

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
TRAIL MASTER PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
March 23, 2018

PRESENT: Parks Commissioners: Jim Lewis
 Additional Committee Members: Luke Brandy, David Chapman, Stephen Jensen, Jim McGinnis
 City and APRC Staff: APRC Director Black; Chief-Forestry Resource Chis Chambers; Interim Parks Superintendent Jeffrey McFarland; GIS Analyst Lea Richards
 APRC Minute-taker: Betsy Manuel

ABSENT: Parks Commissioner Mike Gardiner; Committee Member Torsten Heycke

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. February 23, 2018 and March 9, 2018

For the March 9 meeting, Richards noted that the reference to the Ashland Planning Department should have been *Ashland Public Works*. The date of the community-wide meeting is *April 18, 2018* – not April 15, 2018.

Motion: Lewis moved to approve the Minutes of February 23, 2018 as presented and the Minutes of March 9, 2018 as amended. McGinnis seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & GUEST SPEAKERS

a. Open Forum

There was none.

b. Review Any Public Comments Received Since Last Meeting

McFarland stated that there had been an email to the City Council regarding concerns over mountain bikers on the Snark and Waterline trails and possible erosion on the mountainsides. The respondent highlighted the mixed use of the trail, stating that permitting mountain bikes on forestland trails was dangerous.

McFarland reported that he and Heycke had responded to the comments, noting that signs regarding shared use that includes mountain bikers and hikers had been in place for a number of years – not only on this trail but on others as well. He stated that Parks was aware of the issues with regard to the different uses and was actively working toward solutions such as separate trails for each use. He stated that one of the factors that would determine the outcome of for the Waterline Trail would be a decision by Ashland Public Works to move the water treatment plant. If that were to happen, the trail could be separated via the water treatment access road.

There followed a brief discussion regarding the hurdles and possible solutions that could remedy that specific issue. Chapman suggested meeting with Public Works to review the situation.

Brandy talked about the service road, stating that it was also used for maintenance of the Waterline by vehicular traffic. Chambers indicated that vehicles could not travel beyond Bandersnatch junction. He noted that the lower portion of Waterline to Bandersnatch was an area that should be addressed. It was agreed that removal of the “junk pile” could facilitate development of a trail to the Ashland watershed.

McFarland noted that there were several issues to be taken into account. He stated that until a more permanent solution could be accomplished, Parks crews checked the trail weekly to ensure that signage alerting hikers to the multiuse nature of the trail remained in place.

c. TID Piping Project

McFarland relayed that he was receiving emails regarding the TID piping project. He stated that one property owner was concerned about encroaching trails as a result of the project. He stressed that there were no easements from Starlite to Parks Street where the Paradise Creek corridor was located, and that TID and the Bureau of Reclamation had jurisdiction in that area. McGinnis offered to discuss potential options with a homeowner in the area. He indicated that the biggest issue was the presence of dogs on the trails – something that was difficult to control. Lewis suggested mention of mitigation as one of the services offered by Parks where there were potential conflicts between property owners and hikers. Chapman noted the importance of public outreach as an antidote to confrontations with homeowners. It was agreed that every effort would be made to reach out to concerned citizens – not just regarding the TID piping project, but in regard to the promotion and preservation of trails.

Jensen asked about the design phase of the canal. Chapman stated that he would be attending the public comment meetings about the TID project, as an independent person rather than a representative of the Trails Master Plan Committee. After some discussion, it was agreed that Chapman would officially represent the Committee.

Motion: McGinnis moved to appoint David Chapman as a representative of the Advisory group for the TID project. Jensen seconded and the motion carried, with Chapman abstaining.

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

d. Public Outreach

Chapman noted that APRC had recommended that public input be solicited prior to sending the updated Master Plan to Mark Mularz - the final format editor.

