

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
TRAIL MASTER PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
August 11, 2017

PRESENT: **Parks Commissioners:** Mike Gardiner, Jim Lewis
 Additional Committee Members: David Chapman, Torsten Heycke, Stephen Jensen, Jim McGinnis
 City and APRC Staff: APRC Interim Parks Superintendent Jeffrey McFarland; GIS Analyst Lea Richards
 APRC Minute-taker: Betsy Manuel

ABSENT: **City and APRC Staff:** APRC Director Michael Black; AFR Division Chief-Forestry Resource Chis Chambers
 Committee Members: Luke Brandy,

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

➤ **Committee Meeting**—June 16, 2017

Motion: Gardiner moved to approve the Trail Master Plan Update Committee Meeting Minutes for June 16, 2017. Heycke seconded and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

• **Open Forum**

Ashland resident Lisa Michlebrick was present to observe discussion regarding trail plans and how they integrate with Ashland’s transportation system.

V. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. *Continue Reviewing and Discussing:*

I. Roca Creek

McFarland noted that Roca Creek traverses underneath the SOU campus. He stated that designating a trail “route” would create awareness of the resource.

McGinnis said he invited Roxane Beigel-Coryell, Sustainability & Recycling Coordinator Co-Chair for Southern Oregon University, to attend a future Trail Master Plan Update Committee meeting to discuss additional options for Roca Creek on campus.

Lewis said SOU talked about a bio-garden next to the physical plant some years ago. He inquired whether the concept had been developed further. After a brief discussion it was decided that it was likely that no action had been taken.

McFarland talked about the difficulties associated with developing a corridor along Roca Creek – particularly where Roca meets the TID Ditch. Lewis stated that one alternative would be to designate portions of the streetscape as part of the corridor in the Elkader Street area.

McFarland reviewed the potential for side corridors as a way to detour from trouble spots. He reiterated that planning for connectivity would ensure connectivity if things changed; i.e., owners sold property or granted easements. He supported the long-term viewpoint and stated that long-term plans became placeholders within the Trail Master Plan.

McFarland said APRC has a contact for the Paradise Homeowner's Association (HOA) that committed to keeping Parks apprised of any changes. That person expressed a willingness to discuss trail development in the area. McFarland said he talked to a homeowner regarding HOA issues. While generally supportive, she spoke about the HOA's concerns – particularly with dogs and noise. McFarland gave her positive information about granting a trail easement and how it could help mitigate trail traffic and minimize other trail concerns. He reported that APRC and AWTA were successful in other areas where trails were built near residential developments. He emphasized the importance of continued conversations with homeowners regarding trail development. McGinnis offered to initiate further discussion with residents in the Paradise area.

II. Clay Creek and Hamilton Creek

McFarland conveyed that consensus was reached at a prior meeting about combining the two creeks into one trail corridor. In addition, side corridors would be expanded to encourage development of neighborhood parks – an APRC goal. McFarland talked about a public/pedestrian easement retained by APRC and granted by the YMCA to access the new dog park through the YMCA property. He stated that APRC planned to build a combined playground/neighborhood park with a dog park adjacent to the current YMCA Park.

Continued discussion addressed landmarks along Clay Creek that included a designated wetland. Richards noted that the wetland had been resurveyed, resulting in a change of the boundaries. She asked about Cemetery Creek and whether it would be incorporated into the Clay Creek corridor. After some discussion, Gardiner recommended that Cemetery Creek become part of the enlarged corridor. He stated that APRC owned much of the properties in the area and there would be other opportunities in the future for continued trail and open space developments. McFarland commented that Cemetery

Creek bordered larger properties. He relayed that the headwaters for Cemetery Creek began at Siskiyou Blvd.

Chapman noted consensus for incorporating Cemetery Creek into the Clay Creek/Hamilton Creek Corridor. He initiated discussion about the railroad crossing at Clay and Ashland streets.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review and Discuss Additional Trail Corridors

➤ Central Area Bike Path

Chapman described the pathway along the railroad tracks. He advocated for a continuous connection to Jackson Road through to Railroad Park.

Chapman noted a concern about Oak Street along the tracks – ending with Van Ness to 4th St. He stated that there was no safe crossing at Van Ness. Lewis indicated that there were possible connections on the other side of the track where people currently walked, disregarding “No Trespassing” signs. Chapman noted that the bike path could be continuous if extended from Tolman Creek Rd. to Croman Rd. and beyond.

Gardiner recommended an extension to Otis Street. Jensen stated that the pathway could follow the tracks to Glenn Street with a cross-connection to Otis. An easement through property owned by the Cowan family would be essential. Gardiner noted that the opposite side of the tracks would be needed from Oak St. to 4th where the trail ends.

Chapman noted a missing piece between Laurel, Hersey and Helman streets. Gardiner pointed out that the railroad easement was narrow in that area.

Heycke suggested inviting a Transportation Commissioner to a future meeting to discuss their plans for connectivity. Lewis added that connectivity to the Greenway should be considered as well. Jensen suggested compiling a list of the areas of concern.

➤ Imperatrice Property

McFarland introduced the Imperatrice Property, stating that there are over 800 acres of land owned by the City of Ashland. He indicated that APRC hoped to obtain full or partial ownership of the property and provide a trails system throughout that would also connect to Grizzly Peak in the future. He relayed that there were private properties between the two public lands whose owners might be amenable to providing easements for trail connectivity. It was stated that east of Imperatrice was another area ripe for trail development, although the properties in that area were privately owned.

McFarland noted that the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy (SOLC) expressed interest in conserving all of the Imperatrice Property or at least the portion above the Irrigation Ditch. He stated that SOLC had started the process of identifying and marking valuable flora and fauna and had identified a breeding ground for the endangered Grasshopper Sparrow. He said the rare Round leaf

filariae, buttercups and other native plants had been found on the property. A large portion of the land retained its original characteristics as it remained unplowed. In another area, an old homestead and cistern were discovered on the property.

There followed a brief discussion about a possible bike trail through the property. It was noted that building/maintaining a trail might be problematic, given the clay content of the soil. Heycke stated that a portion of the Grizzly Peak Trail was open to cyclists. McFarland reiterated that unstable soil in some areas could restrict trail development as it posed an environmental concern.

Lewis suggested adding "Future Connectivity to Grizzly Peak" to the chapter on regional connections. Chapman agreed to work on a chapter addressing the Imperatrice Property. Other new chapters might include the Hitt Road area, Alice in Wonderland Trail and others that interface with forestlands as well as the Wrights Creek drainage area.

Heycke noted that ATWA distinguished between north/south connections as well as east/west. It was agreed that there was more work to be done in redefining corridors. McFarland stated that once discussion of the corridors and maps was complete, assignments would be given for compiling the new information as well as writing and editing the new chapters.

VIII. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Manuel, Minute-Taker
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. Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission Subcommittee meetings are digitally recorded and are available upon online.