



**Minutes FOR A MEETING OF THE
ASHLAND FOREST LANDS COMMISSION
Tuesday, February 14th, 2012
5:30PM to 7:30PM
Siskiyou Room, Community Development Building
51 Winburn Way**

I. CALL TO ORDER: 5:37 PM

Dan Maymar, Frank Betlejewski, Marty Main, John Karns, Chris Chambers, David Chapman, John Williams, Gary Pool, Jim Berge, Albert Pepe

II. INTRODUCTIONS: New Commissioner Frank Betlejewski

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 12th action minutes. Motion to accept minutes with Gary Pool added to list of attendees, and change to Item B in Business adding clarification to description of mentioned grant to include the source (TNC PERC funds) made by Williams, seconded by Pool. All ayes.

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

V. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

VI. BUSINESS

A. Trails/Recreation Policy Subcommittee: Feedback from AWTA on FLC letter Karns explained that a response was received from AWTA agreeing to the conditions outlined in the FLC letter. The AWTA would analyze the issue of steepness during construction. Karns proposed that the policy subcommittee for trails being discontinued based on a lack of interest and completion of a majority of tasks. The Lands Commission could take on some of the tasks. Karns is working on the sign posts and has some in mind. He needs some help developing two components of the trails master plan, which are the trail host and trail adoption (sponsor) programs. Pool asked if they could be the same and Karns said he envisioned them as separate, but they could be the same depending on the group. Parks may have some development of the trail host program already. Karns has also looked at an ordinance for enforcement of trail use and there is one on the books that pertains to the Greenway and might be used for City trails. Berge asked if the trail host would be a figure that could enforce trail etiquette and for safety. Karns favored a safety contact, but not really for enforcement purposes. The commission agreed to the dissolution of the sub-committee on trails.

B. Trail Signage (addressed above)

C. Trails Sub-Committee: Discuss Dissolution (addressed above)

D. City Lands Prescribed Burning and PERC Grant through TNC

Chambers described the City's plan for prescribed underburning and attempts in recent years to start an underburning program with little progress to date on acres burned. This year, with funding help from the new PERC program grant through The Nature Conservancy, the City has 20 acres of funding for underburning this year and next year. Staff put out an RFP for contract burning and recently gave a field tour for contractors of high priority City burn units. Bids are due this week and the City will select a burn contractor by next week and hopes to have a contract in place by mid March. The burn units are strategic across the City's ownership for fire management. Chambers hopes the City will burn around 75 acres over this spring and next spring with no more than 50 acres this year.

Main talked about the City's history of managing its forestlands based on the original Ashland Forest Plan. The work progressed from addressing small trees and brush with pile burning and then moved on to helicopter thinning and now we have an opportunity to use prescribed fire. Main showed the City's original maps for forestland management including fire, slope stability, and forest health. The prescribed burning addresses the original fire priorities outlined by the City years ago. The City's history of work is important in the context of where we are right now with prescribed burning. Maymar asked about neighboring lands. Main explained the linkages from City to Forest Service lands. There are some private lands nearer to the City limits. The Forest Service had done a lot of work before the City decided to manage its lands, but then stalled as the City moved forward. Today, both entities are moving ahead with work and significant progress. Main described other concerns such as forest density and related mortality due to insects, especially with developing drought conditions. The overlay of slope stability is important because of landslide activity like the 1997 flood. The City's work has ties to important issues that impact citizens including fire and flooding. Maymar pointed out the link between fire and flooding and the intensity of fire and trying to keep fires at low intensity. The social dynamic also presents an interesting challenge to execute management based on the fundamental concerns on the ground. The City helped create the social license to move forward with work on Forest Service land that we are undertaking currently in AFR.

