

**Dakota County Planning Commission  
Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes-Final**

**Date: May 27, 2021**

**Time: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

Members Present		Staff Present		Others Present	
Jerry Rich	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Robert Timmerman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Liz Hansen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lori Hansen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nate Reitz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kurt Chatfield	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jill Smith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jim Guttman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aaron Sather	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Greg Oxley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tony Nelson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Taud Hoopingarner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Amy Hunting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Donald Post	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lil Leatham	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Barry Graham	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dennis Peine	<input type="checkbox"/>	Valerie Grover	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ramraj Singh	<input type="checkbox"/>			Jill Trescott	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
				Ashley Gallagher	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
				Joe Walton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
				Tom Lewanski	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
				Mary Jackson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
				Georg Fischer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
					Holly Jenkins <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Meeting Called to Order**

**Time: 7:01 p.m.**

**By: Chair Oxley**

Commissioner Hansen joined the meeting at 7:11 pm.

Commissioner Nelson joined the meeting at 7:26 pm.

**Public Comment**

A member of the public was present, Holly Jenkins of Eagan.

**Outline of Meeting Format**

Chair Oxley stated the need to hold a remote meeting as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Governor Walz declared a peacetime emergency (Emergency Executive Order 20-01) on March 13, 2020, and extending the COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency (Emergency Executive Order 20-75) on June 12, 2020, and extending the COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency Declared in Executive Order 20-01 (Emergency Executive Order 20-78 on July 12, 2020, and Continuing to Safely Reopen Minnesota's Economy and Ensure Safe Non-Work Activities during the COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency (Emergency Executive Order 20-74) on June 5, 2020, which prohibits gatherings of 10 or more people and strongly encourages remote governmental meetings whenever possible. Dakota County Board of Commissioners Chair, Mike Slavik, declared a local state of emergency in Dakota County on March 17, 2020, in response to COVID-19. All County Board Commissioners voted to maintain this order on March 20, 2020.

The Planning Commission met virtually as outlined under Minnesota Statutes section 13D.021.

**Approval of Agenda**

Motion by: Commissioner Smith

Second by: Commissioner Post

Vote: Unanimously approved.

**Approval of Minutes (from March 25, 2021 meeting)**

Motion by: Commissioner Smith

Second by: Commissioner Timmerman

Vote: Unanimously approved.

**Welcome New Planning Commissioner Dennis Peine**

Comments/Notes: Commissioner Peine was not able to join the meeting on this date.

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

**Item #1: Spring Lake Park Master Plan and Natural Resources Management Plan Action / Information**

Comments/Notes: Lil Leatham, Senior Planner, and Joe Walton, Parks Natural Resource Senior Ecologist, presented this item and responded to questions.

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

A commissioner stated appreciation that Native American communities, Native American cultural landscapes, and Native American history have been included in the preparation of the plan and inquired about whether European settlement history was also included. *Staff responded that there is a section of the plan that describes European settlement and early farming history, including the history of the town of Nininger and the mill site below Schaar's Bluff.*

A question was raised regarding the designation of Spring Lake Park Reserve as a "Park Reserve" and not as a "Park" in the regional system and how that designation might influence the master plan. *Staff responded that Spring Lake is designated as a park reserve in the system because of its representation of the Mississippi River valley landscape. As such, the park reserve designation means that no more than 20% of the land area may be developed. Today Spring Lake Park Reserve is 12% developed with recreational facilities, and 88% reserved as natural area. If all of the components of this master plan are implemented, including the long-range elements, no more than 15% of Spring Lake Park Reserve would be developed.*

A discussion was held about the role of the Planning Commission once the master plan for Spring Lake Park Reserve has been adopted, with at least one member expressing an interest in follow-up study or design review. *Staff agreed with this point, especially since the master plan calls for a number of follow-up cultural landscape studies prepared in coordination with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers to better evaluate the extent of Native American sites. Depending on the results of these studies the facilities called for in the master plan may need to be moved or modified to avoid sensitive areas and the Planning Commission may have a roll in this process, depending on the County Board's direction. This is especially true in the Schaar's Bluff area where it is highly likely that additional Native American sites may be identified.*

A Commissioner asked whether the re-alignment of soft surface trails south of Church's Woods are included in the Phase I Church's Wood realignment. *Staff responded these trails are in Phase I and that it is highly likely that there may be cultural sites in those areas. We may potentially re-align those trails depending on the results of the additional cultural studies.*

