

MIKE OPAT
COMMISSIONER
(612) 348-7881



MARK STENGLEIN
COMMISSIONER
(612) 348-7882

BOARD OF HENNEPIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

2400 GOVERNMENT CENTER
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55487

08 - 0501

May 12, 2008

Hon. Ann H. Rest
Minnesota Senate
Chair, State and Local Government
Operations and Oversight Committee
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol Building, Room 205
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Hon. Debra Hilstrom
Minnesota House of Representatives
Chair, Local Government and Metropolitan
Affairs Committee
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
State Office Building, Room 379
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Rest and Representative Hilstrom:

Please find herewith the Report of the Victory Memorial Drive Task Force for the 2006–2007 biennium, pursuant to Minnesota Laws of 2006, Chapter 218.

This is the Task Force's first Report, following the Legislature's creation of the Task Force in 2006 and its first meeting, held on April 2, 2007.

The Task Force subsequently met on May 23, 2007; July 18, 2007; September 11, 2007; and December 4, 2007.

The roster of Task Force Members is attached as Exhibit A.

The agendas and minutes of each meeting are attached as Exhibit B.

The Task Force and supporting governments—Hennepin County, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the City of Minneapolis—have work under way for 2008 and plan to continue through 2010.

We were elected co-chairs of the Task Force at our first meeting and are available for any questions or comments from you or your colleagues.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mike Opat in black ink.

Mike Opat
Task Force Co-Chair
Hennepin County Commissioner, District 1

Handwritten signature of Mark Stenglein in black ink.

Mark Stenglein
Task Force Co-Chair
Hennepin County Commissioner, District 2

VICTORY MEMORIAL DRIVE TASK FORCE

2006–2007 BIENNIAL REPORT

to the Minnesota Legislature

EXHIBIT A

Roster of Members

Commissioner Mike Opat, co-chair, Hennepin County

Staff contact: Phil Essington, 612-348-5206

phil.essington@co.hennepin.mn.us

Commissioner Mark Stenglein, co-chair, Hennepin County

Nina Archabal (or designate), Director, Minnesota Historical Society

Commissioner Jon Olson, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

President Barbara Johnson, Minneapolis City Council

Council Member Dan Rogan, Robbinsdale City Council

Senator Ann Rest

Senator Linda Higgins

Representative Joe Mullery

Representative Lyndon Carlson

Patrick Burns, Citizen Representative

Robert Zagaros, Citizen Representative

Pat Schon, Veteran Representative

Steve Fiscus, Veteran Representative

EXHIBIT B

Agendas and Minutes for Meetings in this Biennium

April 2, 2007

May 23, 2007

July 18, 2007

September 11, 2007

December 4, 2007

VMD Task Force

April 2, 2007

8:00 am–9:30 am

Mill City Museum

ADM Conference Room, 6th Floor

Proposed Agenda

- I. Introductions
- II. Review of Legislation & Purpose of Task Force
- III. Recent projects on Victory Memorial Drive
- IV. Future Needs
- V. Role of the Task Force and next steps
- VI. Future meetings

VICTORY MEMORIAL DRIVE TASK FORCE

MINUTES

April 2, 2007

The initial meeting of the Victory Memorial Drive Task Force was held in the ADM Conference Room of the Mill City Museum with the following members present: Nina Archabal, Director, Minnesota Historical Society; Commissioner Mike Opat, Hennepin County; Senator Ann Rest; Representative Joe Mullery; Senator Linda Higgins; Mike Kimble, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board; Nick Eoloff, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board; Jon Olson, President, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board; Barb Johnson, Minneapolis City Council; and Michael Fox, Deputy Director, Minnesota Historical Society. Public attendees present: Larry Walker, Architectural Consultant to Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board; Pat Schon; Steve Fiscus; and Patrick Burns. Support staff present: Kristin Wros, Minnesota Historical Society; Phil Essington, Office of Commissioner Mike Opat; Kari Dziedzic, Office of Commissioner Mark Stenglein; Dennis Gimmestad, Minnesota Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office; Marcia Glick, City of Robbinsdale; and Jan Duffie, Hennepin County. Members absent: Representative Lyndon Carlson; Commissioner Mark Stenglein, Hennepin County; and Dan Rogan, City Council Member, City of Robbinsdale.