Lewis stated that there was some concern that input from the public might not be as robust if presented when the plan was ready for publishing. Holding an open house prior to completion would allow for input while the Master Plan was still in draft form. Lewis described a structured process of gathering information called a *Charette*. He highlighted the value of collecting public input while changes could still be made.

Black suggested that the first meeting be all about the maps. He stated that it helped to focus on visuals and could result in information that might affect the chapter narratives. Black noted that people would be pleased to see the Committee respond to public input at a follow-up meeting – one that incorporated some of the information gathered.

Lewis recommended that people be encouraged to visit the Parks website in advance to become better acquainted with the Plan and its vision for the future.

McGinnis commented that handing out Save the Date type cards to fellow hikers or those who would be interested in attending the meeting was one way of ensuring public participation. Richards noted that other groups might be interested in the trails as well – such as runners or bikers who use the trails for special events.

McFarland suggested public outreach for the end of April with maps, and the second meeting by the end of May. It was agreed that the first meeting would tentatively be held on May 2, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. Black proposed that a smaller group form to plan meeting details.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. *Final TMPC Review and Approval of Chapter 12 – Regional Trails*

McFarland introduced the Chapter, noting that it had been re-named Regional Trail Connections. Brandy stated that he was OK with the edits proposed at the previously held meeting.

In response to a question by Jensen about *passive parks* referenced in the Cascade Foothills section of Regional Trails, Black indicated that passive parks were considered open spaces. There followed a discussion about use of the term. McGinnis noted that the Cottle Property would qualify as a passive park. Black advocated against pairing the word with parks. It was agreed that the chapter would reflect that change.

McFarland stated that it had also been proposed that the Creek to Crest section of Chapter 12 be eliminated from the document. Lewis commented that removal of the section warranted a second look. McGinnis indicated that in his opinion, a chapter on regional connections should include enough information for people to know that the Creek to Crest designation referred to an area nearby that is just outside Ashland's watershed. Jensen suggested that the area be discussed in a way that is similar to the section on Emigrant Lake – i.e. that it is an area of interest.

McFarland summarized input from Heycke about where to draw the boundaries, asking about regional trails that connect with the Rogue Valley, versus areas of interest that are not connected but nearby. Lewis noted that the connections to the Creek to Crest are tenuous at best, but given the 10-year timeframe, mention of it might indicate a desire to expand Ashland's connectivity.

McGinnis proposed removal of the section descriptors in favor of more general information. McFarland talked about highlighting areas that might lead to increased connectivity in the future. Chapman distinguished between regional trail connections and regional destinations such as Grizzly Peak where trail connectivity would be desirable. He questioned the rationale for choosing regional destinations when some are mentioned and some are not. He listed Sky Lakes and Red Buttes as examples that are no longer mentioned in the document.

Brandy referred to the goals adopted by the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan such as the goal to encourage urban trails to connect with outlying Federal trail systems. He proposed eliminating mention of the goals. There followed further discussion that led to an agreement to shorten but not delete information about regional destinations.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. *Committee Review/ Approval of Chapter: East Side Forest Lands*

McFarland highlighted the proposed edit by Heycke that described the southern border as the Mt. Ashland crestline. Chambers suggested changing the designation to Forest Service lands. It was agreed that the new designation would be appropriate.

Chambers questioned the number of trails in the area – noting that there were dozens of trails but mention of the history for only four. Jensen noted that if the history was described for some, then it should be described for most of the trails. McFarland suggested that the history be included for new trails rather than all trails.

McGinnis indicated that the Lamb Mine Trail (a Forest Service trail) should be a part of the regional trail system, with only a mention in the East Side narrative. Brandy countered stating that in his vision, regional connections were outside Ashland's watershed. He explained that in his opinion, the Creek to Crest is the link to get to the Pacific Crest Trail and beyond.

There followed a short debate about Catwalk Trail and Lamb Mine – two trails not listed in the compilation of trails. Lewis suggested categorizing the connections to Forest Service trails as goals. McFarland commented that the narrative could reflect that while the Creek to Crest is not a direct link, it is still a close link to the Pacific Crest Trail.

