Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Minutes for June 28, 2017

Launchpad, Bemidji, MN

# APPROVED

Commissioners in Attendance: Mike Hulett, Tom Ryan, Marc Mattice, Rick Anderson, Tim Kennedy, Keith Nelson, LuAnn Wilcox, Rita Albrecht, Peg Furshong, Barry Wendorf, Bryan Pike, Jannik Anderson

Commissioners Absent: Tom Schmitz

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

1. Meeting called to order at 10:12am by Chair Hulett

Welcome by Dave Hengel, Executive Director of Greater Bemidji

Dave provided an interesting history of the building in which the Launchpad is located, and background on the work of Greater Bemidji.

1. Approval of May 24, 2017 Minutes:

**Motion** by Wendorf

**Second** by Albrecht

**Motion Approved**

1. Treasurer’s Report:

**Motion** by Pike

**Secon**d by R. Anderson

**Motion Approved**

1. Approval of Agenda:

With correction on 10.3 Border 2 Border Trail update, not Prospector Loop update

**Motion** by Nelson

**Second** by J. Anderson

**Motion Approved**

1. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance:

Marcia Larson from the City of Bemidji Parks Department and Chair of Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails, joined the group at 11:45. Due to rainy weather Marcia provided an overview and description of the Bemidji Park System rather than leading a tour of Paul Bunyan Park. This led to a discussion about park designations that don’t fit into the system exactly with the current criteria and the regional differences among the districts.

1. Executive Directors Report:

Operating budget for FY18 is $424,000 and the operating budget for FY19 is $399,000.

Grant funds available for FY18 $7,661,675 - FY19 $8,809,875

There was another adjustment in the final FY18 funds available for grants, which reduced the amount available and already awarded. The final numbers for Cascade Lake Park were further reduced for FY18 and will be made up in FY19.

A suggestion for the funding split discussion would be to take the operating budget for GMRPTC off the top of the Parks and Trails Legacy funds and keep the 40-40-20 split for at least the first biennium. This method would keep intact the percentage split, while sharing the operating budget across the three partner agencies. Commissioner Furshong suggests the need for better data of park visitors and where they are from, since a large percentage of the park and trail visitors in Greater Minnesota are from the metro area. Mattson, the funding discussion should be a focus of the August Commission meeting if we do not hold a July meeting. Further discussion centered on ways to move forward with working on the split.

Mattson reported a meeting with Audrey Mularie was very productive not only in terms of the next round of grant funding for the Commission but also in terms of a software program they use for grants; Filemaker Pro, which may be a reasonable solution for the backend reporting that is necessary for grant tracking and reporting.

Mattson reported on the work of the Legacy Advisory Committee and planning for a series of workshops that will be held in 2018 in each of the six districts and two in the metro area. The concept is to educate the public about work done in the first 10-years of legacy, gain feedback from the public about their perceptions of what has been done and gather suggestions for future years. The workshop outcomes will be gathered into a report and presented publicly in the fall of 2018.

The long awaited integrated website has been moving along well and will launch in late August. There was much more work involved in data collection from three very different parks and trails systems; all with different data sets.

1. Items from Members and Letters to the Commission

*J. Anderson* reports that the language village celebrates 40 years of International Day next week.

*Pike* asked if there was any communication from the Commission about the status of grants awarded now that the session is over. Mattson reported the DNR is working on the grants with the individual recipients and recognizes she needs to communicate more directly with the recipients on behalf of the Commission.

*Mattice* reports that the Wright County Board of Commissioners recently adopted an ordinance related to regional inspection and decontamination of watercraft for Aquatic Invasive Species. Wright County is the first local government unit to enact such an ordinance, at this point this is a pilot project and will be watched nation wide. The inspections and decontamination will take place at a single station, in Annandale, rather than at individual lake accesses, in an effort to make it more cost-effective.

*Wendorf* met with the city of Elk River, Woodland Trails, to discuss their FY19 funding application as they did not receive funding in the FY18 cycle.

*Furshong* met with Memorial Park representatives and discussed how funding applicants not awarded full funding should react to meet the funding that was awarded. They also reported some issues with the funding portal that were resolved during the meeting with a call to Joe for help.

*Albrecht* asked if there was media done around the legacy awards? There was after the decision was made on recommendations but not after the legislature finished their work and awards were confirmed. It was agreed that a second round of media to announce the awards would be a very good idea and would capitalize on the work of the Commission. She also attended a meeting of a national planner’s association in Fergus Falls recently and Bemidji has been named a Bird City and signed a monarch pledge.

*R. Anderson* has had conversations with one of the parks in his district who has been frustrated with a designation application. There is outreach help suggested for the planner in that district.

*Ryan* reported on the work in Oronoco for the Zumbro Watershed District. They will be hosting an organizational meeting for many cities in the district for July. The Commission has had representatives at other meetings.

*Hulett* passed around the most recent newsletter from GMP&T detailing the work done at the legislature this past session. He also updated the group on the Heartland Trail funding and noted they received $3.5 million for trail work this past session.

1. System Plan Coordinator Report:

Joe is spending a great deal of time with applicants as they work in the new DMS system, assisting them with login issues as well as discovering bugs in the system that are being uncovered as more users work within the system.

He will be spending more time on visits within the districts at the start of the new fiscal year.

1. New Business:
   1. Request for Proposal – Consultants to the Commission

Mattson noted that while there was a will to see a finished product at the meeting it became apparent as she and Joe started work on drafting the RFP there were more details necessary to fill in with input from the Commissioners before an RFP could be completed. She recommended that due to the dollars available for consultants work in the districts it would seem to be reasonable to choose three districts; 4, 5 and 6 for the first round of work, the remaining three would follow in the second year of work. Czapiewski noted that the three districts chosen for the

first round were based on the strategic initiatives already underway and it would be a good way to position for success in the future.

Considerable discussion followed this introduction, based largely on whether there should be limits and work in only three districts.

Chair Hulett requested volunteers for a subcommittee to work with Mattson and Czapiewski to craft an RFP to bring back to the Commission at the next meeting.

The subcommittee consists of Commissioners Wendorf, Nelson, and Pike.

* 1. Commission Agreement with Designated Parks and Trails

This item was delayed for another meeting due to time constraints and the recommendation of Mattson.

* 1. Commission Procedures – Review and Approve DPC Operating Guidelines

Czapiewski noted that changes have been made to the document as directed by the Commissioners at the May meeting. Czapiewski would like to take the time to further edit the document; eliminating the redundancy and making modifications as necessary. Discussion continued regarding the changes necessary and the timeline to make those further changes. It was agreed that the document would be reviewed again at the August meeting with an anticipated roll out to the DPC’s in September.

**Motion** by Nelson to approve the DPC Operating Guidelines as presented

**Second** by Mattice

**Motion Approved**

* 1. Policy on Letters of Support by Commission

Mattson is looking for a policy on providing letters in support of projects or initiatives when requests are made by constituents. Mattson asked for approval from the Executive Committee on a recent request from a trail seeking funding from another source. The EC asked that this issue be brought before the board for more input. Discussion ensued about instances in which letters would be written and examples of what might be asked for. Commissioners did not feel it was appropriate to lend support for specific funding requests to other agencies, there was a concern that something might be implied incorrectly. The letter that is already sent to parks and trails receiving designation could be used by the entities to confirm they are part of the regional system.

**Motion** by Albrecht that the Commission does not provide letters of support

**Second** by Ryan

**Motion Approved** with one nay

1. Old Business:
   1. Executive Director Contract Renewal

The Chair appreciated input of Commissioners into the process of creating the new contract. Mattson thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to serve the Commission. There was clear direction from Commissioners that there be a minute taker at each meeting to enable the ED to fully participate in the meetings.

Commissioner Furshong wanted to clarify the contract time line for independent contractors working for the Commission. Nelson offered to check with the St. Louis County Attorney and get a ruling on this issue. The Chair thanked Furshong and Nelson for pursing this matter to a conclusion.

**Motion** by Albrecht to renew the contract for two years

**Second** by Kennedy

**Motion Approved**

* 1. CPO Criteria and Funding Guidelines

Commissioner Wilcox reviewed the guidelines from August 2016 the Committee presented and has been working on since that time, and noted there were no additional comments during the timeframe Commissioners were asked to comment on the proposed guidelines. The Committee proposes using these guidelines for the next funding cycle and suggests changes can be made after the next cycle.

**Move** by Ryan to approve the funding criteria as presented by the CPO Committee

**Second** by Furshong

**Motion Approved**

* 1. B2B Trail Request Update

Dan Larson has requested time on the August agenda to present an update on the progress being made on the B2B trail. Commissioners were supportive of the agenda item.

* 1. Approval of FY18/19 Budget

The primary change to the already introduced budgets was to roll the mapping and marketing functions into the budget of the planners contracted to work in the districts. After discussion, it was agreed that $2,000 be moved from the ETeam budget into the Commission budget to cover additional expenses that may arise as Commissioners travel within the districts during months when there are no Commission meetings.

**Motion** by Nelson

**Second** by Wendorf

**Motion Approved**

* 1. Meeting Schedule FY18/19

Meetings will not be held in March, May, July and November for the upcoming year. We will tentatively agree to hold only eight meetings per year. Commissioner Nelson asked if there is enough budgeted in the event we need to hold more meetings based on the work to be done. Mattson confirmed there are funds available in the event more meetings are needed. Commissioners expressed the desire to have ample time to discuss and review the funding applications. Wilcox noted there would be time in the down months to travel within the districts and tend to constituent services.

**Motion** by Nelson

**Second** by R. Anderson

**Motion Approved**

* 1. Approval of Full Circle Group Maintenance and Host Contract

**Motion** by Wilcox to approve contract with Full Circle Group

**Second** by Mattice

**Motion Approved**

1. Consent Agenda

Consulting Services $24,387.96

Commissioner Expenses $3,800.67

Total $28,188.63

**Motion** by Mattice

**Second** by Furshong

**Motion Approved**

1. Next Meeting and Agenda Items

Redwood Falls on August 23, 2017