Minutes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: June 4, 2026 **Time**: 4:00 PM **Location:** 390 Robert Street

Members present:

☒ Chair, Tony Yarusso, at large	☒ Tess Bouska, District C	☐ Anthony Taylor, District G
☒ Monica Dillenburg, District A	☒ David Yakes, District D	☐ Amanda Duerr, District H
☒ Makiza Johnson, District B	☒ Chris Suerig, District E	☒ Wendy Wulff, Council Liaison
	☒ Lisa Freese, District F	☒ = present,

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Metropolitan Council acknowledges that the land we currently call Minnesota and specifically the seven-county region is the ancestral homeland of the Dakota Oyate who are present and active contributors to our thriving region. As part of the Metropolitan Council's commitment to address the unresolved legacy of genocide, dispossession, and settler colonialism and the fact that government institutions, including the Metropolitan Council, benefitted economically, politically, and institutionally after the forceable removal of the Dakota Oyate, the Metropolitan Council is dedicated to instilling Land, Water, and People Commitments in regional policy. These commitments support the Dakota Oyate, the eleven federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, Ho-Chunk Nation, and the American Indian Communities representing over 150 diverse Tribal Nations that call the seven-county region home.

Call to order

Committee Chair Yarusso called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:06pm.

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment was acknowledged by Chair Yarusso.

Agenda approved

Committee members did not have any further comments or changes to the agenda. Agenda approved.

Approval of minutes

It was moved by Johnson, seconded by Dillenburg to approve the minutes of the April 2, 2026 regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried**.

Public invitation

None.

Introductions

1. New District F Commissioner, Lisa Freese

   Freese introduced herself and gave a brief background of her work history and her love of parks. The Commissioners and staff introduced themselves in turn.

2. Metropolitan Council Chair, Robin Hutcheson

Hutcheson introduced herself and discussed her passion for parks, trails, and open space. She applauded the work of the Commission and noted that it is a priority for her as well.

Business

1. 2026-103 Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan, Carver County (Colin Kelly)

   Kelly gave a presentation on the Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan submitted by Carver County as outlined in the materials provided.

   Wulff asked what will be included in the Phase I development of the park? Sam Pertz, Assistant Park Director, stated that acquiring land is their top priority and modernization of the campground is second. He noted that renovation of the barn will also be a part of Phase I.

   Yakes asked whether a trail around the lake a possibility. Pertz stated that there are many landowners that would need to participate to accomplish this endeavor. Most of the lakeshore is not within the current boundary of the Regional Park.

   Chair Yarusso asked about the water quality and whether it would be improved. Pertz discussed Carver County's work with the Watershed Maintenance Organization. He said that improving water quality is an important goal but noted that this is a eutrophic lake. He did note that a splashpad near the playground was being planned.

   Freese asked about the large parcel across the lake and if there is any plan to bring this into the park boundary. Pertz stated that public engagement during the long-range planning process identified two new parcels that will expand the boundary. The large parcel across the lake is not currently in the administrative boundary for future acquisition.

   Dillenburg motioned and it was seconded by Johnson that the Metropolitan Council:

   1. Approve the Baylor Regional Park Long-Range Plan.
   2. Advise Carver County to consider implementing the recommendations for land use and solar resources in the Advisory Comments section of the business item.

   Chair Yarusso discussed equity engagement work done. Kelly noted that Carver County did a good job with this process, noting that some of the engagement occurred outside of the park boundary and the County.

   Freese discussed the importance of removing barriers to disadvantaged youth so that regional parks are available for and not cost prohibitive. She cited an example with Boy Scout troops using regional system because some traditional camps are too expensive.

   With no further discussion, Chair Yarusso called for a vote on the motion. **The motion carried.**

Information

1. Regional Parks and Trails System, Minor Amendment Administrative Process Progress Update for 2024 (Tracey Kinney)

   Kinney gave a presentation on the Regional Parks and Trails System, Minor Amendment Administrative Process Progress as outlined in the materials provided.

   Chair Yarusso provided the context for why Council staff pursued this minor amendment administrative process, and he asked whether it was working? Do we have the criteria right? Dillenberg expressed her support for this administrative process. CM Wulff expressed her support for cost-effective approaches like this proposal.

Reports

1. Chair – Chair Yarusso noted that there has been recent planning activity for the Lake Links Regional Trail around White Bear Lake.

2. Committee Members – none.
3. Council Liaison – none.
4. Staff - Mullin stated that there is great news from the State Legislature, with their proposal to appropriate $10 million for regional parks with the Council matching $6.7 million.

   Mullin shared that the next round of the Equity Grant Program is ramping up for launch in early Fall. He noted that we will be seeing the draft Notice of Funding Availability soon, and we will need volunteers to serve on the proposal review committee with Council Members and agency staff.

   Mullin discussed the Wakan Tipi grand opening (the former Bruce Vento Visitor Center) and encouraged commissioners to check it out.

   NOTICE: the July 2, 2026 meeting will be held on June 30, 2026 due to the July 4th holiday.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting of June 4, 2026.

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