

Notes from MPRB Native American Parks Council #2

Location: Microsoft Teams 07-01-24

***Councilmembers Online:** Marlena Myles, Mishaila Bowman, Jewell Arcoren, Dana Thompson, Kate Beane, Mattie Harper DeCarlo, Rita K Walaszek Arndt, Shelley Buck, Maggie Lorenz, Samantha Odegard, Jennifer Ringold, Juanita Espinosa*

***Councilmembers Not Present:** Wakinyan LaPointe, Cheyanne St John, Cyndy Milda*

***Park Board Staff Present:** Carrie Christensen, Colleen O'Dell, Kyra Miklowski*

***Others Present:** Carrie Day Aspinwall, MPRB Indigenous Parks Liaison*

Agenda:

- [Updates: Summer of learning and Sibley Park Renaming](#)
- [Follow-up Council Formation and Survey](#)
- [Priorities for the Action Plan](#)
- [Discussion and Action: Commissioner Training and statement Creation process at COW](#)
- [MPRB Policy Review with Jennifer Ringold](#)

Notes:

- Summer of Learning: Staff and commissioners at MPRB have been focused on learning.
 - *Why Treaties Matter* Exhibit at the MPRB HQ
 - Field trip to Prairie Island Community, MPRB staff did some work in the cultural garden, learned about plant stewardship.
 - Tour of the Minneapolis American Indian center recently, MPRB staff learning about programs at the Indian Center.
- Follow up from last council meeting + Survey.
 - Indigenous Acknowledgement Action Plan: 'reconciliation' is phasing out as per the conversation at the last Indigenous Advisory Council Meeting.
 - Recommendation of Naming of the Council: Indigenous Parks Council per recommendation from survey and last meeting
 - Comments: Using Indigenous v American Indian? Who are we representing with this work? If we are focused on engaging people Indigenous to Minnesota, prefer American Indian or Native American. Indigenous might be too broad, comprehensive. Acknowledge this is Dakota land. What about focusing on

Dakota and Ojibwe or include Native American with 'those with ties to Minneapolis/Minnesota land'. Use of the specific tribe in this case: Dakota Acknowledgement Plan, Govt. is updating to Native American from American Indian. Don't mind any of the proposed/existing names, but for the council, leaning toward American Indian, as it is in the framework of law. Leading with Dakota voices, and the diversity of Minneapolis should be considered, as well as its history. Respecting Tribal Sovereignty, not just thinking of the personal representation on the council.

- Request to share the council with the community- will publish notes on project website- How to make this transparent? As a public agency, this is necessary.
 - Sharing council notes online, as well as who is on the council.
 - Council is focused on council conversation and there can be other spaces for public engagement and discourse with the community.
 - Suggests agendas being published, with summary of discussions and decisions that are being made. Both suggest having notes drafted and then sent out to council members to be revised and approved.
 - Also suggestion to share information about how the council was formed and who is on the council – MPRB staff to share with council as a follow up. Include explaining recruitment methods and reasoning for council members as well as having names on the park board website. MPRB Contact should be first point for community input.

- Honorariums being issued

- Follow up on Sibley Park Renaming
 - Park Staff Appreciate recommendations of the council.
 - Park staff will work to plan the fall convening as recommended.
 - Park staff would like to share the recommendation of the council with community members who were involved in the name nomination and commissioners.
 - Should we form a naming subcommittee?
 - Comments, Suggestions, Questions:
 - Include talking about the name-choosing process, how it can be improved upon throughout any project. Creating a pathway to indicate that this process will be happening in many ways, many times, through the Park Board.

- Jennifer Ringold – Deputy Superintendent
 - Naming Policy and Procedure Intro:
 - Naming rights based on monetary contributions historically.
 - Now usually based on nominations.
 - New focus on how we are naming/retiring names.
 - How do attendees go about their naming policies in their work.
 - Existing direction:

- Board can name anything in the system with 6 votes if all policy is removed.
 - Moving forward, looking more into engagement for naming approval
 - Sites may have geographic/historic name appropriate to the park of building site.
 - May also be named after an individual that contributes to the MPRB, or substantially promoted MPRB causes.
 - Takes at least 2 years after the person's name is nominated.
 - Naming rights for monetary gifts
 - Length of naming: 75-year mandatory review for park names?
 - Early communication to nominator if the naming isn't likely to be approved.
 - Considerations about restrictions on naming after individuals.
 - Concerns about wayfinding as verbiage/language is changing.
- Discussion:
- Questions about why monetary naming needs to be included. Very few parks named due to this, in toolbox for possible revenue stream and revenue is dependent on this.
 - Perhaps could be a separate process for indigenous renaming
 - Recommendation to 'supporting racial equity and tribal sovereignty' as a language route.
 - Naming rights for a park should not be after a person, could be problematic and come into question later.
 - If a park or space is renamed/new park is named, should be a separate process if it is involved in Indigenous community.
 - Naming trails/trees/benches within a park separately may be confusing, unclear.
 - Likes the idea for a review for park names, as climate and community changes. Doesn't like naming rights for monetary gifts. Inequitable.
 - 75 years seems very long for a review as our society and landscape changes.
 - Keeping Dakota land and history in mind when reclaiming places and placenames. How are indigenous/aboriginal placenames experienced in other places?
 - In Adelaide, parks all have aboriginal names, are dual named. Another example in Canada.
 - 150 communities in Minneapolis/Minnesota, how are we acknowledging them all.
 - Many places have many names for different communities.
 - When Bde Maka Ska was renamed, many people didn't want a change. Responding to criticism with transparency.
 - Parks being named after people isn't necessarily problematic, but those ones should be up for review after a certain time period. I read recently about the renaming of a park to Lorraine B. Smaller Park and her story was great way to honor the work she did for the black community.

- If someone wants to donate to support restoration and/or to restore a Dakota name to a place - I still think that it's an equity issue and I don't love the idea that money can buy naming rights when other names must go through a process.
- Going to parks named after people that harm the Indigenous community is a health and wellness issue.
- Paying for a name while other names must go through a process is inequitable.
 - Designating Cultural sites and having different policies in place for those situations.
 - Donations should warrant an automatically submitted name suggestion, not guarantee a name it.
 - Reviewed no more than 50yrs apart.
- As far as naming places after people, even if it's a great person who contributed a lot to the community, I do still think it's a problematic practice for public spaces. Not everyone in the public is going to agree on what rises to the level of honoring a person with naming a park/place after them and with all the memorials and monuments being removed and things being renamed, I just think it would be good to do away with it altogether.
- Not limiting by sticking to historical names, as history is primarily written by white people, while Indigenous history is largely not recorded with European methods and has been hampered.
- I think it would be helpful when talking about name changes to include some of the changes that have happened over time that aren't just related to Indigenous peoples as I feel like at times people don't realize that stuff gets changed all the time and overlook that when they don't agree with it.
- Next meeting there will be a discussion of the Tobacco Policy
- Follow up on upcoming commissioner training
- Adjourn