Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission
Meeting Minutes for February 25, 2015   Approved 3/25/15
Sartell City Hall

Members Present: Rita Albrecht; Rick Anderson; Mike Hulett; Al Lieffort; Marc Mattice; Keith Nelson; Bryan Pike; Tom Ryan; Tom Schmitz; Barry Wendorf; LuAnn Wilcox

Members Absent: Bill Bruins

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair Al Lieffort

2. Motion by Pike, second by Ryan: Approve the minutes of January 28, 2015. Carried.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Additions to the agenda: 5.6 Clerical Committee report; 5.2 to be heard immediately after lunch.

Motion by Wendorf, second by Anderson: Approve the agenda as amended. **Carried.**

4. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance

Joe Czapiewski, JFC Strategic Services (serving the commission as System Plan Coordinator)

5. Unfinished Business

5.1 - Mission Statement

Tom R. reported that he would like to bring a final draft to the March meeting, at which time it will either be adopted or tabled indefinitely. Members agreed that the statute establishing the Commission, along with guiding principles in the Strategic Plan, will suffice if a mission statement cannot be agreed upon. Although a mission statement would more clearly define the Commission purpose and goals, the consensus was that it should not become a preoccupation that distracts from accomplishing the work of the Commission.

5.2 - Connecting People and the Outdoors

Included in the 25 year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan are four Strategic Directions:

- Connect People and the Outdoors
- Acquire Land, Create Opportunities
- Take Care of What We Have
- Coordinate Among Partners

The Commission embraces the plan and is committed to using its recommendations to guide its work. The key strategies under Connect People and the Outdoors are:

- Welcoming environment
- Access
- Marketing
- Quality

- Programming and special events
- Partnerships
- Infrastructure and amenities

The Commission is in the process of crafting its policies, processes, evaluation criteria, and performance metrics for non-capital projects based on detailed recommendations provided in the plan. Members will consult with the Legacy Advisory Committee, the District Planning Committees, and others to determine how to utilize funding in the most effective, efficient, practical, and impactful ways. A subcommittee will be formed to conduct research and outreach, and will aggregate results in a draft policy statement for adoption by the Commission.

It is generally understood that funding for capital projects (Acquire Land, Create Opportunities) will be the funding priority in the immediate future. As the physical development of the parks and trails system becomes realized, funding for non-capital projects is expected to increase over the next twenty years. At a minimum initially, the Commission may require press releases and a kickoff event when development projects are completed. The Commission will re-evaluate its objectives and funding toward each of the four strategic directions annually.

Motion by Ryan, second by Wilcox: The GMRPTC recognizes the importance of Connecting People and the Outdoors as outlined in the Parks and Trails Legacy Plan and is committed to pursuing initiatives to that end. **Motion carried.**

5.3 - System Plan

Per MN 85.536, the Commission fulfilled its statutory obligation to provide a report to the Legislature on January 15. A list of 19 projects that met the criteria for regional designation was included. The list was based on the ETeam scoring of *Applications for Regional Designation* and the District Planning Committees weighting of criteria. No projects have been vetted for funding by the Commission. These and other projects may submit applications for funding through June 30. This cycle demonstrated the objectivity of the Commission's process, which removes parochial interests and political motives from the equation.

Motion by Schmitz, second by Ryan: The Commission accepts the 19 top scoring projects as the first regionally designated properties in the *Statewide System Plan*. **Motion carried.**

5.4 - Information Management System

Al presented for discussion the *Wireframes and Functional Requirements* of the web-based application and information management system proposed by Houston Engineering. Members agreed that the concept represents a vast improvement and incorporates lessons learned from the test run conducted last fall. Suggestions were made regarding specific elements of the proposal, which will be referred to Houston Engineering. Members asked for assurance that the application process be accessible to anyone needing assistance, which may involve the availability of alternative methods and/or formats.

Discussion of the data system raised other issues related to the scoring and prioritization of projects and the design of the system plan. Members emphasized that, in addition to providing an efficient, user friendly, and effective planning and selection process, the overarching goal is a seamless, transparent system that is easily accessed, easily understood, and widely available.

5.5 - New Website Progress

Joe reported that he is in consultation with the communications committee (Mike and Barry) regarding the content and layout design for the Commission website. He is working on migrating information, importing new graphics and photographs.

5.6 - Clerical Committee Report

The committee accepted the letter of resignation from clerical assignments received from LuAnn with regret and expressed appreciation for her service to the Commission. The Chair will contract temporary services to perform clerical duties until permanent staff is hired or contracted. The Commission will amend the Operating Procedures to reflect changes in the duties of the Commission Secretary/Treasurer. LuAnn's resignation from clerical duties is effective 3/25/15.

The invoice submitted and approved at the January meeting for extra work performed during September and October 2014 was withdrawn by the Chair.

Motion by Pike, second by Nelson: Reduce the amount invoiced for extra work submitted in January 2015 from $1,000.00 to $500.00. **Motion carried; Wilcox abstained.**

6. New Business

6.1 - Legislative Committee Update

Members discussed the appropriation bill moving through the legislative hearing process, and strategies for advocating its passage.

Motion by Schmitz, second by Albrecht: Move the appropriation bill as written. **Motion carried.**

6.2 - DPC Operating Guidelines

Joe presented changes to the DPC operating guidelines that clarify their roles and responsibilities in the district planning process, and how their work fits into statewide system planning. Members discussed the document and requested additional changes.

Action: Tom S. and Rick will research agreements used by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, LCCMR, and other agencies to draft a standardized Regional Designation Agreement.

Action: Commissioners in Districts 4, 5, and 6 will invite liaisons from the Twin Cities Metropolitan area for appointment to the DPCs.

Motion by Hulett, second by Anderson: Adopt the DPC Operating Guidelines as amended. **Carried.**

7. Consent Agenda

No monthly budget summary report was provided.

Rita reviewed the bills and claims as follows:

- JFC Strategic Services	4,929.98
- Commissioners expenses	2,514.52
- Clerical - February	500.00
- Amazon Web Services	141.41
TOTAL	**8,085.91**

Motion by Anderson, second by Mattice: Approve the consent agenda as submitted. **Motion carried.**

Al reported that he was informed that DPC members cannot be paid per diems for attending meetings. As $2,640 was paid in DPC per diems in 2014, the Commission will need to rectify that amount. Members discussed options. Al will consult with DNR and City of Bemidji staff to determine what options are viable.

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2015.

Motion to adjourn was made by Wendorf, second by Anderson. **Motion carried.**

*All motions are carried unanimously unless otherwise noted. Motions which are not unanimous are recorded in the Vote Tally Journal.