

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT

January 19, 2011

8:45 – 10:00 am

140 West Pine Street

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - No minutes to approve.

ANNOUNCEMENTS None

PUBLIC COMMENT None

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **[Discussion Date: 01/19/11]** Appoint three members who are qualified electors (registered to vote) and either reside in the city limits or within a four and a half mile radius of the city limits to the Open Space Advisory Committee. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Kelly Elam) (Referred to committee: 12/20/10)

MOTION: THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THE COUNCIL APPOINT MARY MANNING TO THE OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR A TERM BEGINNING JANUARY 26, 2011 AND ENDING JANUARY 25, 2014.

MOTION: THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THE COUNCIL APPOINT ETHEL MACDONALD TO THE OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR A TERM BEGINNING JANUARY 26, 2011 AND ENDING JANUARY 25, 2014.

MOTION: THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THE COUNCIL APPOINT ADAM LILJEBLAD TO THE OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR A TERM BEGINNING JANUARY 26, 2011 AND ENDING JANUARY 25, 2014.

The meeting commenced at 8:49 a.m. with Marler reading the above referral.

Interview: Mary Manning

1) Ms. Marler asked: What is your interest in serving on the Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC)?

Manning said: You all know me, you know I like serving on OSAC, I have been on it forever, it never gets tiring, it's exciting. It's so great to use open space lands almost every day knowing I've been a part of it. With her professional background, Manning said she feels she's good fit for the committee.

2) Ms. Hellegaard asked: What do you feel are the benefits of having an Open Space Advisory Committee?

Manning said: We all know we've had incredible acquisitions over the years, and I think some of us may forget that the Kim Williams trail was acquired with the 1985 Open Space bond. For me, the benefits are seeing all the folks on these open space lands, being able to look at the South Hills and know that area will not developed; I am referring, of course to the Line/Rimel properties.

There are clearly intangible benefits, what we are calling ecological services; having less of a paved

environment helps to ameliorate some of the effects of erratic weather patterns. There are so many things in terms of clean air and clean water and wildlife habitat that go without saying, but are certainly considered when we look at these lands. We have people able to look out and see where city ends, and not see this incredible sprawl. We have growth, but it's planned growth. Manning said she was struck by seeing unplanned growth in Anchorage, AK, in recent years and it was sad to see how the community had not preserved wildlife habitat and open space. She sees the contrast.

3) Mr. Wilkins asked: Do you have any personal or professional expertise that relates to the acquisition of public open space, conservation lands or lands for parks and trails?

Manning said: In terms of acquisition, what I contribute to the committee is a thorough understanding of most of the natural systems. I'm a USFS Regional Vegetation Ecologist, and have a masters in ecology, and that is what I do in my work. I can provide good context in terms of the ecosystems and their rarity, and how they function. When we go through the rough cut matrix and the different matrixes for the different types of open space lands, I do feel that I provide expertise. I feel I can identify useful or endangered plant life and provide a broader context by being very familiar with plant communities throughout the region.

4) Mr. Jaffe asked: What areas or types of lands do you consider important to preserve as open space and/or acquire for parks and trails?

Manning said: So much of what we do as a committee is strategic and practical. We revised the Open Space Plan and use it as a touchstone, to guide how we prioritize and look at acquisitions, but we also operate on opportunity. Jackie Corday is always looking forward, looking at the cornerstones and the connections and trying to see how we can connect the dots. We look at distribution in terms of type, geographic distribution, what's an underrepresented area in the open space zone; we look at all of those things. We have certain types of lands, like riparian areas that we are really looking hard at.

5) Ms. Walzer asked: With the recently passed Open Space Bond, of which the City will get \$5 million dollars, how do you think the Open Space Committee should proceed with its mission to conserve open space and acquire land for parks and trails?

