the grant and we only have funds for one, and all had different and good approaches. They must agree to loan out the Wheelchair and it must be insured. Grant applicant need only supply \$500. An additional

\$24,600 could be taken from our budget for all three to be funded. The wheelchairs can be delivered in March and brought to the capital.

Motion by Pike to fund three track chairs to the facilities that applied.

Second by Foley

Motion Approved

Abstention by Anderson

7.3 FY25 Funding Application Update

Completed earlier in meeting

7.4 Resolution 026 Project Scope Change Gull Lake Trail Phase 4

Motion by Engrav to approve resolution for Phase 4 as presented.

Second by Pike

Motion Approved

8. Old Business:

8.1 Contract update for Mountain Bike Development Guidelines.

Request for another \$5000 to complete design phase as it is twice as big as we envisioned and we have a budget surplus to cover it. Will have some printed copies (approximately 300 pages) for our partners and on web site. The guide can be purchased at print cost.

Motion by Engrav to approve an additional \$5000 to complete project.

Second by Wolf

Motion Approved

8.2 2022 Policy and Planning Report

Reviewed

8.3 2022 Summer Mountain Bike System Survey

Bound copy of summer survey from Parks and Trails Council is also on the website.

9. Approval of December 2022 and January 2023 Expenses

Consultants:	December 2022	\$24,388.19
	January 2023	\$29,959.47
Commission:	November 2022 &	
	January 2023	<u>\$1,356.23</u>
		\$55,703.89

Motion by Wendorf

Second by Foley

Motion Approved

10. Next Meeting and Agenda Items:

No February meeting.

Next Meeting is March 22, 2023 in Willmar at Robbins Island Park.

Meeting adjourned 2:12 pm

Rick Anderson – Chair

Date

**Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission
Director's Report for January 2023**

Partner Meetings

- GMPT Newsletter Article
- PTLAC Liaison's Calls

Legislative Meetings

The 2023 legislative session began on January 3, 2023. I've made three trips to Saint Paul for several days of meetings thus far. Legislative meetings with:

- Rep. Lillie, Chair of the Legacy Finance Committee
- Rep. Brand
- Rep. Skraba
- Rep. Zeleznikar
- Rep. Heintzeman
- Rep. Finke
- Rep. Her
- Senator McEwen, Vice Chair of Environment, Climate and Legacy
- Senator Eichorn
- Senator Hauschild

House Legacy Finance Committee has largely new members, only Lillie and Heintzeman have previously served on Legacy. Members are not only new to the committee, but several are also newly elected, so getting to them for an overview of how the Commission works is important early in the session.

Legislation

- We have a bill requesting \$1 million for GMRPTC operations out of the general fund. The bill is authored by Rep. Lislegard and Senator Hauschild. I don't have the bill numbers yet but will share those as soon as I have them. You may recall that we had tried to introduce the same bill in 2021 but were unable to get a hearing in the House from Rep. Hansen's committee. Senator Ruud authored the Senate bill and did give us a hearing. Both Lislegard and Hauschild are champions for this and from Greater Minnesota, so hopefully we will prevail this time around.
- There is a bill being introduced in the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy (HF389 attached) that would increase the percent of the lottery in lieu tax from 72.43% to 99% of the revenues collected. There is an allocation of these funds of 50% for gam and fish, 22.5% for State parks and trails, 22.5% for metropolitan parks and trails grants, 3% for local trail grants and 2% for the Minnesota Zoo, Como Park Zoo and the Duluth Zoo. Notably, Greater Minnesota is not named for a

percentage. Rep. Hansen has been very blunt that the percentages are not open to negotiation. We're going to testify on January 24 that consideration should be given to Greater Minnesota to receive some amount. It's a long shot at best. Rep. Hansen is the House author and Hauschild is carrying it in the Senate. Hauschild is open to the idea, Hansen will not be.

