

MINUTES

OPEN SPACES COMMISSION
MONDAY
JULY 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 4:01 PM.

2. Roll Call

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

Chair Jacqueline Thomas, present	Commissioner Molly Joyce, present
Co-Chair Bruce Fox, present (virtual)	Commissioner Lina Wallen, present
Commissioner Mary Norton (P&Z Liaison), present	Commissioner Nat White, present
Commissioner William Kluwin, absent	Councilmember Rep: David Spence, present

Staff Present: Robert Wallace (Open Space Manager) Sylvia Struss (Open Space Coordinator), Ashlee Fliney (Open Space Educator), Lori Reynolds (Administrative Specialist)

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 Minutes - [June 22, 2026](#)

Commissioner Norton moved to approve the June 22, 2026 minutes as attached. Commissioner White seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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.

Read by Chair Thomas. No comments were received

6. Business Items

A. Observatory Mesa Field Trip Planning

Chair Thomas opened the discussion about holding a future Commission meeting as a field trip to Observatory Mesa Natural Preserve (OMNP), giving commissioners an opportunity to see ongoing projects firsthand and have more in-depth discussions about future trail improvements. She noted the meeting could also include invited partners and stakeholders to showcase the work being done

by Open Space staff and contractors.

Robert agreed that an on-site meeting would help commissioners become more familiar with the preserve, current projects, and the [Greater Observatory Mesa Trail Plan](#). He suggested reviewing mapped trail corridors, walking one of the new alignments, and giving Commissioner Kluwin an opportunity to revisit concerns he had previously raised. Chair Thomas proposed scheduling the field trip in October to allow additional time for Flagline to complete trail marking and related work. Commissioner Joyce asked whether Phase 1 of the trail work was located in the southern portion of the preserve, and Robert clarified that trail work in phase one would take place nearest the surrounding neighborhoods. Commissioner Norton commented that the field trip would also provide a good opportunity to explain the preserve's recent name change and the reasoning behind the updated trail plan.

Robert reminded the Commission that the field trip would still be a public meeting, to which Councilmember Spence added that it would need to comply with Open Meeting Law requirements regarding public access and meeting content. Robert then displayed the Greater Observatory Mesa Trail Plan's map to review potential access points and meeting locations. Commissioner Kluwin expressed interest in discussing partnerships between the City and other land management agencies, particularly those outlined in Section 7 of the plan. Councilmember Spence supported inviting City Council members to attend but recommended first consulting with the City Clerk regarding Open Meeting Law requirements.

Commissioner White also expressed interest in visiting the FlagstaffLoop Trail, noting that the section descending into town is in poor condition and that the trail also serves as a good example of a trail maintained by multiple agencies. Robert recommended keeping the field trip focused on the Commission's priorities and, if needed, inviting partners such as the U.S. Forest Service and Lowell Observatory to a separate follow-up discussion.

As next steps, Robert will review possible dates and logistics and return with recommendations at the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Joyce added a final comment that no recent updates regarding the Observatory Mesa trail plan have been shared with the public. Robert agreed that additional outreach would be beneficial, suggesting a newspaper article to highlight both the preserve's name change and the trail plan progress, and thanked the Commission for the feedback.

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

Robert provided an update on the PROSE Master Plan, noting that the consultant team (Kimley Horn) has launched a project website, developed outreach materials, and plans to attend a series of public engagement events. The consultants recently attended their first community event, Touch-a-Truck, and will continue gathering public input throughout the planning process. Robert shared the project website, www.flagstaffprose.com, with the Commission and said he would also email the link to Commissioners. He encouraged Commissioners to participate in outreach events as members of the public if they wished to provide comments, noting that the consultants will also attend a future Commission meeting. Robert added that he had compiled questions and discussion topics from previous Commission meetings to share with the consultants.

Commissioners briefly discussed their experience using the project website, noting some difficulties accessing the platform on mobile devices and offering suggestions to improve the user experience. Overall, they felt the website was well done but identified several areas where navigation and content could be refined.