Main asked Maymar if he could keep talking about the issue of the Ashland Forest Plan and Maymar agreed to address Item G. The effort to update the Forest Plan was undertaken 2-3 years ago and has moved very slowly. Main said that options should all be on the table at this point as what to do with the Plan updates. Maymar pointed out that Parks land is addressed in the Forest Plan as well as City lands. Main agreed and saw that as an issue since the two departments in the City have managed land separately. Pool asked if the social elements have ever been recorded. Main said that it largely had not, but maybe some in Bill Fleeger's work. Work is often measured in acres and dollars, but there are many other measures of progress that could be used to measure "work" such as volunteer hours. Betlejewski said there are public comments available from the City's restoration project Phase II that might be interesting to look at to gauge public interest at the

time. Building public acceptance was a many years long effort to get to helicopter thinning to fruition. There are still many challenges ahead. Williams said there will be a community forum in March on Water Issues.

Mains recommendations on the Forest Plan including updates to the language and certain references to things like sluicing Reeder Reservoir every 3 years. The Plan was more of an overview that included social and political issues in creating a structure to move forward. Much of that has been created including City Staff, the Forest Lands Commission, and many other things that have been implemented already. The condition of the land has changed significantly since the original plan. Main's document handed out at the meeting described much of what has been done. Main said the specifics for work to be done on the ground were really weak for our purposes today, but that was likely the intent at that point in the process. For example the forest types in the Plan shows 11 types including Parks land and there are 22 types on City land by itself now. The original plan separated forest lands from urban interface lands on private land (wildfire hazard zone). Later, the City mapped those lands for fire hazard, which lead to a successful grant program for fuels reduction. Original maps have since been updated with new fuels reduction areas and used for tactical decision making during wildfires like the Siskiyou Fire. In the Forest Plan, there were 8 goals and strategies identified and we have accomplished many of them since 1992. One goal has not been addressed, and that is goal 5 relating to aquatic habitat between Reeder Reservoir and Lithia Park. Other goals are related to public use and education that we are now addressing. Recreation hasn't been a high priority, but some work has been done all along including closing illegal trails and maintaining existing trails. Desired Future Conditions are outlined and Main thought we generally have met many of the goals related to conditions on City and private interface lands. Goals related to fire prevention have largely been met. Main pointed out that the City has done an incredible job implementing work but has not done a good job of telling the story of success over many years in relation to what was outlined in the Forest Plan. Maymar asked if we have achieved most of the fire management objectives and Main said that we have, although the target has also moved and we should reflect both the successes and what's challenging us now. There are many options at this point for updating the Plan. Williams suggested we should update the Plan and the commission should take a field trip to some of the upper units above Reeder Reservoir. Maymar asked what the similarities are between City and Forest Service as pertains to our strategies for management in similar locations. Main said that we generally have the same land management objectives although we have different sets of overlays that affect our ability to do work so the resulting prescriptions are inherently different. The Forest Service manages the bulk of the watershed so their approach is important to the City as well. Maymar would like Main to help inform the next set of Desired Future Conditions for the next 20 years. Betlejewski commented on the City's dataset, which is extensive. The data was collected for purposes of land management, not so much for research and analysis. The university is a good resource for research and analysis that the City might not want to pay for given other goals on City lands. Data eliminates the need for saying "I think..." when we can get an answer based on real data. Williams asked Chapman what the current City Council knows about the

watershed and the need for active management of our forests. Chapman thought the current Council has a good working knowledge of forest issues, especially AFR, but that could change soon with elections. Main commented on the funding source for forest work over time. Karns suggested that the funding for City lands work might be changing from the Water Fund to the General Fund due to stresses on the Water Fund. Maymar commented on the increase in water supply with less tree demand after thinning programs. The recent drought-like conditions, especially in winters, has increased the potential die-off related to insects.

- E. AFR Project Update including Community Engagement
- F. Watershed Outreach Plan Review
- G. Ashland Forest Plan Revision
- H. Ashland Water Advisory Committee Update
- I. Update Commission 3-Year Goals

Pepe motioned to adjourn, seconded by Williams.

VII. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

VIII. REVIEW AND SET COMMISSION CALENDAR / NEXT MEETING

- A. Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting: March 13th, 2012

IX. ADJOURN: 7:30 PM

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