- I requested and got, our presentation for Parks and Trails on February 8 at Legacy Finance. We're scheduled for an hour, which we will need given there are so many new members and new legislators in general on the committee. This will be the three partner agencies presenting, as we typically do, though not normally this long.
- There is a bill introduced again this session (HF68) that would raise the reimbursement for GMRPTC Commissioners, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council members, Minnesota Zoological Board, LCCMR members and Metropolitan Council members from \$55 per day to \$125 per day. The same bill was introduced last year and didn't get passed. Jordan and Hansen are the authors, there is no companion bill in the Senate yet.

Stakeholder Support

- Assisted Gull Lake Trail Phase 4 with a project scope amendment, coming before you for consideration. The construction costs have increased well beyond their expectations and the need to add more boardwalk to avoid a sensitive area as well as more retaining walls also increased cost projections.
- Met with Duluth Spirit Mountain on two separate issues with their grant, one related to the fiscal agent, the other an asked for and refused request to completely change the project scope for the Nordic trail alignment.
- Duluth Traverse CPO grant has come in over budget and they requested the ability to reduce the number of mountain bikes they purchase. The mountain bikes actually came in at a lower cost than budgeted for, the van, trailer and transport truck came in over budget and they were willing to fund those items two additional project components coming in over the estimate created a \$5,000 shortfall. They were told to find the funding for the shortfall through another source as mountain bikes and the other elements are crucial to the CPO grant.

2022 Policy and Planning Report

Printed copies received on January 3 and delivered on January 4-5 to all committee members of Legacy in the House and Senate.

Mountain Bike Development Guide

In the design stage and getting close to completion

GMRPTC
System Plan Coordinators Report
January 2023

Reviews and Technical Assistance

In addition to working through the Master Plan review of Hubbard County's Deep Lake Park, I have been supporting the City of Chisholm on a Designation Application for the Redhead Mountain Bike Trail. We will likely be bringing you both of those items for review at the next meeting.

Several other facilities continue to work toward designation applications and Master Plans. A group of volunteers at Prairie Woods ELC asked me to join them and explain the Commission's process and benefits. I also met with Matt Davis from the North Country Hiking Trail to brainstorm advancing his multi-county project. Follow up with a few previously funded applications, such as Northerly Park and Duluth, was completed to help keep those projects on track and answer questions.

We've put some time into planning for our annual Spring Tour and will be discussing a little different approach this year. For a number of reasons, we want to move away from district-level workshops and spend that time meeting individually with our regional partners and many eligible and potential partners. We think this will be a more effective use of the resources and help us to break through a number of project logjams.

Funding

We are at the time of year when queries about our funding process and timeline are coming out of the woodwork. A number of jurisdictions, both inside and outside our system, as well as consultants have contacted me with questions. We will be discussing a number of potential minor changes to the funding application during this meeting's planning session that will help steer us toward the April 1 (or so) funding application launch.

ETeam Update

Our Evaluation Team continues to do great work and will be completing another round of review in February. While we aren't expecting any change in the ETeam voting membership, we recognize that there currently isn't any acting alternate on the team. In the past the Commission has appointed someone from time to time who meets qualifications, reviews the documents, and sits in on the meetings. They do not have a vote but are available and trained in the case there is a vacancy. We would like to begin the process of bringing in a new ETeam alternate member.

District and Partner Outreach

Renee and I, along with Commissioners Bonk and Pierce, attended a GMPT Legislative Forum (via Zoom). The number of new legislators, leadership changes, and shifting demographics mean we all need to keep on top of the opportunities and challenges in St. Paul this year. We are lucky to have both the team at GMPT and Renee out there staying in front of the appropriate legislators and advancing our interests.

The DNR held a budget overview covering their special legislative requests. They are in the process of requesting budget surplus funds for both infrastructure and climate related needs. We mirror many of their priorities, such as accessibility and infrastructure rehab. They also are looking to fund more work in areas we don't touch on as explicitly, such as stream restoration and forest/grasslands/wetland management.

Consultant Projects

DMS updates with Full Circle Group continue to move forward, albeit slowly. Most of the work is currently focused on updating the User Interface in the Data Management System. Once we understand the impact of that, we will wrap up the other technical components.