

MINUTES

OPEN SPACES COMMISSION
MONDAY
APRIL 27, 2026

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

1. Call to Order

Chair Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:03 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: Present
Commissioner Lina Wallen: Present
Commissioner Nat White: Present at 4:24 PM
Councilmember Rep: David Spence: Present at 4:06
PM

Staff Present: Rebecca Sayers (PROSE Director), Robert Wallace (Open Space Supervisor), Sylvia Struss (Open Space Coordinator), Lori Reynolds (Administrative Specialist), Ashlee Fliney (Open Space Coordinator). Open Space Interns: Grace Harris, and George Wilson.

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.

Read by Chair Thomas.

4. Approval of February 23, 2026 [Minutes](#)

5. Open Call to the Public

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 comments or questions were received.

6. Business Items

A. Vice-Chair Appointment

The Commission revisited the appointment of a Vice-Chair, noting that while the Chair had been re-appointed at their January 2026 meeting, the Vice-Chair position had not yet been filled. Commissioner Fox, the current Vice-Chair, expressed his interest in continuing in the role. Commissioner Wallen made a motion to appoint Commissioner Fox (Bruce) as Vice-Chair, which

was seconded by Commissioner Norton. The motion was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

B. Rescheduling of the Open Spaces Commission May Meeting

The Commission discussed rescheduling the upcoming May meeting due to the Memorial Day holiday. It was agreed to move the meeting to June 1. Robert Wallace noted that the Aquaplex would be unavailable on that date, requiring an alternative location. Robert will identify a suitable location, with consideration given to meeting at one of Flagstaff's open space sites to provide Commissioners with an opportunity to visit and engage with the areas directly.

C. Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Events Division (PROSE) Master Plan Update and Discussion

Commissioners received an update on the PROSE Master Plan from Rebecca Sayers. Staff reported that, following an initial check-in, a formal kick-off meeting with the consultant was held approximately one month ago. Since then, staff have compiled relevant PROSE materials into a SharePoint site, including an inventory of assets and a summary of Open Space guiding principles such as 10-minute access, connectivity, and maintenance considerations. Budget information for the current fiscal year, the past five years, and future projections (when available) has also been shared. The next check-in with the consultant is scheduled for the following week. Initial billing indicates work has begun on community data collection, and staff have provided a list of community stakeholders and partners.

Commissioner Norton asked whether topics identified during the Regional Plan process but not included could be incorporated into the Master Plan. Rebecca agreed this would be valuable, and Commissioners supported using the Master Plan to provide more detailed, actionable guidance aligned with the Regional Plan.

Discussion followed on funding mechanisms, including development impact fees. Rebecca noted that the City of Flagstaff currently does not use impact fees for Open Space (OS) or Parks and Recreation, though the City is currently reviewing this potential.

Commissioners discussed the 10-minute access goal and the role of developers in providing open space. It was noted that developer-provided spaces are often limited, and Rebecca stated it is generally more effective for the City to acquire and manage open space directly.

Commissioner Norton asked about walkability mapping and level of service (LOS) analysis. Robert confirmed a 2018 GIS walkability analysis exists and noted that LOS metrics used in Parks could potentially be adapted for Open Space. A land value rating system was not identified as part of current PROSE practices, although Robert did review the Conservation Values matrix developed for open space acquisition and prioritization.

Commissioner Kluwin raised questions about defining passive versus active recreation and including the idea of passive recreation in a mission statement for open space. Rebecca responded that the consultant will be working with PROSE staff to help define and refine the mission, values, and guiding principles for each PROSE section. She noted that this process may present an opportunity to revisit and update how passive recreation is defined and incorporated. She also emphasized that interpretations of passive recreation can vary among community members, and that staff aim to define Open Space in a way that best reflects community need. Robert noted Regional Plan definitions differ from Open Space perspectives but agreed the topic warrants further exploration.

Trail connectivity was discussed, including coordination with FUTS and partner agencies. PROSE staff emphasized collaboration with Engineering and noted that the Master Plan should complement, not duplicate, existing plans. Some planning areas fall outside PROSE's purview but will involve interdepartmental coordination.

Chair Thomas asked about viewsheds; Rebecca clarified PROSE does not have regulatory authority but could include viewsheds as a guiding value.

