

MINUTES
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION (APRC)
Trails Master Plan Review Subcommittee
October 20, 2021 – 2:30 p.m.
Electronic Meeting

Present:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: APRC Commissioner Rick Landt, APRC Commissioner Leslie Eldridge, Ashland Forest Lands Commissioner Priscila Franco, Ashland Forest Lands Commissioner Luke Brandy, Jeffrey McFarland, Ashland Woodlands & Trails Association Torsten Heycke, David Chapman, Brooke Hansen, Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association Member Casey Botts

STAFF SUPPORT: APRC Director Michael A. Black, City of Ashland GIS Specialist Lea Richards, APRC Open Space Supervisor Jason Minica, APRC Executive Analyst Dorinda Cottle

PRESENTERS: Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association Member Ian Cropper

Absent:

STAFF SUPPORT: City of Ashland Fire Department Forestry Division Chief Chris Chambers

View [recording of meeting](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

All committee members and staff as listed above introduced themselves. Director Black clarified that APRC and COA (City of Ashland) staff members will not vote on items but will be providing input and support during the process

III. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

IV. PUBLIC INPUT

Written comments were received and have been [posted online](#)

V. REVIEW OF COMMITTEE PROCESS AND MISSION OF THE COMMITTEE

- Black will chair all subcommittee meetings
- Black clarified the GOAL of this subcommittee:
Look at trail proposals from RVMBA (Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association) and make recommendations on each proposal. Black stated that the proposals should not require changes to the Trails Master Plan. This GOAL will be achieved by:
 - Listening to the presentation from RVMBA
 - Visiting the areas where changes are proposed (These on-site visits are to be done individually or in small working groups, in between meetings)
 - Deliberating the changes, or alternatives, at subcommittee meetings

- Making a recommendation on each proposal – If the subcommittee does not recommend a proposal, the subcommittee should state why

The recommendations will then go to the appropriate body who has the decision-making authority: The Parks Commission for APRC properties, or the Forest Lands Commission or City Council for trails/properties that are overseen by the City of Ashland.

VI. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF RVMBA (ROGUE VALLEY MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION) PROPOSAL (View [meeting packet](#) for background information and for the RVMBA Proposal, *City of Ashland, Sustainable Mountain Bike Trails*)

- The RVMBA Plan contains 10 proposals – Six (6) proposals are directly related to APRC managed lands; the other four (4) are on COA lands
- Each proposal addresses seven (7) factors:
 - User safety
 - Trail sustainability
 - Neighborhood connectivity
 - Lack of beginner trails
 - Environmental impact
 - Tourism
 - User experience
- Botts presented the following proposals at this initial meeting:
 - **Lower Alice in Wonderland Reroute – Uphill climb trail/pedestrian addition**–This proposal would address: User safety, trail sustainability, beginner trail opportunity, environmental impact. The uphill climb trail would parallel the current trail – The proposed trail would be constructed in an open area, with good sight lines for both trails (down and up)
 - McFarland pointed out that past geology reports showed concern in this area for headwalls, and there is the sensitive Barranca Unit (gorge narrowing) northwest of this area that is geologically unstable
 - **Lower Wonder Bailout Trails** – This project would address connectivity, user experience and beginner trails by offering two bailout trails that would offer a loop system for the current Wonder Trail
 - Heycke pointed out that the bailout trails as presented might not be feasible because of the proposed water treatment plant in this area – Botts asked if creating bailout/loop trails on the north side could be an option. It was confirmed that this idea may not be prudent due to erosion and the close proximity of a private home
 - Botts asked the group if they knew of reports/data that offer insight on the impact of trails on hillside stability, especially in our area with our soils. McFarland offered that a geology report for fuels reduction was solicited by the COA Forestry Division and showed that an area/drainage to the north of the proposed bailouts is geologically unstable. Franco pointed out that fuels reduction in this area was avoided for some time, but ultimately decided that a fire in the area would be worse and moved forward with some fuels reduction – She would like the subcommittee to think outside the box, create trails if possible, but also protect our resources
 - Commissioner Eldridge asked how detailed the subcommittee should be in their recommendations. Black stated that at the end of this process, the group should make recommendations, such as: Investigate a proposal further, or do something in particular before moving forward with a proposal. As part of the process, subcommittee members should do the following
 - Ask if the proposal is necessary or beneficial
 - If a proposal is not feasible, group could come up with an alternative
 - If the subcommittee does not recommend a proposal, state why
 - **SMP (Siskiyou Mountain Park) Low Angle Loop Trails** – The idea with this proposal is beginner trails and user experience. Botts pointed out that the boundary line between SMP and the Epstein private property is a straight line and is not represented correctly in the map in the RVMBA proposal. This proposal could involve decommissioning some current user-

created trails and could be a tourism boost, according to Botts. The proposal offers three (3) levels of riding: a beginner, low angle downhill for young children (DH 1); a longer downhill trail with more of a grade that kids could work toward (DH 2) and lastly a more challenging, longer, and steeper downhill trail (DH 3). The proposed area is separate from the popular hiking trails, White Rabbit and Mike Uhtoff. One of the biggest issues with this area is access. Botts believes most will come in from the north on the existing fire road. All trails will loop

- Black offered clarification on SMP: This property is managed by APRC, with a conservation easement held by the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy
- Commissioner Eldridge commented that this proposal could be a benefit for our community, our youth and beginner riders
- McFarland shared that the conservation easement agreement for SMP calls for APRC to sustain this area as a nature preserve. He pointed out that it is a challenge to manage for conservation and recreation use that doesn't compromise or degrade the natural resources. McFarland also mentioned there is a sensitive and active Fisher population on this property
- Minica said that APRC generally tries to keep trails a certain distance from the Epstein property line, and private property in general, to prevent users from going onto private property. He stated that he would like input from the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy on the proposal. He also expressed concern with maintenance of new trails
- Botts pointed out there is a fence at the Epstein property line

Action Items:

- APRC will send out a contact list for all subcommittee members
- APRC will schedule the next subcommittee meeting
- If anyone in the group knows of plans on any of the areas proposed, please share with the group and we will try to do GPS overlay on them
- Botts will share GPS data points with staff so that an overlay map can be made in time for the next meeting
- Botts will also send out a handful of field trip dates for the small working groups to schedule tours on their own time
- Franco said it would be helpful if the maps were larger context maps. For example, streets that offer entry/exit points, such as Park St, be shown on the maps

VII. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting Adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dorinda Cottle
APRC Executive Analyst