



MINUTES

City of Flagstaff Open Spaces Commission

Thursday, October 22, 2015
4:00 – 6:00 pm

City Hall, Council Chambers
211 West Aspen Avenue, Flagstaff, Arizona

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



In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact 928-213-2100. Notification at least 48 hours in advance will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements.

CALL TO ORDER

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Bryan Burton
Jim Burton
Jessica Gist
Tina Pfeiffer

CITY STAFF:

Nicole Woodman, Sustainability Manager
Elizabeth Emery, Open Space Specialist
McKenzie Jones, Sustainability Specialist
John Begay, Sustainability Aide
Martin Ince, Multi-Modal Planner
Tiffany Antol, Planning Development
Manager

COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

Jack Welch
Tadd Madeksza
Allen Haden
Hannah Griscom
Elizabeth Stegall
Mandy Metzger

Tracy Plecas

1. Call to order

Commissioner Gist called the meeting to order at 4:03pm.

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.

2. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Bryan Burton noted that the minutes do not reflect that the northwest portion of parcel 111-02-006B could be developed for residential housing. The parcel may be split to accommodate that need. Commissioner Pfeiffer motioned to approve the October 15, 2015 minutes with Commissioner

Bryan Burton's amendment. Commissioner Jim Burton seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in favor to approve minutes.

3. Discussion Items

A. Friends of the Rio Watershed Planning Effort

Hannah Griscom, Friends of the Rio de Flag Board member, gave an overview of the Rio de Flag watershed planning effort at the request of the Commission. The plan will define the community vision for the Rio de Flag and outline steps to restore the Rio de Flag. Ultimately, the group visions to move the Rio de Flag into consciousness for the community, be a community rallying point, and a space for the community to enjoy by creating a greenbelt that connects neighborhoods and public spaces with trails. The Friends of the Rio de Flag plan to start seek funding to support writing the document in 2016. Mrs. Griscom mentioned that there is a lot of overlap between the Rio de Flag watershed planning effort and the goals of the Open Spaces Commission as identified in their Strategic Plan.

B. Rezoning of Open Space Parcels (Public Hearing)

Betsy Emery, Open Space Specialist, presented to the Commission regarding the annexation and rezone process for open space parcels. This also served as the first public hearing for the process for Staff to accept feedback from the community. The City acquired Picture Canyon and Observatory Mesa in 2012 and 2013 and both properties were designated as open space by City Council. These parcels were not zoned as Public Open Space through the acquisition process and remain zoned as rural residential, which allows for development. City Staff is currently working to rezone these parcels as Public Open Space to provide an additional layer of protection to the property because Public Open Space zoning limits the type of development that can be done on the parcels.

Additionally, there are parcels comprising Picture Canyon (113-06-004) and Observatory Mesa (102-15-002) which are outside of Flagstaff City limits. City Staff proposes annexing these parcels into City limits to streamline management requirements for the entire property.

Lastly, Staff is also proposing to rezone and annex the City-owned Schultz Y parcel (300-47-004) as a direct outcome of City Council's discussion of City-owned properties on October 29, 2013.

Community members provided feedback:

- Tracy Plecas, 6525 North Rain Valley Road, asked if the rezoning process would affect planned actions and improvements at the Preserve. Betsy Emery answered that the management plan for Picture Canyon was recently adopted by City Council and that document outlines all projects planned at the Preserve. This process does not affect planned management activities. Mrs. Plecas inquired about how many steps are involved in the annex and rezone process. Tiffany Antol, Planning Development Manager, answered that there will be additional public hearings and that the application will be vetted through the Planning and Zoning Commission before being brought to City Council for approval.

- Mandy Metzger, Coconino County District 4 Supervisor, expressed appreciation for the many hours and dedication the Open Spaces Commission has given to Picture Canyon. She did not have a recommendation or comment at the moment because the County had not yet discussed the proposal.
- Sat Best, 3935 North Paradise Road, expressed appreciation for the work done on these parcels. He inquired about management plans for the Schultz Y property. Commissioner Gist answered the Commission has discussed the parcel's open space value - primarily the parcel's location and adjacency to other trails and amenities makes it important for open space. Mr. Best inquired if the actual "Y" is located on this parcel. Betsy Emery answered that the actual "Y" is located west of the parcel in question. Mr. Best inquired about the actual "Y" and if there are any plans to include it in the process. Betsy Emery answered that the actual "Y" is on private property but the landowner recently contacted the City to propose swapping the actual "Y" for a portion of the City-owned parcel. This trade would be equitable in terms of value and land area. Mr. Best then mentioned the valuable wildlife corridor in the area. Commissioner Gist clarified that the Schultz Y parcel is one of 17 city-owned parcels the Commission reviewed against a set of criteria that were valuable for open space. Ultimately, the Commission determined that the Schultz Y parcel is important as open space and recommended that the City designate it as open space.
- Nat White, 1120 N. Rockridge, mentioned that the actual "Y" area is not necessary for the trail head, and instead those improvements could be located anywhere below the historic reservoir on the City-owned parcel. He also mentioned the opportunity for collaboration between the U.S. Forest Service, Coconino County, and the City to provide these amenities and that this parcel has potential to be another showcase open space area for the Flagstaff community.
- Commissioner Gist inquired about the process involving the County for annexing some of these properties. Tiffany Antol, Planning Development Manager, answered the annexation process is set out in state statute. As soon as the Planning Department receives the application, they will notify the Board of Supervisors. The County will be notified at each stage of the process, just like the surrounding property owners.

