



Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Luverne Trailhead Facility – 601 East Main Street

Luverne, MN 56156

Minutes for October 25, 2023

APPROVED

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

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

Evaluation Team Present: Bob Bierscheid, Kathy Bergen and Wayne Sames all virtual, Ron Bastian in person

1. Call to Order Chair Anderson at 10:03

2. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance

Ron Bastian and Holly Sammons, Luverne Economic Development Director.

Sammons thanked the Commission for grant funding and talked about the economic development that has occurred as a result of the trail being built. Now connecting parks to trails, have private investment in trail, and a new privately funded trail. The city and state park partnership is strong and they have worked together to coordinate names, terminology and signage.

Question – Are there plans to build loop and widen trail from eight feet to ten feet? Unfortunately, some parts of the trail are not expandable due to existing structures but looking at rerouting the trail.

3. Approval of Agenda for October 25, 2023, Minutes from September 27, 2023 and Treasurer's Report through September 2023

Motion by Engrav

Second by Bonk

Motion Approved

4. Executive Director's Report

Guide discussion where Mattson shared visuals for guide and chart to assist legislature to see how money is divided. Our Legacy grant funds have amounts taken out for the operating budget and 2.5% administration fee to DNR, while others do not. Visuals show how our funding translates to Community Development and designation eligible opportunities would be instructive.

Furshong asked if a pie chart with additional data can show what we are trying to communicate. Commissioners had some suggestions to tell our story. Renee and Joe will work on it and bring ideas back to commission.

Still no response from the letter to DNR asking for more information on how the 2.5% is accounted for, it's been more than two weeks. Should we consider a different agency to do our contract with for our grants?

5. System Plan Coordinator's Report

A few more sites for he and Mattson to visit and will have reports early next month. Proceeding with designation and Master Plan reviews. A November meeting is needed to wrap things up. Czapiewski presented spread sheet showing status.

6. Items from Members and Letters to the Commission

Pierce, Wolf, Schmitz, Bonk, Reid, Ziegler, Anderson and Stoa - nothing new to report. *Wendorf* received a call from Cambridge looking to purchase land with swimming and a beach, nothing else like that in their county.

Engrav is happy to be back in person and was sorry to have missed Duluth meeting. ATV MN had a convention in Grand Rapids in September which he attended.

Foley noted that Joe, Renee and Rick did a good job at the APA convention as did Gina with the THPOS.

Furshong is excited to see the trail construction at Memorial Park and passed along greetings from Tom Kennedy whom she saw when she was in Grand Marais for a class.

Mason thanked Renee and Bryan Pike for riding a section of the Gull Lake Trail with him.

7. Old Business:

7.1 FY25 Grant Application Discussion

Cannon Valley Trail— Bridge reconstruction goes well with overall project and the replacement paving will widen trail to the 10' standard.

Morrison County Belle Prairie— Many concerns about the concrete boat ramp.

Crookston - funding reduced by \$200,000 due to better budget numbers from Huffcut, but still need to firm up the budget.

\$16,295,072

\$ 210,000

\$16,505,072

The language in our designation application needs to change if we go to a percentage of a facility for seasonal usage not to exceed a certain percent. This would apply to camp sites and boat slips.

Warroad Point Park

Motion by Stoa for Warroad Point Park funding contingent on 20% maximum for seasonal slips in Warroad

Second by Foley

Roll call vote -one nay and 12 yay

Motion Approved

Vote to approve funding for:

Greater Mankato River Valley Trail, Cannon Valley Trail, Hubbard County Deep Lake Park, Morrison County Belle Prairie Park, Sherburne County Big Elk Lake Park, Gull Lake Trail Segments B&C, Sandstone Robinson Quarry Park, Lac qui Parle County Park

Motion by Engrav

Second Bonk

Roll call vote all yay

Motion Approved

Red Lake River Corridor Funding

Motion by Wendorf

Second by Furshong

Roll call vote all yay with abstention by Huttunen

Motion Approved

Lyon County Garvin Park Funding

Motion by Furshong

Second by Schmitz

Roll call vote all yay with abstention by Anderson

Motion Approved

Isanti County Parks - Springvale County Park and Irving and John Anderson County Park

Motion by Engrav

Second by Wolf

Motion Approved

Roll call vote all yay with abstention by Wendorf

Motion Approved

If funds become available with the MMB February forecast or through budget changes to some of the applications still being worked on, to fund the acquisition at Stearns County Rockville Park

Motion by Foley

Second by Ziegler

Motion Approved

Roll call vote yay with one nay by Commissioner Wolf

8. New Business:

8.1 Evaluation Team Members

Discussion with Evaluation Team about some questions in the Four Pillars of the 25-Year Legacy plan. Are project costs realistic? Current costs seem significantly higher. Perhaps add a question about long term maintenance and the true cost. Another question was asked about sustainability and how often projects are reviewed.

8.2. Open Checking Account for GMRPTC Deposits

Motion by Furshong to open a checking account and require two signatures for checks written over \$1,000, that of the Executive Director and the Secretary/Treasurer

Second by Engrav

Motion Approved

8.3 Create Committee to Review Funding Applications FY26

Chair Anderson appointed Ziegler, Engrav, Wendorf, Bonk and Foley.

8.4 January 2024 Executive Committee Election

Elections for the Executive Committee will be held at the January 24, 2024, meeting which will be held at the Sartell Community Center. Also there will be a mandatory meeting the day before, January 23, for all recipients of FY25 grants.

