



OPEN SPACE COMMISSION
Virtual Meeting – Join Teams Meeting

5/24/2021 4:00 p.m.



Minutes

Members Present

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner William Wilson (Chair) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Eric Nolan |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Andy Bessler (Vice-chair) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Joseph Thomas |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Jim Burton | <input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Jack Welch |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Mark Loeth | |

Councilmember / Liaison to the City Council

- Vice Mayor Becky Daggett

Staff and Others Present

- Sara Dechter – Community Development
- Cathy Guetschow – Administrative Specialist
- Martin Ince – Engineering Project Manager
- Rebecca Sayers – Parks & Recreation, and Open Space Director
- Sylvia Struss – Open Space VISTA
- Robert Wallace – Open Space Specialist
- Michele James – Guest
- Duke MacArthur - Guest

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Bessler, Loeth, Nolan, Thomas, and Wilson were present for roll call. Commissioner Burton joined the meeting at 4:04 p.m. Commissioner Welch was absent.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 26, 2021 MEETING MINUTES**

A motion was made by Commissioner Nolan to approve the April 26, 2021 minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Loeth. Motion passed unanimously with five (5) yea votes.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No public comments.

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

A. **Open Space Integrated System Planning**

Robert Wallace, Open Space Specialist, reminded the Commissioners that the open space integrated system planning is an opportunity to provide the City with recommendations regarding the 2004 Open Space and FUTS bond and how the remaining funds should be allocated for the support of the Commission’s vision for an integrated open space system by providing access for Flagstaff residents through dispersed areas throughout the City. Staff have narrowed their focus to six areas for inclusion in the integrated system that includes Continental 1 (1 parcel), Continental 2 (4 parcels), Fort Tuthill 1 (2 parcels), Fort Tuthill 2 (4 parcels), and Townsend Winona (7 parcels). The goal is to get the Commissions

input on what are the top priority property groupings for a potential inclusion in the open space system. Mr. Wallace reviewed the property spreadsheet and the definitions and their priority rankings to help Commissioners in their decision making for recommendations to City Council.

After some discussion, it was decided that each Commissioner would rank each grouping on the spreadsheet for potential open space and email their rankings to Mr. Wallace who will tally the results and come up with an overall priority for the groupings.

Sara Dechter, Community Development, gave an update on the hospitals plan for the use of the property located by Fort Tuthill. She mentioned that the hospital plans on holding neighborhood meetings and open houses this summer, along with talks/presentations to the City and County's different Commissions. If the Open Space Commission would like a detailed presentation from NA Health, they would need to contact Planning Develop Manager Tiffany Antol or visit NA Health's website to sign up for updated notifications on the project.

B. Switzer Canyon Water Main Restoration Plan Update

Mr. Wallace reminded the Commissioners that the Water Services Department met with them regarding Phase 4 of the Switzer Canyon water main property and the potential use of some zoned open space property. They wanted a recommendation from the Open Space Commission regarding the use of open space property for installing a replacement water line through it. The Commission stated that they would like to see a restoration plan in place before moving forward with the project.

Staff have been working with local citizens that are part of a grant for treating weeds in the area, Flagstaff Arboretum staff, and a few members of the Museum of Northern Arizona to draft a restoration plan for the project to bring back to the Commission for review so they can provide input if needed. The restoration plan would act as a guide for the Water Services Department for restoring the property.

C. Commission Strategic Plan Updates and FY22 Commission Priorities

Mr. Wallace reminded the Commissioners that the Open Spaces Strategic Plan is a working document that the Commission can update to change their priorities or goals.

Commissioners requested the following changes be made to the Plan:

- Page 6: There might be a difference in the actual mileage for Observatory Mesa.
- Page 10: Under Goal 1, Strategy 1.1, number 2, it was asked if it would still be an action item for the Open Space Commission since Open Space has transitioned with Parks and Recreation.
- Page 15: In the heading, the fiscal year should be changed to 2021. Change "Awaiting Start Date" to "Ongoing."
- Page 17: Add new updates to criteria and definitions
- Time frames need to be edited.

Mr. Wallace will provide the final draft to the Commissioners at a future meeting.

D. FY21 Commission Priorities

1. Greater Observatory Mesa Trail Plan

Staff is continuing to move forward with the Observatory Mesa Trail Plan and have met with Lowell Observatory reporting that they were very interested in a partnership. Staff is currently working with the American Conservation Experience to do a survey of the property in locating where unauthorized trails and existing roadbeds exist. The information could be used as a foundation for determining a trail system that would provide connectivity through Lowell Observatory to the Observatory Mesa

Natural Area and the neighboring Forest Service. Mr. Wallace stated that they would like to provide a community input opportunity later this summer.

2. McMillan Mesa Rezone Update

Mr. Wallace reported that staff received a copy of the first draft of the legal survey and was provided minimal feedback. The draft will be completed by the end of May along with the cultural survey that will then be resubmitted for internal review.

3. City Code Review Drafting

No update given.