Commissioners acknowledged that some topics, including enforceability and jurisdiction, fall outside

PROSE authority and should be discussed with the consultant. The Master Plan scope is expected to include funding analyses and priorities. Commissioners emphasized the need for a clear, actionable plan with priorities, timelines, and implementation strategies. It was noted that master plans are typically updated every five years to account for changing local conditions.

To questions about any recent SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analyses performed, Rebecca noted the consultant may lead the Commission and/or the community through this exercise in their community input phase. She also explained that the Master Plan will provide high-level direction, with more detailed implementation planning to follow through staff-led efforts.

Commissioner Norton asked about forming any kind of volunteer task force or non-profit partners to compliment the Open Space section, such as a trail planning group. Rebecca noted that several such organizations exist in Flagstaff, including the Flagstaff Trails Initiative and Flagstaff Biking Organization.

Chair Thomas emphasized the importance of consistent language, addressing residential disparities, and ensuring the plan reflects diverse community needs, including those not engaged through traditional outreach.

Commissioner Joyce asked about the extent to which the Open Space Master Plan could influence or establish requirements for actions taken by external agencies. Rebecca clarified the Master Plan serves as a guiding document and cannot impose requirements on outside entities.

Commissioner Kluwin stressed maintaining an Open Space-specific focus within the plan and encouraged identifying key priorities. Rebecca noted the consultant will guide discussions and encouraged Commissioners to review other documents developed by the consultant, Kimley-Horn, on their [website](#).

During public comment, Commissioner White asked about the plan's vision. Rebecca described it as a 10–15 year guiding document balancing immediate actions with long-term goals. Commissioners supported a forward-looking approach that blends practical implementation with visionary planning.

7. Reports and Updates

A. Council Representative Report, Council Representative David Spence

Councilmember Spence reported that he continues to relay the work of the Commission to the City Council and expressed his intent to support the Commission by bringing forward their ideas, particularly as they relate to potential ordinances and implementation of the Master Plan. He noted that he is available to serve as an advocate and conduit between the Commission and Council, encouraging Commissioners to communicate any priorities or initiatives they would like advanced.

Chair Thomas suggested providing a summary or handout of key discussion points from each meeting to assist Councilmember Spence in conveying Commission updates more effectively.

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

Commissioner Norton reported on ongoing discussions regarding proposed code revisions related to data centers, including considerations for allowing them within City limits through the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) process or potentially prohibiting them. Proposed code would limit data centers to heavy industrial zones, though few parcels remain available, with one potential site identified in state owned land south of Picture Canyon.

Commissioner Kluwin asked if they had considered infrastructure impacts, including water usage. Commissioner Norton replied that City Council has reviewed these considerations in coordination with IT, Sustainability, and Water Services.

The item is expected to return to City Council for consideration and a potential vote on May 5.

Open Space Management Report, Robert Wallace and Sylvia Struss

C.

Robert reported that permanent “No Camping” signs have been installed, and a decrease in illegal camping activity has been observed. Trail and restoration work has been completed at McMillan Mesa, and a signage project funded through an Arizona State Parks grant is nearing completion. Kiosks and wayfinding signs have been installed, with insert panels being finalized and expected to be completed by June. Signage across Open Space and Parks is being standardized for consistency in design.

Staff are also collaborating with Parks on updates to general code of conduct guidelines and anticipate bringing forward additional information to the Commission in the coming months.

Sylvia shared draft interpretive signage with the Commission, including themes focused on plants and animals, with additional signs in development related to geology and scenic viewpoints identifying visible peaks.

D. PROSE Monthly [Newsletter](#) (March 2026)

8. Informational Items To and From Commissioners and Staff

Commissioner White shared that he is involved with the Flagstaff Trail Initiative and is currently working on trail grant efforts. He noted collaboration on interpretive signage related to fire, geology, fauna, and history for the trails leading into Forest Service land north of Buffalo Park.

Commissioners also reviewed reported user numbers for Buffalo Park trail counters from the March newsletter.

9. Potential Future Agenda Items

Chair Thomas asked Commissioners to email Robert any ideas they have for the Commission's next meeting.

10. Adjournment

Chair Thomas adjourned the meeting at 6:03 PM.