

City of Ashland  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
TRAIL MASTER PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 21, 2017

**PRESENT:**       **Parks Commissioner:** Jim Lewis  
                  **Additional Committee Members:** Luke Brandy, Torsten Heycke, Stephen Jensen, Jim McGinnis  
                  **City and APRC Staff:** APRC Director Michael Black (10:35); Chris Chambers, Forestry Division Chief; APRC Interim Parks Superintendent Jeff McFarland; GIS Analyst Lea Richards and APRC Minute-taker Betsy Manuel

**ABSENT:**       Committee Chair David Chapman; Parks Commissioner Mike Gardiner; APRC Executive Assistant Susan Dyssegard

**I.       CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair Jensen called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. at The Grove, 1195 E. Main Street, Ashland, OR.

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

There were none.

**III.     APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** Heycke moved to approve the Minutes of March 24, 2017 as presented. Lewis seconded.

Chambers commented that the words “Forest Resources Division” were extraneous and should be stricken from the list of those present. The Minutes were duly amended.

**Motion:** Heycke moved to approve the Minutes of March 24, 2017 as amended. Lewis seconded. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

**IV.     PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**a.   Open Forum**

**Jim Falkenstein**, 540 Lakota Way in Ashland, was called upon to speak. He said he was a mountain biker who recently obtained a mountain bike with an electric assist. Falkenstein relayed his experiences while using the bicycle on Ashland trails, stating that other users objected to the “motorized” mountain bike. He asked for clarification regarding the use of a motorized mountain bike on trails in and around Ashland.

There followed a discussion regarding access to trails, signage and the rationale regarding motorized and non-motorized uses. Heycke noted that use of a hybrid mountain bicycle on woodland trails had

not yet been fully addressed by regulatory agencies. He stated that it was his understanding that the Forest Service was reluctant to post signs listing possible hazards.

Lewis noted that there are trails open to motorized traffic and noticed with the appropriate signage. Chambers stated that motorized vehicles on City trails were normally prohibited. He stated that the use conflicted with those on foot or those biking without power. McGinnis stated that electric bicycles on street-designed bike lanes were problematic as well.

Heycke summarized the pros and cons, indicating that there were no easy answers. He advocated for continued deliberation of the issue. Jensen agreed, noting that clarification would be helpful. McFarland commented that the timing was apropos, considering the Trails update currently underway.

## **V. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Brandy inquired about timelines for the update process. He stated that his work schedule was busy enough during the summer that he would not be able to attend many of the scheduled meetings. That said, he expressed his enthusiasm for the project.

McFarland stated that there was an unofficial goal to complete the process by year-end. He relayed that there would shortly be a website available to Committee members that could be useful to those who could not attend but would like to remain informed. The website would include maps, Minutes and the proposed draft as well as other pertinent information.

McGinnis suggested a more focused meeting once per month, noting that the Committee was working from an existing document. Lewis agreed, commenting that many elements would remain the same. He stated that he was interested in developing tactics and strategies to complete established goals described in the master plan. Lewis suggested prioritizing the corridors listed – evaluating progress to date and identifying action steps for the future.

McFarland commented that much of the original document was valid and that there might only be a few new additions such as a chapter on climate change or one on current environmental practices. McGinnis suggested researching any corridors that had not been addressed, looking for indicators that would explain the lack of progress. Lewis highlighted the value of retaining the listing of corridors as long-term placeholders if actionable progress had been stymied. He noted that eventual redevelopment could provide new opportunities for trails.

McFarland suggested evaluating each corridor and assigning a priority based upon the potential for completion. Lewis noted that planning actions create an awareness of changes to properties – and provide an opportunity to lobby anew for connectivity. Conversely, the updated Trails and Open Space Master Plan could be utilized to alert the Planning Department that a planning action might affect trail connectivity.

McGinnis highlighted the involvement of HOAs (Homeowners Associations) as a factor. He talked about the TID Ditch Trail where a sign spells out the jurisdiction of an HOA and the rules for traversing the trail. Lewis disclosed the historical context of HOAs, stating that the entities often prefer to give

pockets of land to the City. He indicated that APRC rarely accepts responsibility for such piecemeal parcels.

