



# MINUTES

## City of Flagstaff Open Spaces Commission

Monday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016  
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

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City of Flagstaff Council Chambers  
211 W. Aspen Ave., 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 928-213-2175 (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  
Bryan Burton  
Jim Burton  
Jessica Gist  
Carrie Eberly  
Steve Dorsett

#### COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

Jack Welch  
Dustin Woodman  
Scott Anderson  
Stephen Hirst  
Dale Hopkins  
Debbie Shepard

#### CITY STAFF:

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

### I. GENERAL BUSINESS

#### 1. Call to Order

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

#### 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.

Chair Miller introduced Steve Dorsett, the Commission's new Planning and Zoning representative.

**3. Approval of January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Gist moved to approve the January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 minutes. Commissioner Bryan Burton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**4. Discussion Items**

**A. Regional Transportation Plan Update and Input, David Wessel**

David Wessel, Flagstaff Metropolitan Planning Organization (FMPO) Manager, provided an update to the Commission regarding the process of updating the Regional Transportation Plan, which should be completed by June. As part of the process, the FMPO is looking to engage multiple stakeholders and the public, including the Open Spaces Commission. Mr. Wessel informed the Commission that previous engagement exercises have indicated that community members are interested in well maintained roads and trails and having a transportation system that provides access to employment centers. Mr. Wessel led the Commission through a polling exercise to determine priorities. Commissioners were surprised that the environment ranked highly against transportation options and encouraged the FMPO to consider the environmental impact of any projects they propose. Commissioner Gist expressed interest in helping the FMPO define their natural and environmental scoring criteria to be used in the planning process. At that point, Mr. Wessel questioned the Commission about the current Flagstaff transportation system.

**What does the Open Spaces Commission like about transportation system?**

- System has been expanded to include alternative uses (including, bike lanes, FUTS trails, bus system)
- FUTS trails provide non-motorized access to parks and open space
- Open space provides a hub for transportation opportunities within the region

**What does the Open Spaces Commission perceive to be the weaknesses of the current transportation system?**

- Obvious choke points that are impacted by work, school, and snowplay schedule cycles
- Traffic congestion along Milton Avenue
- Lights are not timed efficiently to let traffic flow effectively through town
- There are not alternative options to cross town other than Route 66 and Butler
- Some transportation methods bisect wildlife corridors, providing a threat to local wildlife

**What does the Open Spaces Commission perceive to be opportunities for the future transportation system?**

- Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve could be included on a bust route to improve access while reducing traffic and congestion
- Remote subdivisions (including Baderville, Kachina Village, and Mountaineer) should be included in the planning area, with FUTS trails planned to provide commuter access to the Flagstaff center

- Transportation connections across highways provide an opportunity for open space and trails

**How is transportation a threat to Open Space?**

- Highway 180 and 89 bypasses through Observatory Mesa Natural Area and Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve
- Wildlife crossing issues are of major concern, especially when widening roads, managing increased volumes, and fencing roads

B. Regional Open Space Management Options, Scott Anderson

Scott Anderson, Natural Resource Manager at Coconino County, presented an abbreviated version of the presentation he provided to the Coconino County Board of Supervisors on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The presentation focused on options that would allow the County to create and maintain a sustainable open space system that can provide benefits for Flagstaff visitors and locals. Mr. Anderson outlined local benefits open space provides for the approximately 2 million visitors that enjoy the existing infrastructure (Picture Canyon, Rogers Lake, Pumphouse Wash, FUTS trails). As part of this discussion, Mr. Anderson indicated that it is important to clearly define the open space system, and provided a number of case studies (including Jefferson County, CO; Boulder County, CO; and Bucks County, PA) as to how the system could be organized in Coconino County.

Many options outlined in the case studies are limited by Title 48 of the Arizona State Legislation, which outlines special districts allowed within the state. If agreeable, the City and County could work together to amend Title 48 to include an open space district. Commission Gist questioned Mr. Anderson as to the next steps of the process. Mr. Anderson indicated that the County will continue to investigate options and continue the dialogue with County leadership.

C. Schultz Y Property Acquisition Update, Martin Ince

Martin Ince, Multi-Modal Planner, requested to table this agenda item for discussion at the March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Commission meeting in order to adequately investigate the Commission's requests.

