



Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Minutes for November 25, 2020

Virtual Meeting - Zoom

APPROVED

Commissioners Present: Tim Engrav, Beth Pierce, Bryan Pike, Rick Anderson, Ted Suss, Barry Wendorf, Jonathan Wolf, Tom Stoa, Matthew Hill, Jen Foley, and Peg Furshong

Commissioners Absent: Tom Ryan, Brad Bonk

Consultants Present: Renee Mattson, Executive Director, Joe Czapiewski, System Plan Coordinator

1. Meeting Called to Order by Vice Chair Anderson at 10:00am

Meeting Goals Welcome to all in attendance and those via video. Passed along best regards from Tom Ryan who could not be at the meeting today.

2. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance: No one from the public in attendance at the meeting.

3. Approval of Agenda for November 25, 2020, Minutes from October 28, 2020 and Treasurer's Report through October 2020

Addition of 7.3, Resolution 015 Hartley Nature Center, moving 7.3. Draft Work Plan 2021 to 7.4.

Motion by Pike to approve the modified agenda, the minutes from October 28 and the treasurer's report through October 2020

Second by Engrav

Motion Approved

4. Executive Director's Report

Nothing additional beyond the emailed report. Question from *Stoa* as to whether we have an updated financial report from MMB. There is no updated report yet.

5. System Plan Coordinator's Report

Nothing additional beyond the emailed report. *Pike* expressed appreciation for the work done by *Czapiewski* and *Mattson*.

6. Items from Members and Letters to the Commission

No letters to the Commission received.

Engrav mentioned Federal legislations passed in August related to the Great American Outdoors Act. Part of the act will provide funding for National Parks and National Forests to reduce deferred maintenance. The Chippewa and Superior National Forests in Minnesota have long lists of projects. Public input is happening now for planned projects. There are links on the forest service website for public comments. The deferred maintenance catch-up funding is specific to five years. The Act is in perpetuity and flows through LAWCON in Minnesota.

7. New Business:

7.1 Resolution 013 for Project Scope Changes to Big Falls Campground and Horse Camp

Motion by Wendorf

Second by Furshong

Motion Approved

7.2 Resolution 014 for Project Scope Changes to Plum Creek Park

Motion by Suss

Second by Pike

Motion Approved

7.3 Resolution 015 for Project Scope Changes to Hartley Nature Center

Motion by Engrav

Second by Hill

Motion Approved

7.4 Draft Work Plan 2021

Calendared the work for 2021, request Commissioners review the plan and provide any comments and suggestions relative to work or projects they may want to include in the plan.

Funding Application Review Committee

Barry Wendorf

Tim Engrav

Jen Foley

Beth Pierce

Engrav asked about the Communications Plan that had been discussed previously, *Mattson* will follow up. Discussion about how the GMPT reviews can be augmented with RDCs in some of the districts or other organizations that could serve in an advisory role. *Pike* asked if the Commissioners could seek groups within their districts who could be helpful reviewers. *Czapiewski* will send out the DPC

discussion document for Commissioner review in December so the matter can be discussed further in January. *Wendorf* wants to be sure that we have a way to utilize the feedback that we receive from these groups. *Anderson* asked for input on the meeting locations for 2021, once we get past the virtual meetings for the first part of the year and begin holding in person meetings. Work plan discussion will be on the agenda for further discussion in January.

8. Old Business:

8.1 Approval of Non-Infrastructure Project Management Policy

Czapiewski reviewed the policy with the comments from the October meeting incorporated.

Anderson, invasive species control, is that the best way to use Legacy funds? Will we ever get a good handle on invasive control? *Wendorf* we have not had a lot of applications for invasive control. There are funds available through other agencies and we are not habitat driven. We as a Commission are not the best agency to grant these funds. *Furshong* noted that having an SWCD identified in the grant applications that are working with them on the issue will help the applicant. This can become an endless bucket of funding. *Pike* agrees with *Wendorfs* comments that there are a host of other agencies that can help with this issue. Encourage them to search out these other sources of funding. Should we limit the funding of these projects so that more can be spent on infrastructure needs and rehabilitation? Should we limit the amount of funding for this work? *Suss*, there are two different types of invasive species projects. 1. If a park is acquired and there is a development plan and part of the plan is to remove invasive species, that makes sense. But later, if they do not stay on top of the work, we should not use money for what is a form of maintenance. Development function vs. maintenance. *Anderson*, have a percentage of the budget allowed for invasive work, similar to engineering and how we allocate a percentage. There is a lot to consider here and we need more time to think about this. Can we revisit again in January? *Czapiewski* confirmed that if we leave this to the January meeting and continue our discussion, we will not be behind in getting the work done in time for the funding application update. In response to some of the comments, *Czapiewski* agrees with the discussion, these projects are difficult and for smaller jurisdictions this is a challenge. There is an on-going management plan in the toolbox, how do you intend to manage this investment and stay on top of the work? *Anderson*, can we create a fact sheet with some of the resources we have or other agencies? *Czapiewski* suggested we create a committee to improve upon the draft and think through the issues prior to the January meeting.

Non-Infrastructure Policy Committee

Rick Anderson

Bryan Pike

Tom Ryan

Wendorf wants to keep the CPO component on the forefront as well. Pike asked if the committee was established to only review the invasive species policy or the whole policy? *Anderson* stated the committee will review the entire policy with special emphasis on invasive control and connecting people to the outdoors.

9. Approval of Expenses

Pike stated the expenses for approval:

Commission Expenses:	\$4,327.40
<u>Consultant Expenses:</u>	<u>\$16,711.93</u>
Total	\$21,039.33

Motion by Furshong

Second by Suss

Motion Approved

10. Next Meeting and Agenda Items

Engrav wants to know if there are other projects or subcommittees the Commission needs to be looking at or engaging in? *Anderson* questioned if we should be reviewing our policies and governance structure. *Mattson* suggested we have a planning meeting mid-year in 2021 when we can hold an in person meeting again. *Anderson* agreed and suggested that July, when we normally do not have a meeting could be an option. *Mattson* recommended a facilitator she has worked with. *Furshong* suggested Nisswa would be a good location for the meeting.

11. Adjourn

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission
Director's Report for September 2020

Partner Meetings

- PTLAC project calls to discuss the research position for the Streetlight Data project, we have come to an agreement that is acceptable for contracting and should be finalizing the contract within a week, two at the most.
- PTLAC Liaisons Monthly Call
- PTLAC Benchmarks Committee Call
- PTLAV Inclusion Committee Call
- GMP&T Membership Committee call
- GMP&T Forum, discussion about winter operations

Site Visits

- Wright County Bertram Park – tour with Marc Mattice, joined by Commissioner Stoa. The camper cabins and support buildings are complete, campground sites nearly complete, just some final landscaping work is left. This is a beautiful campground and when finished next spring will certainly be well occupied.
- Rochester Gamehaven Park – tour with Nike Nigbur and Audrey Mularie. We've toured this site previously and have seen the cornfields transformed with the grading that was still happening during our tour. A follow up photo from Mike showed the road taking shape.
The \$1,076,410 grant that is funding this phase of the project will be used for access, parking, restroom, nature play area, hiking and biking trails, cross country ski trails and disc golf
- Red Wing Hi Mni Can Barn Bluff Park – toured with Audrey Mularie, Steve Kohn and Dan Rogness from Red Wing and contractors. They have done a great job of public outreach and have worked closely with the Prairie Island Indian Community to ensure their voices are heard. It's definitely a location for a future Commission meeting.
- Redwood County Plum Creek Park – visited the park with Audrey Mularie, Scott Wold and Adam Kletscher to review the funding project and scope change request to add another vault toilet due to costs coming in lower than anticipated. The park is a gem and the camper cabins will be highly sought after.
- Warroad – Joe and I visited the community to view the park they have submitted for designation. Joe has completed his review of the application and has been working with the community.

