



MINUTES

City of Flagstaff Open Spaces Commission

June 22nd, 2020
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
VIRTUAL MEETING

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:

Andy Bessler
Jim Burton
Mark Loseth
Eric Nolan

Joseph Thomas
Jack Welch
William Wilson

STAFF LIAISON:

Robert Wallace, Open Space Specialist

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Nolan
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vice Chair Bessler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Thomas
<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Burton	<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Welch
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Loseth	

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 June 1st, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Nolan motioned to approve the June 1st, 2020 minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Loseth. All voted in favor.

5. Business

A. Legally Designated Open Space Management Plan (5 minutes) – All,
Requested Action: Vote to recommend the Management Plan for adoption by City Council

Mr. Wallace reviewed the small changes made to the Legally Designated Open Space Management Plan (LDOS) since the June 1st meeting including the planned minor changes suggested by Chair Wilson to improve the appendix and make the location descriptions of Observatory Mesa more clear. Other small changes were suggested by Commissioner Thomas to clarify overnight use and by Commissioner Loseth to ensure that ADA accessibility is included in the general section. City Council will be voting to adopt the LDOS on July 7th.

The Commission discussed some of the budgetary considerations for the LDOS. As the LDOS is a living document, the timeline for management actions can be adjusted based on budget availability. Commissioner Nolan asked about base costs of Open Space work, and Ms. Antonopoulos explained that the City of Flagstaff is already spending much less per year on Open Space than other cities following best practices (\$12.87/acre rather than \$200/acre). While this low funding amount is important to draw attention to, it will not be included in the LDOS.

Vice Chair Bessler motioned to approve the Legally Designated Open Space Management Plan with the additional edits suggested and to recommend to City Council for adoption. Commissioner Nolan seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

B. Economic Recession Plan and Potential Open Space Impact (10 minutes) –
Nicole Antonopoulos, Requested Action: Informational

Mr. Wallace shared the City's economic recession plan. The City of Flagstaff is now in the 3rd tier of "significant" recession with a reduction in revenues between 5 and 10%. Mr. Wallace has put together a series of budgets to plan for each recession scenario, incorporating some potential incoming grant funds. With a "significant" recession, the Open Space budget for Fiscal Year 21 is \$34,211.

The Commission discussed some of the implications of the reduced budget and a recession on Open Spaces. There is a lot of uncertainty about when the Open Space budget can be finalized, particularly since it is funded by the City's general fund which is greatly impacted by sales tax.

Vice Chair Bessler, with support from Councilmember Aslan, suggested revisiting the budget and the management plan on a regular basis at each Commission meeting.

C. Switzer Canyon Water Transmission Main Project (30 minutes) – Duke B. MacArthur, Requested Action: Discussion

Mr. MacArthur, project engineer, gave an overview of the Switzer Canyon Water Transmission Main Project. The project is replacing a 70-year-old water main that brings water into Flagstaff from near the Museum of Northern Arizona. The next phase of the project is in the planning stages, and Mr. MacArthur wanted to get approval from the Commission to allow for construction of the water main on Open Space property.

The preferred alignment would place the new pipe on a small part of McMillan Mesa Natural Area near Fir Ave. The only other options considered for alignment include (1) replacing where the existing water main is by crossing private property requiring easements and placing directly under a planned new City Stormwater facility or (2) putting the water main under the road which has a private Right-of-Way requiring costly easements, road materials, and traffic control. The specific relative costs for each of these options are uncertain at this point. The new water mains require digging a minimum of 4 feet deep and 30 feet wide.

Mr. Wallace gave more detail on the Open Space parcel in question (parcel #11003001B). He also showed pictures of the disturbance created by past phases of the project in other areas of Flagstaff. These disturbed areas have many invasive plants that have grown in and show what could happen on the property in question.

Mr. MacArthur explained that there is no revegetation plan yet as the location has not been selected, and offered to provide a revegetation plan when it is ready. However, they typically use the City's construction seeding standards. Commissioner Thomas, Vice Chair Bessler, and Chair Wilson expressed concern about the City's current seeding standards and requested to see the revegetation plan before approval of the proposed location in consideration of the long-term maintenance impacts. Similar concerns were brought up when the previous phase was approved by the Open Space Commission on November 13th, 2014. Mr. Wallace pointed out that a new seeding standard is currently being developed with The Arboretum at Flagstaff that could be used to inform this revegetation plan.

Chair: are there also utilities running alongside the road as well as under it?
Yes, but they are in right of way; may be impacted by the proposed location but may not be

Discussions may continue with Affordable Housing in the context of equitable access to Open Space as well as with the Parks and Recreation Commission since they were involved in the 2014 decision for the last phase as well.

Chair Wilson expressed appreciation for including the Open Space Commission in the conversation and the topic will be revisited at the next meeting.

D. FY21 Commission Plan (30 minutes) All, Requested Action: Discussion

The Commission continued their discussion from last meeting about priorities for FY21 that line up with the Open Space Commission's strategic plan and authority. Mr. Wallace provided a list of potential priorities that could have the biggest impact on Open Space work.

The Commission discussed the possible priority items. The following items were mentioned as a high priority:

- Update City codes, including those related to viewsheds
- LDOS revision
- McMillan Mesa rezone
- Revision of seeding procedures
- Financial sustainability, incorporating best practices from other cities and exploring possible bond measures or other funding sources to maintain Open Spaces
- Observatory Mesa Trail Plan
- Regional Plan 2030 revision

Vice Chair Bessler suggested focusing on a combination of city-wide and Open Space-specific items with consideration for varying timelines. For example, the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 revisions could ultimately inform an Open Space Master Plan.

At Chair Wilson's suggestion, Mr. Wallace will send out a quick survey so that all Commissioners can prioritize the items to revisit at the next meeting.

E. Regional Plan Overview for Upcoming Update (15 minutes) – Robert Wallace,
Requested Action: Informational/Discussion

Mr. Wallace suggested tabling this item for the next meeting to allow for a more detailed discussion. The Commission agreed.

F. Picture Canyon Thinning Project Update (5 minutes) – Robert Wallace,
Requested Action: Informational/Discussion

Mr. Wallace gave a brief update on the Picture Canyon thinning project based on the Picture Canyon Stewardship Plan. The Fire Department has received a grant to do the work, and they will be working with an archeologist to make sure that cultural sites will be preserved. This project will be moving forward this summer, but the specific start date is not set yet.

6. Reports and Updates

A. Open Space Management and Events and Outreach Report (5 minutes),
Requested Action: Informational

Mr. Wallace sent the report over email to the Commission. An application was sent to the Southwest Intervention Fund to fund a cultural survey at McMillan Mesa. There have been requests for development within McMillan Mesa for a riprap project for the new veteran's facility; however, this project was not presented to the Commission as there was not enough time. The Commission will be getting more information on this project, despite not being able to provide

feedback. Open Spaces also applied for a Catalina Grant for educational signage at Observatory Mesa.

7. Information Items To and From (10 Minutes) – All

NONE

8. Future Agenda Items (5 Minutes) - All

- Next meeting: July 27th, 2020 (Virtual or Sustainability Office 419 N. Mogollon St.)
- 3 priority items for the Commission
- Viewshed policy
- Economic recession plan and Open Space impacts
- Revisit the Switzer Canyon Water Transmission Main project
- FireWise property management
- Regional Plan overview
- Information about riprap project on McMillan Mesa

9. Adjournment

Chair Wilson adjourned the meeting at 6:04pm.

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 _____, 2020.



Robert Wallace, Staff Liaison