



Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Minutes for September 23, 2020

Sartell Community Center

Sartell, MN

APPROVED

Commissioners Present: Beth Pierce, Bryan Pike, Peg Furshong , Rick Anderson, Barry Wendorf, Jonathan Wolf, Tom Ryan, Tom Stoa and Jen Foley
Ted Suss, Tim Engrav and Brad Bonk via Zoom

Commissioners Absent: Matthew Hill,

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

Presenter: Jon Oyanagi

1. Meeting Called to Order by Chair Ryan at 10:05 am

Meeting Goals Welcome to all in attendance and those via video. Please consider where you might like to meet during 2021, we will be putting that schedule together in coming months.

2. Acknowledge Members of the Public in Attendance: None

3. Approval of Agenda for September 23, 2020, Minutes from August 26, 2020 and Treasurer's Report through August 2020

Motion by Wendorf

Second by Furshong

Motion Approved

4. Executive Director's Report

In addition to the written report submitted previously there was a discussion of Resolution 012 - Sauk River Regional Park, to amend the scope of the project to exclude the bridge and the restrooms due to higher than budgeted cost estimates.

Discussion, *Wendorf* asked that the watershed and best practices are taken into consideration as part of the work they are doing in the area due to the proximity of the river. This grant was approved by the DNR prior to the Commission assuming the granting for Greater Minnesota. *Furshong* encourages us to impart that the concerns noted are taken into consideration for the work being done. We have a fiscal responsibility to make sure the grant dollars are spent wisely. Further discussion followed.

Motion by Anderson

Second by Wendorf

Motion Approved, with provisions including a letter to the grantees noting concerns about ensuring best practices in the riparian zone.

5. System Plan Coordinator's Report

Nothing to add

6. Items from Members and Letters to the Commission

Engrav, Bonk, Suss, Wendorf, Stoa, Pierce, Furshong, Anderson, Foley – nothing to add
Pike – enjoyed mountain biking at Britton Peak with his family and former Commissioner Kennedy. *Wolf* – enjoyed a 5K race with good social distancing. *Ryan* – took a trip to Bayfield and enjoyed the area.

7. New Business:

7.1 Racial Equity Discussion – Jon Oyanagi

Jon began with an introduction about himself and how his views have been shaped by his heritage. Jon reviewed the outline and provided context about our discussion today as well as Part II at the October meeting.

Points – you can't judge a book by its cover. Jon is of Asian descent and Asian people tend to have not very expressive facial expressions. Jon's parents are both Japanese, born in the United States. Jon reviewed his career and varied life experiences.

Mantra "Do your best, not your least"

Current baseline – what has the GMRPTC been doing in the area of racial equity?

Czapiewski – public engagement through the Master Planning process. The evaluation team does look on more public engagement favorably as it points to a successful park effort. *Furshong* pointed out we are not prescriptive enough in our application process to address racial equity. Questions about the diversity of the

Commission itself. *Suss* feels the term “racial equity” is not a broad enough term. We should engage in this issue and coordinate with Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails and provide education and have questions on our applications to ensure we are gaining insight from more individuals.

When do you first recall meeting a person of color? Discussion about our collective memories.

Handouts were provided (attached here).

Important to allow the other party to make the change themselves. We define “normal” we need to allow those we serve to determine that. Ask for everyone to be a part of the discussion or decision at the beginning.

Scientifically there is no such thing as race. There is no explanation that determines there is a difference.

Implicit/Explicit Bias: Explicit are the obvious acts, Implicit are inadvertent, unintended.

Brown eyes/Blue eyes experiment from 1968. Discrimination is learned and can be unlearned. Jon noted micro-aggression when he was growing up. “What country were you born in?”

Systems born out of the dominant culture are aimed at serving the dominant culture and can inadvertently discriminate and/or create disparities with other cultures.

Blaming the Victim – William Ryan (1971). Turning race complaints back at the victim rather than changing. Unintended consequences:

Streetlight practice quoted, strategically divided the city into districts and changed the lights in each of the districts because it was found in the wealthy neighborhoods people called for assistance, but poorer neighborhoods did not because they did not want to have the city/police in their neighborhoods.

Jon’s family were in the relocation camps as a result of Executive Order 9066. Which eventually brought his father to Saint Paul when his family relocated inland to get out of the camps where they were interned.

Random Thoughts – Saint Paul has taken on racial equity training and all 2,100 employees have gone through the training, plus 605 police officers. This is an example that training can be done on a large scale.

Racial Equity Toolkit in October – GARE Group

8. Old Business:

8.1 FY22 Funding Application Review

Czapiewski began the overview with a note of thanks for those Commissioners able to join the site visits in their districts. Breakdown of the types of applications, dollar amounts and the scoring from high to low.

Discussion about invasive species control and long term plan to deal with the problems so this is not a one time project when we provide grants for invasive species control.

Discussion about how we would handle the sale of CPO equipment from a grant and future reinvestment in equipment replacement. Will there be a tangible deliverable at the end of a few years of the use of the equipment? We may need to revisit this point at a later date.

EV charging station discussion and what funds are available for paying for a charging station outside of Greater Minnesota grant funds.

8.2 Funding Working Group Report – removed from agenda due to time constraints, will be addressed at the October 28 meeting.

