

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

CHISAGO COUNTY PARK BOARD OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS Thursday, July 21, 2016

At 3:00 pm, Thursday, July 21, 2016, Chairman Kaiser called the meeting of the Chisago County Park Board of Directors with the following members present: DuBose, Carlson, Kaiser, Sicheneder and Sutcliffe. Also present: D.J. Forbes, Trust for Public Lands (TPL), Joyce Anastasi, Lake Improvement District (LID), Mike Robinson and George McMahan, County Commissioners, Kurt Schneider, Environmental Services Director, Park Director Laird Mork, and Meeting Recorder Deb Johnson.

Director Carlson offered a motion to approve the Agenda for the Board of Directors meeting. Second by Director DuBose and **carried unanimously**.

Director Carlson offered a motion to approve the minutes of June 16, 2016. Second by Director DuBose and **carried unanimously**.

DJ Forbes, with the TPL, and Joyce Anastasi, with the LID, was present to discuss funding options for the potential acquisition of the Strand/Johnson parcel on Chisago Lake. TPL's mission is to create parks, protect land by purchasing private property for public access, assisting with financial acquisition and transfer of property to a public entity. They have been working with the owners for many years, who would like to see the site protected. It was a consensus that the site would be difficult and costly for someone to build on due to multiple restrictions, wetlands, access, utilities, etc. The two parcels on the "point" are not readily accessible from the adjacent land or road. Additional acreage could be possible to allow land access, as well as regional park designation. The site is close to AWA property; DNR is not currently pursuing acquisition due to lack of funding. The Chisago Lakes Area ABC group has targeted the area for inclusion in their water trails project and would like to see primitive camp sites established. Discussion was held on options for financing through the Conservation Legacy Grant, which opens for applications August 1 – September 9, 2016. Trust for Public Lands and the County could pursue a joint application for funding. DJ Forbes will contact the owners to establish an acquisition price. Part of the match could include the difference between the asking price and appraisal price. The maximum grant is \$400,000 with a 10% match of \$40,000, cash or in-kind. This grant would include a deed restriction for preservation. The County would request that the land owner contribute the 10% local match or a significant percentage of the local match. A determination will be made whether primitive camp sites would be an acceptable use. Fishing, hunting and trapping would be required allowable uses. It is unlikely that Parks and Trail Legacy funding would be possible for the site unless the property was 100+ acres, receive regional designation, had a master plan for development, and use would include more access and a wider range of uses. Mork noted negotiation should include property that would allow for improved public access as the funding requires the property to be open to the public for hunting. Discussion was held on how best to preserve the parcels. The DNR could possibly react to local pressure to support DNR ownership as an AWA or WMA. Potential LID participation in funding the match was discussed, as well as in-kind, which could include volunteer hours for removal of buckthorn and other noxious or invasive plants on the parcels. Director Carlson offered a motion to approve pursuing a joint application with Trust for Public Land for the

Conservation Legacy Grant for acquisition of the two “point” parcels, and request County Board support to submit the application. Second by Director DuBose and **carried unanimously**.

An update was given on the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail East End Project. Kurt Schneider, Environmental Services Director, updated the Board on the progress to acquire additional property necessary to complete the SIRT Connection Project, funding to be received in 2017, of the Swedish Immigrant Trail. Discussions have been held with land owners and progress is being made. One landowner has not responded. Discussion was held on the timeline for acquisition, with the timing of receipt of the next grant. Director DuBose offered a motion to approve moving forward with the acquisition of the K. Peterson parcel and request the County Board to move forward with acquisition of the abandoned rail corridor that crosses the north side of the parcel. Second by Director Carlson and **carried unanimously**.

A video tour of the completed trail was presented. Final inspection and certification has been sent to the state and certificate of completion letter received. Some fencing, gates, and signage will be completed by Park staff. The Federal trail grant to provide paving for the trail did not receive funding. The transition point at the State Park property includes an opening which is accessible for trail goers and a clearing to hike to the overlook. Public issues were discussed, tree replacement, and noise complaints. Discussion held on the City of Taylors Falls concern regarding the depth of the ditch in one short area along Herberg Road. County Public Works/highway engineer Joe Triplett indicated he could assist in accommodating the city’s request if it could be done later in the year. The Park Director noted that all funding had been exhausted for the trail project and that he will be meeting with the Parks and Trails Foundation to request funding assistance for purchase of tables, bench, and signage. As the state park connection to city hall is uncertain, Mork suggested alternate plans to provide public access to the east end of the trail. Park Board members concurred that it may be worth exploring options. A tentative date has been set for September 10, 10am for a trail dedication event, this is subject to change depending on availability of board members.

The Park Director attended a meeting with the MN DOT Transit staff to discuss future regional trail connections with the proposed Oberstar route and USBR 41 route.

Park Board roundtable will be tabled until the next meeting, to include discussion on potential development of primitive campground sites at Ki-Chi-Saga and carry in access onto South Center Lake across Grader Blvd.

Director Carlson offered a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:03pm. Motion seconded by Director Sutcliffe and **carried unanimously**.

Next meeting set for August 18, 2016.

Dan Kaiser, Chair

Attest:

Laird Mork
Parks Director