It was agreed that Lamb Mine Trail has merit but mention of the trail along with Catwalk should be removed from the East Side discussion and included in the Regional Chapter.

Motion: Jensen moved to approve the East Side narrative as amended. McGinnis seconded and the motion carried.

b. *Committee Review/ Approval of Chapter: West Side Lands*

McGinnis recommended that the references to the Mystical Trail be removed. Under the **CHARACTER** section, the reference would be of Mt. McLoughlin rather than Wagner Butte.

McFarland noted that the reference to Strawberry-Hald should be Hald-Strawberry. Chambers suggested that the sentence "AWTA has plans for an additional trail in the area called Wonder, which may start near the defunct granite quarry at the top of Granite St. and continue..." be changed to say "AWTA has plans for an additional trail in the area called Wonder, which may start near the defunct granite quarry at the top of Granite St on City-owned forestlands."

McGinnis initiated a discussion about the mention of rogue trails and unsanctioned trails in paragraphs under **ROUTE DESCRIPTION**. He noted that referring to trails as "*popular rogue trails*" for example might encourage people to hike there rather than discouraging travel on trails that are not recognized. It was agreed that the references would be eliminated.

Minica talked about vegetation along Hitt Rd. under **CHARACTER**. He proposed that the term "transitioning" be substituted for "*grading*." After additional discussion, it was agreed that the sentence would end after "occasional open-grown pine trees" – removing the comment "*grading into Douglas fir*". Richards asked about the reference to *City and private lands* along Hitt Rd. There followed a brief debate

about the reference, and it was agreed that the sentence would read: "*Hitt Road climbs considerably gaining 1000 feet on City and private lands in just 1.5 miles*" would be removed from the narrative. In addition, the reference "Hitt Road provides a critical link..." would be changed to read "*Hitt Road could provide a critical link...*" McGinnis proposed that the sentence "*The TID traverses along a closed forest canopy offering a more secluded and shady trail outing*" would also be removed. The final narrative prior to editing would read as follows:

"CHARACTER

Hitt Road was once a logging and mining road but is no longer a navigable four-wheel vehicle route. It still retains the character of a steep mountain road in places, with an average grade of 12%. It holds appeal for hikers, runners and mountain bikers as a single-track trail. Hitt Road provides a critical link to other important West Side Forest Land trails and, together with FS Rd 2060, is one of the two main arteries into the West Side Forest Land trail system.

Vegetation at the bottom of the trails begins with a mix of chaparral, white oak, madrone and occasional open-grown pine trees. Large granite boulders are perched in the Acid Castle Rocks area on Fell on Knee Trail, as well as higher up on the West Side Forest Service trails.

Trails in this area offer views of Mount Ashland, Grizzly Peak, the city of Ashland and the central Rogue Valley."

Motion: McGinnis moved to approve the modifications to the West Side Forest Lands chapter. Lewis seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

c. *Reassign Three Trail Corridors: Roca/Paradise, Hamilton/Clay and Tolman*

No action was taken.

d. *Roundtable Discussion*

Minica noted that he and Torsten Heycke had recently hiked the Bandersnatch and Snark trails. He stated that there had been some unauthorized work done in the forest that included the removal of healthy pine trees. He stated that many were six inches in diameter, located approximately two feet from the trails. Minica stated that the person or persons responsible for the work were damaging the forest ecosystem.

Minica asked that Committee members report any sightings of unauthorized work to Parks.

VII. UPCOMING MEETING DATE

April 6, 2018

- a. Siskiyou Room, Community Development Building – 10:00 a.m.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – 11:30 a.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Manuel, Minute-Taker
Trail Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission

These Minutes are not a verbatim record. The narrative has been condensed and paraphrased at times to reflect the discussions and decisions made. All Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, including Subcommittee meetings, are digitally recorded and available upon request.