



MINUTES

City of Flagstaff Open Spaces Commission

Jan 4th, 2021
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 Loeth
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 5:07 pm.

2. Roll Call

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

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 Comment.

4. Approval of December 7th, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Bessler motioned to approve the December 7th, 2020 minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All voted in favor.

5. Business

A. APS Elden Substation Easement City Council Recommendation

All, Requested Action: Discussion, Decision

Mr. Wallace gave a recap from the last meeting about APS' request to alter their easement on McMillan Mesa. He had drafted a recommendation to City Council to come from the Open Spaces Commission. He opened this up to the Commission for feedback and edits.

Chair Wilson then asked the public for comment. Nat White commented that when the APS station was built, they designed it carefully to minimize impact and that APS was more than willing to work to be environmentally sensitive.

Chair Wilson asked for verification on the total net-footprint gain in favor of the APS easement adjustment. Mr. Wallace confirmed that the easement adjustment would expand the APS easement by approximately two square feet in their favor, as reported by APS. The area that would be returned to the Natural Area in exchange for a wider access from Gemini, is currently part of the driveway base and would have to be restored to natural conditions.

Chair Wilson said he would like to see wording that states the City will be fully compensated for the project even if the cost changes. He then asked if the seeding guidelines were appropriate for McMillan Mesa. Mr. Wallace responded that the restoration guidelines suggest a seeding mix with types of grass the Flagstaff Arboretum and Natural Channel Design think would be appropriate for the specific area. Chair Wilson said he would like to make sure all dates were filled in. Mr. Wallace agreed, noting that they will need to treat weeds for the first two years and then seed afterwards so invasive plants are more under control. He also agreed to reword the document to say that APS will cover the full cost of remediation in the identified area. Vice Chair Bessler added that APS can determine a limit if they want. He commented that there is an additional APS easement that has seen a lot of unauthorized traffic and has become a two-track road. He suggested that APS could additionally improve their other easements. He asked how many easements APS has on Open Space lands in Flagstaff and if the city had any kind of guidance for APS on these easements. Bryce Doty, Real Estate Manager, said he could not find any kind of master agreements on access issues or revegetation apart from the actual easement agreements themselves. He added that this could be incorporated into a recommendation. Vice Chair Bessler said he was fine with providing recommendation allowing this easement but would like to make sure to get additional restoration work completed on Open Space lands. Nicole Antonopoulos, Sustainability Director, said that the needs on each of the Open Space parcels vary significantly and encouraged discussing varying needs with APS.

Commissioner Burton commented if there was to be removal of vegetation such as ponderosa pines, they should be removed and not chipped or scattered. Mr. Wallace responded that work should not include removal of trees, just grass and shrubbery.

Vice Chair Bessler asked if the program preferred that APS do the work or contract externally. Amy Hagin, City Parks Manager, confirmed that APS would contract out work for restoration. Vice Chair Bessler asked if the City should arrange a contract and have APS reimburse the City. Ms. Hagin said the typical process is for the City to be at the table if APS contracts. Mr. Doty confirmed APS communicated that their preference would be to hire a contractor. Mr. Wallace communicated that he would create a scope of work to help direct the project.

Mr. Wallace gave a recap on the requested revisions. There will be an expanded request to include restoration of the 30ft easement from Gemini Rd to the FUTS trail. There will also be a request to add a gate from Gemini Rd to the Elden substation and a gate or barrier on the southern side of the APS easement coming from Gemini Rd. They will also request that Open Space should have input on the scope of work for this project.

Vice Chair Bessler asked if signage requirements should be included. Mr. Wallace answered that they had talked with APS about putting signs up in restoration areas, but hadn't talked about signage on gates. They decided to include a request for signage reading "authorized vehicles only."

Celia Barotz, member of the public, expressed support for what the Commissioners discussed. She said it is better to have more awareness at Council level on this topic.

Mr. Wallace explained that the next step was for the Commission to approve this letter with the agreed upon edits. Chair Wilson will sign the recommendation when edits are completed.

Vice Chair Bessler motioned to approve the recommendation letter pending revisions made by Robert Wallace. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All voted in favor.

Vice Chair Bessler asked to look at the legally designated Open Space Management Plan to see if there are any changes needed. Mr. Wallace agreed to put this on a future agenda.

6. Information Items To and From

A. Open Space Development Protocol Feedback – All

Mr. Wallace gave the Commission a reminder that the Open Space Development Protocol is still being worked on and requested feedback so it can be discussed in the next meeting.

7. Future Agenda Items - All

- Next meeting: January 25th, 2021
- Easements on Open Space areas
- Priority Based Budgeting. Jack Fitchett, Requested Action: Informational, Discussion.

8. Adjournment

Commissioner Bessler moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Chair Wilson. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 5:51pm.

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