Manning said: One of the things we've been doing is working with the County Open Lands Working group. They've been involved with the Spooner acquisition (in progress) and the Deschamps acquisition. Working with the County Open Lands group has been productive and exciting. We are always looking for ways to leverage our dollars and partner up; certainly we work with Five Valleys Land Trust, Trust for Public Lands, TNC and other organizations. Jackie Corday is great at finding partnership opportunities. As a committee, we are very careful with the bond funds and we count our pennies. We refer back to the bond language to determine the best use for the bond funds.

6) Mr. Strohmaier asked: If appointed, you will be working on a public board that may have different ideas as to how to allocate the City funds. Can you provide an example of a time when you have had to compromise, collaborate or deal with conflict and what were the results of your efforts?

Manning said: It's always a compromise, but I don't feel that as a committee we've ever had any divisive situation or where we haven't all agreed.

There's only one I can think of would be the Marshall Canyon property with the legacy—there was some lively discussion. In general, the committee's discussion is civil and well thought out. We work through that and make sure that everyone's questions are answered.

7) Ms. Marler asked: Should OSAC consider management, maintenance and public access issues, when acquiring or preserving open space lands?

Manning said: We always do. Access a big deal, and maintenance always is. Maintenance has always been a concern of mine; I was the first chair of stewardship committee which led to the Mount Jumbo and North Hills advisory groups. So OSAC, historically, rarely looked at management considerations. But in recent years the committee has been more proactive about management issues. In terms of access, OSAC should absolutely consider it. We always consider access and discuss at length with property owners. It is always on our mind, and is one of the criteria in the rough cut matrix.

8) Ms. Hellegaard asked: OSAC presently meets once a month on the 2nd Thursday from 4:00 -6:00 P.M. With the updated Open Space Plan and \$5 million dollars, the next few years will be pivotal and may require additional OSAC time to achieve its community goals. Are you willing to devote the time needed to attend meetings and work on committee activities?

Manning says she does have time to serve on the committee and she schedules her work-related travel around OSAC meetings whenever possible. She said she enjoys serving on the committee.

In additional remarks, Manning said she debated about re-applying to the committee as she has been on the committee for several years. She said several OSAC members asked her to re-apply. She told the council she would understand if they wanted to make a different choice on appointments. Regardless of what the Council decides, she said she will remain involved in public open space work.

Interview: Adam Liljeblad

1) Mr. Wilkins asked question #1.

Liljeblad said public open space is something he is really passionate about. He really values the fact that citizens can be involved in a process like making recommendations for open space acquisition and expenditure of these public resources. He feels that as a conservation professional, he can contribute his knowledge of complex conservation issues to the City and because of that, he feels OSAC is a great opportunity to help.

2) Mr. Jaffe asked question #2.

Liljeblad said OSAC allows the public to be directly involved in the "dirty work" of open space acquisition. It gives people the opportunity to readily participate in making recommendations for the expenditure of their tax dollars. The committee allows a wide variety of expertises to come to the table and contribute to the process.

3) Ms. Rye asked question #3.

Liljeblad said: Most of my expertise comes from my experience as an OSAC member last three years.

I work in conservation field on a large variety of natural resource issues. I am a regular user of open space, and have developed additional expertise on the committee over the last 3 years. The expertise I am able to bring is about integrating complex conservation issues.

4) Ms. Walzer asked question #4.

Liljeblad said: OSAC has done an excellent job over last few years of sticking with the open space plan and priorities. In terms of personal priorities, I'd like to see more lands acquired along the river corridor, west of reserve. I'd love to see the bicycle-trail network through town connected. As a bicycle commuter, he said he feels that connectivity in trails, from the Northside to Fort Missoula, is very important. He would also like to see more acquisitions and easements in the western North Hills, along I-90. He would like to see more community gardens. The OS Plan does a great job of balancing the various open space types. It's very important to maintain public access to open space. To maintain community support for open space bonds, we need to include access wherever possible.

5) Mr. Strohmaier asked question #5.

Liljeblad said he would repeat the priorities he just stated; the river corridor west of town, the bicycle commuter network, community gardens. He said we have such a great open space plan, it offers a lot of guidance. He thinks the committee should continue to follow the plan has is has been.

6) Ms. Marler asked question #6.

Liljeblad said he deals with conflict and compromise as a regular part of his job. He works for the National Forest Foundation and manages a national grant-making program for conservation projects nationwide. The funding committee very rarely fully agrees, but it works on a consensus basis, so he very regularly deals with resolving conflicts.

7) Ms. Mitchell asked question #7.

Liljeblad said he believes that management and maintenance needs to be considered. First off, the feasibility of access needs to be considered, as prescribed in the OS Plan. As a committee, here are times where it's appropriate to go further and make management prescriptions in acquisitions. Doesn't necessarily need to happen in every case, often times those decisions should be left up to management, but there are times when it's appropriate to make management recommendations.

8) Mr. Haines asked question #8.

Liljeblad said that OSAC only demands a few hours a month of his time, he has the time, and is happy to continue to serve on the committee.

Interview: Ethel McDonald

1) Ms. Hellegaard asked question #1.

MacDonald said she loves Missoula and loves open space; parks, trails, nature, outdoors, and all the natural beauty around us. She enjoys very much being a part of a committee that works on saving that beauty and preserving the health benefits of having open space.

She said she finds it very rewarding to work on OSAC, and she great respect and affection for all of the committee members and Jackie Corday.

2) Mr. Wilkins asked question #2.

MacDonald said it's important to have a citizen committee, because they reflect a lot of different interests, they have different expertise and different priorities. OSAC really helps raise awareness about the importance of open space, and they all worked very hard on passing the open space bond.

3) Mr. Jaffe asked question #3.

MacDonald said she is only one of only two members who are not experts in ecology, wildlife, etc. She feels she brings some balance to the committee in that while she loves all of the resources, and can look at endangered species and plant life with a lot of interest and respect; her own interest tends toward the human. She looks at what we humans can get from it. While views and vistas properties with limited public access, like the Deschamps acquisition, are wonderful; where she really gets enthusiastic is preserving open space that includes public access and connects areas like the south side of Mount Sentinel to Pattee Canyon. Those lands to preserve wildlife corridors and other ecological systems, but also have public access. I get really excited about something like the Jacobsen property, where we'll get trail connection to the whole trail system and the Milltown Dam site. She was excited about acquisitions like Lafray Park, which added parkland to an underserved area. Another underserved area is the Franklin to the Fort neighborhood, and the committee is actively seeking park land in that area. That's where it's not expertise, it's priorities, and she feels she represents that side of the issue for acquiring open space.

4) Ms. Rye asked question #4.

MacDonald said, every type of open space is important to consider. When she looks back at her service on the committee, through two terms, she has immense satisfaction in all the things OSAC has recommended to be purchased. There was no purchase that she didn't think was just great. From small parcels like a recent acquisition near Kelly Island which went to Fish, Wildlife and Parks, to things like Lafray Park to trails connections to preserving things that we aren't necessarily ever going to have access to, but are still there for the wildlife and views and vistas. It's the variety that is exciting about being on OSAC.

5) Ms. Walzer asked question #5.

MacDonald said the committee should proceed as it has been. She said Jackie Corday is just a treasure for Missoula, she works hard and is so talented and skilled. The committee should continue with the rough cut and matrixes, and should working closely with partners like Five Valleys Land Trust, Rocky Mtn. Elk Foundation, Fish, Wildlife and Parks. She said all OSAC members are keeping eyes open, looking for opportunities in Franklin to the Fort area. The committee needs to continue as they are with their partners, and should always remain ready for anything they bring, including the County Open Lands working group. OSAC is currently working with the County on several parcels in the Miller and Spooner Creek areas.

6) Mr. Strohmaier asked question #6.

MacDonald said the only conflict she can recall is when one OSAC member felt areas were being neglected, like horse access on open space or making acquisitions west of town.

But it's a matter of what's available and that's how the group solved that particular problem.

Disagreement on OSAC is very rare, they have all kinds of perspectives, but all seem to agree.

She said she knows city council usually approves their recommendation.

7) Ms. Marler asked question #7.

MacDonald said, OSAC has to consider management and access on OS lands. An example is the recent Bonner Hill project—the committee considered whether Bonner School would take care of the maintenance and decided that it would. Another example is a recent small acquisition in the works at the base of Mount Jumbo, which will improve access and weed control efforts on Jumbo. MacDonald said management issues are a consideration, because the City doesn't have a large budget for management.

8) Ms. Mitchell asked question #8.

MacDonald said she does have time to serve on OSAC and her attendance at meetings has been very good. OSAC is a priority to her.

In additional remarks, MacDonald said she understands that the council may wish to appoint “new blood” to the committee. She said she is the third most senior member on the committee, and several members that are quite new. She hopes the council will re-appoint her, as she is experience and has historical knowledge. She suggested that the Council might consider gender balance, as OSAC right now is pretty heavily male.

Interview: Beau Larkin (name was misprinted as Linder in initial referral)

1) Mr. Haines asked question #1.

Larkin said he has been a western Montana resident for most of his life and has been in Missoula since 1996. He has seen a lot of development since then, and feels that while growth is important for our community, he would like to serve the community by helping to identify areas which shouldn't be developed and areas that are best left open.

2) Ms. Hellegaard asked question #2.

Larkin said: As I understand it, from reading OSAC's mission statement, OSAC is supposed to identify areas which are suitable for OS. Approving a purchase, paying for it, dealing with the politics of it, is the Council's job. As he understands the committee, the benefits is that OSAC finds suitable land to use as open space and then recommends it to the Council.

3) Mr. Wilkins asked question #3.

Larkin said he does not have specific acquisition experience. He does have a background in forestry, private lands management, restoration ecology, weed management, and he certainly has an interest in open lands.

4) Mr. Jaffe asked question #4.

Larkin said a variety of types of lands is most important to preserve as open space. We need green grassy parks in neighborhoods, trails along rivers are important, and less managed areas like Maclay Flats are important. The variety is important--some that are centrally located, some that are on the urban fringe and provide wildlife habitat and noise buffers. There are many reasons to preserve open space and variety of land types are important to include in that package.

5) Ms. Rye asked question #5.

Larkin said: He said OSAC should proceed in a slow and measured fashion. He would want to identify priority areas where there might be some risk of missing an opportunity and target those areas first, for example, where there are competing buyers. The committee should also identify areas which not as urgent, based on risk of losing them or less benefit to the community.

The committee should seek to acquire a variety of property types and should have a variety of funding mechanisms in place.

6) Ms. Walzer asked question #6.

Larkin said: In my current job, I manage restoration on private lands in the Swan and Bitterroot valleys. The people I work with are focused on a wide variety of issues, from wild game, to weeds, to forestry, soil, water. Some projects get approved, some are prioritized or de-prioritized. There are certainly compromises, but conflict doesn't help projects get done--by working together we accomplish more work and meet the needs of the landowner. That doesn't mean you don't give up on your pet projects, but you don't take conflict personally and you try to help everyone succeed.

7) Mr. Strohmaier asked question #7.

Larkin said: the first way to answer that question is that somebody should definitely consider maintenance and management issues when acquiring open space lands. Without management and maintenance, the quality of the open space degrades. The purpose of acquiring open space lands is to make sure people can use them, so again if you are going to acquire a variety of lands, you want to make sure that all the demographics in your citizenry have land they can enjoy. He thinks OSAC should be able to make some recommendations on maintenance and should be able to provide the Council with information on which to make acquisition decisions.

8) Ms. Marler asked question #8.

Larkin said he does have time to spend on the committee. He has been looking for a way to serve the community since he earned his master degree last spring. He thinks this is a good way for me to serve. He enjoys thinking about land conservation, public use of lands and how local citizens have to be involved. \$5 million will allow really good progress on open space and we need to use that money wisely—he has time to make that happen.

In additional comments, Mr. Larkin said regarding gender balance on the committee, he believes that equal representation is very important in these matters.

Marilyn Marler said: We have four really wonderful applicants, and we have three positions. She suggested each committee member say 3 applicants for the rough cut.

Strohmaier said his inclination would be to preserve the institutional knowledge we have, and reappoint Manning, Liljeblad and MacDonald. Walzer, Rye, Jaffe, Wilkins agreed.

Hellegaard said she would like to see Larkin appointed over MacDonald, as he has more experience in maintenance issues.

Haines said he would like to see Larkin appointed also as he seemed to have good business sense.

Mitchell said that since she missed the first interview, she was neutral.

Marler said she was extremely impressed with Larkin, but is also impressed with incumbents, their service has been amazing. She said there were five members who would like to reappoint the sitting OSAC members, and two to a maximum of four to appoint Manning, Liljeblad and Larkin. She said the first round of the rough cut goes to Manning, Liljeblad and MacDonald.

Wilkins said he is always in favor of getting new blood on any committee and would be in favor of appointing Manning, Larkin, MacDonald. Regarding MacDonald, he said it's good to have a layperson on an expertise-heavy committee like OSAC. He said she does have a lot of expertise as a frequent trail user. While all the candidates are just great, he would like to see someone new every once in awhile. He said Liljeblad has done a great job; he would just like to get someone new on the committee.

Strohmaier made a motion to reappoint Mary Manning to OSAC. Motion carried.

The committee took an informal poll again for the other 2 positions. Wilkins moved to reappoint MacDonald, and the motion carried.

Wilkins moved to appoint Larkin.

Strohmaier said: As MacDonald mentioned, last round of OSAC appointments added a few new faces on the committee. As there has been some new blood infused in the recent past, he would hate to lose the recent years of experience that Liljeblad has invested in OSAC; he can see wanting to cycle people out to get new blood in, but he would prefer to reappoint Liljeblad.

Walzer said: Liljeblad just finished his first term, and there are other new folks on OSAC, like Bert Lindler. She said she's sure Larkin is very qualified; but he doesn't have a lot of knowledge of what OSAC does. She thinks Liljeblad brings more to the committee.

Marler said both Liljeblad and Larkin are outstanding, and she has slight preference to re-appointing Liljeblad. He hopes Larkin will re-apply in the future and be involved in other ways.

Walzer made a substitute motion to appoint Liljeblad. There were five in favor, four opposed.

Marler said that was a very slim vote, which reflects quality of both applicants.

Wilkins said he would like the motions to be placed on the consent agenda. The committee agreed. Marler directed that the motions be placed on the consent agenda.

HELD/REFERRED OR ONGOING AGENDA ITEMS –

1. Information on Trail Projects ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Marilyn Marler) (Referred to committee: 08/23/2010)
2. Reorganization of conservation lands advisory committees. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Marilyn Marler) (Referred to committee: 11/08/10)
3. Consider a new ordinance that will create a process and criteria for the naming of public parks, trails, open space, and recreation facilities. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Jackie Corday) (Referred to committee: 10/25/10)
4. Approve an agreement between the City and Garden City Harvest (GCH) to allow for community gardens on City owned properties that will be identified in the future. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Jackie Corday) (Referred to committee: 10/25/10) (Item tabled in committee 12/08/2010)
5. Budget update on aquatics. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Lyn Hellegaard) (Referred to committee: 11/08/10)
6. Appoint one member to the Conservation District for the term beginning January 1, 2011 and ending on December 31, 2013. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Kelly Elam) (Referred to committee: 12/13/10)

NON-AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 10 a.m.