A Commissioner asked whether watercraft rentals are included in the Phase I river landing improvements and whether those improvements include a self-serve kiosk. *Staff responded that self-serve watercraft rentals are included and would double check to confirm with the plan language.*

A Commissioner reported reading an article in the New York Times in which Spring Lake Park was mentioned and Lil Leatham was quoted. The fact that Spring Lake Park Reserve was in a national publication is testimony to its importance as a Native American site, and it may result in more people coming to visit. Given this national attention and significance it is even more important that the master plan is thoughtfully prepared and carefully implemented. *Staff responded in agreement.*

A Commissioner noted that the public comment received during the official review period was highly varied, with some commenters calling for more recreational facilities, and other commenters calling for more preservation. It is difficult to balance the wide spectrum of public opinion and it is difficult to make everyone happy. Several Commissioners joined in to commend staff on the quality of the final plan and thanked staff for their efforts.

Motion by: Commissioner Post

Second by: Commissioner Smith

Vote: Unanimously approved.

**Item #2: Agricultural Chemical Reduction Effort (ACRE) Program**

Action / Information

Comments/Notes: Valerie Grover, Groundwater Protection Supervisor, presented this item and responded to questions. Jill Trescott, Mary Jackson, and Ashley Gallagher were also in the audience to answer questions.

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

A Commissioner stated that 3M has developed some best management practices for working with agricultural lands that it owns that are leased to farmers, and offered to connect staff with 3M resources. *Staff responded that they would be interested to learn about 3M's methods and see examples.*

A Commissioner stated that given the rate of groundwater contamination in Dakota County and the importance of the resource, there needs to be a higher level of urgency about this issue. A concern was expressed that the ACRE Plan timetable should be accelerated. *Staff acknowledged the concerns that were raised.*

A comment was made that farmers that are applying chemicals to their lands should fund groundwater research through a surcharge placed on the use of those chemicals. *Staff responded that there are fees on both fertilizers and pesticide, and that a portion of the legacy amendment that has traditionally been directed to surface water issues has now been shifted toward groundwater and drinking water issues.*

The discussion on the ACRE plan concluded with staff providing an overview of stakeholders that will be engaged and the general timetable for the project.

**Item #2: New Planning Commissioner Orientation – Process Improvement**

Action / Information

Comments/Notes: Aaron Sather, Management Analyst III, and Liz Hansen, Administrative Coordinator, presented this item and responded to questions.

Staff provided an overview of the process to improve new Planning Commissioner on-boarding and orientation. This project began in response to vacancies on the Planning Commission, and at the request of several Planning Commissioners who suggested that a more formal process that included existing Planning Commission members would be beneficial for the orientation of new Planning Commission members. Staff provided a summary of a new Planning Commissioner Guidebook that contains administrative materials such as the Planning Commission Ordinance, Bylaws, and other orientation materials.

Planning Commissioners discussed the new Guidebook and were in agreement that the materials are useful and an improvement to the process. Commissioners also discussed the role of staff (primarily administrative) and the roll of existing Planning Commissioners (explaining the culture of the committee, background on other members) in the orientation process.

There was general agreement that the orientation for new Planning Commissioner Peine followed this process and was successful. There was also agreement that the Vice Chair should contact new Planning Commissioners as part of the orientation process and introduce the new member to the rest of the Planning Commission.

Planning Commissioners thanked Vice Chair Hunting for her work on the process improvements.

### **Planning Manager Update and County Board Actions**

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

- Authorized submission of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Metro Council
- Received an update on the Veterans Memorial Greenway design and memorials
- Authorized submission of amendments to the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network
- Authorization for Joint Powers Agreement with South St. Paul for design and construction of Wakota Trailhead on the Mississippi River Greenway
- Discussed options for funding and accelerating the implementation of the Dakota County Greenway system

### **Upcoming Public Meetings – Community Outreach**

None at this time.

### **Topics for Next Meeting**

- The Planning Commission decided to tour Miesville Ravine Park Reserve for the June meeting, in anticipation of the upcoming Natural Resources Management Plan and Master Plan.

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

None

### **Adjourn: 8:49 p.m.**

Motion by: Commissioner Smith

Second: Commissioner Reitz

Vote: Unanimously approved.

**Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, June 24, 2021.** A tour of Miesville Ravine will take place at the next regular meeting. Staff will include CDC guidelines with the meeting invite/agenda.