



MINUTES

City of Flagstaff Open Spaces Commission

October 11th, 2019

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
Jackie Thomas, Vice-Chair
William Wilson

Jim Burton
Jack Welch
Kate Stanley
Vacant

STAFF LIAISON:

Robert Wallace, Open Space Specialist

1. Call to Order

Vice-Chair Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:04pm.

2. Roll Call

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair Burton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Burton
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vice-Chair Thomas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Welch
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Wilson	<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Stanley
	<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner (<i>Vacant</i>)

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.

No public participation.

4. Approval of August 26th, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Wilson motioned to approve the August 26th, 2019 minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All voted in favor.

5. Business

A. Introductions (10 minutes) – All, Requested Action: Informational/Discussion

Commissioner Jack Welch, new to the Commission and resident of Flagstaff for 20 years, introduced himself to the rest of the Commission.

Councilmember Austin Aslan was also in attendance as the new liaison to City Council in accordance with the new structure to aid in decision-making.

B. Council Committee on Parks and Recreation and Open Space Bond Measure Discussion (60 minutes) Robert Wallace, Nicole Antonopoulos. Requested Action: Informational/Discussion

Mr. Wallace outlined the proposed priority Open Space budget items that may be funded by the new bond measure from the transportation initiative that will be shared with Parks and Recreation. The needs specific to Open Space are small in comparison with Parks and Recreation, so the final decisions will be based on bonding capacity and lower priority items may not be funded. However, this bond is an opportunity for Open Space to add capacity and lend monetary support that has not been available since Open Space was created.

The following are the prioritized budget items:

1. Maintenance of Open Spaces including trails, restrooms, fencing, and other facilities upkeep is the biggest challenge. Currently, only \$11 per acre is being spent on maintenance, but other cities with open spaces usually spend about \$200 per acre. The proposed cost is up to \$620,000 per year on an ongoing basis.
2. Hire a new full time employee for on-site management of Open Space properties including informing visitors of rules and regulations, enforcement, monitoring, and supporting improvement projects. This would be an ongoing cost.
3. Pursue land acquisitions to create an integrated system and allow for better preservation of Open Spaces and provide interconnectivity with trails and neighborhoods. Specific parcels have already been identified and prioritized by the Commission in the past. This is a one-time cost.
4. Improve the trail system at Observatory Mesa including formalizing trails and restoring unauthorized trails as a one-time cost. Councilmember Aslan asked whether there was a master trail plan with Lowell Observatory. Ms. Antonopoulos assured him that there is a plan in process and Lowell Observatory has been a strong partner and ally with collaborations already in place for education with the Indigenous Youth STEM Academy.

5. Increase public access points for Observatory Mesa. The current access points are located in Railroad Springs, Thorpe Park, Cheshire, and A-1 Mountain. Potential additions include a new parking area at Lowell Observatory and new access in Hidden Hollow. Commissioner Burton also suggested utilizing the Santa Fe Trail area to the west of Lowell Observatory. Commissioner Welch asked whether the Loop Trail is considered an access point to Observatory Mesa; while it does connect to the trails on Observatory Mesa, it is not designated as an access point.
6. Hire a full time employee to work directly on Open Space educational objectives to lead courses, volunteer efforts, and visitor programming. Open Space already does many of these types of efforts with the assistance of VISTA positions, but as the City has received VISTA positions already, it is not guaranteed those would still be available in the future.
7. Expansion of experiential educational curriculum for Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) teachers. This item was originally Priority Item #9, but the Commission agreed to move it up in the rankings due to the overall importance of education and the potential benefit of increasing volunteers. Chair Burton also suggested combining this item with Item #6 if need be as an additional responsibility of that position. Vice-Chair Thomas pointed out that this could also be an internship position.
8. Expand the invasive plant program to McMillan Mesa and continue efforts at Picture Canyon. The Commissioners discussed the need for this effort to be collaborative with other entities as weed management has widespread effects. Commissioner Burton agreed that partnerships are necessary for this kind of work, but also urged that McMillan Mesa should remain the top priority as it is surrounded by private property and only the City is responsible for the management of that area.
9. Install composting toilets at Picture Canyon, Observatory Mesa, and Schultz Creek. McMillan Mesa was not included as it would be a good place to partner with Parks and Recreation and restrooms were not identified as a need by the public.
10. Improve the Picture Canyon trailhead. Currently, there are only nine designated parking spots. To remedy this, land can be purchased from the Arizona State Land Department (Parcel Section 8, T21N, R08E) to expand the parking and access. The City purchased a similar parcel in 2012.
11. Complete the trail system through Picture to connect it to surrounding neighborhoods.
12. Resurfacing and maintenance of El Paso Road, which is the access road to Picture Canyon. This has been a recent issue, so has not been presented to the Commission previously. El Paso Road is technically not a street, so it has not been maintained as part of the City's street inventory. The Commission agreed that while maintaining this road is important, it should not be the

responsibility of Open Space. Mr. Wallace and Ms. Antonopoulos will investigate this issue further and report back to the Commission. This item was originally Priority Item #10, but was decided to be the lowest priority.

Commissioner Burton expressed concern about funding ongoing costs such as new employees with this bond, as those efforts may not be sustainable in the future.

Chair Burton highlighted that McMillan Mesa does not seem to be in the proposed items as much as the other Open Space properties and should be included.

The Schultz Creek trailhead was not included on the list as City Council has already allotted money for that project and Open Space will be given final direction soon. The specific options for this project were not presented to the Commission, but the options were crafted based on input from the Commission and the public survey.

A joint committee with Parks and Recreation will be meeting on October 21st to further prioritize all items. Mr. Wallace will make the suggested edits, and Commissioners Wilson and Welch and Vice-Chair Thomas will be in attendance.

C. McMillan Mesa Management Plan Review. (10 minutes) – All, Requested Action: Discussion

Mr. Wallace presented the final version of the McMillan Mesa Management Plan to the Commission. There were no suggested edits, but the Commission discussed the history of scenic easements on McMillan Mesa and the potential material it may provide for interpretive signage. Vice-Chair Thomas suggested collaborating with an archaeology class at Northern Arizona University in order to find out more of the history and offered to send the professor's information to Mr. Wallace.

D. Subcommittee Update. (20 minutes) – All, Requested Action: Discussion

The Financial Subcommittee gave an update on funding the cultural survey for the rezoning application of McMillan Mesa. The potential cost of the survey will be around \$17,000. The Subcommittee looked into applying for the Southwest Intervention Fund, which would cover half of the cost if the City covers the other half. As they have not heard back yet from the budget team if half of the cost will be feasible, the Subcommittee aims to apply in February.

6. Reports and Updates

A. Open Space Management and Events and Outreach Report (5 Minutes) – Robert Wallace, Requested Action: Informational

Mr. Wallace emailed the Open Space Management and Events and Outreach Reports to the Commission before the meeting. He briefly outlined some of their work including the success of trail counters at Picture Canyon so far and the start

of events with the Indigenous Youth STEM Academy with Killip Elementary School at Lowell Observatory on Observatory Mesa.

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

None

8. Future Agenda Items (5 Minutes) - All

- Next meeting: October 28th, 2019
- City Real Estate Story Map Review
- Viewshed Protection Update
- Electric Bike and Electric Scooter Update
- FUTS and Open Space
- Subcommittee Update
- Possible Chamber of Commerce presentation
- Possible Economic Vitality presentation

9. Adjournment

Chair Burton adjourned the meeting at 5:42pm.

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 _____, 2019.



Robert Wallace, Staff Liaison