

City of Ashland  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
TRAIL MASTER PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 24, 2017

**PRESENT:**      **Parks Commissioners:** Michael Gardiner, Jim Lewis  
**Additional Committee Members:** David Chapman, Torsten Heycke and Stephen Jensen, Jim McGinnis

**City and APRC Staff:** GIS Analyst Lea Richards, Forestry Resource Division; APRC Director Michael Black; APRC Interim Parks Superintendent Jeff McFarland; APRC Executive Assistant Susan Dyssegard and APRC Minute-taker Betsy Manuel

**ABSENT:**      Luke Brandy, Chris Chambers, Cory Darrow

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chapman called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. at 51 Winburn Way, Ashland OR.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Heycke moved to approve the Minutes of February 24, 2017 as presented. Lewis seconded and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

**III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

a. Open Forum

**IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

There were none.

**V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

➤ *Complete Discussion about Mission, Vision, and Goals*

McFarland reviewed the agreed upon changes beginning with the updated Mission statement. Changed bullet points include the following:

**MISSION**

- Describe and maintain rather than describe
- Natural areas rather than surrounding rural
- For all residents and visitors rather than residents
- Continue to use rather than establish

The paragraph beginning with "In addition, the committee..." was deleted.

## **VISION**

Chapman proposed that the Vision Statement be updated as follows:

Trails connect people to nature, to well-being, to people, to our community and to our region. These vital connections are the key to the continuing success of our trail system.

Chapman explained that in his opinion, the original Vision statement was too similar to the Mission Statement. After researching the matter, he modified the statement to incorporate ideas that resonated with him.

There followed a brief discussion regarding the use of the word people; and what that word implies. Jensen suggested that the statement be modified to read Trails connect people to nature, to well-being, to other people, to our community and to our region as a way to distinguish the connectivity with those one does not know. The statement was further modified, incorporating a statement by Gardiner: Trails connect people to other people, to nature, to well-being, to our community and to our region.

McFarland noted that recreation should also be reflected in the wording. It was agreed that recreation was inherent in well-being.

McGinnis commented on the increasing importance of alternative modes of transportation in efforts to decrease greenhouse emissions. He stated that the plan document promoted a goal to decrease greenhouse emissions by 46% over time. To accomplish that reaching goal, 50% of all movement in the City would have to come from alternative modes of transportation such as bicycles. McGinnis noted that Ashland's trails system was one element that could support that outcome.

McGinnis recommended that the transportation element could be defined as non-motorized. Jensen inquired about motorized vehicles for the disabled. McFarland noted that some trails like the Greenway permitted both motorized and non-motorized vehicles.

Chapman proposed that the greenhouse emission statement be shortened to indicate general support for the environment. Black agreed, stating that the broader term "environment" strengthens all efforts to enhance the natural world.

Bullet point three under Mission was changed as follows: Enhance the quality of life for all residents and visitors of Ashland through improved recreation and transportation opportunities in support of our health, wellness and environment.

In response to a question by Heycke, McFarland explained that equestrian opportunities were limited to specific trails. Trail signs trails where horses are permitted.

Taking the global view, Chapman noted that user conflicts and how to resolve them have been a focus over the years, intimating that the topic might be included in the updated document. Black suggested that legal

challenges resulting from user conflicts should be acknowledged – or at least remain top-of-mind. Heycke supported the concept, advocating that discussion of user conflicts be incorporated into the goals and objectives.

### Format

It was agreed that the Vision Statement would be placed first in the document followed by the Mission.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Jensen questioned the distinction between goals and objectives as seen through the eyes of the general public. Black recommended that the terms be explained. He noted that goals were not necessarily measurable – goals outline a broad focus. (big picture). Objectives provide benchmarks that are measurable.

McGinnis advocated for increased attention to safety factors. He stated that safety concerns at Willow Wind School had led to resistance to the proposed expansion of the Bear Creek Greenway to Emigrant Lake.

McFarland summarized comments that had been identified as potential goals. Topics include but are not limited to risk management, legal implications and safety concerns. It was agreed that the subjects would be revisited once the goal discussion was completed.

## **GOALS**

### **A. *Transportation, Trail Access and Connectivity***

- Provide trails as an integral part of Ashland's transportation system.

Further discussion about motorized and non-motorized uses resulted in an effort to craft language that expanded the reach beyond bicycles and pedestrians. It was agreed that a glossary of terms would be integrated into the document to provide insight into buzz-words such as "active transportation". Black highlighted the value of using the term, stating that the phrase was federally recognized.

Heycke inquired about redundancy between the Trails Master Plan and other plans such as Ashland's Transportation Systems Plan. (TSP). Black agreed, stating that there was overlap between the plan and others. He explained that there were various sources of funding available based on the type of plan it was. Heycke noted that many plans addressed the same issue, making it difficult to determine who the responsible party was. Black replied that each entity pursues their own plan, but there were benefits to inclusion in other plans such as the TSP. The more often elements are listed, the more validity it has. Lewis pointed out that the Trails Master Plan was the go-to document for Parks, just as the TSP was for the City of Ashland. Jackson County provides regional oversight.