The Commission also discussed ways to better highlight Open Space-related topics that are not prominently featured on the project website. Commissioners suggested incorporating maps that identify areas where multiple planning efforts overlap, and providing more helpful information on projects that will require future public input. They also expressed interest in increasing public awareness of anticipated development south of Interstate 40, so residents are better informed when providing feedback. Robert said he would compile the Commission's questions and

comments and provide them to the consultant team. See attachment [here](#) for the Commission's findings.

Open Spaces Commission [recommendations](#) for the PROSE Master Plan

7. Reports and Updates

A. Council Representative Report, Council Representative David Spence

Councilmember Spence provided a brief update, reminding the Commission that at the June meeting he had requested input on the City Council's Strategic Plan. He said he received interest from Commissioners Norton and White and noted that any other commissioners wishing to provide input are welcome to contact him individually.

Commissioner White asked about the nature of the City Council's Strategic Planning meeting scheduled for September, specifically whether information would be available beforehand or if the meeting would be open to the public. Councilmember Spence explained that the strategic planning process is not a public process. Commissioner White expressed interest in staying informed about any opportunities to be involved if appropriate.

Councilmember Spence also noted that the City Council was currently in the third week of its six-week summer recess.

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

Commissioner Norton provided an update on the proposed Planned Community Zone, following Tiffany's presentation to the Open Spaces Commission at the previous meeting on June 22, 2026. She shared the upcoming public review schedule, noting that the Planning and Zoning Commission will consider the proposal on August 12, 2026, followed by a City Council public hearing on September 15, 2026 with Council action anticipated on October 6, 2026. Commissioner Norton explained that, if adopted, the new zoning designation would provide developers with additional flexibility in land use and density while requiring developments to dedicate 20% of the site as common space for recreation and conservation purposes.

She also shared that under the proposed code, golf courses could be included as part of a planned community development without requiring a Conditional Use Permit, provided it is approved as part of the overall development. Commissioners noted that such golf courses would need to be publicly accessible rather than private.

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

Open Space Coordinator Sylvia Struss provided updates on several upcoming projects and events. She announced that Flagstaff will celebrate Arbor Day on August 25, 2026 with community tree planting events, including planting additional trees at Thorpe Park between the baseball fields and replacing trees at Picture Canyon that did not survive a previous restoration effort.

Sylvia also shared that a community member had expressed interest in developing a youth practice golf course at the back of McAllister Ranch Road. The individual was encouraged to submit the idea through the PROSE Master Plan process. Robert added that the area has already been identified as a potential future park site.

She reported that new interpretive signs for McMillan Mesa will be installed soon, displaying a sample of the welcome sign to Commissioners that will include site information, rules, and a trail map. Staff are also developing a scope of work to improve accessibility on McMillan Mesa, including plans for an accessible loop trail.

Sylvia concluded with several volunteer opportunities, including a Full Moon Hike and Bike event on the Karen Cooper Trail, as well as upcoming invasive weed pulls targeting scotch thistle at Picture Canyon, along the FUTS Trail near Fourth Street and Butler Avenue, and Sinclair Wash and Lone Tree Road.

D. PROSE Monthly Newsletter - [June 2026](#)

8. Informational Items To and From Commissioners and Staff

Commissioner Norton shared concerns about the increasing use of electric motorcycles and electric golf carts along the FUTS Trail near Lone Tree Road and J.W. Powell Boulevard, noting that many children have been noticed as the operators of the motorized devices along portions of the nearby FUTS trail. She asked whether additional public education or messaging could remind users that certain devices are prohibited on the FUTS Trail. Robert responded that these devices are prohibited under FUTS regulations. Staff shared this recommendation with City Multi-Modal Transportation planners.

