



# Minutes

## City of Flagstaff

### Open Spaces Commission

Thursday, November 21, 2013  
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

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City Hall, Council Conference Room  
211 West Aspen Avenue, Flagstaff, Arizona

A quorum of the Flagstaff City Council may be in attendance of the Open Spaces Commission meeting.



In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact 928-779-7660 (774-5281 TDD). Notification at least 48 hours in advance will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements.

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

##### COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Rick Miller, Chair  
Carrie Eberly  
Paul Moore  
Jessica Gist  
Christopher Ives  
Stephen Hirst  
Bryan Burton  
John Fall

##### CITY STAFF:

Nicole Woodman  
McKenzie Jones  
Erik Olsen  
Martin Ince  
David McIntire

##### COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

Ralph Baierlein

#### **I. GENERAL BUSINESS**

##### **1. Call to Order**

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 4:06 pm.

##### **2. Public Participation**

At this time, any member of the public may address the Commission on any subject that is not scheduled before the Commission on that day. The Arizona Open Meeting Law prohibits the Commission from discussing or taking action on an item which is not listed on the prepared agenda. Commission members may, however, respond to criticism made by those addressing the Commission, ask staff to review a matter, or ask that a matter be placed on a future agenda. To address the Commission on an item that is on the agenda, please wait for the Chair to call for Public Comment at the time the item is heard.

##### **3. Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Hirst moved to approve the October 16, 2013 meeting minutes. Commissioner Gist seconded the motion.

**4. Discussion Items**

**A. Update on Walnut Canyon Study**

Ralph Baierlein gave a presentation on the status of the federal Walnut Canyon Study that outlines management options for the 30,000 acres of land surrounding Walnut Canyon. Mr. Baierlein informed the Commission that the final report will list three management options. Mr. Baierlein suggested that the Commission take the responsibility of conducting public process as a means of determining which management option the public prefers, which will then be recommended to City Council. Mr. Baierlein stated that it is his hope that by taking into consideration the desires of the public, the City will decide on the best management option independently from what the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture decide.

**B. Update on City Council's Review of City-owned Parcels**

David McIntire, Real Estate Manager, updated the Commission on City Council's Review of City-owned parcels.

Chair Miller asked Mr. McIntire to explain how the outcome of the Venus parcels occurred. Mr. McIntire informed the Commission that the Council asked that the eastern parcel be reviewed again in 2025 for a potential reconsideration. In addition, the Venus parcel was determined to be reviewed for its best use. Council's guidance was clear that the drainage and trail need to be protected.

Commissioner Hirst stated that the Council did not specifically address an easement for the FUTS trail on McAllister Ranch. Mr. McIntire informed the Commission that Council is allowing progress in the area that is developable, such as the Core Services facility.

Mr. McIntire informed the Commission that the next steps in this process include the drafting of a memorializing resolution, which will consist of actions items pertaining to Council guidance, and working with City staff to update maps of City-owned parcels to show changes in parcel designations.

Mr. McIntire informed the Commission that the goal is to bring parcels before Council over the next several years for finalization.

Chair Miller inquired if it would be appropriate for the Commission to submit additional properties that they felt needed designation for review at the same time as the 17 City-owned parcels. Mr. McIntire informed the Commission that it would be best to keep the 17 parcels separate from any additional properties.

**C. Definition of Open Space Terms for Regional Plan**

In an effort to assist the Commission in drafting a definition of open space to be included in the Flagstaff Regional Plan, Erik Olsen, Open Space, Aide, provided

the Commission with definitions of open space from five U.S. cities including: (1) Missoula, MT; (2) Boulder, CO; (3) Albuquerque, NM; (4) New York, NY; and (5) Portland, OR.

Commissioner Hirst expressed his preference of Missoula's criteria for open space.

Chair Miller inquired if the Commission was broadly defining open space as a system or just a piece of the system (e.g. natural areas, FUTS, etc.).

Commissioner Gist expressed that she liked how New York City defined open space as "publicly accessible."

Commissioner Ives inquired if by including "active recreation" as an element of open space, does the Commission risk having golf courses being defined as an element of open space. Chairman Miller stated that this is most likely, however, the Commission cannot be restrictive at this point in time.

