

MINUTES

OPEN SPACES COMMISSION
MONDAY
OCTOBER 27, 2025

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

1. Call to Order

Commission Chair Thomas opened the meeting at 4:01 PM.

2. Roll Call

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

Chair Jacqueline Thomas, Present
Co-Chair Bruce Fox, Present
Commissioner Mary Norton (P&Z Liaison), Present
Commissioner William Kluwin, Present

Commissioner Molly Joyce, Absent
Commissioner Lina Wallen, Present
Commissioner Nat White, Present
Councilmember Rep: David Spence, Present

Staff present: Rebecca Sayers (PROSE Director), Sylvia Struss (Open Spaces Coordinator), Lori Reynolds (Administrative Specialist), Ashlee Fliney (Open Spaces Coordinator)

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 Chair Thomas.

4. Approval of [August 25, 2025](#), [September 8, 2025](#) (Special Open Spaces Commission Meeting), and [September 22, 2025](#) (Joint Parks & Recreation / Open Spaces Commission Meeting) Minutes.

Commissioner Fox motioned to approve the August 25, 2025, September 8, 2025, and September 22, 2025 minutes. Commissioner Wallen seconded the motion. All commissioners present approved the motion.

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.

Read by Chair Thomas. No comments or questions were received.

6. Business Items

A. Regional Plan Update

Chair Thomas shared a brief overview of the recent Planning and Zoning Commission meetings, and City Council meetings that Open Spaces Commissioners and PROSE staff attended to share the commission's recommendations on the Regional Plan draft. She mentioned that of the three main points that commissioners shared, the densely populated development zoning proposal that falls next to a wildlife corridor was the topic they felt most strongly about. Despite the commission's efforts to persuade City Council on that decision, the Council remained firm and chose not to remove it from the Regional Plan draft. There were some wins that the commission had. Chair Thomas mentioned that several of their updates to language recommendations were approved, as well as the update to the Walking Access Standard and the request for a ponderosa tree inventory.

Commissioner Norton provided feedback from the Planning and Zoning Commission. She summarized that during their review of the commission's recommendations to the Regional Plan, the P&Z Commission kept things at a surface level without providing enough baseline information to City Council.

The Open Spaces Commissioners expressed their thanks to Robert Wallace for all of his work, time, and effort that he put forth on the Open Spaces section of the Regional Plan. The commission was especially grateful for both Robert's and Rebecca Sayer's presence and the statements that they provided to City Council.

Councilmember Spence informed the commission that he would work closely with commissioners and play a more active role as their liaison between the Open Spaces Commission and City Council.

Rebecca Sayers provided follow-up information on the commission's earlier topic of discussion, the suburban center falling within a wildlife corridor. She let them know that she and other PROSE staff can plan to periodically follow up with the commission, providing them with updates as they move forward with the planning and development process. Rebecca added that she would be sure to relay the Commission's interest in that corridor.

No additional comments or questions were received.

B. Observatory Mesa Natural Area Renaming Consideration

Sylvia Struss, Open Spaces Coordinator, shared with commissioners a list of pros and cons for updating Observatory Mesa's name. She commented that Open Space staff had reached out to the Indigenous Commission for their recommendation. That commission would be okay with the Open Spaces Commission's decision to rename the Mesa, but they did want to be consulted if Open Spaces renamed any trails. After a quick discussion between commissioners, they unanimously decided to recommend a rename for Observatory Mesa Natural Area to Observatory Mesa Natural Preserve.

C. November/December Open Spaces Commission Meeting Date Selection

Commissioner White motioned to approve the cancellation of a November 2025 Open Spaces Commission meeting and move the December 2025 commission meeting to December 8, 2025 from 4 to 6 PM. Commissioner Wallen seconded the motion. All commissioners present approved.

D. Open Space Management Updates

Sylvia Struss shared several updates and accomplishments from the Open Spaces program with commissioners.

- The Hidden Hollow Right of Way Access Easement is in the planning stage. Once private property owners are finished, their plans will be reviewed by City staff and then sent to City Council for consideration of the amendment of the right-of-way easement.
- Picture Canyon's Jack Welch Memorial Bridge has been officially named and includes a new plaque. There will be an accompanying art installation, open to the public, on December 7, 2025 at 1 PM.
- Observatory Mesa Natural Area's draft plan was completed and approved by the City Council

and the AZ State Parks Board. Staff are currently working on a solicitation for a vendor to assist with trail flagging as a next step. Some funds have been designated for trail building in 2028.

- Open Space city code revision update: Staff are working on a document for their specific codes - determining if their codes will be stand alone, or if they could be included with Park's.
- The BNSF Railway is applying for a grant to install new tunnels between Country Club and Picture Canyon, an area that has been an increased concern for public safety. One of the tunnels will be wide enough to host a FUTS trail.
- McMillan Mesa signage update:
 - Temporary no-camping signs have been nearly all replaced with permanent signage.
 - Funding is being sought for additional new signage (5 interpretive signs). This project has been ongoing.
- The Don Weaver Trail Alignment Proposal for the realignment of switchbacks along the trail is in progress. Staff have submitted their SHPO application and consulted with local tribes.
- The Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund grant application that funds the Open Space Educator position, is in progress. This funding project will be completed in Summer 2026.
- Invasive plant grants: PROSE staff are working on completing two invasive plant mitigation projects for the Observatory Mesa project and expect it to be completed by December 2025.

7. Reports and Updates

A. Council Representative Report, Council Representative David Spence

Council Representative Spence did not have anything to share at the meeting.

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

Commissioner Norton shared with commissioners that on September 23, 2025 the Planning and Zoning Commission had reviewed the amended agreement regarding Pine Canyon reclaimed water. She noted that this was an administrative function but it was shared with the public and could be something that Open Spaces Commissioners may be interested in reviewing.

A comment that Commissioner Norton shared earlier in the meeting, during the Regional Plan discussion, to be included in her Planning and Zoning Commission report: Commissioner Norton notified her fellow commissioners that on Wednesday, October 29, 2025, the Planning and Zoning Commission would be hearing a conditional use request for a new amenity at Pine Canyon golf course.

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

There were no additional comments or updates from Open Space staff.

D. PROSE Monthly Newsletter ([September 2025](#))

There were no comments on the September 2025 newsletter.

8. Informational Items To and From Commissioners and Staff

Commissioner Fox expressed his thanks to his fellow commissioners and the Open Space staff for their work and participation in the draft Regional Plan recommendations. Commissioner White also expressed his gratitude and acknowledged the hard work that everyone committed to the Regional Plan.

9. Potential Future Agenda Items

Future items for discussion include:

- Update on the status of PROSE's master plan

- Capital project priorities
- Plan for implementation of Observatory Mesa Natural Preserve

10. Adjournment

Chair Thomas adjourned the meeting at 5:33 PM.