Commissioner Gist clarified that City Staff is looking for the Commission to recommend that the City proceed with the process to rezone and annex the three properties. Commissioner Bryan Burton motioned to support rezoning and annexing these three properties. Commissioner Pfeiffer seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all.

C. Picture Canyon Interpretive Signs

Betsy Emery, Open Space Specialist, provided a follow up presentation with the latest draft of interpretive signs for the Picture Canyon Preserve. The draft is in

black and white because the graphic designer is waiting for art approval from the Open Spaces Commission to finalize the artwork. There are five panels being placed at the Outdoor Classroom addressing archaeology, botany, wildlife, watershed, and geology. Two signs are being designed for the watchable wildlife site near the deep-water pond. Those signs will be related to wetlands and wildlife. The Commission provided feedback and minor suggestions for the signs, including correcting misspellings, providing descriptions for the QR codes, and indicating differences between Kaibab Limestone and Coconino Sandstone. Commissioner Jim Burton motioned to approve the signs. Commissioner Bryan Burton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

D. Review of City Owned Parcels

The Commission discussed the recent fieldtrip to review the City-owned parcels along the Karen Cooper Trail near the Museum of Northern Arizona using the matrix used for the 17 city-owned parcels last year. Some of the parcels are appropriate for open space because they are too steep to develop or are within the Rio de Flag floodplain. Preserving these parcels as open space would provide a buffer to the Rio de Flag. The only parcel that doesn't meet all of the criteria and may not be appropriate to designate as open space is parcel 111-02-006B because there is a large area that could be developed. Commissioner Gist inquired what areas should be visited on additional field trips and the Commission discussed visiting the parcels along the Rio de Flag in the Southside Community during the spring. The Commission agreed to stand by their previous discussion of the open space value associated with City-owned parcels on McMillan Mesa. Additionally, the Commission agreed to individually visit a small number of City-owned parcels before the next meeting to provide information to the Commission regarding their open space potential.

E. Open Space Management Update

Betsy Emery, Open Space Specialist, has been working on designing trail signs for Picture Canyon for all the major trail intersections. Signs will be 3-3 ½ feet tall and posted on 4" steel tubing. Additionally, Staff is still working to edit the interpretive signs. There is an easement water pipeline at Picture Canyon that provides water to a few families in the area along the eastern side of the Preserve. Staff is working on surveying the pipeline and is working through the required cultural compliance regulation process associated with the ground disturbance. Additionally, Staff is in the process of launching the Sites Stewards Program, a volunteer program out of Arizona State Parks. Program training will be on November 4, 2015. Staff is working to address access issues at Matson Tank on Observatory Mesa by installing gates to limit illegal motorized access.

4. Information Items To and From Commissioners and Staff

A. Soliere Property Update

Per John Grahame's request at previous Commission meetings, Staff looked into the proposal to grant open space land in exchange for the City covering the substantial cost to realign Soliere Road. The developer planned to use the portion as an active park for ball fields. Ultimately, the Parks and Recreation

Commission decided to not accept the trade because of floodplain requirements associated with the property.

B. Other Updates

- Staff provided an update regarding the City Council's discussion of specialty seats on City commissions. The City Council recently decided to remove specialty seats from commissions. The Open Spaces Commission has multiple specialty seats, including Natural and Cultural Sciences and Real Estate. Current commissioners wishing to renew their term will apply for an At-Large position and will compete against applicants without specialty experience.
- McKenzie Jones, Sustainability Specialist, informs the Commission of the recycling application the City is launching – MyWaste. The app provides information on recycling schedules in Flagstaff.
- Nicole Woodman, Sustainability Manager, informs the Commission that the Sustainability Program is hosting their first DIY Workshop of the season, which will take place on October 29, 2015 at east public community library.

5. Agenda items for Next Meeting

A. Flagstaff Urban Trail System Acquisitions and Easements

B. Review of City-owned Parcels

C. Open Space Management Update

6. Adjournment

Commissioner Jim Burton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:06pm. Commissioner Bryan Burton seconded the motion. All voted in favor of adjourning the meeting.