



# MINUTES

## City of Flagstaff Open Spaces Commission

February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

4:00 pm – 5:00 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

Chair Burton

Vice-Chair Thomas

Commissioner Wilson

Commissioner Burton

Commissioner Welch

Commissioner Stanley

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.

No public participation.

**4. Approval of January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Welch motioned to approve the January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Thomas. All voted in favor.

**5. Business**

**A. PROS Package: OS Cost Estimate Breakdown.** (50 minutes) – All, Requested Action: Discussion/Decision

Mr. Wallace reviewed the goals of the Open Space Commission and background of the PROS bond package discussed at the January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting. The recommendation for Priority 2 in the PROS package, related to land acquisitions to create an integrated system of open space, had not been finalized yet. Mr. Wallace gave an overview of options for Priority 2 with the associated costs so that the Commission could decide on what to include.

Two types of open space are being considered in the PROS package: regional preserves and connectors. Regional preserves are intended to be open space hubs, while the connectors link them with features such as FUTS, hillsides, and floodplains.

In response to a question last week, Mr. Wallace showed where the proposed connectors overlap with the Flagstaff Loop Trail. The connectors are intended to complement the trail as the corridor for the trail is very narrow in some places and does not provide enough area for an open space.

Three parcels near Walnut Canyon were considered by the Commission for acquisition as a regional preserve. Each parcel is estimated to cost approximately \$6.4 million. Previously, the Commission had expressed interest in pursuing Section 30 (closest to the city). This parcel already has a lot of unauthorized use as a natural area. Section 28 is located just south of the Campbell Mesa Trail; Commissioner Welch highlighted its importance in proximity to the Flagstaff Loop Trail and Chair Burton mentioned that the Flagstaff Trails Initiative has proposed new trails in that area. Section 22 is the closest parcel to Walnut Canyon, and contains terrain that is difficult to develop on. All parcels are currently State Trust Lands. Chair Burton asked which parcel currently sees the highest use in that region, and the most used is Section 20 just south of old Walnut Canyon Road, but it was not included as it was projected as a future urban growth area and the Commission agreed that it should be omitted.

Mr. Wallace also reviewed three different options with varying costs for connector acquisition. The most expensive option (“Additional connector”) included purchasing areas that could eventually be acquired through development requirements, the moderately priced option (“Base connector”) excluded those areas, and the lowest cost (“Reduced connector”) only included the floodplain areas along the Rio when the parcel also included uplands.

Combinations of these options were presented to the Commission to select from. The Commission had already agreed to ask for approximately \$3.9 million

dollars, and the Commissioners came to a consensus that the total amount should not exceed \$30 million.

The Commissioners agreed on the value of asking for at least the Base connector option as the acquisition of those properties are in line with the FUTS plan and the goals reviewed at the beginning of the meeting, but discussed other options for the regional preserve acquisition. As the Commission could not come to a decision over which parcel to pursue, Commissioner Wilson suggested making the language more general to allow time for staff and the Commission to more carefully select which parcel to purchase and base the decision off of what lands are available for purchase.

Commissioner Nolan asked about the protections of these properties into the future. Mr. Wallace explained that a property would be perpetually Open Space if there is a conservation easement. Chair Burton further elaborated that an overlay such as preservation can also lead to areas being rezoned as Open Space. Commissioner Nolan urged making this clear to voters in the ballot for the bond measure.

Vice-Chair Thomas, while engaging in the discussion about State Lands due to a conflict of interest, gave an explanation of State Trust Lands. The intent of State Trust Lands are to ultimately generate revenue for schools. Each parcel has a specific beneficiary, and they all have management plans, so the value of the land needs to be considered. Recreation permits are required for any recreation to take place on the land, and no revenue is generated from recreation. There are currently no developed trails on these properties, and to create trails would require extensive cultural resource surveys.

Chair Burton expressed interest in having two options to suggest to the PROS Committee. The additional option would provide guidance if there was money remaining.

Chair Burton motioned to recommend acquisition in the Walnut Canyon Regional Preserve and base connectors (only) in the value of approximately \$22 million. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wilson. Vice-Chair Thomas abstained. All others voted in favor.

Mr. Ince (Multimodal Planner) briefly mentioned that a past bond for FUTS easements and Open Space was passed and approved without determining exactly which pieces of land were involved. He agreed with the Commission's vote not to select the specific parcels yet.

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

None

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

- Next meeting: February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- Legally Designated Open Space Management Plan update

## 8. Adjournment

Chair Burton adjourned the meeting at 5:07pm.

### 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