

DRAFT MINUTES

OPEN SPACES COMMISSION
MONDAY
MARCH 24, 2025

HYBRID MEETING
FLAGSTAFF AQUAPLEX
AND [MICROSOFT TEAMS](#)
1702 N FOURTH STREET
4:00 P.M.

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Thomas called the March 24, 2025 Open Spaces Commission meeting to order at 4:04pm.
2. **Roll Call**
Present:

Chair Jacqueline Thomas	Commissioner Molly Joyce
Co-Chair Bruce Fox	Commissioner Nat White
Commissioner Lina Wallen	Commissioner William Kluwin
Commissioner Mary Norton (P&Z Liaison)	Councilmember Representative David Spence

Others present: Mike Wilson, Jane Jackson, Karen Malis-Clark, Aaron Dickinson, Bill Case, Ashlee Fliney, Rebecca Sayers, Robert Wallace, Sylvia Struss, Cole Lang
3. **Land Acknowledgment:** Chair Thomas read the land acknowledgment.
4. **Approval of Minutes**
 - A. **Open Spaces Commission Meeting Minutes - 1/27/25:** Commissioner Norton motioned to approve the January 22, 2025 Minutes, Commissioner Wallen seconded, and all voted in favor.
 - B. **Parks & Recreation and Open Spaces Combined Commission Meeting Minutes - 2/24/25:** Commissioner Wallen motioned to approve the February 24, 2025 Joint Open Space-Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes, Commissioner Joyce seconded, and all voted in favor.
5. **Public Comment:** Chair Thomas called for public comment on any items not on the agenda, and there was none.
6. **Business Items**
 - A. **Open Spaces Commission Introductions:** New Commissioner Bill (William) Kluwin introduced himself, noting that his wife Gisela Kluwin volunteers with Open Space, and that living near Observatory Mesa got him interested in being on the Commission.
 - B. **Jack Welch Memorial Bridge Naming:** Jane Jackson, representing Friends of Jack Welch and JWalkers, updated the Commission about the plaque honoring Jack Welch, which is proposed to be installed at the foot bridge at Picture Canyon Natural & Cultural Preserve. Jack Welch (1938-2023) was instrumental in saving Picture Canyon by having the City of Flagstaff purchase it from the State of Arizona. He also was passionate about Flagstaff, hiking, and history, and regularly guided hikes throughout Flagstaff--a tradition which continues with the JWalkers. It was noted that Jack Welch was voted Citizen of the year by the Flagstaff City Council several years ago. A photo of the proposed plaque was shown. Ms. Jackson noted that funding for the plaque was raised by Friends of Jack Welch. She hopes the plaque will be installed in July 2024, which will be the second anniversary of his passing.

Robert Wallace noted that Open Space Steward, Diana Henry is also proposing artwork for the bridge as well, and she submitted a Beautification grant application. The proposed artwork was shown. These groups were congratulated on their efforts. It was noted that after a recommendation from the Commission, it will be presented again to City Council.

Commissioner White motioned to recommend the naming of the foot bridge at Picture Canyon after Jack Welch, it was seconded by Commissioner Wallen, and all voted in favor.

- C. Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve: New Proposed Trail - Don Weaver Trail Canyon Route: Sylvia Struss presented a short PowerPoint, noting that the proposal to realign the Don Weaver Trail at Picture Canyon is a citizen initiative first proposed almost 4 years ago. The proposal would re-reroute the Don Weaver trail from the current pipeline road, down towards the canyon and the waterfall, so that it is a more enjoyable and picturesque hike, down into some trees, and out of the weather. With the current pipeline road, visitors hear the waterfall and want to see it, and so a series of unauthorized trails have been made. The citizen group raised over \$2,000 to work with Flagline Trails and an archaeologist to propose the realignment, and we've worked with a State Historic Preservation Officer to finalize the alignment so that there is a buffer to archaeology. Robert Wallace showed a zoomed-out map to show the whole property and current trails at Picture Canyon. There was a question about whether, with the realignment, the trail would be to honor, for example, the tribal affiliation of the trail instead of a person. It was noted that the original naming after archaeologist Don Weaver was important to the community at the time.

