

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
TRAIL MASTER PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
May 19, 2017

PRESENT: **Parks Commissioners:** Ashland Parks Commissioners Mike Gardiner and Jim Lewis
 Additional Committee Members: Luke Brandy, Stephen Jensen, Jim McGinnis
 City and APRC Staff: City of Ashland GIS Analyst Lea Richards; Division Chief-Forestry
 Resource Chris Chambers; APRC Interim Parks Superintendent Jeffrey McFarland; APRC
 Director Michael Black
 APRC Minute-taker Betsy Manuel

ABSENT: **Committee Members:** David Chapman and Torsten Heycke

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Gardiner moved to approve the Committee Meeting Minutes for April 21, 2017, and May 5, 2017. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Open Forum

There was none.

V. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

McFarland noted that discussion regarding a review of the Bear Creek Greenway extension had been concluded. The Agenda for this meeting would be discussion regarding the TID (Talent Irrigation Ditch) Corridor.

Jensen suggested that the pertinent discussions and observations of the Trail Master Plan Update Committee be logged as a reference document for future insertion into the original Trail Master Plan. He described a document that would include the commentary as well as pertinent GIS information. Lewis added that a quarterly review of the relevant material would also be helpful.

- ***Review and Discuss Wright's Creek***

Richards noted that based on the discussion of May 5, 2017, regarding the Wright's Creek Corridor, a new map was prepared documenting connectivity along the Corridor, the identification of private property and GIS information regarding the forestlands interface.

Gardiner advocated for adoption of the map as an element of the updated Trail Master Plan. Lewis advised that Forest Service maps be integrated as well.

After some discussion, Chambers recommended the creation of a new Corridor detailing a plethora of heavily used trails that traverse City-owned properties adjacent to the Ashland Creek drainage area. Names such as the Ashland Forest Lands Corridor were discussed. Jensen proposed that the area be referred to as the Forestlands Network. The phrase would be used as a placeholder – one that could be used to identify a separate chapter.

In response to a question by McGinnis, Chambers noted that the Creek-to-Crest Trail Route included some sections of roadway. McFarland said trails that include portions of a roadway or trails that provide an alternative for connectivity are designated as trail *routes*.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review and Discuss TID Trail Corridor

McFarland reported that APRC and the City of Ashland had obtained several easements since 2005 when the original Trail Master Plan was written. APRC now owned several properties along the TID Corridor that connected to other trails such as the Liberty Street connection, Waterline Rd. connection and others. McFarland noted that several sections of the TID Corridor (maintained by TID) were still unavailable. He highlighted the Pinecrest Bypass where the TID Ditch Trail drops off and users must traverse a series of streets to locate the next section of the Ditch Trail.

McFarland highlighted another closure above Clay Street next to the Oredson-Todd Woods. He talked about the City's responsibility to maintain the ditch from Pinecrest Terrace to Hald-Strawberry Park. McFarland said the Pinecrest subdivision is governed by an HOA (Homeowners Association) that had some concerns about the trail and the close proximity of the trail to the subdivision. APRC offered to assist homeowners in the area with screening, fencing, signage and other amenities in return for an easement. McFarland stated that no agreement had yet been reached. He stated that in other areas within the TID jurisdiction, the trail system faltered. He explained that even if property owners were willing to provide access to the trail, TID and the Bureau of Reclamation had declined authorization of trail improvements such as a bridge crossing.

There followed discussion about the beneficial aspects of granting easements to APRC and other tools APRC uses in developing partnerships. Lewis noted that APRC works hard to be good neighbors when trails are in close proximity or traverse over populated areas. McFarland talked about local, regional and state regulations for signage. Black said he had hoped the State Legislature would regulate

Irrigation Districts so irrigation properties could become more user friendly and liabilities affiliated with public access more manageable.

McGinnis asked whether it would be in TID's best interests to allow the City to maintain pedestrian or maintenance easements. Black replied affirmatively, noting that the City would significantly mitigate liabilities associated with open water canals. McGinnis noted other types of hazards as well on TID easements such as sections of the ditch where broken bits of concrete could cause injuries to passersby. He commented that Morton Street had a section of approximately 25 ft. where the ditch was relocated underground. McGinnis noted that piping the irrigation water in that way might be a cost-effective solution—one that would conserve a finite resource over the long term. Black commented that the up-front costs of enclosing the ditch might be appropriate but ultimately unaffordable.

There followed a brief discussion about proactive management of TID ditches. Jensen suggested that TID challenges and potential solutions be included in the Trail Master Plan. He stated that doing so might energize management and generate interest in funding sources. In response to a question by McGinnis, McFarland noted that the City of Ashland maintains portions of the ditch for TID. McGinnis stated that the City could segregate the cost of maintaining the ditch for comparison purposes – researching whether the cost of maintenance could help offset costs for piping irrigation water.

McFarland talked about maintenance of APRC easements along the Corridor, stating that weed abatement was part of the responsibilities. Easement signage and dog stations provided by APRC assist users and decrease contamination of the ditch water. McFarland detailed APRC easements, stating that there are other properties where an easement might provide additional trail connectivity. He highlighted the Tuttle property – a land parcel located between two APRC properties. The newly acquired Acid Castle Rock Property also traverses several trails and is in need of maintenance and forest management.

McGinnis asked about receiving notice of properties as they are listed for sale. Black replied that the current notification system alerts agencies such as APRC when the City has an application requiring a planning action. While not perfect, the system works relatively well. APRC also works with a realtor who is involved with the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy. The realtor alerts APRC when land changes occur.

McGinnis pointed out an unmapped trail off Liberty Street that proceeds to the TID Ditch via Waterline Rd. Richards stated that the trail is an old road-trail. Chambers noted that the area from Waterline to the TID ditch is prime real estate and therefore most likely unavailable. Alternative options for trail development were debated without specific resolution.

Black indicated that prioritizing easement options could assist APRC when considering property acquisitions and/or the need for additional easements. Lewis suggested the addition of a paragraph outlining the importance of the TID Ditch and the potential for recreational purposes. Richards said she

could create a map identifying properties that would be desirable for trail development. Black stated that the map could then be inserted into the Open Space Plan.

It was agreed that the Agenda for the June 2 meeting would include Roca Creek Corridor, Clay Creek Corridor and Hamilton Creek Corridor.

Lewis noted that the regional network could include trails in part of the Imperatrice Property, if acquired by APCR in the future.

- ***Southern Oregon Land Conservancy Award (SOLC)***

Black announced that each year, SOLC recognizes an individual who has made a major impact on land conservation in the region. This year's recipient is Jeff McFarland – APCR's Interim Parks Superintendent and Supervisor of forested areas, trails and open spaces.

VIII. 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