Commissioner Norton also revisited the earlier discussion regarding the J.W. Powell corridor, emphasizing its importance as one of Flagstaff's major growth areas. She encouraged commissioners to review the corridor's original planning efforts dating back to 2020, including the land use vision, and consider how shifting priorities, the COVID-19 pandemic, staffing changes, and other factors influenced the project's evolution. She noted that while the City established a long-term vision for the area, the pace and nature of private development have altered that vision over time, resulting in a final outcome that differs from the original planning concepts.

9. Potential Future Agenda Items

Future agenda items identified by the Commission included finalizing plans for the Observatory Mesa Natural Preserve field trip meeting and discussing potential Open Space property acquisitions.

10. Adjournment

Chair Thomas requested a motion for the meeting's adjournment. Commissioner Norton motioned to adjourn. Commissioner White seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 5:28 PM.

**Open Spaces Commission:
Questions and Comments on the PROSE Master Plan Website**

1. When opening the website on your phone, it is unclear where to push the link buttons. It took commissioners a few minutes to learn that you must push the text within colored bubble. Can the entire button rather than the words be clickable?
 - a. This recommendation has been implemented.
2. When you click on a link it opens a new browser tab and sometimes it jumps the webpage forward. Can it be made consistent?
 - a. This recommendation has been implemented.
3. The phrase "Choose your new adventure" seems confusing, might there be a better phrase that could be used to indicate that we are encouraging input?
 - a. This recommendation has been implemented.
4. When will the consultant be attending an Open Spaces Commission meeting?
 - a. 09/28/26
5. What are the dates of the upcoming public workshops?
 - a. Dates for the public workshops will be determined and advertised soon; the first one will likely be on 10/22/2026 at the Aquaplex.
6. Can the OSC share the list of events that Kimely-Horn will be tabling?
 - a. Touch a Truck Event at Coconino High School, July 11, 2026
 - b. Concert in the Park at Bushmaster Park, July 22, 2026
 - c. Concert in the Park at Jim Cullen Park, July 29, 2026
 - d. National Night Out at Bushmaster Park, August 4, 2026
 - e. Science in the Park, September 26, 2026
 - ~ One to two more events possible in October/November, TBD
7. What is the timeline that the survey will be open for public feedback?
 - a. No set date has been determined at this time for when the online survey will close, but it will likely be closed by December 31, 2026.
8. Are we ready for the OSC to share the master plan website with the community or is that preferred in phase two of the public outreach?
 - a. The website (www.flagstaffprose.com) is ready to share, please encourage the public to get involved.
9. How can the public be informed about upcoming development plans so that they can make informed comments that relate to the community's future PROSE needs.
 - a. Additional information regarding the strategy and process will be shared at the Open Spaces Commission meeting in September (09/28/2026).

Recommendations for the PROSE Master Plan

1. Establish a Clear Open Space System Framework

Recommendation 1.1 — Investigate Formally Defining the Open Space System

Could the Master Plan formally define the Open Space System as a connected network consisting of:

- Regional Preserves
- Open Space Connectors and Greenways
- Complementary or Neighborhood Open Space (“Neighborhoods/ Pocket Parks”)
- Multi-use trail corridors
- Wildlife corridors
- Riparian corridors

Recommendation 1.2 — Vision, Mission, Values

- Include PROSE guiding statements

Recommendation 1.3 — Consider Clarification of Passive and Active Recreation Definitions

Consider including a modern definition of passive recreation that reflects:

- Conservation goals
- Community values

Recommendation 1.4 — Adopt an Open Space Vision Map

Can an official Open Space Vision Map be included to identify:

- Existing protected lands
- Proposed Regional Preserves approximate locations
- Priority trail connectors, wildlife corridors, and complementary open space
- System gaps
- Areas lacking 10-minute walking access
- Culturally significant landscapes

Recommendation 1.5 — Ensure unified branding for PROSE

Can we include branding information and identify recommendations for working with other jurisdictions for unified signage, such as Forest Service, Coconino County, and City of Flagstaff.