#### **Objective A-1**

- Provide active transportation routes throughout Ashland.

#### **Objective A-2**

- Provide a diversity of trails

#### **Objective A-3**

- Provide safe routes to community nodes.

Black stated that providing safe routes to school conjured up bike lanes, crosswalks and sidewalks rather than trails. Chapman concurred, noting that all routes to schools should be safe. Black agreed to refine the language of objective A-3 to distinguish trails from other routes.

**Objective A-4**

- Provide linkages to municipal transit systems.

Black noted that A-4 was specific to multi-modal travel.

McGinnis initiated a brief conversation about the difference between a path and a trail. Black advocated for differentiating between trails rather than describing paths and trails. Heycke cautioned against redefining paths because of the potential for multiple definitions.

**TRANSPORTATION, TRAIL ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY**

**Old Section B**

Chapman suggested adding B objectives to A objectives, deleting section B. Black noted that in the context of this master plan, trails provide connectivity rather than transportation.

Jensen suggested that section A speaks to all three concepts - Transportation, Trail Access and Connectivity. Black noted that A3 and B1 could be combined to cover access to trails and safe routes. He volunteered to take the concepts and put them into writing for review and approval.

**Objective B-2**

- Provide parking at major trailheads. **Move to A**

**Objective B-3**

- Provide cross-town connectivity and links to trail systems in the surrounding public lands and communities. **Stand alone**

**Objective B-4**

- Provide connections to important community centers and environmental features **Move to A-3**

**Objective B-5**

- Provide trail access information at major bus stops **Move to A-4**

***Natural Environment and Citizen's Rights***

**New Section B**

It was agreed by consensus that this section would be renamed. Jensen agreed to re-word the goal for this section. He stated that there were corresponding responsibilities to citizen rights.

McGinnis asked whether safety should be incorporated at this point in the document.

Black explained the difference between recreational immunity and discretionary immunity. Recreational immunity generally applies if a party is injured while in a Park where there is no fee for entrance. The park is typically not held liable. Discretionary immunity applies when an individual, such as a Parks employee creates a hazard that

causes an injury resulting from a lack of an action such as failing to properly mark a dangerous area. In that case, the individual and his supervisor could be sued. He argued against a statement that implied that citizens have a right to a safe trail. Alternatively, Black proposed a statement that indicated that Parks would make every effort to evaluate trails and address safety concerns. He added that design standards for parks could be established to prevent dangerous situations or create places that lend themselves to illicit conduct.

McFarland noted that Parks gathers information from risk management people regarding safety matters. Formal safety meetings are conducted on a regular basis, and signage is more detailed or specific when depicting hazards. It was agreed that a safety statement would be added to Objective E4.

- Stewardship of the natural environment and rights and concerns of citizens are addressed.

#### ***Planning for Trails***

#### **New Section C**

- Ensure that trail planning is intentionally integrated with City planning and vice/versa.

Black noted that the City of Ashland has a pre-application process that alerts APRC, allowing for commentary if the planning action would impact Parks. He stated that there is no guarantee that every issue will be caught or addressed, but he indicated that the process works well. Black suggested adding a goal to stay integrated and involved with Planning processes.

Discussion focused on various tools used by different jurisdictions to flag actions or track land uses. The largest and most widespread is the GIS system of mapping. McGinnis commented that the Forest Service has map overlays designed to identify potential conflicts on the ground. Chapman highlighted the need for a mechanism for follow-up on planning actions.

It was agreed that rewritten goals and objectives would be ready for review at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Black called for additional focus on maps and corridors within Ashland's jurisdictions. He asked that each member look for additional information that should be added into the existing documentation. Maps would be updated accordingly.

Lewis advocated for ideas that would lead to strategies and tactics that would move Parks forward. He stated that the identification of areas to expand the trail system, or integrate new properties would be helpful and would aid in the prioritizing of projects for the next ten years.

Black expressed a need to identify the most advantageous route for the Greenway expansion project. He asked that the Update Committee look at the possibilities property by property – highlighting the value of the various perspectives when developing a tentative plan and possible alternatives.

McGinnis asked about regional connectivity – particularly regarding land that might have benefited the Greenway project. Lewis noted that property sales are typically not planning actions and therefore Parks would not be notified. He stated that new owners represent a new opportunity for negotiation.

**VI. ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the Agenda for the meeting of April 7, 2017 would include a review of maps with urban boundaries.

**VII. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION**

Chapman confirmed that the next meeting would be held at the Community Development Center at 51 Winburn Way in the Siskiyou Room on April 7, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (*the meeting was later canceled due to staff illness*).

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Manuel, Minute-Taker  
Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission