



Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Best Western St. Peter

1301 Old Minnesota Avenue, St. Peter, MN 65082

Minutes for June 26, 2024

APPROVED

Commissioners Present: Rick Anderson, Tim Engrav, Beth Pierce (virtual), Rob Mason, Brad Bonk (virtual) Jonathan Wolf, Jen Foley, Tom Schmitz, Karlin Ziegler,

Commissioners Absent: Peg Furshong, Barry Wendorf, Reid Huttunen and Tom Stoa

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

1. **Call to Order** – Chair Anderson at 10:05 am
Meeting Goals to work toward getting out a bit early for tour
2. **Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance**
Welcome and overview of the Le Sueur County Park System, Lake Washington Park with Tyler Luethje, Le Sueur County Parks. Tyler and four seasonal employees manage the 12 parks of varying sizes. Due to recent heavy rains many smaller less popular parks are flooded, but fortunately the larger, more well used parks are okay. Camping has a seven day stay limit and mid-week attendance is encouraged. In Lake Washington Park 50% of the campers come from a 50-mile radius. The grant helped greatly, and the trails developed in the park are well used by the campers and visitors, as well as the neighborhood which was initially not all that excited about the trails and the new entrance.
3. **Approval of Agenda for June 26, 2024, Minutes from May 22, 2024 and Treasurer’s Report through May 2024**
Motion by Wolf
Second by Engrav
Motion Approved
4. **Executive Director’s Report**
Currently we have 13 funding applications in process with approximately \$4.5 million in requests and a \$526,000 from Sherburne County for an acquisition which could move to the supplemental round of grants that will open on August 5.

A question was asked if we could issue emergency grants for recent flooding. As of July 1 funds are available from the surplus Legacy funds. The DNR is conducting a series of workshops about their 4 The Outdoors initiative. Unfortunately the first is taking place in Duluth today, in conflict with the Commission meeting. Anderson did receive an invitation to attend and there are two more scheduled, July 10 in Roseville and July 11 in New Ulm. Question was asked if Commissioners can attend, and Mattson will forward the invitation to all.

5. System Plan Coordinator's Report

Busy now with Placer ai. project. Many older designation eligible facilities are getting their master plans submitted as well as some new facilities that are exploring designation. The ADA symposium was good and we're still working through the notes from the conference. Question as to whether we will learn more about Placer? Yes, later in the presentation we will touch on the preliminary information.

6. Items from Members and Letters to the Commission

Bonk, Wolf and Anderson - nothing to report this month

Pierce noted multiple wash outs on Mesabi Trail, most of which occurred near Giants Ridge, in areas that have been impacted before, so work needs to be done to arrive at a long term solution. The IRRRB is providing support. It's a long trail so much is still open and available for riding. It will be years before the trail is complete, but it will be fixed.

Mason asked if there are state disaster funds that could help with the flooding?

Foley attended a few ribbon cuttings for trails on behalf of the Commission and they had good attendance.

Ziegler attended ribbon cutting for the Lake Byllesby Park opening, which was also well attended. The grant for Oxbow Park nature center and the entrance plaza grant is complete and has been closed out.

Schmitz MRPA session update, has mentioned this previously and hopes that Mattson and Czapiewski can offer a session. Czapiewski has been scheduled to do a workshop, which conflicts with the September Commission meeting. Schmitz will follow up on the scheduling.

Engrav asked if Commissioners could attend MRPA conference as it's around the Commission meeting and nearby. Mattson stated that Commissioners are encouraged to attend, and the expenses are reimbursable. Lots of trails impacted from flooding in District 1. Everyone is still assessing the damage, there was up to 9-inches of rain in some areas. ATV trails have been impacted.

7. New Business:

7.1 Resolution 033 Red Lake River Corridor, Red Lake Falls

Timeline for grant completion error was made and no fault of client. Mattson proposing a new \$100,000 grant to help them complete the project since it will not be done by the deadline of June 30, 2024 and grants funds will be lost due to the timing.

Discussion about whether funds come out of the operations budget or the supplemental grant round opening July 1.

