



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

Date: 6/26/2025

Minutes prepared by Liz Hansen

Location: Western Service Center

Attendance

Members Present

- Amy Hunting
- James Guttman
- Tony Nelson
- Dennis Peine
- Jill Smith
- Paul Nasvik
- Barry Graham
- Ibrahim Abdinasir
- Kelly Kausel
- Steve Shurts

Member(s) Absent:

- Jerry Rich
- Lori Hansen

Dakota County staff members attending:

- Kurt Chatfield, Planning Manager
- Liz Hansen, Administrative Coordinator
- Niki Geisler, Parks Director
- Lil Leatham, Principal Planner
- Tom Lewanski, Natural Resources Manager
- Laura Domyancich-Lee, Friends of the Mississippi River
- Leah Weston, Friends of the Mississippi River

Meeting Called to Order

- Time: 7:00 p.m.
- By Chair, Jim Guttman

Pledge of Allegiance

- The Planning Commission opened the meeting by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments

- Comments/Notes: No audience member wished to address an item not on the agenda.

Chair Guttmann clarified voting procedures for meeting minutes, stating that it is an accepted practice for Planning Commissioners to vote to approve the minutes for meetings where they were not in attendance. He also noted that if an individual Planning Commissioner is uncomfortable voting on minutes for meetings where they were not present that they always have the option to abstain, but Robert's Rules of Order does not preclude a previously absent member from voting to approve the minutes.

Approval of Agenda

Chair Guttmann asked if there were any changes to the agenda.

The Planning Commission advised no changes, additions, or deletions.

MOTION: Commissioner Smith moved, seconded by Commissioner Kausel, approving the agenda. Voice vote: Ayes – 10 – Nays – 0 – Unanimously Approved

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (from March 27, 2025)

Chair Guttmann asked if there were any changes to the previous meeting's minutes.

The Planning Commission advised no changes, additions, or deletions.

MOTION: Commissioner Graham moved, seconded by Commissioner Hunting, approving the previous meeting's minutes. Voice vote: Ayes – 10 – Nays – 0 Abstain – 0 – Unanimously Approved

Release Draft Mississippi River Greenway Natural Resources Management Plan – Action (Tom Lewanski – Parks)

The Planning Commission received an update on the Draft Mississippi River Greenway Natural Resources Management Plan. Tom Lewanski, Natural Resources Manager, Laura Domyancich-Lee, and Leah Weston, Friends of the Mississippi River, presented this topic and responded to questions.

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

Have the Friends of the Mississippi River prepared other Natural Resource Management Plans? *Staff responded that yes, FMR has a team of natural resource experts who have experience preparing natural resource management plans, as well as implementation.*

Planning Commissioners responded favorably to the organization of the plan and the use of “nodes” to designate existing natural communities and areas that are candidates for natural resource restoration. Several Commissioners mentioned that the plan was prepared in a way that is user-friendly.

A question was asked about whether there is any advantage to having additional input about the restoration of the natural area nodes besides that from the consultant and Dakota County staff. *Staff responded that many of the sites are well known, and some have been managed for over 20 years. However, the consultant and staff were in contact with landowners, the cities, DNR staff, and others to gather information and perspective about how these sites should be protected and managed moving forward. Dakota County will work in partnership with these agencies, so their input is very important.*

A statement was made that a few language changes could be made in the plan to emphasize that the plan is doing more than describing current conditions, but also makes recommendations about how natural communities should be restored and managed moving forward.

In the acknowledgement and contact section of the plan, the plan should be updated to acknowledge the work of past staff, but also include updated contact information for current staff.