D. Open Space Management Update, Betsy Emery

Betsy Emery, Open Space Specialist, provided an open space management update to the Commission. The Open Space Program will be hosting 2 paid, part-time internships this summer. One will be focused on providing guided tours at Picture Canyon while the other will collect road and trail infrastructure on Observatory Mesa to commence the trail planning process. The Open Space Program has developed a framework for the Observatory Mesa Natural Area Management Plan and will bring it to the Observatory Mesa Stakeholder Group on May 11, 2016 for initial comment and feedback. Ms. Emery worked with Arizona Game and Fish Department and the US Forest Service to update trailhead kiosks on Observatory Mesa, which will be installed before the summer season. The Open Space Program has completed phase 1 of the interpretive materials to be installed at Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve. This phase consists of 7 signs that will be installed at the Outdoor

Classroom and Watchable Wildlife Site before the summer season. Lastly, Flagstaff Area National Monuments and Arizona State Parks have provided funding to complete a trail construction project at the Waterbird Petroglyph Site, which will commence this summer.

**5. Action Items**

A. Picture Canyon Upper Reach Acquisition, Martin Ince

Martin Ince, Multi-Modal Planner, presented to the Commission regarding an opportunity to acquire a 20-acre portion of the Rio de Flag floodplain from Arizona State Land Department, commonly referred to as the Upper Reach of Picture Canyon. Acquiring this parcel would allow for a FUTS connection from Route 66 to Picture Canyon, which will ultimately have a FUTS connection to Townsend Winona Road and the great Doney Park area. This portion of the parcel has a low development value because it is entirely comprised of floodplain. The FUTS Master Plan has budgeted \$360,000 for the acquisition, meaning that the program is not sacrificing another purchase in order to purchase this parcel. The Stormwater Department would manage the floodplain in partnership with the Open Space Program. The Commission questioned if a small parking area would be installed near the parcel if it is successfully acquired from the State Land Department. Picture Canyon parking is limited, especially during large recreation events. Mr. Ince responded that a small gravel lot might be constructed. The Commission reviewed the parcel utilizing the open space criteria outlined in the Strategic Plan. The parcel provides a buffer for the Rio de Flag channel and planned FUTS alignment, likely contains cultural resources and petroglyphs; is moderately aesthetic with the Rio de Flag channel; provides ecological benefits for the area; provides accessibility/connectivity; and recreation. Commissioner Bryan Burton motioned that the City place priority on acquiring the parcel for the Open Space Program. Commissioner Dorsett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

A. Planning and Zoning Commission dates for Open Space Rezoning and Annexations

Betsy Emery, Open Space Specialist, updated the Commission that the parcels previously recommended by the Open Spaces Commission and City Council to be formally rezoned as Public Open Space will be going to the Planning and Zoning Commission on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016. If approved, they will be going before City Council on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 with a final ordinance being approved on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Ms. Emery also informed the Commission that the vacant seat and re-appointments will be filled at the March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 City Council meeting.

This Commission discussed the upcoming tour of the Downtown City-owned parcels and determined that the ideal time would be 3:30pm – 5:30pm on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016.

Commissioner Gist congratulated Mr. Anderson on his recent presentation to the Coconino County Board of Supervisors and noted that the presentation was well received.

Commissioner Bryan Burton noted that he enjoyed the case studies presented during Mr. Anderson's presentation that illustrated how an open space system could be interpreted in the Flagstaff community.

Commissioner Dorsett introduced himself to the Commission. He moved to Flagstaff in 1998 and has worked locally as an architect. He has served on the Planning and Zoning Commission for the past 7 years and will serve on the Open Spaces Commission until December, when his appointment expires.

**7. Agenda Items for Next Meeting – March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

- A. Forest Service Travel Management Rule Update, Mike Dechter
- B. McMillan Mesa Zoning Update, Tiffany Antol
- C. Schultz Y Acquisition Update, Martin Ince
- D. Open Space Management Update

**8. Adjournment**

Commissioner Bryan Burton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:46pm. Commissioner Gist seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all.

**CERTIFICATION OF POSTING OF NOTICE**

The undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the foregoing notice was duly posted at Flagstaff City Hall on\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. in accordance with the statement filed by the Disability Awareness  
Commission with the City Clerk.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chris Monteverde, Administrative Specialist