2. Determine if Parks and Open Space can be Contributed through Development Requirements

Recommendation 2.1 — Investigate opportunities to obtain Parks and Open Space Dedications During Development

- Investigate and recommend development dedications for Parks and Open Space as a condition of subdivision or site plan approval when properties are identified within the Open Space Vision Map. Could this apply to both residential and non-residential development.

Recommendation 2.2 — Investigate Opportunities to Improve Civic Space

- Suggest how civic space can contribute to broader ecological and recreational connectivity

Recommendation 2.3 — Integrate Open Space into Other City Priorities

Make suggestions for preserving open space important to the open space system during:

- Transportation planning
- Affordable housing planning
- Stormwater infrastructure projects
- Utility planning
- Neighborhood planning

Can the plan recognize Open Space as critical infrastructure that supports:

- Public health
- Climate adaptation
- Flood mitigation
- Alternative transportation
- Community resiliency

3. Review and Recommend Sustainable Funding Mechanisms

Recommendation 3.1 — Investigate the feasibility of a Future PROSE Bond Measure

Can the Master Plan identify criteria and priorities for future bond measures focused on:

- PROSE acquisitions that improve community needs (Needs for additional Parks, Recreation Centers, Open Space, and Events Space)
- Trail connectivity
- Habitat protection and connectivity

4. Recommend how to Implement an Equitable and Connected Open Space System

Recommendation 4.1 — Define the 10-Minute Walk Standard

How can we define a measurable communitywide standard so that all residents have access to:

- Parks and Open space
- Trails
- Greenways

within a 10-minute walk ($\frac{1}{4}$ mile) of their homes.

Could this become:

- A measurable performance target
- A mapping metric

Recommendation 4.2 — Conduct Equity and Access Analyses

Can the Master Plan include:

- Walkability analysis
- Service gap analysis

How do we ensure priority investments focus on underserved neighborhoods and public feedback

5. Identify a Strategic Land Prioritization Program

Recommendation 5.1 — Prioritize PROSE Expansion

Recommend how to identify targeted geographic priorities, including:

- Underserved areas
- Southeastern Flagstaff
- Complementary open space
- Regional trail gaps
- Wildlife movement corridors

6. Review Opportunities to Improve Stewardship, Operations, and Maintenance

Recommendation 6.1 — Expand Staffing Capacity

- Can the plan evaluate staffing needs

7. Establish Accountability and Implementation Measures

Recommendation 7.1 — Create Measurable Performance Indicators

Can progress be tracked through metrics such as:

- Acres protected
- Trail miles added
- Percent of residents within 10-minute access
- Funding secured
- Connectivity gaps completed

Recommendation 7.2 — Establish Regular Plan Updates

Can the Master Plan recommend:

- Annual implementation reporting
- Five-year plan updates
- Ongoing GIS mapping updates
- Periodic community needs assessments

8. Enhance Partner Recognition

Recommendation 8.1 — Identify main partners.

- Can the plan identify other city departments, and partners by identifying areas of overlap between divisions, county, Forest Service, housing, climate, and relevant commissions to support for the implementation of the open space system and help determine the management direction of city owned parcels.

9. Review the Open Spaces Commission's Regional Plan's Comments

Recommendation 9.1 — Determine which conditions should be included in the PROSE Master Plan.

Could the following topics be reviewed for inclusion:

- Include language that trail design, and alignment should integrate natural experiences that interconnect neighborhoods and increases safe, and supports low-carbon access to community infrastructure.
- Consider if incentives, density bonuses, expedited reviews, and other partnerships opportunities could encourage developers to incorporate the 10-minute Walking

Access Standard, FUTS connectivity targets, designate meaningful trail alignments, or designate neighborhood complementary open space or pocket parks in projects.

- Consider a code analysis to provide insight on how to best to update or develop code, development standards, or zoning tools to assist in the dedication of trail corridors, complementary open space, neighborwoods, and pocket parks.
- Include trail extensions as a priority to provide accessibility through developed areas to those natural open spaces/lands, as development expansion occurs in greenfield areas toward the Urban Growth Boundary and/or Forest Service lands.