

RESOLUTION # 16-03

Addition of the City of Saint Paul, Department of Parks and Recreation Concerns On the Latest Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Draft Rules to the Other Concerns of the City of Saint Paul

WHEREAS, on Mar. 27, 1979, Governor Albert Quie established the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (“Critical Area”) through Executive Order 79-19; and

WHEREAS, in 2013 the state Legislature directed the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (“MNDNR”) to develop state rules governing management of the Critical Area (“Draft Rules”); and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul (“City”) has provided informal comments to the MNDNR regarding the Draft Rules as they have been developed; and

WHEREAS, on April 11, 2106, the MNDNR published a Notice of Hearing, signaling intent to adopt the draft rules, initiating the formal rulemaking process, and opening the record for public comment; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council will hold a public hearing on May 18, 2016, to gather public comments and inform official City comments on the Draft Rules; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission (“Commission”) is an appointed body established to advise the Mayor and City Council on long-range and city-wide matters related to Parks and Recreation; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul, Department of Parks and Recreation (“SPPR”) has reviewed the Draft Rules; and

WHEREAS, the City appreciates, supports and will continue to support the cooperative efforts of the State of Minnesota, the state Department of Natural Resources’ and efforts by other agencies and groups to protect the Critical Area; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul performs significant services for citizens of the Metropolitan area and all Minnesota residents through its ownership and operation of parks and trails within the Critical Area; and

WHEREAS, the SPPR has a long history of careful, sensitive, and sustainable development and natural restoration of parks and recreation facilities along the Mississippi River; and

WHEREAS, access to the river has many associated benefits, including health enhancement, nature based activities, a healthier environment, and appreciation of related historic and cultural resources, including for under-represented populations; and



WHEREAS, in 2013 the Saint Paul City Council adopted the Great River Passage Master Plan, a plan developed with substantial community engagement that lays out plans for enjoyment and preservation of parks and natural areas along the River; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has concerns about the Draft Rules regarding but not limited to on buildings height limits and rivers setbacks for park buildings and other park facilities, required bluff setbacks, prohibition of development on slopes greater than 18% (approximately 1 foot height to 5 foot length), and permit requirements for vegetation management; and

WHEREAS, the Commission also finds the Rural Open Space (ROS) district designations in Saint Paul to be inappropriate for urban parkland and supports City comments recommending a new Urban Open Space district that reflects an urban location that is consistent with current and future urban park facilities in the Critical Area; and

WHEREAS, the Commission also finds that both municipal and non-municipal parks agencies play similar roles in managing regional parks, and supports City comments requesting equal treatment in the Draft Rules in regard to exemptions for all agencies which manage regional parks;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission that the Commission supports City of Saint Paul comments on the MNDNR’s Draft Rules for the Critical Area that highlight the need for reduction or removal from the rules of restrictions on park facility development, the need for the creation of an Urban Open Space district to be applied to Critical Area park lands in Saint Paul, and the need for equal treatment of all agencies which manage regional parks.

Adopted by the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission on May 11, 2016:

Approved:	Yeas	___
	Nays	___
	Absent:	___

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Attested to by:

Staff to the Parks and Recreation Commission