



Open Space Commission

Virtual: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

In-person: Aquaplex (1702 N Fourth St, Flagstaff, AZ 86004)

August 28, 2023 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Minutes



Members Present

- Commissioner William Wilson (Chair)
- Commissioner Bruce Applin (Vice Chair)
- Commissioner Mary Norton (P&Z Liaison)
- Commissioner Bruce Fox
- Commissioner Jacqueline Thomas
- Commissioner Lina Wallen
- Commissioner Nat White

Councilmember / Liaison to the City Council

- Councilmember Representative Deborah Harris

Staff and others present

Koren Brown – PROSE Admin Specialist
 Martin Ince – Transportation Planner
 Jay Hicks – Dig Studio
 Brandon Stocksdale – NPS Community Planner
 Sylvia Struss – Open Space Coordinator
 Robert Wallace – Open Space Supervisor
 Danyel Mezzanatto – Dig Studio
 Sirena Rana – Trails Inspire
 Mark Loseth - SDR
 Jordan Hollinger – Associate Planner
 Sara Dechter – Neighborhood Planning and Development

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4 pm.

2. Roll Call

Those present noted above.

3. Land Acknowledge Statement

“The Flagstaff Open Space Commission humbly acknowledges the ancestral homelands of this area’s Indigenous nations and original stewards. These lands, still inhabited by Native descendants, border mountains sacred to Indigenous peoples. We honor them, their legacies, their traditions, and their continued contributions. We celebrate their past, present, and future generations who will forever know this place as home.”

4. Approval of the July 24, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Chair Wilson motioned to approve the July minutes as recorded, Commissioner Applin seconded; The Commission approved the minutes unanimously.

5. Public Participation

“At this time, any member of the public may address the Commission on any subject that is not scheduled before the Commission on this day. The Arizona Open Meeting Law prohibits the Commission from discussing or acting on an item which is not listed on the prepared agenda. Commission members may, however, respond to criticism made by those addressing the Commission, ask staff to review a matter, or ask that a matter be placed on a future agenda. To address the Commission on an item that is on the agenda, please wait for the Chair to call for Public Comment at the time the item is heard.”

There was no public participation.

6. Business Items

- A. **Sun Corridor Trail Partnership.** (15 minutes), Sirena Rana (Trails Inspire, LLC). Requested Action: Informational, Discussion.
Suncorridortrail.org

Ms. Rana provided information about the benefits and history of the Sun Corridor Trail which is a 1500-mile trail concept from Douglas, AZ, to Las Vegas, NV. The trail will connect hub cities of Tucson, Phoenix, Prescott, Sedona, Flagstaff, Kingman, and Las Vegas. This is what’s called a credit card trail as opposed to backcountry. This means the trails’ purpose is to drive business to hub cities to increase tourism and local support, as participants would pause to rest and re-fuel. AZ Office of Tourism awarded a \$250k grant for a 2-year period in 2021.

There are dozens of partners involved across multiple regions. Some Flagstaff challenges being considered involve the alignment of Lake Havasu to Flagstaff. The concept objective for the entire project involves using the most scenic established routes, with the least amount of effort to integrate. This approach allows for less maintenance and overall cost efficiency. Time to completion would be 1-2 years out.

There will continue to be partner meetings and trail town participation throughout the process, with further collaborations with NPS, NAU, and others to develop, finance, plan, and refine the Sun Corridor Trail.

Examples of similar, existing trails are popular in Europe. Chair Wilson asked for examples that exist in the USA. Such examples of ‘credit card trails’ follow canal routes in Pennsylvania or connect National Forest trails throughout Missouri but have been not developed in the West yet.

B. Observatory Mesa Trail Planning. (50 minutes), Mark Loseth (SDR) and City staff. Requested Action: Informational, Discussion.

The trail planning committee received approximately 2,900 individual comments in the latest public comment period regarding the development of the Greater Observatory Mesa Trail Plan. The trail plan is being revised based on community feedback. The trail planning committee is seeking input and recommendations from the commission for the final draft trail plan to ensure the plan is reflective of the purpose of Flagstaff Open Space. Topics for input include, but are not limited to, directional trails, single-use vs. multi-use, the balance between recreation and preservation, and e-bike use.

There was a robust discussion around the topic of e-bikes on trails and what the Commission’s stance might ultimately be. Chair Wilson suggested that e-bikes may not be an appropriate use on designated open space trails, and that city code should differentiate between use on the Flagstaff Urban Trail System and single-track trail experiences. Commissioner Applin concurs and stated that e-bike use should be enforced.

There was a question of what “obliteration” means as it’s referred to in the plan, which Mr. Loseth defined as trail restoration.

Commissioner White shared concern for the adoption of trails 3.36 and 3.37, although he is willing to compromise if similar typed trails are offered in another location.

The commission has requested a projection that would help them understand what type of increased use will be seen with the implementation of the trail plan. Next steps include commission discussion and input on various plan topics.

C. Flagstaff Regional Plan Update. (15 minutes), City staff. Requested Action: Informational, Discussion.

The Regional Plan is currently in phase 2. There have been 11 workshops with over 150 participants with a focus on how to build a thriving community to 2045 and beyond. The workshops identified that people largely value our natural spaces. There is also interest in transportation, preserving our city’s unique character, and concern for government collaboration.

The team is currently working on scenario planning which involves developing scenario themes. Themes are developed utilizing the narratives that were identified from the workshops and plugging them in to the software to explore outcomes. These outcomes would be compared to a ‘business as usual’ baseline scenario. Scenario choosing will occur in November 2023, after which time the plan will enter Phase 3, in coordination with the Regional Plan Committee.

~~**D. Council Update Planning.** (15 minutes), All. Requested Action: Informational, Discussion, Decision.~~

Omitted for time.

E. Heritage Grant Support. (5 minutes), City Staff. Requested Action: Informational, Discussion, Decision.

There was a motion by Commissioner White to approve the Heritage Grant letter of support from the commission, which was seconded by Vice-chair Applin. The commission approved the letter with unanimous support.

The remaining items were omitted for time.

7. Reports and Updates

~~A. Council Representative Report. (5 minutes), Council Representative Deborah Harris~~

~~B. Planning and Zoning Commission Representative Report. (5 minutes), P & Z Representative Mary Norton~~

~~C. Open Space Management Report. (5 minutes), Robert Wallace and Sylvia Struss~~

8. Informational Items To and From Commissioners and Staff

9. Potential Future Agenda Items – All

Next meeting: September 25, 2023, 4-6 PM

- A. Council Update Planning (10/31/23). All. Requested Action: Informational, Discussion, Decision. (September)
- B. Observatory Mesa Trail Planning. (60 minutes), Southwest Decision Resources & City staff. Requested Action: Informational, Discussion, Decision. (September)
- C. Commission Collaborations, (P&R and OSC). (XX minutes), All. Requested Action: Informational, Discussion, Decision. (September)
- D. BBB Fund Allocations. (XX minutes), City staff. Requested Action: Informational, Discussion. (TBD)
- E. Prioritization Multi-year Project Planning. All. Requested Action: Informational, Discussion. (TBD)
- F. Don Weaver Trail Alignment Proposal. (XX minutes), City staff. Requested Action: Informational, Discussion. (TBD)

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:10.