DMS Phase IV

Weekly calls with Full Circle team to define the project and review needs.

Policy and Planning Report for 2020

Writing, photo collection, and data for the annual report, due to the Legislature on January 15, 2021. The Commission will have the first draft for review the first part of December. The

report this year will add four pages and more information around the pillars, our criteria and a larger map.

Funding Notifications

All 14 applications for FY22 funding were notified of the status of their application by phone and followed up with an email and a letter of congratulations, or sorry we did not fund your project. A hard copy of the letter was mailed, and Commissioners were copied on the correspondence to applicants in their districts.

Parks and Trails Advisory Committee

I'm pleased to announce that we have finally filled the Program Consultant on the PTLAC that has been vacant since December 2018 when Paul Purman left the position to move to another department within DNR. Lars Erdahl will be joining PTLAC as the new Parks and Trails Legacy Program Consultant. I was on the hiring committee for the position and we made the recommendation to hire Lars last December. However as you know, hiring at the State level is a long, long process and then COVID intervened and there was a hiring freeze. But we have finally been able to work through the process and will welcome Lars at our December 3 meeting. Much thanks to Laura Preus at DNR for keeping the hiring moving along.

GMRPTC
System Plan Coordinators Report
November 2020

Non-Infrastructure Funded Project Contracting and Review

Following last month's Commission/ETeam meeting, Renee and I drafted and modified a "discussion" policy and toolbox for managing non-infrastructure projects like Connecting People to the Outdoors and natural resource management investments. This document is a starting point for discussion and eventual adoption of the Commission's response to these types of funded projects. Our goal is to make sure we are implementing the appropriate oversight of these projects and that outcomes are supported, measured and communicated. We also hope that the management tools put into place are reasonable and appropriate for the resources they require.

On-Site Reviews and Technical Assistance

Several agencies were provided with technical assistance or on-site reviews during the past month.

- Renee and I conducted a site review of the Designation Application at the Warroad Harbor on Lake of the Woods. They have submitted an application fairly analogous to the Marina in Grand Marais, which is awaiting submission of its Master Plan. Extensive discussions about the focus of the park, its surrounding community and more helped to focus the concept for all parties.
- Isanti County has submitted an updated Master Plan for Irving & John Anderson Park, which has expanded since it was designated. The ETeam will review and score at their upcoming meeting.
- Wabasha is putting together a team to support the development of a trail from there to Kellogg. They have provided some basic information and are learning the ins and outs of designation. I will know more when I attend a meeting next week.
- Hartley Park in Duluth approached us requesting modification of their funded project. We have reviewed the proposal, worked with them to make it meet our specifications and policy, and are bringing you a recommendation for formal approval.
- Morrison County's Legacy-funded Belle Prairie Park Master Plan update has been reviewed and approved for ETeam scoring at their next meeting.

DMS Phase IV

Renee and I continue to meet with Full Circle Group on this update of our Data Management System. We have provided them with three key work products that will guide their technical updates.

- Pre-App wireframe. Currently we have no way to track inquiries about designation within the system. This is a gap that does not meet the Commission's guidance for organizational sustainability. Therefore we created a framework for tracking those inquiries in the database that FCG is implementing.
- Improved Reports. Renee has led the effort to identify the information we need to pull regularly from the DMS for Commission, Legislative and public reports. Tools to track that information, as well as streamlining the collection of that data itself, will be worked in throughout the overall project.
- Archive and Delete Criteria. As the system is now over 5 years old, there are a number of applications that are either false starts, duplications, or are no longer relevant. We have now identified the criteria that can be used to either delete, archive, or simply snapshot/secure a particular application. This process will greatly clean up our system and reduce costs. The system will remain open and free to use, including the Master Plan portal, so users should experience no change on their end.