Commissioner Hirst stated that the Commission needs to identify what activities will be allowed in open space before it is defined.

Commissioner Moore stated that he was under the impression that the objective of the conversation was to further discuss what open space is. Commissioner Moore inquired about where the definition of open space will be submitted if the Commission defines open space and if the Commission will submit language to the Regional Plan.

Chair Miller stated that City Council is looking for a definition that does not define vacant land to avoid the mindset that vacant land is open space. Ms. Jones stated that Kim Sharp, the City of Flagstaff Neighborhood Planner, asked the Commission to define vacant land to make it clear that it is different from open space.

Commissioner Burton expressed that he would like the language "or zoned as open space" to be removed from the definition of vacant land.

Chair Miller stated that the term open space is defined in so many ways that it has become tainted. Chairman Miller suggested the Commission refer to open space as "designated open space." Commissioner Ives stated that he likes the word "designated" because the word "protected" seems loaded.

Commissioner Ives suggested that the Commission define open space by its elements: (1) parks; (2) agricultural lands/gardens; (3) natural areas; (4) etc.

Martin Ince, City of Flagstaff Multi-modal Planner, suggested that a finer point might be needed to be put on the historical and cultural component. Ms. Jones suggested the natural area definition could be reworded to include the historical

and cultural component. Chair Miller stated that he believes the historical and cultural resources component should be included separately.

Ms. Woodman encouraged the Commission to keep the open space definition concise so it is easily understood by the public.

Commissioner Burton suggested the Commission include a scenic views and vistas component in the natural areas element because they are similar. Commissioner Gist expressed her concern about combining natural areas with scenic views and vistas.

Chair Miller inquired if the Commission should include language regarding “protection” in the open space definition in order to convey that open space does have some level of protection. Commissioner Gist expressed that the Commission is implying protection by using the word “designated”. Chair Miller stated that he would like stronger language than “designated”. The Commission unanimously voted to recommend the following definitions for inclusion into the Regional Plan.

Commissioner Ives made a motion to allow City of Flagstaff staff to edit and finalize the definition of open space. Commissioner Burton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Designated Open Space** is a complex mosaic of undeveloped or minimally developed lands with a wide variety of qualities, values, and purposes, which affects all other components of the Flagstaff Regional Plan. Designated Open Space could be made up of one or more of the following elements: Natural Areas, Historic and Cultural Areas, Parks and Recreation Areas, Agricultural Lands, Trails, and Scenic Views and Vistas.

**Natural Areas:** Open lands left in a primarily natural state that contain significant natural, cultural, aesthetic, or recreational features that warrant protection. The Natural Areas have been purchased, deeded or zoned as ‘Natural Areas for Conservation’, using the various tools legally available to do so.

**Historic and Cultural Areas:** Lands that contain significant historic or cultural resources.

**Parks and Recreation Areas:** Urban green spaces generally dedicated to active recreational uses. Parks and Recreation Areas have been purchased, deeded and zoned as ‘Parks and Recreation’ as a public facility.

**Agricultural Lands:** Lands used primarily for raising crops, forage and livestock, and community gardens.

**Trails:** Pathways for all forms of non-motorized transportation and recreation.

**Scenic Views and Vistas:** Open hillsides and river corridors.

**Vacant Land** is undeveloped land that is not currently protected from development. It can be either publicly- or privately-owned.

**5. Information Items To and From Commissioners and Staff**

**A.** Commissioner Ives inquired if the Commission has the right to recommend more passive recreation than a golf course on the Little America property. Chair Miller stated that the Commission would have to conduct more research to see if it is in their purview. Commissioner Ives inquired about the time frame for this. Chairman Miller asked Ms. Woodman to clarify the time frame.

**B.** Commissioner Burton read a letter addressed to City staff from the Open Spaces Commission praising them for a job well done at the Regional Open Space Symposium held in October 2013.

Commissioner Eberly made a motion to send the letter to Council and the County. Commissioner Hirst seconded the motion.

**6. Agenda Items for Next Meeting – December 19, 2013, 4 pm**

- A.** Update on Management of City-owned Open Space
- B.** Long-Range Planning for Open Spaces Commission
- C.** Explanation of Open Space Zoning Designation

**7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 pm.