



# MINUTES

City of Flagstaff

## Open Spaces Commission

August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

### COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

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 928-213-2154. Notification at least 48 hours in advance will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements.

### CALL TO ORDER

#### COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Bryan Burton, Chair

Libby Kalinowski, Vice-Chair

Jackie Thomas

William Wilson

Stephen Hirst

Jim Burton

David Zimmerman

#### STAFF LIAISON:

Robert Wallace, Open Space Specialist

#### 1. Call to Order

#### 2. Roll Call

Chair Burton

Vice-Chair Kalinowski

Commissioner Wilson

Commissioner Burton

Commissioner Hirst

Commissioner Thomas

Commissioner Zimmerman

#### 3. 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.

Public Comment: Jack Welch of 2600 E. 7<sup>th</sup> addressed the Commission regarding a Scotch thistle infestation on private land at the end of Cortland Blvd. Mr. Welch mentioned that he knows how hard volunteers have worked to eradicate Scotch thistle in other parts of town and wanted to know if there is any way to get the private property owner to remove the thistle. Mr. Wallace said he would look into it and get back to Mr. Welch.

**4. Approval of July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Hirst motioned to approve the July 23<sup>rd</sup> minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kalinowski. All voted in favor.

**5. Business**

**A. John Wesley Powell Infrastructure and Facilities.** (30 minutes) - Sara Dechter  
Requested Action: Informational

Mrs. Sara Dechter, Comprehensive Planning Manager for the City of Flagstaff, gave an informational update on the J.W. Powell project area between Lone Tree Road and 4<sup>th</sup> Street in terms of city planning for public infrastructure and facilities. She was accompanied by Julie Leid, Peak Engineering, and James Duval, Capital Project Manager with the City Engineering Department.

Mrs. Dechter shared that the J.W. Powell Public Infrastructure and Facilities Specific Plan (Specific Plan) is being funded by City Council and is being worked on through a contract with Peak Engineering.

Mrs. Dechter noted that this is an Area Specific Plan which means that it needs to relate back to the Regional Plan and the land use decisions that voters ratified in 2014. She mentioned that it also presents an opportunity to evaluate the area types, use types, and transportation/infrastructure planning in more detail.

A map was shown of the project area that highlighted the planned J.W. Powell connection between the airport and 4<sup>th</sup> Street which includes a road, sewer, water, and storm drain connectors. Mrs. Dechter also showed existing and planned City trails and the Arizona Scenic Trail.

Mrs. Dechter noted that the Specific Plan will be used to determine the share of the improvements that will be paid for by the public versus the private sector. The percentage that the public will pay is legally known as a Fair and Roughly Proportional Share of Costs and has yet to be determined. She noted that developers in the project area have had trouble figuring out how to pay for the cost of public infrastructure and that the City has had to handle these questions on a property owner by property owner basis.

Mrs. Dechter noted that the Regional Plan identifies the area as a future “Suburban Neighborhood” except the area between the county islands which would be maintained with a rural character. The Specific Plan will use public input to help determine what the area will look like in terms of where roads,

activity centers, libraries, community centers, etc., will be located. Modeling for the area estimates 17,000 new residents in the area.

Mrs. Dechter noted that the Arizona National Scenic Trail runs through the project area. The new Zoning Code Manager will be working on a petition by the Conservation Study Forum to include more natural resource features in the Resource Protection Overlay (RPO). Currently, the City zoning code does not protect the Arizona National Scenic Trail (AZ Trail). The AZ Trail exists mostly in a floodplain within the project area so they anticipate that it will be set aside as part of the Resource Protection Overlay.

Another reason Mrs. Dechter and her team are working on this plan is that the governor has designated the area an Opportunity Zone. Opportunity Zones are a new financing tool under the new tax code. The census tract that encompasses the project area was one of the areas in Coconino County that qualified for the special market-driven financing. The developers who qualify for the “Qualified Opportunity Fund” must spend a portion of their money within the census tracts and this can include the funding of public infrastructure. City staff is still learning about this new tool, but it might mean that Flagstaff will see an accelerated demand for development applications.

Mrs. Dechter related the J.W. Powell plan back to open space, mentioning that the RPO currently distinguishes the types of open space they can designate in the area. The RPO prioritizes floodplains, forests, and steep slopes.

Phase I of the specific planning process is underway. Currently, Peak Engineering is working with staff on sharing data. A draft multimodal transportation network will be available soon. Phase I meetings with landowners are coming up, but not yet scheduled. A letter was also sent out to landowners about the ballot initiative. Mrs. Dechter said that they are ultimately looking to create a land use framework with conceptual designs.