9. Approval of September Expenses

Commission Expenses:	\$2,143.06
<u>Consultant and other Expenses:</u>	<u>\$37,518.55</u>
Total	\$39,661.61

Motion by Furshong

Second by Foley

Motion Approved

10. Next Meeting and Agenda Items

- *Furshong* related to the placement and amount of Legacy signage; are there enough signs posted on trail projects and other facilities?
- *Furshong* discussion about a seat on the Commission liaisoned to the tribal communities. Either an assigned seat or an ad hoc seat. Wants this on a future agenda.

11. Adjourn

**Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission
Director's Report for September 2020**

Funding Application Site Visits

Joe and I completed our funding site visits for the grant projects.

Following the August meeting we completed the visits.:

- Winona Bluffs Traverse
- Olmsted County Oxbow Park
- Austin Jay C. Hormel Nature Center
- Luverne Loop
- Granite Falls Memorial Park

On Site Reviews

- Joe and I were able to stop in Jackson County on our way from the Southeastern tours to Luverne and toured on our own the Jackson County Park that will be submitting a designation application.
- Twin Lakes Park was toured by DNR staff as part of a close out process review. Joe and I made a visit there to look at progress and follow up on some of the comments made by DNR staff. We also toured Garvin Park and discussed potential future improvements.

GMP&T Committees

Monthly Communications committee meeting, membership committee cancelled for September.

Parks and Trails Legacy Advisory Committee

The subcommittee work has been active in the absence of the ability to host in person meetings of the group. I sit on three committees to represent GM.

- Statewide Trails – this committee has been moving forward, with the most recent meeting making great progress, largely due to the interactive trails map Jillian Reiner developed, with Joe's direction, for the GMRPTC website. We are working toward a designated trail system from North to South and East to West, utilizing the trails of GM, DNR and MetC.
- Inclusion – this committee has spurred the presentation we'll be having from Jon Oyanagi at Wednesday's meeting.
- Benchmarks – we've had modest progress of late, after a fairly well developed plan in 2019. New members on the PTLAC and this committee have created a need to review work that has been done, therefore, a lack of progress at the moment.

DMS Phase IV

Joe and I had a good call with our contacts at the Full Circle Group and will be starting the work on the Phase IV improvements shortly. This phase is focused on reporting and administrative functions we have identified that will better manage our contacts and follow up work, both with current designees and potential designees. Deliverables include; data assessment and reclassification, modifications to reporting, enhanced alert/notification capabilities and data/GIS integration. We're looking forward to starting this project and working with a more robust contact management system.

GMRPTC
System Plan Coordinators Report
September 2020

2020 Funding Applications

A total of fourteen qualified funding applications have been submitted. Renee and I were able to conduct site reviews for all of them, with the exception of holding a Zoom meeting for the Connecting People to the Outdoors application from Wright County. The final four site reviews were held after the last Commission meeting. An extensive technical review process for all applications required minor updates to fix budget issues (typically inclusion of non-eligible items like Contingency Funds), complete allowed updates for resolutions, or include detailed site plans that were originally missing or in process.

Renee and I have completed our independent scoring processes, the results of which you will see at this meeting. Commissioners have access to the applications through the DMS. Additional site visit reports and photos will be uploaded to the Exavault cloud storage by meeting time. The ETeam is also reviewing applications and will provide technical review to staff on September 30. They do not provide an actual score but provide a great “gut check” on the technical aspects of applications to make sure we aren’t missing anything. I have also asked them to provide us with some insight on how we might do a great job helping our CPO applicants set up for success through the contract and delivery phases of their projects.

On-Site Reviews and Technical Assistance

Several agencies were provided with technical assistance or on-site reviews during the past month.

- Renee and I were able to conduct an ad-hoc, unofficial site visit to Belmont Park in Jackson County. This park is nearing completion of a designation application and should be reviewed soon.
- As a part of the DNR project close-out of Twin Lakes Park in Lyon County, Renee and I conducted a site visit with staff. While this project had completed spending its Legacy allocation, there were a few items that are still underway and need to be completed before the final report and funding payment can be wrapped up. We also visited Garvin Park while in the neighborhood. This designated park has a wide array of day use and camping facilities but has not applied for funding yet. We discussed opportunities for investments that staff are considering in the future.

Strategic Plan Update

Jillian is working to complete our mapping needs for the plan. Due to wrapping up funding application reviews, I haven’t had a chance to complete drafts of Chapters 4-6 yet. However, we are working on a schedule for completion and ETeam review prior to the next Commission meeting.

Partner Agency Survey

We have launched a basic inventory survey targeting all of our partner agencies/facilities. The goal is to gather needed information about size, infrastructure, programming and usage for the coming legislative session and related contacts. Our thanks to Rochester and Morrison County for serving as test survey takers to help make sure the survey worked. After only one week we have about 10 surveys returned out of the 64 facilities in the system.

DMS Phase IV

We had a lengthy meeting with Full Circle Group to kick off the development of our next found of DMS improvements. Several design feature needs were clarified. As our data system grows, redesigning our archiving tools, ability to update and manage partner agency information, and maintain accounts is going to be a key part of this investment. We foresee expansion into additional layers of data for inventory updates, quantitative and qualitative user data, GIS integration and other tools as key items for both ours and our users management of their facilities in the future. This will help make sure the system can handle it.