I. Call to Order by Nina Archabal at 8:00 a.m.

Opening welcome by Ms. Archabal, acting as convener of the Task Force.

Introductions of all Task Force members, public attendees, and support staff took place.

II. Review of Legislation

Ms. Archabal reviewed *Laws of MN, 2006, Chapter 218, Sections 2-6* relating to the Victory Memorial Drive Task Force. Discussion followed concerning the significance of and process for inclusion of the Parkway on the National Register of Historic Places. Senator Rest requested that staff provide the Task Force with a written summary of the information. Information regarding the nomination process, criteria for nomination, and the length of the process can be found on the National Park Service website <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/listing.htm>.

The Task Force discussed its reporting responsibility as defined in the legislation and agreed to report its work to the policy and budget committees of both State and Local Government Operations and Veterans Affairs.

Ms. Archabal noted that the section of the legislation relating to staff support did not include Hennepin County. Commissioner Opat assured the members that Hennepin County would provide this service.

III. Funding

Ms. Archabal reviewed funding available for the restoration project including \$200,000 from the Save America's Treasures, a program of the U.S. Department of the Interior; matching funds from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board; and \$3.5 million included in Hennepin County's 2007 budget.

Commissioner Opat emphasized the importance of timely progress on this project.

IV. Presentation by Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Mr. Eoloff reported that the Park Board had developed a master plan for the Parkway during re-pavement of the pathways. He offered to send a copy of this plan to the members and requested time to present the plan at the Task Force's next meeting. He then distributed the Park Board's preliminary cost estimate for the restoration of the Parkway. Attachment A.

V. Selection of Chairmen

Upon a motion made by Barb Johnson and seconded by Jon Olson, it was decided that Commissioner Mike Opat and Commissioner Mark Stenglein would co-chair the Task Force.

The members agreed that the next meeting of the Task Force should occur in mid-May. It was noted that the Minnesota Legislature will be in session until May 21 and that legislators may be unable to attend Task Force meetings before that date.

VI. Adjournment

Commissioner Opat adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nina M. Archabal
Convener

Attachment

VICTORY MEMORIAL DRIVE TASK FORCE

May 23, 2007
9:00 am - 10:30 am
@ Mill City Museum

Agenda

- I. Introductions (5 minutes)
- II. Approval of Agenda
- III. Approval of Minutes from April 2, 1007 Meeting
- IV. Process for Inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places
By: Historical Society Staff (10 min)
 - a. Nomination process
 - b. Criteria for nomination
 - c. Length of process
 - d. Next step for Victory Memorial Dr.
- V. Update on Victory Memorial Dr. – The Past and Present. By: Park Board Staff (30 min)
- VI. Restoration Plan Presentation. By: Park Board Staff (15 min)
- VII. Restoration Plan Discussion (15 min)
- VIII. Items for discussion &/or presentation at next meeting (5 Min)
- IX. Schedule Next Meeting

VICTORY MEMORIAL DRIVE TASK FORCE

MINUTES of the May 23, 2007 Meeting

Members Present

Hennepin County Commissioner Mike Opat, co-chair; Hennepin County Commissioner Mark Stenglein, co-chair; Sen. Linda Higgins; Rep. Lyndon Carlson; Rep. Joe Mullery; Minneapolis City Council President Barb Johnson; Robbinsdale City Council Member Dan Rogan; Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board President Jon Olson; Minnesota Historical Society Deputy Director Michael Fox; Veterans Representatives Pat Schon and Steve Fiscus; Citizen Representatives Bob Zagaros and Patrick Burns.

Call to Order

Commissioner Opat called the Task Force to order at 9:05 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Opat moved to approve the Agenda with item IV placed at the bottom of the Agenda. The motion was APPROVED.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the Minutes for the April 2, 2007 Task Force meeting was APPROVED.