8.5 Data Management System Storage and Maintenance Contract

Motion by Schmitz to approve \$41,400 for the annual cost of system storage and maintenance

Second by Engrav

Motion Approved

8.6 Data Management System Updates Phase VIII

Motion by Schmitz to approve \$30,900 for the next round of data management system upgrades

Second by Bonk

Motion Approved

9. Approval of October 2023 Expenses

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| Consultants | \$27,753.73 |
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| Commissioners | <u>\$ 6,128.63</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------------|

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Total | \$33,882.36 |
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Motion by Engrav

Second by Furshong

Motion Approved

10. Next Meeting and Agenda Items

November 22, 2023 at 10am, meeting will be virtual due to proximity of the Thanksgiving holiday.

11. Meeting Adjourned 1:52pm

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

Partner Meetings

- GMPT Newsletter Article
- PTLAC Liaison's Calls
- GMPT Communications Committee

DNR Administration Fee Follow Up

The letter and graph were sent to the DNR staff, Linda Erickson-Eastwood, Laura Preus and Shannon Lotthammer, on October 10. To date I have not had any response other than an out of office bounce back from Linda and Shannon. At almost two weeks it's both irritating and unprofessional to not acknowledge the letter. I do have a Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee meeting on Thursday this week which the DNR is host of at Sibley State Park, Laura will be there, and I'll speak with her about the issue. We can discuss if there are next steps you want to take before that.

DNR Grant Staff Status

The new DNR grant manager who was to specifically take on Audrey Mularie's duties started her job on October 4 and left on October 9. The position is on hold for the moment to my understanding. In the interim the new grant managers, both hired in the last six or seven months, will step in to help with our grants, including our operating budget.

2023 Policy and Planning Report

The last two months have been focused on writing the policy report and locating appropriate photos to include that provide a sense of the variety and depth of our system. We're using the same company for graphic design this year as last, Evolve Creative out of Bemidji. They have done the creative on the Strategic Plan as well as the Mountain Bike Trail Development Guide and we've been really pleased with their work.

We will have an opportunity to preview the piece during my report at the meeting on Wednesday. The layout and design is similar to last year, with a few additions and tweaks that seemed appropriate to add and enhance.

Trail Affect Podcast

I had the opportunity to be a guest on the Trail Affect Podcast hosted by Joshua Blum. Joshua has a background with the Wisconsin DOT and is now working for Rock Solid Trail Construction, in his spare time he hosts a pretty well received podcast focused on mountain biking and trails. My segment is the final of three about our new guide, Jake Carsten and Mike Repyak have both been interviewed about the guide.

Site Visits

Joe and I have a flurry of site visits for new designation applications and master plans. After the meeting in Luverne we head up the road to Pipestone to review their designation application for the Hiawatha Pageant Park. We'll be in Cloquet on Monday for a visit to Pine Valley Recreation Area and their master plan submission and Friday is Roseau for the Roseau River Trail master plan submission. All three will be interesting and definitely different from each other.

Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee Meeting

In between the Commission meeting and site visits is the October PTLAC meeting hosted by the DNR at Sibley State Park. We are down a significant number of members, and the application period has shown great interest this year. We won't have a discussion at this meeting about new members, we plan a work day in November for that, however we will hopefully be having a good discussion about the languishing Art in the Parks initiative. I'll update you on the progress following the meeting.

GMRPTC
System Plan Coordinators Report
October 2023

Reviews

The ETeam did not have any reviews to complete this month.

We have received two Master Plans and One Designation for review. Renee and I have coordinated with the applicants to complete site visits on relatively short order, so as to beat any winter weather. The Master Plans are for Roseau River Trail and Cloquet Pine Valley Park, with the Designation Application for Pipestone Hiawatha Park, which is next to the Pipestone National Monument. We have completed our initial staff reviews and will be working through the full ranking/scoring reviews with the Eteam in November.

Technical Assistance

There were a handful of requests for technical assistance this month. Biwabik did request a Zoom meeting to discuss their designation application. Following that meeting, they are going to take some time to evaluate their options. Hopefully this will be a busy winter as many of the potential designation applications and master plans we met with and encouraged over the summer continue their work.

Funding Application Review

Thank you to all of you for submitting such thoughtful ideas for potential phasing and prioritization of the scored funding application list. In addition to the obvious follow up items discussed at last month's meeting, we were able to work through a couple of new ideas with applicants that we can share with you at the meeting.

We also have a short list of items for consideration as a part of next year's funding guidelines and scoring. At this meeting, if time allows, we'd like to discuss those ideas briefly and establish a small committee to review them in-depth and make recommendations to the full Commission, as we have done in the past.

District and Partner Outreach

On behalf of the Commission, I attended a pair of ribbon cuttings for regional projects in Moorhead (held the same week as last month's meeting). The first project was the midtown section of the Moorhead River Corridor Trail. That project is essentially completed, until a bridge connection to the parallel Fargo greenway trail system can be established on the south end of town. The other was the completion of a CPO project, which added an accessible dock to the river access at MB Johnson park along with additional accessible parking space. It was great to see so many community partners attend!

We, along with our partners, also completed two presentations at the APA state conference in St. Cloud. My sincere appreciation to Chair Anderson and Renee for their great roles in telling the GMRPTC story. Sherburne County's Gina Hugo and her tribal partners also told a great story about the development of Big Elk Lake Park, which left a lot of people very thoughtful. As a great add on to that, Melanie Benjamin (Mille Lacs Tribe CEO) was the lunch speaker that day and highlighted that project to the whole conference as a huge success story for them. Thanks as well to Commissioner Foley for attending those sessions!

Consultant Projects

Jillian and I are nearing completion of the GIS system upgrade you approved last month.

We have also nearly completed last year's DMS project, and are planning for next year's!