



## Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Virtual Meeting

Minutes for November 27, 2024

**APPROVED**

**Commissioners Present:** Rick Anderson, Rob Mason, Brad Bonk, Jonathan Wolf, Jen Foley, Karlin Ziegler, Barry Wendorf, Peg Furshong, Tom Stoa, Tim Engrav, Beth Pierce, Tom Schmitz, Reid Huttunen

**Consultants Present:** Renee Mattson-Executive Director, Joe Czapiewski-System Plan Coordinator, Tess Dandrea-Administrative Assistant.

**Call to Order** – Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 9:00 am  
Meeting goals are to have a timely and efficient meeting.

### 1. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance

Drew Hatzenbihler with Morrison County

### 2. Approval of Agenda for November 27, 2024, Minutes from October 25, 2024 and Treasurer's Report through October 2024.

**Motion** by Engrav

**Second** by Bonk

**Motion Approved**

### 3. Discussion with Bill Botten, Accessibility Specialist

Bill Botten will be working with the Commission as an Accessibility Specialist for the next year. Botten shared his background, including his experience as a manual wheelchair user since 1983 due to a spinal cord injury. He has worked extensively in accessibility, including a career at the US Access Board, where he led the rulemaking for minimum accessibility requirements for recreation facilities. The Commissioners expressed their excitement about working with Botten and discussed potential projects and collaborations.

- **Improving Accessibility in Parks and Recreation**

Botten expressed his enthusiasm to the group to improve access to projects and ensure all citizens have the opportunity to participate in recreational offerings. He has specialized in accessibility for about 40 years, focusing on recreation facilities. Mattson proposed quarterly sessions to share his knowledge with our partner organizations. Informational sessions are planned for minimum standards and user-friendly features, starting with play areas and maintenance in February, followed by pedestrian trails and shared use paths in April. Discussion included reviewing site

and construction plans for grant applicants to ensure they meet or exceed standards. Botten mentioned his involvement in a committee developing a test method for determining firmness and stability of loose fill products, which could be helpful for all. The Commission also discussed incorporating standards for disabilities like autism and visual impairments in their parks.

- **Trail Accessibility Standards Discussion**

Botten explained the accessibility standards for trails and facilities. He stated that new construction must be accessible, but exceptions can be made for existing facilities unless altered. He stated that the standard doesn't require all trails to be made accessible, but rather to provide an accessible alternative. He suggested using a Mobi-Mat, or Path Mat for accessible surfaces and mentioned a natural trail surface study on the Access Board's website for further research. He also said that in cases where the State archaeologist's concerns conflict with accessibility guidelines, the archaeologist's requirements take precedence.

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

Mattson provided updates on the legislative committees for the upcoming session. Representative Leon Lilly, a key supporter, will not be chairing the House Legacy committee this year. Representatives Joe McDonald and Samantha Vang will be co-chairs on the Republican and Democratic sides, respectively. Representative Rick Hansen is not chair of Environment and Natural Resources Committee this term. Representatives Peter Fisher and Josh Heinzman will be co-chairs on the Democratic and Republican sides, respectively. Mattson also discussed the issue of the 2.5% administrative fee and she plans to follow up with Commissioner Strommen after their November 1 meeting. The DNR's insistence on a joint report with the DNR will be charged back to the Coordination Among Partners fund.

#### **5. System Plan Coordinator's Report**

Czapiewski reported working on technical issues with Placer.ai data, following up on past grant projects, and conducting a site visits. The Placer data for parks should be available by the end of the year, with the updated algorithm rolling out globally in the first half of next year. Wendorf is interested in comparing the Placer data to traffic counter data. Mason asked if cell service affects the data and Mattson clarified that it's based on cell tower triangulation. Mason asked about snow plowing policies for bike trails, with varying responses from different counties.

#### **6. Items from Members and Letters to the Commission**

*Bonk* - attended meeting with AMC representatives regarding applicants.

*Furshong* - attended some community events and is excited about our MNPAiR program.

*Pierce* - shared about a collaborative meeting in Northeast Minnesota to discuss trails.

*Anderson, Wolf, Foley, Ziegler, Stoa, Engrav, Schmitz, Mason, Wendorf and Huttunen* had nothing to report.

## 8. Old Business:

### 8.1 Review of FY26 Funding Application

Stearns County Quarry Park discussion included requiring a more detailed design for the proposed mountain bike trail. It was clarified that the park's existing Master Plan only includes 2.2 miles of trail, not the 10 they were looking to expand to. Any additional trails would require an updated Master Plan.

Funding Recommendations based on extensive review and scoring:

Stearns County Quarry Park	\$0
Olmsted County Oxbow Park	\$0
Sherburne County Two Inlets at Bde Hehaka Omashkooz Zaaga'igaans	\$526,880
Cloquet Pine Valley Recreation Area	\$1,307,783
Chisago County Swedish Immigrant Trail	\$2,414,276
Rochester Quarry Hill Park	\$403,206
Morrison County Soo Line Trail	\$986,957
Frazee Wannigan Park	\$917,177
Proctor Hermantown Munger Trail Spur	\$950,000
Gull Lake Trail	\$2,528,591
Great Northern Trail	\$683,240
Willmar Robbins Island Park	\$1,304,568
Wright County Stanley Eddy Park	\$292,850

Chair Anderson recommended approval of the projects as recommended.

**Motion** by Stoa

**Second** by Wolf

Roll call vote of 12 Yeas one Nay

**Motion Approved**

Chair Anderson called for individual votes on projects for which some Commissioners have a conflict of interest

Mesabi Trail \$400,000.

**Motion** by Bonk

**Second** by Foley

Roll call vote of 12 Yeas

Abstention by Pierce

**Motion Approved**

Chair Anderson passed the gavel to Vice Chair Engrav for the motion and vote on Lyon County Garvin Park funding recommendation.

Lyon County Garvin Park \$517,167

**Motion** by Furshong

**Second** by Zeigler

Roll call vote of 12 Yeas

Abstention by Anderson

**Motion Approved**

Vice Chair Engrav passed the gavel back to Chair Anderson.

Olmsted County Chester Woods Park \$185,000

**Motion** by Mason

**Second** by Pierce  
Roll call vote of 12 Yeas  
Abstention by Ziegler  
**Motion Approved**

### **8.2 Update on MNPAiR Progress**

The commissioners discussed the Minnesota Parks Artists in Residence project, which aims to bring artists to parks across the state as well as the Greater Minnesota system. Several collateral materials have been developed for our working artists.

### **8.3 Discussion and Acceptance of the GMRPTC Grantee Contract**

Review of a new contract for grantees, which clarifies the GMRPTC role in funding projects. The commissioners were asked to consider the new contract and vote on it.

**Motion** by Schmitz

**Second** by Mason

**Motion Approved**

## **9. Approval of November 2024 Expenses**

Consultant Expenses	\$ 52,237.42
Total	\$ 52,237.42

**Motion** by Engrav

**Second** by Furshong

**Motion Approved**

## **10. Next Meeting and Agenda Items**

**No December meeting – Happy Holidays**

Next meeting is January 22, 2025 at the Holiday Inn & Suites St. Cloud 10:00 am - 3:00pm

The FY26 Mandatory Grantee Meeting will be held on January 21, 2025 at the Holiday Inn & Suites St. Cloud 11:00am – 3:30pm.