Jensen suggested that staff present the current status of each corridor, as a prelude to discussion about prospects down the road. He indicated that some properties might be jettisoned depending upon the potential for redevelopment. Lewis noted that keeping references to the properties might be beneficial - even if outside the scope of the 10-year life span of the Master Plan. McGinnis added that corridors could be considered as reference points for evaluation. He noted that resistance to trail development by property owners could sometimes be mitigated.

Black built on that concept, stating that no avenues of potential growth should be closed. He advocated for flexibility when prioritizing the corridors because of unexpected and unplanned opportunities. He stated that staff could provide a presentation on each corridor – map by map. He emphasized the varied expertise of Committee members and the significance of member input.

Richards indicated that in some areas, trails are adjacent to corridors. She advocated for consideration of lands beyond or adjacent to the corridors. Further discussion focused on various individual properties, whether they were within City limits or outside City boundaries and whether property owners might be amenable to trail development. Black detailed examples of changing circumstances that could lead to more positive outcomes.

It was agreed that the goal for extension of the Bear Creek Greenway to Emigrant Lake was an important element. Jensen clarified the mission, stating that identifying stakeholders and synthesizing the points of view could result in direction for the master plan. Lewis agreed, stating that references to activity currently underway would also be helpful.

Black reviewed the background behind plans for extension of the Greenway. He traced potential routes for connectivity to Emigrant Lake on a map of the area, highlighting diverging opinions regarding development of a trail from the Ashland Dog Park to the lake.

One route might include traversing a sidewalk or roadway. If this option were developed, people would walk along Nevada Street, crossing a pedestrian bridge to reach the trail. With construction of a bridge crossing Nevada Street unlikely, another option would focus on developing a pathway that is separated from the street. Black marked the properties along the way that are owned by APRC and indicated those parcels that are privately owned. Black disclosed that a portion of private property was under negotiation for acquisition by APRC. He outlined a trail on one side of Bear Creek that would end at North Mountain Park. This option would provide a cut-through to the Greenway rather than an unbroken continuation of the Greenway.

Alternatively, the Greenway could connect to Oak Street via a series of private properties along the creek. One of the property owners is in the pre-app stage of planning, with a request to alter the

channel of Kitchen Creek, triggering the potential for an easement or acquisition to continue the trail. Black also pointed out parcels where development would be restricted due to location in a flood zone or designation as a wetland.

Black recommended that all three options remain viable. In that way as property acquisitions or easement possibilities develop, the entire Emigrant Lake drainage area could become a wilderness area with opportunities for multiple trails. In response to a question by Lewis, Black replied that the Greenway Committee would finance a creek crossing if it became necessary to advance the trail. Black agreed to discuss the possibilities of a pedestrian bridge at the next Bear Creek Greenway meeting.

Jensen noted that a pedestrian crossing would be appropriate for Oak Street. Black concurred, noting that a crossing would connect people to the trail along the creek. A second crossing at Nevada would continue the extension. Black noted that the current bridge at Nevada was narrow and there were safety concerns with pedestrians crossing via the roadway.

Brandy indicated that the current chapter on the Greenway was vague. He stated a preference for additional detail. Black relayed his preference for detail as well, stating that the specifics could be reviewed by the Transportation Commission for greater clarity and direction. He committed to preparing a memo and map depicting the options and possible next steps. Brandy concurred, stating that the updated master plan could contain additional chapters that would provide documentation for reference. Richards also agreed stating that planning actions for development would then have to take the Trails and Open Space Master Plan under advisement.

Jensen noted that the entire update does not have to be completed before disseminating chapters, citing the chapter detailing options for trails to extend the Greenway as an example. Black stated that the Committee could vote for approval of the chapter so that it could be adopted. He stressed the importance of the Greenway chapter, given the properties that were in flux and the current interest in development. Jensen proposed that the Greenway chapter be reviewed and finalized at the next meeting on May 5, 2017.

Richards pointed out another pressing reason for adoption, noting that Helman Elementary school children needed a safer route to school – another reason for moving the project forward.

Jensen addressed changes to the meeting schedule, changing from bimonthly meetings to once per month. It was agreed by consensus that the next meeting would be held on Friday, May 5, 2017, at 10:00 a.m.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Dyssegard, Executive Assistant;  
Betsy Manuel, Minute-Taker  
Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission