

## MINUTES

OPEN SPACES COMMISSION  
MONDAY  
JULY 28, 2025

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

### 1. Call to Order

Co-Chair Bruce Fox called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

### 2. Roll Call

*NOTE: One or more Commissioners may be in attendance through other technological means.*

Chair Jacqueline Thomas: Absent  
Co-Chair Bruce Fox: Present  
Commissioner Molly Joyce: Present  
Commissioner William Kluwin: Absent

Commissioner Lina Wallen: Present  
Commissioner Nat White: Present  
Commissioner Mary Norton (P&Z Liaison): Absent  
Councilmember Rep. David Spence: Present

Staff Present: Rebecca Sayers, Robert Wallace, Sylvia Struss, Rose Toehe (joined virtually at 5:50 PM), Lori Reynolds, and Ashlee Fliney

### 3. Land Acknowledgment

The Flagstaff Open Spaces 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.

Read by Co-Chair Bruce Fox.

### 4. Approval of June 23, 2025 Minutes

Review and approval of June's commission meeting minutes was deferred to the August 25th meeting so that all commissioners may review the document.

### 5. Open Call to the Public

Read by Co-Chair Bruce Fox. No public comments were received.

### 6. Business Items

#### A. Regional Plan Review and Recommendations

Co-Chair Fox opened the discussion topic for the commission, sharing that the Regional Plan was currently undergoing a second round of public comment. He asked fellow commissioners to share any comments that they have on the plan. Commissioners had concerns about how the plan read - the tone and assumptions made surrounding the core purpose of the plan. They also questioned the sustainability of the plan and what it is seeking to achieve and if the plan would focus on supporting people who currently live here. Councilmember Spence shared with the commission that the Continental area belongs to the city and is a part of long-range planning that includes opportunities for recreation and an event venue within the Continental space. This opportunity, Spence said, could fit into the plan's PROS.2 Policy. Overall, the commission's discussion centered on how open space considerations are minimal and secondary to the priorities of housing and climate change.

Rebecca Sayers thanked the commission for their input and shared with them that PROSE staff

provided similar comments with Regional Plan drafters. She suggested that if the commission decides to prepare a recommendation that includes those points, it will be important to clearly communicate their concerns and address why the recommended changes are valuable. She further stated that the Regional Plan references a future updated PROSE Master Plan that may help provide leverage for implementation of regional plan goals and policies. Chair Fox asked what the timeline would be for the consultant group with the PROSE Master Plan. Rebecca replied that the process would likely be a twelve-month process that would involve public engagement, plan review, a gap analysis on what PROSE is missing, and set priorities.

The commission decided that each commissioner would submit their top four comments and recommendations on the plan to Robert by August 11th. He and Co-Chair Fox will then draft a letter to be shared at the next Open Spaces Commission meeting on August 25, 2025. Next, the letter will be shared with the City Planning and Zoning Commission at their meeting on August 27, 2025.

Co-Chair Fox called for public comment on this topic. No public comments were received.

#### **B. Draft Code Analysis Project: Code Concepts Report Review and Recommendations**

Robert provided a general summary of the Code Concepts Report. The commission asked if PROSE staff had provided any comments on the draft. Robert replied that they had not, and it was to be determined if staff would in the future. Rebecca added that this should not deter the commission from providing their own comments. Robert informed the commission that if the commission was interested in reviewing and submitting comments on the report that they would have until the August 26, 2025 Council meeting. The Commission decided to review the report individually and submit comments for inclusion in a recommendation. Co-Chair Fox added that the feedback should be reviewed and incorporated into a formal recommendation by August 11th. A draft letter will be shared at the next Open Spaces Commission meeting on August 25, 2025.

Co-Chair Fox called for public comment. No comments were received.

#### **C. Observatory Mesa Natural Area Renaming Consideration**

Co-Chair Fox reiterated some of the comments that were made on this topic from June's commission meeting. Robert commented that he reached out to Flagstaff's Indigenous Commission for their input on the topic. He shared that while the Indigenous Commission was unable to get the topic onto their most recent meeting's agenda, he was invited to attend their next commission meeting.

Beginning the renaming discussion of Observatory Mesa Natural Area, Commissioner White shared that he was in support of including "Preserve" as it conveys the intent of the land and provides naming consistency with another Open Space, Picture Canyon Natural and Cultural Preserve. Open Spaces Commissioners expressed support for including "Preserve" in the name. They also commented that the cultural history of the Mesa could be incorporated via interpretive signage and into trail names, too.

Indigenous Commissioner, Cherylee Francis, and Indigenous Commission staff liaison, Rose Toehe, joined the meeting. Rose Toehe shared with Open Spaces Commissioners that she had informed her commission on this topic and that there were individuals interested in providing input.

Robert shared that he would provide a short presentation for the Indigenous Commission and share that that Open Spaces Commission is considering recommending an update to the name of the city's regional preserve, currently known as **Observatory Mesa Natural Area**, to **Observatory Mesa Natural and Cultural Preserve**, with the intent of reflecting the significance of the area as more than a recreational destination, and to emphasize the preservation of both natural and cultural resources.

Co-Chair Fox called for public comment. No comments were received.

## **7. Reports and Updates**

### **A. Council Representative Report, Council Representative David Spence**

Councilmember Spence did not have anything to share at this time.

### **B. Planning and Zoning Commission Representative Report, Representative Mary Norton**

Representative Norton was not present.

### **C. Open Space Management Report, Robert Wallace and Sylvia Struss**

Sylvia Struss, Open Space Coordinator, shared with the commission highlights of recent and upcoming Open Space events.

- A group of 15 youth from Iowa assisted Open Space staff remove invasive elm along North Turquoise Drive. Staff will be planting Juniper and Pinyon in their place.
- Completed trash removal along McMillan Mesa.
- Ongoing volunteer event, Weed Pull Wednesdays. The next upcoming events will be held on September 3rd and 17th.
- Upcoming full moon hike on August 9th along the Mars Hill Trail.
- Upcoming mushroom walk on August 23rd, partnering with AZ Watchable Wildlife Experience. Registration for the event is required and can be found at [Volunteer Flagstaffaz.gov](http://Volunteer.Flagstaffaz.gov)

### **D. PROSE Monthly Newsletter**

Review of the June newsletter is postponed until the August commission meeting.

## **8. Informational Items To and From Commissioners and Staff**

No additional items were discussed.

## **9. Potential Future Agenda Items**

Future agenda items include commissioner comments on the Regional Plan and feedback on the Code Analysis Project.

## **10. Adjournment**

Co-Chair Fox adjourned the meeting at 6:10 PM.