



Meeting Minutes: Dakota County Planning Commission Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: 12/15/2022

Minutes prepared by: Liz Hansen

Location: Western Service Center, Conference Room L139

Attendance

Members Present

- Amy Hunting
- Barry Graham
- Anna Boroff
- Lori Hansen
- Jerry Rich
- John Ross
- Don Post
- Nate Reitz

Staff Present

- Kurt Chatfield
- Liz Hansen
- Niki Geisler
- Lil Leatham
- Al Singer
- Nikki Stewart
- Georg Fischer
- Kelsey Walfoort
- Mike Lynn
- Joe Walton

Others Present

- Sarah Evenson, HKGI

Meeting Called to Order

- Time: 7:05 p.m.
- By: Vice Chair Hunting

Due to Commissioner Oxley's absence, Vice-Chair Amy Hunting led the meeting.

Audience items not on the agenda

- Comments/Notes: No one was present in the audience.

Approval of Agenda

- Motion by: Commissioner Graham

- Second: Commissioner Post
- Vote: Unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes (from October 27, 2022)

- Motion by: Commissioner Hansen
- Second: Commissioner Boroff
- Vote: unanimously approved.

Item #1 Miesville Park Reserve Master Plan and NRMP – Review Phase 1

(Lil Leatham – Planning Office)

Lil Leatham, Sr. Planner, presented the Miesville Park Reserve Inventory and Analysis Report. Sarah Evenson from HKGi was also in attendance and presented this item.

Comments/Notes:

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

Native American Indians are not listed as a focus group on page 19. This was noted as missing from the report regarding getting this group's input and activities. *Staff responded that they are working with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and have contracted with the Upper Sioux to complete a Cultural Landscape Survey for the Park.*

Commissioners noted that the draft Miesville document contained language about the Trout Brook being "pristine." *Staff responded that while the Trout Brook is a valuable natural resource, it is not pristine, and they will remove that language from the draft document.*

What impacts does the adjacent golf course have on the water and quality of the Trout Brook? *Staff responded that they were unsure of the golf course's effects on the water quality in the area. Staff noted that the park reserve is at the very bottom of the watershed and that the golf course and all upstream land uses could affect surface water quality. Staff also mentioned that they are working on identifying the extent of the park reserve's "spring shed" to determine if infiltration from nearby land uses impacts springs within the park reserve.*

Since the park reserve is located within Dakota County and Goodhue County, please explain how the park reserve is managed. *Staff responded that Dakota County owns land in Goodhue County and is responsible for managing all the land within the park reserve boundaries, regardless if it is located in Goodhue County.*

The commission discussed several natural resource issues. Is the park reserve prone to flooding? *Staff responded that the Trout Brook is prone to flooding, and it can be severe, threatening both natural resources and trails and bridges.* Will the staff bring the goats back to this park reserve? *Staff responded that the plan is for goats to return to this area and that goats are needed to manage the natural resource on the steep slopes of the ravine.*

A commissioner observed that the park reserve is far away from more populated areas of Dakota County. The service area of the park reserve, as shown in the draft report, should not include areas beyond a 30-minute

drive. Since the park reserve is so far away from most Dakota County residents, it should be a lower priority. The county should limit investment in recreational improvements at this far away location. Several other commissioners nodded in agreement. *Staff acknowledged the comment.*

A question was asked about the planning process for the park reserve and whether there will be options developed to choose between. *Staff responded that the next planning phase looks at various options, and the Planning Commission will be involved in that process. The Planning Commission will have the benefit of community input when making recommendations about what options they support or wish to change. Staff also provided an overview of the upcoming planning process for the park reserve in 2023.*

There was a general discussion about what is currently offered at the park reserve and what might be offered to make the park reserve a more desirable place to visit. Several comments were made that the park reserve should remain natural, yet it also needs to be more accessible than the current facilities. One suggestion was that the park reserve needs a trailhead on the north side to provide access to the tops of the bluff prairies. A comment was made that a bridge connection to the Cannon Valley Trail would make the park reserve much more accessible and would likely result in more visitation. Programming will be challenging because there are no 4-season buildings at the park reserve. Several commissioners expressed concern about some of the public comments requesting mountain bike trails in the park reserve, noting that natural resources are sensitive. *Staff took note of the comments raised in the discussion.*

Staff asked for feedback regarding the vision and guiding principles for the park reserve:

- A commissioner stated they felt the vision and guiding principles were well-written.
- A commissioner struggled to see how the trails would become more ADA Accessible given how rugged the terrain is in the park reserve. A commissioner suggested that another trailhead on the north end of the park reserve may be needed.
- The guiding principles are good and give the feel of keeping the park reserve wild. At least some of the trails should be accessible, and it should be a priority to make it easier for people to get in and out of the water at the Trout Brook and the Cannon River confluence.

Staff responded that they would continue working on concepts and be back in the Spring for continued input and review.

Item #2 Dakota County Land Conservation Program – Update on Pending Projects

(Al Singer – Land Conservation Program)

Al Singer, Land Conservation Program Manager, provided an update on the status of the Land Conservation Plan and Program. Mike Lynn, Environmental Specialist, and Kelsey Walfoort also presented.

Commissioners asked general questions about the program and the lands that have been protected to date. Several questions were raised about how existing easements were being monitored. *Staff described how drones are being used to quickly and efficiently determine whether easements are being managed according to agreements.*

Commissioners provided a number of positive comments in support of the Land Conservation Program and complimented staff on their efforts.

Planning Manager Update and County Board Actions at Physical Development Committee

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

- County Board approved Joint Powers Agreement with City of South St. Paul for the Mississippi River Greenway Wakota Trailhead
- County Board approved the Planning Commission's Work Plan for 2023
- Planning Commissioners received an overview of the Planning Commission Application Process for 2023
- It was announced that Dakota County received the Blazing Star Award from Conservation Minnesota for the Spring Lake Park Reserve Bison Herd

Comments/Notes:

Kurt informed the Planning Commission that the Bison had arrived at Spring Lake Park Reserve and offered to arrange a staff-led tour of the Bison before a Planning Commission meeting in Spring of 2023. Planning Commission members expressed interest in the tour.

Upcoming Public Meetings – Community Outreach

Meeting	Details
Dodd (CSAH 9) and 179 th (CSAH 60) Reconstruction Open House www.doddblvdc9.com	Mon, December 12, from 5:30pm-7:00pm Lakeville Water Treatment Facility
Crisis and Recovery Center on Dakota County NSC site City Council Presentation	Mon, December 12, 6:30pm West St. Paul City Hall
County State Aid 88 – Reconstruction Open House	Wed, December 14, from 5:00pm – 6:30pm City of Randolph, City Hall
River to River Greenway – Mendota Heights Segment Project Update – Mendota Heights City Council River to River Greenway, Mendota Heights Segment Dakota County	Tues, December 20, from 4:00pm-5:30pm Mendota Heights City Hall

Topics for next meeting (Thursday, January 26, 2023)

- Election officers
- Schedule workplan
- Vermillion River Greenway Natural Resource Management Plan
- Veterans Memorial Greenway Natural Resource Management Plan

Planning Commissioner Announcements/Updates:

The following Commissioners announced they will not be serving in 2023:

- Don Post
- Anna Boroff

Adjourn

- Motion by: Commissioner Graham
- Second: Commissioner Ross
- Vote: unanimously approved.
- Time: 9:02 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., Dakota County Western Service Center, Apple Valley