

METRO EAST PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT
320 Regency Centre, Collinsville, Illinois
Parks and Trails Committee
Minutes of January 24, 2006 Meeting 3:00 p.m.
No Quorum present at 3:00 p.m.

Chairman Gene Peters called the meeting to order at 3:25 p.m. after reaching a quorum.

Roll call was taken. Present were Earl McDowell, St. Clair County, Gene Peters, Madison County, Paul Evans, St. Clair County. Member Harold Byers, Madison County was absent.

Also in attendance were Mike Buehlhorn, Executive Director, Bryan Werner, Planner, Bill Baudendistel, District Engineer.

There were no minutes to be reviewed, since this was the first meeting of the Committee.

Chairman Peters addressed the Committee on the focus and direction as he sees it and coordination with the staff. He has asked Planner Werner to put together an "evergreen" document that can be utilized at each meeting to determine the progress of each project discussed as time goes on. Plans and development of the Malcolm Martin Memorial Park will not be a part of these meetings, as a separate committee has been established for that purpose.

The Committee will talk about grant applications and their process. Buehlhorn suggested that the documents in the books, be forwarded to the members after the meetings for their records. There was no opposition.

At this point Planner Bryan Werner outlined projects currently under consideration for application by MEPRD. He asked for any input for additional ideas regarding information to be added to the project list. He then went over the Scott – Troy Trail as submitted for Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program. Director Evans asked where the financial numbers used in the presentation were from. Planner Werner stated they were from the original 2003 Long Range Plan.

Director Evans questioned the location of Woodlands Park in relation to the Scott/Troy trail.

Executive Director Buehlhorn stated in response to an earlier question from Director Evans that the financial data has been secured from current applications and the Long Range plan. Director Evans agreed.

Director Evans stated that the north portion of the Troy/Scott trail was from Troy to State Street in O'Fallon. He also indicated that Rohr Park was private property, not a community park as indicated. It was also noted that the subdivision data needed to be updated in the shape files as often as possible.

Director Peters asked if we will submit an IDNR application for this project, and the response was not at this time. However, it was apparent we need to coordinate with Madison County Transit District with their future plans regarding the Schoolhouse Trail. Executive Director Buehlhorn stated that it may be useful to have an agreement with MCT to apply for an IDNR grant for a portion of that trail, and we work out a funding solution with MCT. MEPRD would then be free to apply for two separate applications.

District Engineer Baudendistel asked if we were submitting one or two applications. Executive Director Buehlhorn stated he feels an application in both counties was the most beneficial way for the district to proceed.

Members discussed other funding opportunities, which were slim, and the staff and Committee will search out additional sources. Ex. Director Buehlhorn stated that some communities were incorporating ordinances that would include trail connections with new subdivisions and annexations. He also said that it should be the direction of the board to use every funding source available to leverage district funds with other funds, especially with the transit districts, IDNR and federal funds.

Discussion centered on the Malcolm Martin property and if the funds could be used to make a “continuance” of the park in the form of a trail. Ex. Director Buehlhorn said that it was his understanding that the funds could only be used on the 31.4 acres, and no other locations. District Engineer Baudendistel also noted we have the opportunity to partner with the Casino Queen on their parcels for a tie in sometime in the future. Ex. Director Buehlhorn said he would like to continue to pursue the underground tunnel at the casino to create a connection to the riverfront once the tunnel has been determined not useful. Director McDowell asked how we fit into any plans the Corps of Engineer’s may have for the area, and it was explained that we are currently in sync with those plans at this date.

Bill Baudendistel will contact MCT for any work they have completed on the portion of the Confluence Trail for our files for future use. Ex. Director Buehlhorn said it was a good time that we schedule a meeting with MCT. Director Evans recommended we contact the railroads last in reference to any plans, until we have completed documents due to past issues.

The discussion turned to the Levee Trail extension towards Malcolm Martin Memorial Park. Chairman Peters questioned how we access Front Street and the Levee. Ex. Director Buehlhorn stated it was his suggestion to contact the City of East St. Louis for potential access to Front Street and then the Levy districts for access to the levy.

Chairman Peters reviewed the action items that were outlined by the Committee for future meetings as follows:

- Committee members agreed to keep an eye out for additional funding sources to be used for park and trail development.
- The Committee recommended the MEPRD staff speak to local municipalities to determine the possibility of adding trail connections as part of new developments that are in close proximity to existing or proposed trails.
- The Committee suggested the MEPRD staff contact Madison County Transit to determine what trail segments they were actively pursuing funds for, so not to duplicate efforts by any agency.
- As part of the evolving Parks and Trails Committee Manual the MEPRD staff will determine boundaries in which proposed projects intersect or lie within; such boundaries could include but not be limited to: district, public/private agencies, municipal, political, etc.

- It was suggested by the Committee that the MEPRD staff contact the City of East St. Louis regarding the placement of a pedestrian trail along Front Street.

Ex. Director Buehlhorn also suggested that the East St. Louis Park District be notified of any segments near Front Street and the levy that may be in their jurisdiction. It was noted by Director McDowell, that the ESL district takes in several communities.

Chairman Peters asked if there were any comments now on park parcels. Planner Werner stated that we should operate on a regional perspective rather than localized districts. Ex. Director Buehlhorn stated that St. Clair County has the Silver Creek Nature Preserve and noted that every portion of the district's mission statement was present at this location. He also said he felt if the opportunity arose to secure additional ground, MEPRD should be proactive in approaching the St. Clair County Green Space Committee. Director Evans concurred that if approached by the county we should look into the possibility of assistance in the purchase of additional property. Ex. Director Buehlhorn will contact Pamela Hogan to ascertain what future plans the county has for this park.

Ex. Director Buehlhorn also addressed the issue of Chouteau Island, which is a portion of the Long Range Plan of the District. He suggested we make an attempt to meet with the City of Madison and Illinois Department of Natural Resources to see if a plan can be implemented to further this project. He stated that while the Chouteau Island Coordination Team has a great plan, funding is an issue to complete it. Chairman Peters asked how to handle the situation and Ex. Director Buehlhorn said he would meet in February with IDNR officials in Springfield, and the City of Madison.

Director Evans asked to be excused and Chairman Peters asked that the Committee schedule the next meeting. Members present agreed that the 28th of February was the best date. An agenda will be prepared for that date, and notification issued as required by law. Chairman Peters asked that the agenda contain an Executive Session for the purposes of property acquisition.

Motion by Director McDowell, second by Director Evans to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael S. Buehlhorn, Executive Director

The next Parks and Trails Committee meeting is at 4:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 28, 2006 at the MEPRD office; 320 Regency Centre, Collinsville, IL 62234.