

# Minutes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



**Meeting date:** April 2, 2026

**Time:** 4:00 PM

**Location:** 390 Robert Street

## Members present:

|                                                                   |                                                             |                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair, Tony Yarusso, at large | <input type="checkbox"/> Tess Bouska, District C            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anthony Taylor, District G   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monica Dillenburg, District A | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Yakes, District D | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amanda Duerr, District H     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Makiza Johnson, District B    | <input type="checkbox"/> Chris Suerig, District E           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wendy Wulff, Council Liaison |
|                                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacant, District F                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> = present, E = excused       |

## 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 4:09pm.

## Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

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

## Agenda approved

Chair Yarusso noted that Met Council Chair Robin Hutcheson could not make today's meeting, so he removed information item one. Committee members did not have any further comments or changes to the agenda. Agenda approved.

## Approval of minutes

Without a quorum present, Chair Yarusso moved the approval of minutes until a quorum becomes present.

## Public invitation

None.

## Information

1. Trail System Coordination Agency-Council Workgroup Update (Zoey Mauck)

Mauck gave an update on the Trail System Coordination Agency-Council Workgroup as

outlined in the materials provided.

Yakes discussed the great opportunity to show how our trails are inner-connected, and loved the naming and branding concept for the regional system -- keep it meaningful but identifiable. Mauck suggested Commission members send her name ideas when they had them.

Mullin noted e-moto's are not allowed on Regional Trails.

Mauck discussed the proposed law for youth under 18 to have a helmet. The recommendation in the e-bike policy guideline was to encourage youth to wear a helmet but not require them due to equity concerns.

Chair Yarusso discussed that it would be good to educate people that helmets have a certification and let them know that helmets do expire over time. Mauck discussed using social media to promote this idea.

Chair Yarusso discussed communities that do bike rodeos, to promote this information.

Wulff noted a lot of cities are coming up with their own bike trail rules and regulations. She asked how we coordinate with them?

Mauck discussed that agencies are working with communities on creating consistent rules and guidelines. Staff hope that documents like this E-bike policy will help guide these types of issues. She also discussed that the State Legislature was working on legislation that could help create consistency across trail systems and jurisdictions.

Dillenburg discussed that creating ordinances that are not enforced could lead to people disregarding the law. If we create laws, we need to ensure there are consequences. She asked if a child breaks the law, does the child get the 'ticket' or the parent? She discussed branding and naming ideas and expressed that she likes it a lot. She asked if there is a vendor to help with branding? Mauck discussed the possibility of using in-house Communications staff but also acknowledged the benefits of using a vendor who specializes in naming and branding.

Yakes suggested a complimentary project to the naming and branding work – to host a contest for best decorated helmets.

Johnson noted that Carver County does a bike rodeo as does the Fire Department. Mauck discussed the possibility of having the implementing agencies lead this endeavor.

Wulff asked about how we will fund this work. Lisa Barajas, Executive Director of Community Development, discussed the Community Development budget and noted that we have identified a funding source for this project.

Wulff asked about motorized scooters and are those being discussed. Mauck stated they are.

Chair Yarusso felt it would be difficult to enforce youth only helmet laws because they don't carry proof of age and could say they're 18 years old.

Yarusso discussed branding across agencies. He thinks there are opportunities to have all regional trail signage including the Agency name and brand and also include the system brand. He felt it would be good to have wayfinding components to the signs too, including maps and location coordinates. This will help with wayfinding and safety concerns.

Chair Yarusso suggested naming/branding ties to park names as well. Mauck discussed mapping that highlights trail system but will include maps as well.

### Approval of minutes

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Chair Yarusso to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2026 regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

## Information (continued)

2. Minnesota Parks Artist-in-Residence (MNPAiR) Program, Reporting on Year 1 Pilot and Preparing for Year 2 (Thony Thao and Ellie Hohulin)

Thao and Hohulin gave an update of the pilot year 1 of the Minnesota Parks Artist-in-Residence (MNPAiR) program as outlined in the materials provided.

Duerr expressed her love for the MNPAiR video and asked how the video will be shown and promoted? Hohulin stated it will be put out on social media and can be shared in other ways.

Johnson discussed how Minnesota is known for its parks. For continued work, he suggested getting the corporate world involved. He felt this was great work.

Chair Yarusso asked how long the art created in this project will be left up? Hohulin stated it depends on what it is and how long it is designed to last. Some, i.e., murals are permanent.

Yakes commented that art can be intimidating but having it in a park setting can help alleviate some of that.

Dillenburg thanked them for doing something in winter. She likes how different projects represent different cultures. She would like to see wildlife art incorporated.

Chair Yarusso discussed the possibility of integrating art into other aspects of parks and trails, i.e., on signage.

Wulff asked about what went well and lessons learned. Hohulin discussed what a positive experience it has been, but coordination between artists and host sites could be improved. Working to get the artists and parks staff on the same page is critical. Also, improving the timelines of the MNPAiR program could be improved (e.g., not putting all activities in the summer).

Johnson asked how MNPAiR host sites be switched up? Thao stated that yes, they are looking at who will be involved in the next chapter of funding. This has not quite been determined.

Chair Yarusso asked if this project could work with Arts and Cultural Heritage Legacy dollars. Mullin noted that this project is funded with Parks and Trails Legacy dollars, and he loves the idea of getting Arts and Cultural Heritage Legacy folks on board. Chair Yarusso stated this could open opportunities to collaborate with arts expertise.

Chair Yarusso asked what the theme was when this project was launched. Hohulin responded, welcoming and belonging. The second-year theme may change. Chair Yarusso suggested using a theme that encompasses learning about the parks and trails but putting art in the center of the project. He likes the idea of traditional skills like weaving.

Johnson discussed connecting art to learning and keeping it all natural, e.g., art and maps, art and stars, art and connecting people to learning.

## Reports

1. Chair – none.
2. Committee Members – none.
3. Council Liaison – none.
4. Staff

Dingle discussed new parking reimbursement policies. Instructions were provided and will also be posted with the next meeting notice.

Mullin reported that District F interviews are being held next week.

Cedar Lake Regional Trail grand re-opening is coming on May 9.

Mullin gave a brief Legislative progress update.

Mullin noted the Three Rivers Park District State of Parks will be held on April 22, 2026, at 9am, Mississippi Gateway Regional Park.

### **Adjournment**

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 5:47 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 April 2, 2026.

Approved this 4 day of June 2026.

---

### **Council contact:**

Sandi Dingle, Recording Secretary  
[Sandi.Dingle@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:Sandi.Dingle@metc.state.mn.us)  
651-602-1312

