



# MINUTES

## City of Flagstaff Open Spaces Commission

November 25<sup>th</sup>, 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  
Eric Nolan

#### STAFF LIAISON:

Robert Wallace, Open Space Specialist

#### 1. **Call to Order**

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

#### 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Nolan

#### 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.

Jeff Goulden, resident on Laurel Loop, shared his thoughts on four City-owned parcels just north of Campbell Meadows. These parcels are owned by Parks and Recreation, and the current plan is to create a multi-use field. Mr. Goulden highlighted opportunities for Flagstaff Urban Trail System (FUTS) connections through that area and encouraged that trails be considered in the plan. He also mentioned that part of the area contains a section of floodplain and could have Open Space value. Chair Burton expressed that since Parks and Recreation already owns the property, the area cannot be changed to Open Space, but the Commission can bring up trails to the Parks and Recreation Commission at the next joint Parks and Recreation – Open Spaces Committee (PROS) meeting.

#### **4. Approval of October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Wilson motioned to approve the October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Thomas. All voted in favor.

#### **5. Business**

##### **A. Open Space Matrix and Property Review (80 minutes) – Robert Wallace and Martin Ince, Requested Action: Informational/Discussion**

As one of the priority items for the PROS bond measure is to acquire new Open Space parcels, Mr. Wallace requested that the Commission begin to create a prioritized list of parcels that could be purchased by Open Space as a first step to making acquisition recommendations. A matrix was created (based on the Open Spaces Strategic Plan) and reviewed by the Commission to help determine which parcels have Open Space value including many criteria such as protecting cultural resources, scenic and ecological values, and FUTS connectivity. Areas that contributed to natural areas, greenways, and neighborwoods were considered to be the highest priority for Open Space. Two such regions are section 7 of Observatory Mesa and some state land parcels near Walnut Canyon. Mr. Wallace asked the Commissioners for feedback on the proposed process, the matrix and priorities, and the current list of properties to review.

There is already a list of properties that have been reviewed and deemed valuable as Open Space by the Commission and City Council. Mr. Wallace has been working on adding to that list other City properties that are qualified as undevelopable by Real Estate or have been dedicated for Open Space but not yet protected, as well as a handful of properties owned by other entities. Chair Burton noticed that some of the already reviewed properties have been incorporated into Open Space, such as McMillan Mesa, and Mr. Wallace will update the list.

The Commission discussed the best way to move forward. Chair Burton explained some of the difficulties the Commission faced last time they reviewed parcels, including spending months looking at parcels that were already owned by other City departments and were not actually viable options for Open Space. Mr. Wallace will bring forward specific parcels to the Commission with detailed information on zoning, whether those parcels have commitments already, who purchased the parcel, acreage, and location. The Commission will then use the matrix to evaluate each parcel, starting with the City-owned properties. Once those parcels have been evaluated and prioritized, the Commission will look at

State land and private parcels that are viable options for purchase. Vice-Chair Thomas recommended that each parcel for review be aligned with the priority areas in the strategic plan.

Mr. Wallace will be looking through and assessing parcel recommendations made by the Friends of the Rio de Flag to bring to the Commission at the December meeting. Many of the undevelopable parcels are along the Rio de Flag, but planning to acquire these parcels may be difficult in the near future as the path of the Rio de Flag may be changing with the planned flood control project by Army Corps of Engineers.

Commissioner Wilson expressed concern about the timeline, considering the short amount of time left for the PROS bond proposal and that the list of priority parcels will need public input. Chair Burton agreed, mentioning that last time it took the Commission six months to assess 17 properties.

Commissioner Nolan asked for clarification about whether Schultz Pass and Schultz Meadow are referring to the same property. Mr. Wallace explained that they are the same area, and Chair Burton further clarified that the area was allotted to Parks and Recreation rather than Open Space despite the Commission's recommendation.

**B. Schultz Creek Council Input (5 minutes)** Robert Wallace, Requested Action: Informational

Mr. Wallace gave a presentation on November 5<sup>th</sup> to City Council on the community feedback on the Schultz Creek parcel. He requested that City Council give input on where to spend the allocated money for access to the property.

City Council decided not to move forward with the project, but can revisit the issue if access problems come up in the future. Mr. Wallace is looking into reallocating those funds to a different Open Spaces project.

**C. Potential Land Transfer. (10 minutes)** – Robert Wallace, Requested Action: Informational/Discussion

Mr. Wallace showed the Commission a parcel of land that is being considered as a donation to the City as a protected Open Space parcel by the University Terrace Homeowners Association (HOA). The HOA requested, through Charity Lee with City Real Estate, that the Commission determine whether there is Open Space value in that parcel before the donation is considered further. The parcel (#112-47-031) is near a steep but complete section of FUTS and could provide an opportunity to realign the trail. However, it is closed in by two private parcels, that have been recommended to the City as Open Space but have not been purchased.

The Commission was open to considering it. However, Commissioner Nolan urged caution as acquiring the parcel would add a taxpayer expense in order to maintain it, and Chair Burton was concerned that unless the other two parcels are also acquired, this donated parcel will not provide any connectivity to the FUTS.

**D. PROS Bond Measure Update.** (10 minutes) – Robert Wallace, Requested Action: Informational/Discussion

Mr. Wallace shared the latest update of the PROS bond measure priorities. The language for the top three priorities was edited to include other priorities, and costs were adjusted accordingly. The top priorities are as follows:

1. *Conserve publicly owned open space areas*: includes maintenance, trails, and education
2. *Neighborhood Open Space Land Acquisitions*: includes Open Space Commission evaluation process
3. *Trail System at Observatory Mesa*: includes better access to the mesa, creating a master trail plan, and implementation with public scoping

Chair Burton highlighted that the use of “maintenance” in the descriptions was altered to be more conservation-focused.

The Commission discussed further edits. Commissioner Wilson suggested that the connection between each priority item and the Open Space strategic plan and regional plan be incorporated back into the descriptions. Commissioner Burton requested that the education be broadened to schools more generally rather than being restricted to Flagstaff Unified School District. Commissioner Nolan asked for clarification on what is intended by “cultural resources”, and as it was originally intended to refer to historical resources but the Commission wants to leave it open to include current resources, they agreed to change it to “heritage and cultural resources”.

Chair Burton asked whether the new employees were still included in the priorities, and Mr. Wallace explained that the general language of their potential tasks were included in the hopes of hiring a contracted employee instead.

The next PROS meeting will be on December 4<sup>th</sup> from 4-6pm in the Staff Conference Room. There was low turnout at the last meeting, so the Commissioners were encouraged to come to this next meeting.

**6. Reports and Updates**

**A. Open Space Management and Events and Outreach Report** (5 Minutes) – Leila Husain, Requested Action: Informational

Mr. Wallace sent a written report to the Commissioners.

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

Flagstaff Trails Initiative will be presenting to City Council on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6 pm. Vice-Chair Thomas will be attending.

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

- Next meeting: December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019, at 419 N Mogollon, 4-6pm

- Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Vitality
- Flagstaff Trails Initiative will come and present on their completed regional strategy and give more information about their public comment period and open house on January 15<sup>th</sup> at Flagstaff High School.

## 9. Adjournment

Chair Burton adjourned the meeting at 6:00pm.

### 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