



# Meeting Minutes: Dakota County Planning Commission Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: 1/26/2023

Minutes prepared by: Liz Hansen

Location: Western Service Center, Conference Room L139

## Attendance

### Members Present

- Lori Hansen
- Tony Nelson
- Barry Graham
- Jim Guttman
- Amy Hunting
- Kelly Kausel
- Nate Reitz
- Jerry Rich

### Staff Present

- Kurt Chatfield
- Liz Hansen
- Niki Geisler
- Joe Walton
- Chris Klatt

## Meeting Called to Order

- Time: 7:04 p.m.
- By: Planning Manager, Kurt Chatfield

## Pledge of Allegiance

- The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

## Public Comments

- Comments/Notes:
  - Former 2022 Chair of the Planning Commission, Greg Oxley, addressed the Planning Commission. He wished to express his appreciation for his time serving as a Planning

Commissioner. He was not able to attend the last meeting held in December of 2022 and used this opportunity to say good luck and goodbye to the current Planning Commissioners.

## **Election of 2023 Planning Commission Officers**

### **Election of 2023 Planning Commission Chair**

Kurt Chatfield summarized the Planning Commission's bylaws before voting. He then informed the Planning Commission that the following Planning Commissioners had expressed an interest in the following positions: Commissioner Hunting was interested in the Chair position, Commissioner Guttman was interested in the Vice-Chair position, and Commissioner Graham was interested in serving in the Secretary position.

Planning Manager, Kurt Chatfield, began the election of Planning Commission positions by calling for a nomination for the Planning Commission Chair.

Commissioner Rich nominated Commissioner Hunting for the position of Planning Commission Chair. No additional nominations were made.

Second by Commissioner Hansen.

Vote: unanimously approved

Commissioner Hunting then assumed the duties of Chair for 2023.

### **Election of 2023 Planning Commission Vice-Chair**

Chair Hunting called for nominations for the position of Planning Commission Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Graham nominated Commissioner Guttman for the position of Vice Chair. No additional nominations were made.

Second by Commissioner Nelson.

Vote: unanimously approved

Commissioner Guttman then assumed the duties of Vice-Chair.

### **Election of 2023 Planning Commission Secretary**

Chair Hunting, called for nominations for the position of Planning Commission Secretary.

Commissioner Hansen nominated Barry Graham. No additional nominations were given.

Second by Commissioner Nelson.

Vote: unanimously approved

Commissioner Graham then assumed the duties of Secretary.

## **Approval of Agenda**

- Motion by: Commissioner Nelson
- Second: Commissioner Guttman
- Vote: Unanimously approved.

## **Approval of Minutes (from December 15, 2022)**

- Motion by: Commissioner Graham
- Second: Commissioner Rich
- Vote: unanimously approved.

## **Welcome New Planning Commissioner—Kelly Kausel**

Planning Manager Kurt Chatfield briefly introduced Kelly Kausel, who represents District Seven.

Commissioner Kausel shared information with the Planning Commission about her family and interests and that she is particularly interested in the topic of ADA accessibility.

## **Establishment of 2023 Meeting Dates – Action**

Kurt Chatfield proposed meeting dates for 2023.

Chair Hunting entertained a motion to approve the 2023 meeting dates as presented. The Planning Commission voted to approve the 2023 meeting dates.

Motion by: Commissioner Graham

Second by: Commissioner Nelson

Vote: Unanimously approved.

## **Planning Commission Administrative Forms – Information**

Administrative Coordinator, Liz Hansen, spoke about two forms that need to be filled out and returned. The two forms are: “Consent to Release Private Data” and “Citizen Advisory Committee Member Statement of Representation.” She also informed the Planning Commission that on January 3, 2023, the Dakota County Board passed Resolution No. 23-029, which states the per diem for 2023 has increased to 50 dollars for attendance at regular and special meetings of committees.

## 2023 Planning Commission Work Plan – Information

Planning Manager, Kurt Chatfield, outlined the County Board adopted 2023 Planning Commission Workplan.

