



MINUTES

City of Flagstaff Open Spaces Commission

Wednesday, December 2, 2015
4:00 – 6:00 pm

City Hall, Staff Conference Room
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: CITY STAFF:

Rick Miller, Chair
Bryan Burton
Tina Pfeiffer
Jim Burton
Carrie Eberly
Jessica Gist

Betsy Emery, Open Space Specialist
Nicole Woodman, Sustainability Manager
Martin Ince, Multi-Modal Planner
John Begay, Sustainability Aide

COMMUNITY
MEMBERS:

1. Call to order

Commission Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 4:02pm

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.

Commissioner Bryan Burton introduced Charity Lee, the new Real Estate Manager. She comes to the City with a large real estate background, including working as a broker, assessor, appraiser, and in escrow.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Jim Burton motioned to approve the October 22, 2015 Open Spaces Commission minutes. Commissioner Pfeiffer seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

4. Discussion Items

A. Flagstaff Urban Trail System Acquisitions and Easement Update

Martin Ince, Multi-Modal Transportation Planner, provided an update to the Commission about the status of the 2004 Open Space and FUTS acquisition bond. Primarily, the City has been using the funds to purchase easements to complete trails throughout the Flagstaff area, and has only purchased full parcels in specific instances. There is a 5 year plan for FUTS acquisition that outlines priority areas for the upcoming term. Martin briefly discussed key easements and parcels the FUTS team is working on.

Arizona Trail

This trail will follow a ravine on the south side of McMillan Mesa, from Route 66 to the existing FUTS trail on top of the mesa. This trail is part of the statewide Arizona Trail, and completes the last missing section through Flagstaff. The south end of the trail, about 650 feet in length, is planned as part of a separate City project

Hospital Rim Trail

A trail completed that connects from Fort Valley Road to Beaver Street on the ridge between Flagstaff Medical Center and the Fort Valley Shopping Center. The easements required were gifted to the City to construct the trail.

McMillan Mesa Trail

This trail will complete a missing segment of trail on top of McMillan Mesa between Pine Cliff Drive and the end of Hemlock Way. The City purchased a small easement to complete the trail.

Switzer Canyon Trail

A new concrete trail follows the band of open space along the west side of Turquoise Drive between Forest Avenue and Switzer Canyon Drive. Two sections of this trail are already in place and this project will complete the remainder. Several sections of missing sidewalk in the area are also planned as part of the project. The eastern section of the trail is under construction along the south hillside of Cherry Hill along Route 66. This FUTS trail will connect from the downtown area to Buffalo Park.

Pine Knoll Trail

This trail is planned along the north side of Pine Knoll Drive, and completes a connection between the trail on San Francisco Street and the trail on Lone Tree Road. Bike lanes along both sides of Pine Knoll Drive are also planned as part of the project. This project is being funded as part of the federal "Safe Routes to School" program and Kinsey Elementary has been a valuable partner.

Phoenix/Beaver Street Trail

The City purchased a narrow easement to install a trail near the south side of Mike's Pike Street and the NAIPTA bus stop. This project is part of a bigger project to connect downtown and NAU by constructing a tunnel underneath the train tracks.

High Country Trails

The City is working with the Ponderosa Trails HOA to complete this section of trail as part of an effort to extend the FUTS trail along High Country Road all the way to Lake Mary Road.

Cedar Trail

Two short additions will complete the Cedar Trail along the south side of Cedar/Forest Avenue between West Street and Turquoise Drive. At the east end, a new aggregate trail has been constructed to fill-in a missing section between Gemini Drive and the existing Arizona Trail. At the west end, the existing sidewalk at the southeast corner of Forest Avenue and Turquoise Drive will be replaced with a 10-foot concrete trail.

B. Open Space Management Update

Commissioner Eberly motioned to change the order of the agenda and review the Open Space Management Update before discussing the Open Space Value Matrix agenda item. Commissioner Jim Burton seconded the motion. The Commission unanimously voted to approve the motion.

Betsy Emery, Open Space Specialist, provided an update about the annex and rezone process for the parcels she brought forward at the October 22, 2015 Commission meeting. Some parcels with have the Landmark Overlay Zoning to protect cultural resources and Stormwater Management has expressed interested in including the Rural Floodplain Designation zoning on additional parcels. The applications were submitted and they will go before Planning and Zoning Commission in February. Additionally, the City is in the final review process for the interpretive signs at Picture Canyon. Mrs. Emery has also been working with the Legal and Real Estate Teams to address access and easement issues on Observatory Mesa and Picture Canyon.

Nicole Woodman, Sustainability Manager, mentioned that the City recently lost a GIS staff member which may impact the Commission's projects.

Chair Miller mentioned that he has received comments from community members recent forest restoration project on Observatory Mesa. Mrs. Emery and Chair Miller will be touring the project with the Flagstaff Fire Department next week.

C. Open Space Value Matrix Discussion

Commissioner Gist explains that she is not supportive of ranking or scoring the parcels the Commission is currently reviewing because it doesn't allow City staff to

take advantage of opportunities that may arise. The Commission decided to use the existing matrix from the 2013 review of City-owned parcels to complete the exercise.

D. Goal of City-Owned Parcel Review

Rick Miller, Commission Chair, explains that his goal for the review is to provide a list to the Real Estate Manager that outlines which parcels are valuable for Open Space and therefore would cause the Real Estate Manager to seek input from the Open Spaces Commission if any action were ever proposed for those parcels.

E. Establish Process for Review of City-owned Parcels

The Commission discussed which process would be most effective for the review. Ultimately, the Commission decided that they will organize informal field trips to the parcels of interest and matrix those parcels at formal Open Spaces Commission meetings. Upon completion, the Commission will provide a copy of the end result to Martin Ince, Charity Lee, Nicole Woodman, and the Property Team and City Staff will present the outcome to the internal Property Committee. If an action is ever proposed for one of the parcels, the Commission will draft a letter to the involved parties outlining why the parcel is important for open space. Additionally, City staff will work to produce a GIS map so the data is available for Staff working on other projects.

The Commission decided to set a fieldtrip in January to look at the parcels in the downtown area along the FUTS trail.

F. Matrix Rio North Parcels

The Commission discussed the parcels they visited near the Museum of Northern Arizona, including 102-02-053A, 102-02-054D, 102-05-125A, 102-05-125D, and began matrixing them. All commissioners are in favor that the parcels to have open space value.

5. Information Items To and From Commissioners and Staff

Tamara Lawless, Sustainability Specialist, has requested to switch the Open Spaces Commission standard meeting date with the Sustainability Commission meetings. If accepted, the Open Spaces Commission meetings would be scheduled for every fourth Monday during each month, while Sustainability Commission meetings would be every fourth Thursday of the month. All Commissioners agreed to switch out meeting dates with the Sustainability Commission meetings, which will become effective in January 2016

Commissioner Pfeiffer, notified the Commission this will be her last meeting as her term on the Planning and Zoning Commission expires in December and she will not be renewing her seat.

6. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

A. Joint City-County Open Space District

B. Review of City-owned Parcels

C. Open Space Management Update

7. Adjournment

Commissioner Pfeiffer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:02pm. Commissioner Bryan Burton seconded the motion.