

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ABBREVIATED MINUTES
June 14th, 2012
4:00 – 6:00 pm

Present: Mary Manning
Tim Aldrich
Bert Lindler
Jeff Stevens
Gabe Millar

Adam Liljeblad
Matt Barnes
Gary Knudsen

Absent: Beth Hann, Park Brd Rep
Ethel MacDonald
Jenny Tollefson
Jed Little

Also Present: Jackie Corday, Open Space Program Mgr & Jim Habeck

Open Space Updates

Jackie informed members that Edgell did not accept the City's offer to purchase his 66 acre parcel, nor did he accept the offer to purchase solely a trail easement. He has decided to list the property for another 6 months, but the owner indicated he will not sell the property without giving the City the opportunity to purchase the trail easement.

In regards to the Stout property adjacent to Council Grove Park, Jackie and Fred Stout led the Community Food & Agriculture Coalition (CFAC) board members on a site tour of the property in May. The board members really loved the property and soon thereafter formed a new incubator farm subcommittee to move forward with how they can make this project happen. Jackie requested CFAC inform her by September of whether or not this property fits their purposes and if they want to move forward with working with the City to acquire the land.

Conversations are picking up once again in regards to the PEAS farm and the Garden City Harvest River Road farm. The PEAS farm is owned by Missoula County Public Schools and the River Road property is privately owned. The goal would be to permanently protect both parcels for continued farm use.

Adopt a Quadrant Update from Members

Tim – He would like to see more of the Big Hill preserved. It is an approximately 1,300 acre parcel between Lolo and Missoula with a FVLT conservation easement on it that allows 14 mega homesites. He has seen lots of elk hanging out there and observed its importance as a wildlife corridor to the Bitterroot River. Jackie mentioned a discussion she had with FVLT in 2007 about potentially "buying out" some of the development rights on the homesites that contain the highest conservation values. With the large drop in land values, she will have that conversation again.

Adam – He has eyed the triangle parcel located at the junction of Ivy and Marshall Streets in the Slant Street area and wondered if that could become an official park or garden. It is owned by the City, but not as official parkland. Jackie informed him that she had worked with Garden City Harvest a couple years ago to develop a list of potential new community garden sites and that parcel topped the list for being most desirable. However, it is now slated for an affordable housing project.

Gary – He is still interested in seeing the Deschamps parcel next to the Mastel farm and next to the airport being preserved with a conservation easement. He will check with Jim Brown to see if he knows if the ownership of the parcel has been settled (there was some back-n-forth over airport condemnation). He also mentioned Carl Hayden's remaining property in the South Hills. Jackie informed him that she and FVLT staff visited with Carl a couple years ago about placing a conservation easement on his approximately 700+ acres. If the City were to spend about \$700,000 or more on that project, we would want at least some public access trail on the northern end of the property off the end of Hillview Way. He seemed to be opposed to that and the conversation did not get any further.

Mary – She is continually interested in preserving the remaining unprotected lands in the North Hills – Luckman, Spurlock, and Cooney. Jackie mentioned FVLT continues to let the Spurlocks know of our interest. The other two parcels are priced beyond our ability to work with the landowners towards a preservation outcome.

Gabe – He has wondered about the little open space on the west side of Rattlesnake Creek on the north side of the Lolo Street bridge. It appears to be in the floodplain/floodway of the creek and is likely unbuildable. He wondered if the parcel could help connect up to parkland to the north. However, there are many (8 or more) privately owned parcels adjacent to the creek between the open space and the park.

Matt – He prepared a map to show landownership in the Upper Miller Creek Valley – the backside of the South Hills. There are 4 large parcels that could potentially provide a trail link to the section of State land. The idea of having a public trail from a point in the South Hills (like the end of Hillview Way) all the way over the top of the hills to the backside is very appealing and one of the large 4 parcels (along with others to the north) would be needed to make that happen. We discussed the pros and cons of the City owning land or a trail in this area (problems with littering and guns and ATV use). The major road block in making this trail happen is the fact that the Hayden, Rimel, and Line family ranches are all working ranches, and thus it won't work to have a public trail going through their pastures.

Bert – He is still hopeful that the Sherry and Washington Ranch properties can be preserved to protect the elk corridor that exists from the east side of the North Hills to the west side. The Sherry's own a long narrow parcel that the elk use on the east side of Grant Creek Rd and the Washington Ranch owns the land to the west that the elk use. Jackie explained the history behind trying to work out a deal for protection on the Sherry property that involved RMEF holding a conservation easement.

Jeff – He would like to see the trail easement Rimel granted on the southern border of his property be extended to Hillview Way or Foss Court, which will likely require a small easement grant from the Alliance Church. Jackie said she would follow up this in the near future.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm with the next meeting date scheduled for 4:00–6:00pm on August 9th at Currents.