### Veterans Memorial Greenway Natural Resource Management Plan - Information

Chris Klatt, Natural Resource Specialist, presented this item and responded to questions.

Questions and comments by the Commissioners, along with responses from staff (italics):

A commissioner asked a question about whether the greenway crossing at Hwy 3 is proposed for a grade separation. *Staff responded that the master plan identifies a grade separation at this location and that a trail bridge is proposed.*

Natural Resources Staff described a location along the greenway on Flint Hills property where the alignment has been refined to protect natural resources. A commissioner asked whether the new alignment is more rigorous than the original alignment. *Staff responded that the new, more environmentally sensitive alignment meets greenway grade standards, but staff was not able to provide an answer about which alignment was more gradual.*

Staff described the challenge of engaging the public on the Natural Resource Management Plans since the information in the plans is technical. Commissioners discussed how to increase public engagement, suggesting:

- Combining the Natural Resources Management Plan with the Master plan to generate more interest
- Using a web map so that residents could provide input online and at specific locations
- Use the County's email list serve and email updates to notify interested residents that a plan is available for comment
- Holding open houses near the greenway location to make it more convenient for residents to attend, such as at one of the churches along the corridor

The Planning Commission discussed the need to engage staff from Flint Hills Resources since they own significant land along the corridor. There was a general discussion about Flint Hills buffer land, encroaching residential development, the Flint Hills solar farm project, and the role that Flint Hills can play in restoring and managing land along the greenway corridor. *Staff agreed with the comments about Flint Hills land and responded that a meeting will be scheduled with the new Flint Hills Resources land manager.*

### Vermillion River Greenway (Hastings) Natural Resource Management Plan - Information

Joe Walton, Natural Resource Senior Ecologist, presented this item and responded to questions.

Questions and comments by the Commissioners, along with responses from staff (italics):

A Commissioner noted that there are several caves along the greenway in the gorge downstream of the falls. Are the caves in that area natural or artificial? Should the caves be protected? *Staff responded that more research is needed to evaluate the caves and that it may be a recommendation to protect them.*

Planning Commissioners discussed the upcoming project to reconstruct segments of the existing trail along with overlooks. One suggestion was to improve views from the existing bridge by replacing all or a portion of the chain link fence with something less obtrusive. *Staff reported that there are some rare and important plants along the existing trail route that natural resource staff have identified that should be protected as part of the project.*

Planning Commission members discussed the informal trails that people have made along the Vermillion River and in Old Mill Park. One suggestion was that the City and the County work together developing a master plan for the city park master plans to address unauthorized trails and locate trails in the appropriate locations. Another suggestion was for County staff to work directly with City staff on the plans for the area, including at open houses and stakeholder engagement events. *Staff agreed with the comments made by Planning Commission members.*

## Planning Manager Update and County Board Actions at Physical Development Committee

Comments/Notes: Kurt Chatfield, Planning Manager, provided the Planning Commission with an update on the following County Board Actions:

- Dakota County was notified of a \$4,995,000 federal award for the Veterans Memorial Greenway
- County Board reviewed the findings of the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Sustainable Trails Study
- County Board reviewed the Miesville Ravine Park Reserve phase 1 public participation and research results, requested options for next steps to be discussed at February PDC

## Upcoming Public Meetings – Community Outreach

Concord Blvd Crossing Improvements and the Mississippi River Greenway Open House	Wednesday, Jan. 25, from 5pm-7pm Veterans Memorial Community Center – Room #3 <a href="https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Transportation/PlannedConstruction/CR56/Pages/default.aspx">https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Transportation/PlannedConstruction/CR56/Pages/default.aspx</a>
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## Topics for next meeting (Thursday, February 23, 2023)

- None at this time

## **Planning Commissioner Announcements/Updates:**

No updates or announcements were given.

## **Adjourn**

- Motion by: Commissioner Reitz
- Second: Commissioner Graham
- Vote: unanimously approved.
- Time: 9:03 p.m.

**Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, February 23, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., Dakota County Western Service Center, Apple Valley**