Agenda Items

Introductions

Commissioner Opat introduced co-chair Commissioner Stenglein and members, staff and others present introduced themselves.

Presentation

Larry Wacker of SWB Inc., consultant to the Minneapolis Park Board, presented a history of the Victory Memorial Drive. Mr. Wacker also discussed the Drive's current condition and offered design ideas and design concepts for improvements. *A copy of his presentation is included in the Task Force Record.*

Lighting

Council President Johnson said recent bonding requests sent to the Legislature by the City of Minneapolis have included funding for deteriorating park lighting, and the upcoming bonding request could list park lighting as a high priority.

Jon Gurban, Minneapolis Park Board Superintendent, estimated that the Grand Rounds system included more than 3,000 light fixtures. Approximately 250 have been replaced.

Commissioner Opat said Hennepin County's upcoming bonding request could include park lighting, as Victory Memorial Drive is a County capital project.

Council Member Rogan said citizens have requested additional lighting along the walking path to make the parkway more usable at night.

Road Safety

Commissioner Opat said several street intersections along the Drive have become dangerous, especially Osseo Road, which is a county road. Mr. Burns, Ms. Schon and Commissioner Olson discussed the presence of cars driving at high speeds and heavy trucks and whether signage would correct the problem.

Pathway Safety

Mr. Zagaros and Commissioner Olson discussed safety issues on pathways that are striped for both pedestrian and bicycle use.

Statues

Nick Eloff, Minneapolis Park Board Project Manager, said the Park Board has received a federal grant award of \$200,000 from the Save America's Treasures program. The Park Board will match the grant with \$200,000. These funds will primarily be used to restore the memorials, the flagpole area and the Lincoln statue.

Doughboy Statue

Mr. Wacker said adding a Doughboy Statue to the Drive has become a popular idea and offered potential locations for it to be added. Mr. Fiscus agreed and said a mockup was being created. Dennis Gimmetstad, from the Minnesota Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office, said his organization would be concerned that the statue fit in with the Memorial and meet artistic standards.

Next Meeting

The Task Force agreed to meet within 3-4 weeks. Ms. Schon requested the meeting not take place from June 21-23.

Items for Discussion at Next Meeting

- Discussion of tree placement, size and species;
- Traffic counts for Osseo Road and other major streets along the Drive;
- Analysis of potential street closures;
- Pathway lighting;
- Gateway designs;
- Memorial designs

Adjournment

Commissioner Opat adjourned the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

VICTORY MEMORIAL DRIVE TASK FORCE

A G E N D A

for the July 18, 2007 Meeting

A-Tower, 23rd Floor Large Conference Room

Hennepin County Government Center – 300 South 6th St., Minneapolis

1. Call to order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes from the May 23, 2007 Meeting
4. Intersection of Osseo Road and Victory Memorial Drive
 - Resolution 1, to recommend that Hennepin County purchase 2408 Victory Memorial Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55412
5. Cost estimates for trail repairs, road work and closures for streets
6. Nick Eoloff, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
 - Lighting update
 - Gateway designs and cost estimates
 - Markers
7. Tree replacement options
8. Next meeting
 - Items for discussion
 - Schedule
9. Adjournment

VICTORY MEMORIAL DRIVE TASK FORCE

MINUTES
of the July 18, 2007 Meeting

Members Present

Hennepin County Commissioner Mike Opat, co-chair; Hennepin County Commissioner Mark Stenglein, co-chair; Rep. Lyndon Carlson; Rep. Joe Mullery; Minneapolis City Council President Barb Johnson; Robbinsdale City Council Member Dan Rogan; Minnesota Historical Society Deputy Director Michael Fox; Veterans Representatives Pat Schon and Steve Fiscus; Citizen Representatives Bob Zagaros and Patrick Burns.

Call to Order

Commissioner Opat called the Task Force to order at 8:35 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Stenglein moved to approve the Agenda. The motion was APPROVED.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the Minutes for the May 23, 2007, Task Force meeting was APPROVED.

Agenda Items

Resolution 1, to acquire 2408 Victory Memorial Drive

VICTORY MEMORIAL DRIVE TASK FORCE

Resolution No. 1

Offered by COMMISSIONER STENGLEIN; seconded by COUNCIL MEMBER ROGAN:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Victory Memorial Drive Task Force recommends that Hennepin County staff begin negotiations for the purchase of 2408 Victory Memorial Drive, Minneapolis MN 55412, for the purpose of redesigning the intersection of Osseo Road and Victory Memorial Drive; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Task Force recommends funding the purchase of the parcel, and all attendant costs, from funds appropriated to the Hennepin County Capital Improvement Program, Project No. 0031744.

VOTE SECTION:

Council Member Johnson

_____X_____

Council Member Rogan	<u> X </u>	Mr. Burns	<u> X </u>
Senator Rest	<u> abs </u>	Mr. Zagaros	<u> X </u>
Senator Higgins	<u> abs </u>	Ms. Schon	<u> X </u>
Representative Mullery	<u> X </u>	Mr. Fiscus	<u> X </u>
Representative Carlson	<u> X </u>	Commissioner Opat, Co-Chair	<u> X </u>
Commissioner Olson	<u> abs </u>	Commissioner Stenglein, Co-Chair	<u> X </u>
Ms. Archabal (Michael Fox)	<u> X </u>		

APPROVED JULY 18, 2007

Commissioner Opat introduced the Resolution and said its purpose was to improve the intersection of Osseo Road at Victory Memorial Drive, widening the intersection and eliminating blind spots and sharp turns.

Commissioner Stenglein moved the Resolution, seconded by Council Member Rogan.

Commissioner Stenglein asked if the property's owners were willing sellers. Commissioner Opat said that in conversations with him, they did appear to be.

Mr. Fiscus asked if any markers were located on the property. Members of the Task Force said there likely would not be.

Mr. Zagaros asked about the cost of purchasing the property. Phil Eckhert, Hennepin County Director of Housing, Community Works & Transit, said it would be negotiated and paid by the County's Victory Memorial Drive Task Force budget.

The Resolution was APPROVED by a voice vote.

Trail repairs, road work and street closures

Nick Eoloff of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board gave a presentation on potential street closures and estimated costs. *A copy of the estimates sheet is included in the Task Force Record.*

Council President Johnson suggested that the typical 90-day comment period for street vacation may not be needed, since many road closures were included in the Victory Memorial Drive Master Plan. Public comment was solicited during the creation of that plan.

Craig Twinem of the Hennepin County Transportation Department suggested that Minneapolis Public Works work crews could accomplish the street vacations and related work faster and cheaper than bidding out the work.

Commissioner Opat requested for the next meeting information on potential closure of east-west streets and detailed traffic counts for intersections along Osseo Road.

Lighting

Mr. Eoloff and Jon Gurban, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board Superintendent, discussed lighting options and cost estimates for the Parkway and the pedestrian paths. *A copy of the estimates sheet and light options is included in the Task Force Record.*

Flagpole redesign, gateway monuments, doughboy statues

Larry Wacker of SWB Inc., consultant to the Minneapolis Park Board, gave a presentation on redesign concepts for the flagpole area, gateway monuments and doughboy statues. *A copy of his presentation is included in the Task Force Record.*

Markers

Members discussed whether all markers are accounted for and located in their proper place. Mr. Eoloff said a survey was under way to account for the markers.

Next Meeting

The Task Force agreed to meet within the next several weeks.

