

**MINUTES FOR THE STUDY SESSION
ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
Monday, May 2, 2016
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way**

Mayor Stromberg called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. in the Siskiyou Room.

Councilor Seffinger, Rosenthal, Morris, Voisin, and Marsh were present. Councilor Lemhouse was absent.

1. Public Input

Huelz Gutcheon/2253 Hwy 99/Addressed global climate change and explained the ocean would rise twelve feet if Greenland's 1.8-mile thick ice melted. Climate experts were now saying climate change was worse than they reported in Paris.

2. Look Ahead review

City Administrator Dave Kanner reviewed items on the Look Ahead.

3. 2016 Ashland Forest Plan draft review and presentation by the Forest Lands Commission

Forest Lands Commission Chair Frank Betlejewski started the presentation on the 2016 Ashland Forest Plan. The Commission updated the 1992 plan and built a website. Ashland owned approximately 1,100 acres of forest land and were adding 172 acres from the Parks and Recreation Department previously not in the plan. He accessed the website, <http://gis.ashland.or.us/2016afp/> and explained the features.

Commissioner John Williams presented the Ashland Forest Plan overview that included:

- Pre-settlement – Native peoples low-impact Ashland Watershed
- 1860-1890 – Scattered logging, cattle, and sheep grazing – water supply degraded
- 1935-1990 – Logging, fire suppression, several large wildfires, run-away vegetation
- 1992-1995 City Council mandates active forest management. City adopts first comprehensive Ashland Forest Plan and established Ashland Forest Lands Commission
- Modern Era Management 1992-2015: Active management with 3 primary objectives:
 - Protection and promotion of the City's water supply
 - Maintenance and promotion of forest health
 - Reduce risk of catastrophic fire
- 1995-2002 Building community trust; low-level, restorative forestlands projects completed
- 2003-2004 – Restoration II project initiated: community supported, professionally implemented
 - 180 acres, helicopter thinning, 125 log truck loads
 - recognized Becomes nationally recognized as workable model
- 2004-2014 – Community collaboration with Forest Service
- 2010 – Ashland Forest Resiliency Project (AFR) begins restoration work in Ashland Watershed across all ownerships: City of Ashland, Nature Conservancy, US Forest Service, Lomakatsi Restoration Project
- 2016 and Beyond
 - Continued Community Engagement
 - Joint management of Parks and Rec Forestlands
 - Secure sustained funding for further restoration work
 - Implementation of 2016 Ashland Forest Plan
- Recreation Issues: Resource impacts; unsanctioned trails; user conflict; increased future use
- Management Considerations
 - Manage trails for sustainability – reduce “social” trails
 - Monitor and implement adaptive management

- Continue community outreach and education
- Monitoring Chapter – Obtaining and recording information over time
 - Qualitative: subjective assessment
 - Quantitative: objective measurements
- Types of Monitoring
 1. Inventory or baseline monitoring: Initial assessment of species distribution & environmental conditions
 2. Implementation Monitoring: Were management actions accomplished as planned?
 3. Effectiveness Monitoring: Did management action achieve stated goals or objectives?
 4. Validation Monitoring: Determine if assumptions & models used in management were correct, and modify them as necessary
- Current Monitoring
 1. Restoration I-IV management projects 1995 to 2016: Stand density and fire hazard reduction through thinning; Reintroduction of fire
 2. 206 monitoring goals: Site description, forest structure & composition, soils, fuel
 3. Results indicate success in achieving management goals for City forest lands
- AFP 2016 Monitoring Goals
 1. Track ecosystem elements that are likely to change as a result of management actions
 2. Compare effects of treatments at different locations
 3. Ensure that the desired effects are produced
 4. Provide feedback on the effectiveness of our actions so we can respond in the future to make better management decisions
- Monitoring Under AFP 2016
 1. Emphasis on specific quantitative indicators
 2. Focus of monitoring indicators that make best use of limited resources
 3. Build upon past monitoring
- Management Chapter
 - Ecological Goals: Promote healthy, resilient forests; Diminish the likelihood of a high severity wildfire through active vegetation and fuels management that emulates the historic range of natural disturbances; Maintain water quality and quantity for use by the City and enhance aquatic life in the watershed while minimizing the potential for soil erosion and landslide events
 - Social Goals: Encourage community input, and awareness and education in the process of maintaining healthy forests, the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and the broader Ashland Watershed; Integrate recreational opportunities into the larger context of active forest management.
- Management Chapter: Subchapter Headings
- Ashland 1996 Fire Management Priorities (by unit) - photo
- Unit photos over time and treatment
- Unit C2 Maintenance Treatments
 - 1996-97 – Thinning/brushing, piling, burning
 - 1997 – Plant conifer seedlings
 - Winter 2004/05; 2006/07; 2010/11 – Maintenance treatments (brushing/grubbing manzanita seedlings, blackberry, Scotch broom, etc.)
 - Winter 2010/11 – Low prune pine saplings
 - Spring 2012 – Prescribed underburn