Commissioner Burton asked how the Open Space Commission could help with the Open Space piece of the plan and how to communicate with them about this piece. Mr. James Duval, Senior Project Manager with Capital Improvements, said they would have one or two public open house meetings. Mr. Duval welcomed the commission to contact him directly to provide input. Mrs. Dechter also noted that they could provide input on amendments to the RPO once they are approved.

Mrs. Thomas asked whether or not there was a contractual agreement with previous Arizona Trail designations. Mrs. Dechter said that there was not such an agreement. She added that Laura White, the AZ Trail Coordinator, has documentation for some of the easements, but not the whole thing. She added that ultimately the development pattern in the area could mean reroute of the trail if needed. Mrs. Dechter noted that the AZ Trail in the project area is a resupply route and what always thought to have a different character, but that they do not want to see the trail get hemmed in by development.

Commissioner Hirst asked about the availability of funding for the development in the area. Mrs. Dechter mentioned that the funding might be there and that we need to get ahead of the financing of these development projects. She mentioned that there are a lot of opportunities to get ahead of the projects because this area has few open applications for development.

Commissioner Burton asked whether or not this area will develop in segments. Mr. Duval responded that yes, it would occur in segments. He added that about a year and a half ago he had a meeting with all of the major property owners in the area and several of them mentioned that they would need infrastructure to be in place before they could ever develop their parcels. Mr. Duval mentioned that there is no current funding for the entire roadway which means that if a developer wanted to move on projects then the major property owners would first need to contribute to the building of the roads in order to access these properties.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked about the land ownership in the area. Mr. Duval mentioned there is quite a bit of private property adjacent to the proposed J.W. Powell alignment and that the City would have to acquire right of ways to for this road extension and any open space designations. The City would have more leeway to designate Open Space on their own parcels. The area is about 2,300 acres in size.

Mrs. Dechter hopes the commission uses the presentation and maps to think about what they want and do not want in the project area as it relates to trails and Open Space.

Public Comment was made by Mr. Jack Welch, 2600 E. 7<sup>th</sup>, who hopes that similar consideration is made related to the Flagstaff Loop Trail as is being made for the AZ Trail in the project area.

**B. Introduction of Kaeli Wells, New Open Space VISTA Aide (5 Minutes) –**  
Requested Action: Informational

Kaeli Wells is the new Open Space VISTA Aide with the Open Space program and is overlapping with Erin through November 2018. Will do outreach and coordination with the Open Space projects, working mostly with Kinali Dorm but also Willow Bend and Sinagua Middle School. Her education is in urban planning and sustainable development.

**C. Continuation of Open Spaces Commission Strategic Plan Development**  
(5 Minutes) - Robert Wallace. Requested Action: Informational

Mr. Wallace explained that he has had discussions with professionals within the City to prepare the necessary revisions for the Open Space Commission Strategic Vision. This vision will help the commission identify what kind of advisory role they can play for City Council. He mentioned that the revisions will build on the current strategic plan. Mr. Wallace has met with the Chair and Vice-Chair to get their recommendations and draft these revisions.

Mr. Wallace was encouraged to focus on setting strategies and actions that the Commission could complete rather than recreating the Open Space Strategic Plan that is already in place. They are working on a draft now and will ask for feedback soon. The idea is to work on the revisions in segments.

Mr. Burton mentioned that are using the [Marin County Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan 2008](#) as an example. He emphasized that the example is very robust and includes more detail than the Commission would need, but that they could use it as a template to create a simpler version. Mr. Wallace will share this plan.

Mrs. Thomas mentioned that it would be good to include an implementation plan within the Strategic Plan so that there are steps identified for meeting goals. Mr. Zimmerman asks for clarification on the goal of the Strategic Plan and whether or not it was intended as an amendment to the Regional Plan. Ms. Antonopoulos responded that the Open Space Commission has noted in the past that the Open Space element of the Regional Plan needs to be updated and this will be in front of the Commission as a priority action when the time comes to rewrite the Regional Plan.

#### **D. Parcel Review and How Information is Conveyed to Community**

**Development.** (20 Minutes) - Charity Lee. Requested Action: Informational  
Charity Lee, Real Estate Manager for the City of Flagstaff, presented on how they review City parcels and communicate this to the public. She showed a map that displays City parcels. She has been working with Carmen Prior, Real Estate Specialist, whose job it is to gather all the information available on City parcels. She has compiled this data with the goal of thinking about affordable housing, but it can also be used to think about Open Space.

Mrs. Lee then showed the commission the Open Space parcels both designated and not yet designated. She noted that she knows the Commission is looking for areas that could be Open Space in the future.

Mrs. Lee noted that they before any property goes in front of Council, they discuss the parcels with Property and Development. They also discuss the parcels with the Open Space Commission and IDS to determine what the parcels could be used for. They then go to City Council to request their input on what should become of the parcel (development, Open Space, etc.).

Mrs. Lee mentioned that she is very proud that they completed the project in one year and that it is very robust. Mr. Burton noted that the Commission would be more than happy to review any parcels that they would like input on. Mrs. Lee added that their goal is to communicate clearly and give the Council the information they need to be well informed in decisionmaking about the City parcels.

### **6. Reports and Updates**

#### **A. Open Space Management Report (5 Minutes) - Robert Wallace**

Mr. Wallace completed Arizona State Park Reports that are due each year due to the conservation easement that is on Picture Canyon/Observatory Mesa. These will be published soon.

Mr. Wallace and his staff are addressing a public concern about an unauthorized trail section on Observatory Mesa.

The Open Space Program is applying for an Invasive Plant Grant to mitigate and improve the health of habitat of the Picture Canyon Preserve. On an unrelated note, vandalism has occurred in the Preserve with spray paint on ponderosa pine trees and a tipping over of a portable toilet which Mr. Wallace is mitigating. They also just finished a Natural Area map for the Preserve.

The McMillan Mesa community survey has been reopened for one more month. They are promoting it on social media and in the Open Space newsletter. Mrs. Antonopoulos said it will be in Cityscape and hopes the Commissioners can get the word out. Staff will put together an email for the commission to share the survey and volunteer to survey people at trailheads. These responses will be used in the management plan for the mesa.

Schultz Creek trailhead concept plan put on hold while community outreach continues. They are hoping to get feedback and hold an open house this fall, too. The Heritage Preservation Commission recommended a new concept be developed on the far west of the property.

Mr. Wallace has participated in several Flagstaff Trail Initiative meetings to discuss collaboration on projects. He will present these at an upcoming public meeting.

Open Space Program has been meeting with FUTS and Parks to discuss uniformity in their signage that looks professional throughout the Flagstaff area.

Mr. Burton suggested a newspaper article in the Daily Sun to promote Picture Canyon, explain the lasting negative impacts of vandalism, and promote the Observatory Mesa survey.

Tuesday, September 4<sup>th</sup> there will be a brief presentation to update the Council on open spaces, etc.

**B. Open Space Events and Outreach Report (5 Minutes) - Erin O'Keefe**

Ms. Erin O'Keefe, Events and Outreach Coordinator, explained that they hosted their first Indigenous Youth STEM Academy (IYSA) at Picture Canyon. They had nine participants from Kinlani Dorm. They joined a Willow Bend tour and heard from a Hopi guide on medicinal plants. Marina Vasquez, Mayan Traditional Knowledge Scholar, showed the students how to make salve and toothpaste.

Ms. O'Keefe noted that at the end of October they will have the Hopi and Navajo Astronomy Outreach Program that is run through Lowell Observatory who will

do telescope viewing on Navajo astronomy. They will have a private tour of the Lowell Observatory.

Upcoming events include Science in the Park on September 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10:00am-2:00pm at Wheeler Park. This would be a good opportunity to get input on the McMillan Mesa community survey. There will be a guided tour of Picture Canyon on September 29<sup>th</sup> (must RSVP). Finally, November 3<sup>rd</sup> is last Picture Canyon tour hosted by Willow Bend and will be led by Neil Weintraub.

**7. Information Items To and From (5 Minutes) – All**

Mr. Wallace will put the Flagstaff Trails Initiative on Future Agenda Items.

Mrs. Thomas noticed that one of the characteristics missing from the eight open space characteristics that they consider for open space is viewsheds. She has noticed that light development and light impacts have not been considered much in viewsheds. Ms. Antonopoulos said that staff can bring someone in to discuss the Dark Sky light zones and how they relate to future development.

Staff mentioned that they hope to discuss a change to the title of the Open Space program area and commission in order to better communicate with the public about natural areas.

Mr. Zimmerman mentioned that the National Trust for Historic Preservation designated Route 66 as a National Historic Trail with 58,000 signatures. This will make it the 20<sup>th</sup> National Historic Trail in the country.

**8. Future Agenda Items (5 Minutes) - All**

**A. Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Amy Hagin**

**B. Fire Department Thinning Projects and Open Space Health, Matt Millar**

**C. Observatory Mesa Natural Area Access and Trail Planning, Martin Ince**

**D. Fox Glenn and Potential Open Space, TBD**

**E. County Parks and Recreation Update, TBD**

**F. What is the Flagstaff Trails Initiative?, Robert Wallace**

**G. Discussion of Open Space name, Robert Wallace**

**9. Adjournment**

Chair Burton adjourned the meeting at 5:10pm. All in favor.

**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 \_\_\_\_\_, 2017.

Robert Wallace, Staff Liaison