

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ABBREVIATED MINUTES

March 12th, 2009
4:00 – 5:30 pm

Present:

Tim Aldrich
Mary Manning
Jed Little
Jeff Stevens
Adam Liljeblad
Bob Clark
Ethel MacDonald
Ginny Fay, Park Board Rep
Peter Bugoni
Maureen Hartman

Absent:

Karen Knudsen
Gerhard Knudsen

Also Present: Jackie Corday, Open Space Program Mgr, Juniper Davis (FVLT) & Jim Habeck

New Member Introductions

Peter – Has lived in Missoula County for 14 years, originally from WY. He is a both an Undergrad and Masters Degree from the University of Montana, majoring in land use planning. He is a very frequent user of the public lands surrounding Missoula. Currently he works for RMEF.

Maureen – Has lived in Montana for 12 years and is an EVST graduate. Currently she works for Northwest Connections, an NGO that focuses on protecting wildlife corridors, especially in the Seeley/Swan Valleys. She enjoys visiting Missoula's open spaces almost every day.

Bob – Has lived in Missoula for 17 years and currently works for the Sierra Club. In the past he worked for labor unions and is good at finding common ground between diverse interests. He also loves and uses the public lands surrounding Missoula.

Open Space Updates

Jackie informed members that she has been meeting with FVLT and RMEF to discuss what properties might provide good potential partnership opportunities within the Open Space Plan boundaries. She updated members on those discussions as well as other projects:

South Hills –

- 1) Conservation Easement - One of the largest landowners in this area has indicated to FVLT that he is interested in discussing the possibility of a conservation easement. This will likely be a long-term project, but it's very good to know that the landowner is interested in conservation, not development.
- 2) Tonkin Trail – Thanks to Jeff Steven's diligent efforts, the City was awarded an FWP trail grant to substantially pay for constructing a trail and fence along Ms Tonkin's property that will connect Clearview Way to Hillview Way. Construction will take place in early summer.

- 3) Craigheads Trail Connection – She has not had any luck with getting the Craigheads or their attorney to respond to meeting requests to discuss a trail connection from the end of Rimmel Rd, through the Craighead property, out to Hillview Way. She asked Jeff if he could help.

Target Range

- 1) Neighborhood Plan – The Office of Planning & Grant begin the work to prepare a neighborhood plan for the entire TR area. Jackie met with the planner in charge of the project to go over all of the parks, trails and open space issues in the area.
- 2) Chickasaw Subdivision – City Council recently reviewed a proposed 30 lot subdivision on 9.4 acres, almost all of which, consists of Prime Agricultural soil. The Community Food & Agricultural Coalition, the Parks Dept, and OPG all recommended a 3 acre agricultural lot be created to help mitigate for the impacts to agriculture. A final decision is yet to come.
- 3) Conservation Easements on TR Farms – Jackie reviewed aerial maps of the TR area for farms that may be worthy of protection with open space funds. The "rough cut" criteria she looked for included: 1) about 10 acres or more, 2) location west of Clements road (no sewer hookup planned and citizen zoned 1 d.u./acre and thus not nearly as much development value as land that will have sewer), 3) surrounded at least 50% by streets (less conflicts with neighbors), and 4) currently farmed and receives ag tax classification. She found 3 very good candidates, and another that is OK (didn't meet 50% streets criteria). She met with CFAC members for a site visit to these 4 parcels and a drive-by inspection confirmed that they have good potential. She then contacted Bruce Bugbee to hire him to contact the 4 landowners. Mark Sommers, Bruce's associate that helped with the 40 acre addition to the Tower Street open space, will head up the work.

Grass Valley

- 1) Parcel research indicates that one person owns about 7 large parcels surrounding the entrance to Council Grove State Park. It is a beautiful mix of pasture and some wetlands. Discussions with FVLT and Bruce Bugbee indicated that the owner is very unlikely to be interested in a conservation easement, but Jackie said she would send an inquiry letter anyway.
- 2) Airport – Jackie participated in the Airport Master Plan process in 2008 to let the airport officials know that the City is interested in acquiring approximately 40+ acres for a community park to the west and north of the 44 Ranch subdivision. They indicated the plan would be finalized early 2009, so she will follow up with them soon.

North Hills

- 1) RMEF – Mike Mueller prepared 3 letters for Jackie and the Mayor to sign that let those property owners know that RMEF and the City are working together to help protect the elk corridor that crosses the North Hills between the Rattlesnake Wilderness and Grant Creek, then across Grant Creek Road, then extends from the Butler Creek area over to the hills north of the Wye. The landowners each own a critical piece to the corridor. Jackie and Mike will soon meet with two of the property owners and await news from the third.
- 2) FVLT – Grant has been working closely with property owners in the North Hills between the Rattlesnake and Grant Creek over the past year. He will let us know when he can bring something forward for OSAC to consider.

Mt. Jumbo

- 1) The YAWLE project is moving forward through the approval process. The joint BCC/CC public hearing will be on April 13th.
- 2) Marshall Canyon - Jim Berkey and Carolynn Byrd from The Nature Conservancy recently contacted Jackie to see if the City would be interested in purchasing Section 7 adjacent and to the east of Mt Jumbo. This portion of Marshall Canyon was part of the recent MT Legacy Project purchase. Jackie said that maybe the portion west of Marshall Canyon Road made sense for City ownership since it would complete the Mt. Jumbo Cornerstone and she spoke with Morgan Valliant to get his in-put. He agreed that it would be great for management purposes to own to the road, but not the land to the east of the road. Jackie invited TNC to make a presentation at the next OSAC meeting.

Other Updates

- 1) CLM Plan Open House – March 19th 6:30 Council Chambers
- 2) No May meeting – Jackie will be out most of the month.
- 3) Parkland Regulations – Council adopted the changes Jackie recommended to the city subdivision regulations.
- 4) New Chair – Karen is now traveling so much that she needs to retire from being chair. Jackie asked members to think about if they would like to be chair. We'll have nominations and a vote at the April meeting.
- 5) 2009 Legislative Session – Jackie testified in Helena against SB 478, a bill that would have banned perpetual conservation easements, only allowing them to be a term of up to 15 years. The bill was defeated.

Tim said that the above open space updates alleviated most of his concerns that he had over Jackie's lack of time in 2008 that she was able to devote to open space projects. He said he would still appreciate knowing how and when OSAC members can be of more assistance in making open space projects happen. Jackie said she could use some help with contacting the Craighheads (Jeff volunteered) and with making contacts in the Franklin to Fort neighborhood, the area that has the lowest level of parkland service.

Ethel asked members if they were interested in doing a project to get kids outdoors in conjunction with following up on the Children in Nature Summit. Bob suggested tying it into Public Lands Day in September in order to have enough time to organize something and have the Parks Department address the liability issue of volunteers.

Jim brought up the big pine forest owned by the U of M across the Bitterroot River from Fort Missoula Regional Park. It's one of his favorite places and he wants to make sure it is permanently protected. He suggested that the City discuss with the U of M a way to accomplish that goal.

Ginny suggested that the OSAC could attend the May OLAC meeting in place of the regular OSAC meeting that will not be held in May. Jackie thought that was a great idea and would send OSAC members the meeting time and place.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm with the next meeting date scheduled for 4:00 – 6:00 on Thursday, April 9th at Currents.