E. McMillan Mesa Community Celebration

Commissioner Bessler feels that the McMillan Mesa is central to Flagstaff and is a good unifier for all residents suggesting that it has a chance to highlight the Open Space Program and the importance of protecting open space within the City.

Mr. Wallace stated that if the Commission was interested in a subcommittee to plan and carry out an event, that he could help arrange a subcommittee group of up to a maximum of three people. It was also noted that the Commission could come up with ideas on their own of what a community celebration would look like, identify how the Open Space Program could assist, and identify what tasks the Commission could undertake on their own.

Commissioner Wilson would like to see the rezoning to go through before having a celebration for Proposition 413 and the people who voted for it. Commissioner Bessler volunteered to organize a subcommittee for the celebration. Commissioner Wilson also volunteered for the subcommittee.

F. City Reentry Plan Discussion

Mr. Wallace reported that the City is currently in phase three of the reentry plan which calls for all meetings to be virtual. When the City goes to phase four of the reentry plan, the Board and Commission meetings will occur on a regular schedule with new protocols and provisions related to hybrid meetings that are currently being explored. The Clerk's office is asking the Liaisons of the different Commissions to determine where their Commission would like to hold their meetings once they go back to an in-person meeting. A Commission will also have the option to choose if they would like to continue with virtual meetings or go to a hybrid setting in a city conference room of their choice that would give them the option to phone in. The Commissioners indicated that they were interested in having hybrid meetings at the Aquaplex.

G. Boards and Commissions Newsletter Content Opportunity

Mr. Wallace reported that the City's Clerks office had published a Boards and Commissions newsletter that featured updates from the different Commissions. The Clerk's office is requesting that information for the upcoming newsletter be turned in by the end of May. Mr. Wallace volunteered to help prepare and submit material to the Clerk's office if the Commission was interested in submitting a story, photos, or a report.

Commissioner Bessler suggested submitting a report on the merge of Open Space to the Parks and Recreation Department and on recommendations of open space parcels to purchase. Vice Mayor Daggett stated that the newsletter is an important way for City Council members to stay in touch with what is going on with the different Commissions and that most of them share the newsletters with the

public. She suggested using it as an opportunity as a way of letting the public know what the Open Space Commission is working on and possibly piquing their interest to become involved.

6. REPORTS AND UPDATES

A. Council Representative Report, Vice Mayor Becky Daggett

No update given.

B. Open Space Management Report

- The Wednesday Weed Pulls at Picture Canyon have started and are held every other Wednesday at 7:00 a.m. with the next Weed Pull on Wednesday, June 2, 2021.
- Ace American Conservation Experience has been busy removing invasive Siberian Elm trees on the McMillan Mesa utilizing the Tree Grant. The tree trunks and larger branches are being cut into firewood size which are available to the public.
- On May 15, the Arizona Trail Association Gear Girls cleaned up branches along N. Izabel St. that had been cut by Ace American Conservation Experience.
- 68 Students and 12 Chaperones from Texas along with 14 weed warriors pulled invasive weeds behind Foxglenn Park along the FUTS Trail up to the Coconino County Humane Society.
- The pre-application to restore unauthorized trails at Picture Canyon through the Arizona State Parks Program has been approved and staff has now been invited to submit a full grant application.
- Guided hikes will be held at the McMillan Mesa with the first one hosted by Willow Bend. Family guided hikes will be held in June, July, and August on Saturday mornings. More information can be found on the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Facebook page and on Instagram.
- Staff has partnered with the Arizona Watchful Wildlife Experience with in-person events. Upcoming events include a prairie dog watch in June at Campbell Mesa and Open Space staff will be hosting a bug safari in July at the Francis Short Pond. More information can be found on the Arizona Watchful Wildlife Facebook page or on Instagram.
- The Open Space Program will be participating in the Festival of Science that will be held in September by hosting a plain air event. Artists of all ages will be welcomed to paint or draw at all open spaces. Easels, paints, and pencils will be available for those who are interested in trying it out.
- The consideration of adoption of ordinance 2021-11 was read for the final time and adopted on April 20, 2021. The ordinance amends the easements on McMillan Mesa with Arizona Public Service (APS) and US West Wireless, LLC. It is an approved in agreement in remedial services with APS with conditions providing for the restoration of lands that are affected by the easement boundary changes. Staff will be working with APS to get the necessary quotes from different organizations for the restoration project regarding weed treatment.

C. Open Space Program Budget Report

Mr. Wallace reported that Open Space is on track for this fiscal year's spending.

7. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS TO AND FROM THE COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

Mr. Wallace reminded the Commissioners that the June meeting was rescheduled to June 22, 2021, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

8. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETING

Next meeting: June 22, 2021, 4-6 PM

- NA Health Presentation

- FY22 Open Space Program Budget Discussion
- Open Space Easements – Bryce Doty
- Schultz Creek Natural Area Continued Update
- Program Funding
- Continued, FY21 Commission Priorities
 - Observatory Mesa Trail Plan
 - McMillian Mesa Rezoning Amendment Application
 - City Code Review

9. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bessler moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.