Chair Thomas suggested that the Commission would like to walk the proposed trail at Picture Canyon before making a decision, since there are some new Commissioners since the last time it was hiked. It was agreed that the next Commission meeting will be a field trip to Picture Canyon, on Monday April 28, 2025 from 4-6pm.

Mr. Wallace noted the conservation easement from AZ State Parks, which limits us to developing ten percent of the property, and this realignment would count toward that percentage. The AZ State Parks board would have to review and approve this as well. Other items counting toward the ten percent are signage under the RTP grant, bathrooms at the trail head, and fencing the boundary.

There was a question about the connection of the FUTS to Picture Canyon, which is a future project.

- D. Recreational Trails Program, Picture Canyon Trail Restoration Project Completion Update: Robert Wallace showed some photos of the work that has been completed under the AZ State Parks RTP grant. They included before and after photos of trail repair, rehabilitation of unauthorized trails and roads along the Tom Moody, Don Weaver, and Arizona Trails, re-aligning the Waterbird Site trail (moving it further away from the petroglyphs), and installing stone steps at the Petroglyph Overlook. He reported that formal signage was also made and installed, and one-inch steel grid was installed under welcome signs so that temporary signs can be attached to those. Mr. Wallace noted that staff is still working on the Pit House interpretive sign, and a wayfinding sign to be installed near the entrance to the Wildcat Waste Water Treatment Plant, and he invited feedback about the trails.
- E. Greater Observatory Mesa Area Trail Plan Update: Robert Wallace reported that the final proposed trail plan will go to City Council work session on Tuesday 5/13/2025 starting at 3pm. This will be informational and discussion, and will be widely publicized. It is tentatively on the 6/3/2025 City Council meeting for a resolution. People will be able to join virtually. Commissioners should let Mr. Wallace know if they'll attend, since if there is a quorum of the Commission, we will need to post that.

7. Reports and Updates

- A. City Council Liaison Report: Councilmember David Spence did not have a report to make and thanked the Commission for acclimating him to the Open Spaces Commission.
- B. Planning and Zoning Commission Representative Report: Commissioner Norton noted that the last two P&Z Commission meetings had been canceled, so there was nothing to report.
- C. Open Space Management Report: Sylvia Struss noted that the City's new volunteer software was up and active at <https://volunteer.flagstaffaz.gov>. She noted some upcoming field trips on Open Space properties and other community events and volunteer events were up there, and volunteers were needed. Robert Wallace noted the AZ State Parks Heritage Grant is still active with Open Space Educator Ashlee Flaney, and she will give a presentation to the Commission in May 2025. He also noted that work under the Department of Forestry & Fire Management's Invasive Plant grant on Observatory Mesa was underway, and so visitors may see folks working on weed mitigation and the chip/bark piles there.

D. PROSE Monthly Newsletter - February 2025 was included in materials.

8. **Informational Items to and from Commissioners and Staff:** Robert Wallace noted there is a Recreation van we can use to get to Picture Canyon for next month's meeting. It was decided to meet at Picture Canyon trailhead. Commissioner Norton asked if there would be invasive weed workshops this Spring/Summer. Ms. Struss reported there is a 2-part invasive weed workshop on June 3, 2025 at noon and 5:30pm, which will be posted on the volunteer.flagstaffaz.gov website. A Native Plant workshop will also be scheduled, and invasive weed pulls at Picture Canyon are scheduled. Commissioner White reported that the Resource Protection Overlay change was passed by Flagstaff City Council, noting that removing trees in roadways would not count toward the RPO. Commissioner Kluwin noted that the Arboretum is growing willows for the US Forest Service, which will be the topic at the next Northern AZ Native Plant Society.
9. **Potential Future Agenda Items:** Picture Canyon field trip, Don Weaver alignment, Flagstaff Urban Trails connection, update on the Flagstaff Urban Trails, and Ashlee Fliney reporting on her work in May.
10. **Adjournment:** Commissioner White motioned to adjourn, it was seconded by Commissioner Fox, and all voted in favor. The meeting ended at 5:12pm.