Commissioners explained forest science was complicated and included qualitative assessments, plot data, and soil erosion measurements. Commissioner Downey would forward a seminal paper by Jerry Franklin regarding forest science to Council.

The Forest Plan contained a section that addressed climate change. The Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest would start a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment that will take 18 months to complete.

4. 8/10 Staffing Study for Ashland Fire & Rescue

Fire Chief John Karns provided the background on transitioning from an 8/9 staffing level in the Fire Department to 8/10. Staffing was critical and the Fire Department was relying on Fire District 5 and Mercy Flights more often. They were currently in the process of subcontracting non-emergent transfers and would seek permission from Jackson County Commissioners. Two viable vendors could assume transport duties. Transitioning out of non-emergent transports would decrease calls 2-3% but not alleviate staffing inadequacies.

The Fire Department recently executed an entry-level exam and had a list of possible firefighter candidates. Hiring paramedics instead of firefighter/paramedics would curtail flexibility and not solve the issue. There were certification levels that would preclude paramedics from responding to fires.

Chief Karns wanted to start hiring July 1, 2016. City Administrator Dave Kanner understood the rationale and supported moving to an 8/10 staffing level but wanted to do it July 1, 2017 as part of the budget. In addition to the increase in cost, there was a \$40,000 to \$50,000 annual cost associated to giving up non-emergent transports. The two retirees the Fire Department hired completed their hire back terms that lasted 4 to 5 months due to staff hours. The volunteer student program would be appropriate once the department achieved an adequate staff level and could not replace career firefighters.

Council discussed directing staff to come to a future meeting with a plan to achieve an 8/10 staffing level starting July 1, 2016. Opposing comments wanted to wait and review staffing with other priority budget issues during the financial segment of council goal setting set for June 17, 2016. Council majority directed staff to move forward on a plan to achieve 8/10 staffing.

5. Update on employee disaster readiness

Chief John Karns explained employee emergency preparedness would allow employees to return to work during a disaster to help the city recover. Further training would provide emergency preparedness, Ashland's threat hazard, and the new state strategy of everyone having the ability to self-sustain for fourteen days. If the disaster were not a 72-hour situation, it would take 14 days for the area to receive relief from the state. Training could extend to the families of employees as well.

The City would create a committee mostly staffed by the Employee Emergency Response Team (EERT) who would evaluate 14-day sustainability options for employees and their families. Mayor Stromberg added the goal was ensuring families of every City employee had the necessary supplies, provisions, and training to survive in a healthy state for 14 days so employees were available to return to work and help the city recover.

The City could cover some costs or pay the cost upfront and have employees pay through payroll deduction afterwards. There were also costs for having the employees at work, ancillary agreements with fuel providers and contracts that allowed the City first access. The City may also be able to offer collective buying opportunities to citizens. The project would take a couple years to put together.

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Smith
Assistant to the City Recorder