Items for Discussion at Next Meeting

- Effects of temporary street closures and neighborhood response
- Detailed traffic counts for streets intersecting Osseo Road
- Jurisdiction discussion and special services agreement
- Cost estimates for monuments
- Discussion on flagpole area; other World War I memorials / Dennis Gimmestad
- Discussion on trees / Ralph Seivert
- Survey results for the markers on the Drive

Adjournment

Commissioner Opat adjourned the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

VICTORY MEMORIAL DRIVE TASK FORCE

A G E N D A

for the September 11, 2007 Meeting
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
2117 West River Road, Minneapolis

1. Call to order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes from the July 18, 2007 Meeting
4. Street closures
 - Impact of temporary closure of Xerxes Ave. N.
 - Additional street vacations: Irving, James, Logan, Morgan, Oliver, Penn, 39th
 - Detailed traffic counts for streets intersecting Osseo Road
5. Ralph Seivert, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board Forestry
 - Trees on Victory Memorial Drive
6. Nick Eoloff, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
 - Survey results for markers on the Drive
7. Dennis Gimmestad
 - Brief history of the flagpole area
8. Next meeting
 - Items for discussion
 - Schedule
9. Adjournment

VICTORY MEMORIAL DRIVE TASK FORCE

MINUTES

of the September 11, 2007 Meeting

Members Present

Hennepin County Commissioner Mike Opat, co-chair; Hennepin County Commissioner Mark Stenglein, co-chair; Rep. Lyndon Carlson; Rep. Joe Mullery; Minneapolis City Council President Barb Johnson; Dennis Gimmestad, Minnesota Historical Society; Sen. Linda Higgins; Sen. Ann Rest; Veterans Representatives Pat Schon and Steve Fiscus; Citizen Representatives Bob Zagaros and Patrick Burns.

Call to Order

Commissioner Stenglein called the Task Force to order at 8:40 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was APPROVED.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the Minutes for the July 18, 2007, Task Force meeting was APPROVED.

Agenda Items

Temporary Street Closures

Council President Barb Johnson reported that her office had received few phone calls regarding the temporary closure of Xerxes.

Commissioner Opat proposed closing two out of every three north-south streets, north of the Parkway, as follows: Irving, James, Logan, Morgan, Oliver, Penn, in addition to Xerxes and 39th Ave., and this was discussed.

Sen. Higgins suggested closing the streets for 60 days to evaluate the impact, and the recommendation was APPROVED by a voice vote.

Lowry Avenue Project

Carol Lezotte from Hennepin County Community Works presented the Lowry Avenue Community Works project and its proposed gateway monuments, and how they might complement new monuments for the Parkway.

Metro Transit Project

Adam Harrington and Cyndi Harper from Metro Transit presented plans to overlay parts of 42nd Avenue North and 45th Avenue North for new bus service.

Parkway Trees

Ralph Seivert, forester with the Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board, described the status of trees on the Parkway, and noted:

- About 82% of the trees are now hackberry; only 18% are elm

- About 30%, or 263 trees, are out of alignment with the rank-and-file design of the parkway
- About 28 of the misaligned trees are of transplantable size and can be moved.

Dennis Gimmestad of the Minnesota Historical Society said the historic preference would be to align the trees as they were originally when the Parkway was created.

Markers

Nick Eloff of the Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board presented the status of the summer survey of markers for World War I dead from Hennepin County, and said three markers are missing. Pat Schon identified one person who does not appear to have a marker and is buried at Fort Snelling.

Next Meeting

The Task Force agreed to meet after Veterans Day.

Items for Discussion at Next Meeting

- New design options for the flagpole area
- Ideas on realigning the Parkway trees

Adjournment

Commissioner Stenglein adjourned the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

VICTORY MEMORIAL DRIVE TASK FORCE

A G E N D A

for the December 4, 2007 Meeting
Hennepin County Government Center – A-2300 Large Conference Room
300 South 6th Street, Downtown Minneapolis

1. Call to order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes from the September 11, 2007 Meeting
4. Hennepin County Survey work
5. Flagpole plaza design
 - Nick Eloff, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
6. Street closure updates
 - Steve Mosing, Minneapolis Public Works
7. New Website
 - victorymemorialdrive.org
8. Next meeting
 - Items for discussion
 - Schedule
9. Adjournment

[Minutes from the December 4, 2007, meeting will be presented to the Task Force at its next meeting.]