How will public comments be collected and in what format? *Staff responded that a webpage exists to view the document with a link and provide comments. Staff are not proposing public open houses due to the technical nature of the plan and the general lack of interest in the details of these Natural Resource Management Plans from members of the general public.*

A statement was asked about whether the County is able to identify how many people are looking at the draft plan online. *Staff responded that they will work with the IT department to measure site visits.*

A comment was made that it may be useful, once natural areas have been restored, to identify some of the restored native plants using signage. *Staff responded that it is the County’s practice to use interpretive signage to provide information about natural communities, although not necessarily about individual plants. The Planning Commission will have the opportunity to discuss the role of interpretive signage as part of the upcoming update of the Mississippi River Long Range Plan.*

MOTION: Commissioner Kausel moved, seconded by Commissioner Nasvik, recommending that the Physical Development Committee of the Whole release the Draft Mississippi River Greenway Natural Resources Management Plan for public review. Voice vote: Ayes – 10 – Nays – 0 Abstain – 0 – Approved

Adoption of 2050 Parks, Greenways, and Natural Areas Plan – Action (Lil Leatham – Planning)

The Planning Commission received an update on the 2050 Parks, Greenways, and Natural Areas Plan. Lil Leatham, Principal Planner, presented this topic and responded to questions.

A Planning Commissioner asked if it would be possible to promote the new plan with a brochure that could be used for public events such as the National Night Out. *Staff responded in agreement to make promotional materials.*

A comment was made in support of the Forever Wild tagline.

A Commissioner pointed out that a table within the plan that references paved trail connections to trailheads should be modified to be consistent with other sections of the plan.

A suggestion was made to add language to specifically mention seeking out partnerships with natural resource-based non-profits, in addition to other partnerships.

A Planning Commissioner thanked staff for engaging the Dakota County Disability Advisory Council and making changes to the plan to improve accessibility.

A question was asked about whether the County's all-terrain wheelchairs are ready to enter service. *Staff responded that the wheelchairs are nearly ready and are anticipated to be in service this fall.*

MOTION: Commissioner Kausel moved, seconded by Commissioner Hunting, recommending that the Physical Development Committee of the Whole adopt the 2050 Vision Plan for Parks, Greenways, and Natural Systems. Voice vote: Ayes – 10 – Nays – 0 Abstain – 0 – Approved

Planning Manager Update and County Board Actions

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

- Provided direction on CSAH 54 and Mississippi River Greenway design process
- Provided direction on the Vance Grannis Trust property (potential nature center) at Marcott Lakes
- Authorized agreement with Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railroad for Veterans Memorial Greenway bridge

Upcoming Public Meetings – Community Outreach

Burnsville Library Renovation Open House	June 25, 4pm – 7pm Burnsville Library
Hwy 50 and I-35 interchange CP 50-33 Public open house #3	Wed June 18, 2025, 4:30–6:30 p.m. - Central Pavilion at Antlers Park; 20141 Ipava Ave., Lakeville County Road 50/County Road 5 Interchange at Interstate 35, Lakeville Dakota County
Hwy 42 and US 52 Interchange Open House	Mon, August 25, 4pm-6pm Rosemount Public Works Building, 14041 Biscane Avenue

Topics for next meeting (Thursday, July 24, 2025)

Kurt Chatfield, Planning Manager, proposed a tour of the Mississippi River Greenway for July's Planning Commission Meeting. The Planning Commission agreed to the proposal and requested an earlier start time of 6:30 p.m.

Planning Commissioner Announcements/Updates:

The Planning Commission discussed with staff the use of public home addresses and whether Planning Commissioners can obtain a Dakota County email address to use for Planning Commission purposes. *Staff responded that they would investigate this and get back to those inquiring.*

Kurt Chatfield, Planning Manager, announced that there is now an additional vacancy on the Planning Commission for District 5. Staff are optimistic about that vacancy being filled in the near future.

Adjournment

Chair Guttmann asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Commissioner Ibrahim moved, seconded by Commissioner Kausel, to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m. **Voice Vote: Ayes – 10 – Nays – 0 – Unanimously Approved.**

Next Meeting: Thursday, July 24, 2025, at 6:30 p.m., Kaposia Landing Park, South St. Paul

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Hansen, Administrative Coordinator