Motion by Anderson to issue a new contract for \$100,000 grant and no match. Any additional further costs would come out of the operations budget. The \$100,000 grant should come from the Lottery in Lieu funds

Second by Engrav

Motion Approved

7.2 Master Plan Review, Grand Marais Recreation Area 16-002D

The park designation is special feature, with 89 acres on Lake Superior. They scored 397.5 and the grade was B. There are 296 campsites, of which 30% are seasonal, above our target of 20% seasonal. The harbor has 30 slips with 28 being seasonal, so 90% seasonal, with again, a target of no more than 20%. The park is largely locals in the winter and visitors in the summer. The large portion of camping and marina/boating is in question as to whether or not it fits with our criteria. The western portion of the park is in conservation easement with the Minnesota Land Trust and will remain natural with just hiking trails. There is a ballfield there that is not included in the designation and may move at some point, if that happens the area will be left as open space. This park is very similar to Warroad Point Park. The majority of the facility is the destination campground. The marina is a harbor of refuge, with the next closest marina 50 miles away. Discussion about how future funding requests are handled with the overage of seasonal sites. Grants cannot be used to increase the number of campsites or slips until the 20% threshold is met.

Motion by Schmitz to accept Grand Marais Recreation Area as regionally designated

Second by Wolf

Motion Approved

7.3 Master Plan Review, Hok-Si-La Park 15-038D

Natural resource park with 252 acres in Lake City on Lake Pepin.

Score of 390 and a grade B, they had previously had a grade of C, so the process does work, the plan was sent back for more review and work, and they brought it up to a B grade. Hok-Si-La is a good size park with tent and camper cabins, a beach, trails and extensive day use areas and no RV sites. This started as a Boy Scout camp and currently operates with an on-site live-in manager. They are working on strategies for resource protection from rising water impacting the park.

Motion by Ziegler to accept regional designation for Hok-Si-La Park

Second by Schmitz

Motion Approved

7.4 Budget Review and Approval for Fiscal Year 2025

There are some category reallocations in FY25 compared to the budget presented and accepted last year. Nothing major, just reallocating amounts based on needs and outcomes identified for the coming year.

Motion by Schmitz to approve the FY25 as presented budget

Second by Engrav

Motion Approved

7.5 Brief on ADA Symposium

Held June 10-12 at the Hilton in Minneapolis and attended by Mattson, Czapiewski and Commissioner Foley. Great sessions with knowledgeable speakers. The seminars focused on a variety of challenges not just limited to physical disabilities. They have an Inclusive Playground Design Guide for everyone that was available at the conference. ADA is the minimum standard to meet, but pointed out many times that we should strive to exceed the minimum. Our naturescape design parks are okay but could be so much more. Engineers and architects are not required to train in ADA and while the information is available, many are uninformed. We will try to find resources so as to not recreate the wheel and be proactive. Commissioner Foley was acknowledged and well known at the conference and is highly regarded for her advocacy. We need to develop a knowledge base to make available to our partners to help them work through what is a minimum and how we can exceed that. Ziegler would like to see us develop a guide for ADA similar to what we did with the Mountain Bike Trail Development Guide. We have talked about making such a resource available and will definitely pursue that avenue. We need to have more requirements for ADA in our funding applications and pay for enhancements that partners might not necessarily apply for. We need to be the leaders in accessibility.

7.6 Overview of Data Management Portal and Updates

Czapiewski opened the GMRPTC website and walked through the funding application process via applicant's point of view, then went through administrative process via Commission point of view. Our data management vendor is out of Atlanta and has great follow-up, customer service and training. We started with a Minnesota engineering company to develop our portal, but they were the wrong vendor to do what we needed. We have been with the Full Circle Group for about seven years and have developed a robust system that we continue to improve every year. We will however be taking a break this year and not making further enhancements, but rather working within the fields we have developed and learning more about how to communicate with the facilities and provide more information and service.

7.7 2024 Policy and Planning Report – 2024 Overview and Changes

Mattson proposed adding four pages to the report in 2024, including a page for grand openings, heavy with photos, a half page for the equipment free use days, the program for which was specifically asked for by the House Legacy Committee, half page for the Placer ai. information, a page for the Art in the Park residency program and a page for the new grant opportunity funds. The cost for the increase is not very significant. In addition to the design for the new four pages we will also have copy editing added to the job this year. The increased cost for design and copy editing is only around \$800 and printing is minimal about \$200. We print 250 copies each year and distribute them heavily to the legislators, particularly since this is a budget year.

8. Old Business:

8.1 Art in the Park Update

Call with all parks interested in participating in the program was very well attended

9. Approval of June 2024 Expenses

Consultants to the Commission	\$71,430.89
<u>Commissioners</u>	<u>\$3129.21</u>

\$74,560.10

Motion by Schmitz to approve the June 2024 expenses

Second by Foley

Motion Approved

10. Next Meeting and Agenda Items

July 24, 2024 Warroad. Room block is available at the Hampton Inn Warroad. Meeting location to be determined.

Meeting adjourned at 1:47