

MINUTES

**OPEN SPACE COMMISSION
MONDAY
10/23/23**

**IN PERSON
2:30 - 5:30 PM
MCALLISTER RANCH
FIRST RIGHT AFTER CITY OF PUBLIC WORKS
3200 W ROUTE 66
FLAGSTAFF, AZ 86001**

- 1. Call to Order**
The meeting was called to order at 2:31 pm.

- 2. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT

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

NOT PRESENT

Councilmember Representative: Deborah Harris

STAFF AND OTHERS

Koren Brown - Admin
Rebecca Sayers - PROSE Director
Robert Wallace - Open Space Supervisor
Sarah Holditch - Open Space Coordinator
Sylvia Struss - Open Space Coordinator
Pat Mcgervey - Coconino National Forest
Forrest Saville - Coconino National Forest
Mark Loseth - SDR

Commissioner Mary Norton was present from 2:30 - 3 pm and didn't participate in the walking portion.

- 3. Land Acknowledgment**
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 Minutes**
Commissioner Mary Norton motioned to approve September minutes, seconded by Commissioner Lina Wallen. The Commission approved the minutes unanimously.

5. Public Comment

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 taking action 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.

No members of the public were present.

6. Business Items

A. Observatory Mesa Trail Planning - Mark Loseth

The Commission opted to open business items with the Observatory Mesa Trail Plan (OMTP) discussion. Southwest Decision Resource representative Mark Loseth provided an introduction to the trail plan and provided some insight on what commissioners would see during the field trip. He also mentioned items that they should try to observe during the outing.

Representatives from Coconino National Forest were present prior to the group walk to discuss multi-agency collaboration. Forest Service representatives provided some background on their involvement and insight on how the trail plan could help meet the needs of the community. They also provided some information regarding how the trail plan could be implemented with the proper permit application from the city of Flagstaff (COF). If a permit was approved, it would allow the COF to construct and maintain trails on Forest Service lands. Forest Service representatives then took questions from the commissioners. Topics/questions that were discussed included:

- a. Identification of land parcels owned by the Forest Service.
- b. Examples of the Forest Service partnering with other land managers on similar trail projects. Examples identified: Sheep's Crossing with the COF, and the Fort Tuthill to Rogers Lake trail segment in partnership with Coconino County.
- c. E-bike considerations were discussed with questions about where they are currently allowed, since the Forest Service identifies them as motorized vehicles.
- d. E-bike regulation enforcement if e-bikes were permitted in the OMTP area.
- e. The continuation of motorized traffic, grazing permits, and hunting on Forest Service lands associated with the trail plan project area.
- f. E-bike classes and examples of the Forest Service providing opportunities for classes I and II (San Juan National Forest).

Following these discussion points commissioners and staff embarked on the field walk at 3 P.M. The walk introduced Commissioners to the McAllister Ranch parcels, the BNSF underpass, and trail plan alignments 5.20, 5.25, 3.36, and 3.37. During the field walk, topics of discussion included:

- a. BNSF partnership in designating a new formal underpass for pedestrian use. It was noted that the AZ Trail Association did work out a recent agreement with BNSF on the east side of town.
- a. Resource preservation related to trail corridors avoiding springs, tanks, oak stands, and other wildlife important locations.
- b. Mountain biking features and how trails could accommodate multi-use.
- c. Adaptive Trails: trail width (36"), and trails designated for this specific use. It was noted the number of adaptive trails was reduced, and the entire plan was adjusted to be more 'trail-light', based on public comment and wildlife considerations. If the

Flagstaff Loop Trail (managed by the county) could be wider (36”), it could be used by adaptive bikes and provide better options for adaptive users.

- d. Cost for trail construction was discussed and estimated at approximately \$25-30k per mile, or \$4-\$5/foot. The trail plan proposes approximately 18 miles of new trail. A rough estimate provided is around \$500,000 to enact this plan. This would be accomplished through grants and donations; and would be done in stages rather than all at once.
- e. Inclusion of language to the trail plan for “adaptive management” should be included to allow for needed flexibility for changes in visitation, needs, etc.

B. Council Update Approval

Commission voted to approve the Open Space Commission’s draft presentation for their City Council update, to take place on Tuesday Oct 31. Commissioner Thomas motioned to approved, Commissioner Fox seconded. The presentation was approved unanimously.

7. Reports and Updates

A. Council Representative Report - Councilmember Deborah Harris

Councilmember Harris was not present to provide an update.

B. Planning and Zoning Commission Representative Report - Commissioner Mary Norton

Commissioner Norton was only present for the meeting start, but it was relayed to staff that the naming terminology for Open Space will be presented to the Planning & Zoning Commission on Thursday, Oct 26.

C. Open Space Management Report - Staff

8. Informational Items To and From Commissioners and Staff

Staff Robert Wallace noted that AZ Site Stewards visited and provided over 200 hours in 75 visits over the last fiscal year. Staff Sylvia Struss shared that the Full Moon Tarantula Trek is Saturday Oct 28 at 5:30 pm from Buffalo Park.

Commissioner Nat White had a meeting with Tiffany Antol, Zoning Code Manager, who is interested in coordinating with the Commission on planning. There are occasionally small parcel opportunities when working with developers that the commission could consider utilizing as potential FUTS and OS connectors.

9. Potential Future Agenda Items

Proposal to invite Tiffany Antol to discuss Commission collaboration with Planning and Zoning.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.