

Chisago City pursuing funding for Ojiketa with unanimous support

BY NANCY KRAMER

Correspondent

Emily Miller, project associate with the Trust for Public Land, visited March 11 with the Chisago City Council to discuss the process for acquiring Camp Ojiketa as a city park. Camp Ojiketa is on Big Green Lake in southern Chisago County.

Miller described the parcel as "being in a corridor of ecological means" and she would like to assist the city in pursuing grants for the purchase of the camp. TPL has an option with Minnesota Camp Fire to buy the site and then Chisago City will buy it from TPL.

During the public hearing, Miller described to the council the services that TPL can offer to the city. The first step of the Trust is to identify a Conservation Vision. This is accomplished by rallying public support for a project.

TPL would then pursue conservation finance, and then assist the city in closing transactions. The purchase price of the camp stands at \$3.8 million.

City Administrator John Pechman identified six different funding sources that would be used to purchase the camp:

A Natural & Scenic Area/ Non-Metro Regional Park Grant would award \$1.4 million towards the purchase price.

Metro Greenways would allot \$200,000 while a grant from the Department of Natural Resources & Fisheries would award \$100,000.

TPL - Metro Conservation Corridors would award \$500,000 with private funding offering \$300,000 and Chisago County offering the same.

After council member Sue Skow made a motion to authorize the city to acquire the camp, David Giese added, "(the city) can't beat (the purchase) as an investment in the community."