

## OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 10, 2020

4:00 PM

Schmidt Road Property

1077 Schmidt Road, Missoula, MT 59808

**Members present:** Eric Anderson, Kristine Akland, DeAnna Bublitz, Rob Erickson, Daniel Gundlach, Catherine Ipsen, Edward Monnig, Regan Whitworth

**Members absent:** Charles Besancon, Julie Gardner, Alexis Gibson

**Others present:** Staff Present; Jolanda Cummings, Grant Carlton  
Public Present; Alex Mitchell

### 1. Administrative Business

#### 1.1 Roll Call

#### 1.2 Approval of Minutes

Correction to minutes section 4.1 "Reagan Whitworth" spelling correction "Regan Whitworth".

Catherine Ipsen motion to approve minutes with amended correction to spelling. DeAnna Bublitz seconded the motion.

Minutes approved with amended correction.

### 2. Public/Guest Comments

None

### 3. Announcements

None

### 4. Discussion Items

#### 4.1 Summer Update on Current Open Space Projects

Grant Carlton updated the committee on open space projects that are currently in the works. Mt. Dean Stone trail is close to being completed. The City and Five Valleys Land Trust are working together to complete main corridor trail. Conservation Lands Advisory Committee will meet on September 15 and will discuss Mt. Dean Stone Corridor and begin the steps for developing a recreational plan. Grant Carlton gave a brief overview of what the anticipated timeline will be for completing the public process and transfer of the property and when the committee can expect it to be open for public use.

Grant Carlton discussed Knife River Ponds with the committee and when the City expects to accept the transfer of property. One thing the City is currently working on is obtaining public access through parcels that the University of Montana owns with the

assistance of UM staff. The committee had discussions about the ponds property and if it was necessary to gain public access and if the city had studied the area for any environmental hazard that might be currently in the area. Grant informed the committee that gaining public access prior to transfer of the property is not absolutely necessary but the City's near term objective is to obtain reasonable assurances of future public access from UM and that the City has looked at the site and it doesn't appear to have environmental hazards but the City would observe the area.

#### **4.2 Update on Open Space Advisory Committee Project Evaluation Process Enhancement**

Grant Carlton said that the updated evaluation process and associated documents are almost final and will be ready for review by Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) and the County Open Lands Committee. The City and County are still working on completing the capital improvement process.

Grant Carlton asked if the sub-committee wants to meet soon.

The sub-committee wants to meet soon. Grant Carlton will send out a doodle poll to see what will work for sub-committee.

### **5. Action Items**

#### **5.1 Schmidt Road Public Access Easement Project - Milwaukee Trail to Mullan Road Connector**

Grant Carlton updated the committee on the Schmidt Road parcel that is currently for sale and that the city has interest in purchasing a perpetual public access easement on the parcel that would connect the Milwaukee trail to Mullan road. The cost would be \$25,000 (\$15,000 easement acquisition and \$10,000 transaction costs) and the money would come from the 2006 Open Space Bond. Grant Carlton highlighted areas in the opens space plan and other City and community plans where the language pertains to and prioritizes this type of purchase. Some highlights included using corridors to reach other open space areas and "anchors".

There was discussion amongst committee members if the Opens Space funds were the right fit for this project or if the City should look at other options to retrieve the funds.

Kristine Akland stated that she will not approve this project. She feels that this is a good idea but expressed that the City transportation should not dictate the open space funds. She stated that she believes the City should look at other pots of money instead of open space funds. She stated that in her opinion the public voted to protect the open space from being over developed and that this project is not in accordance with that vision.

The committee discussed how the project does meet the open space guidelines. Grant Carlton went over the 5 types of open space listed in the 2019 open space plan, which includes corridors. It was also addressed that there are currently 3 or 4 parcels between Schmidt road and the river that the city currently has a relationship with the owners. This trial would provide connectivity for neighborhoods to open space and to downtown.

Eric Anderson asked about the bridge that needs to be built over the river that would connect the Milwaukee trail to the easement. He stated that from an engineering

perspective, there could potentially be issues with bridge construction in that location and he asked what if the City decides that the bridge is not proposed in a viable place?

Grant Carlton- To my knowledge, and based on conversations with appropriate City staff, there haven't been any red flags in that designated area.

Eric Anderson- If bridge becomes unviable is there still value that it will give?

Grant Carlton- Yes there is still Open Space and Conservation value in completing the section of the Milwaukee Trail segment as it will connect Mullan area residents with City-owned lands and trails along the river, including the Clark Fork Islands.

There was a public individual who stopped and asked what the group was doing. Grant Carlton informed the citizen that the group was with the City and we were an Open Space Advisory Committee. He asked the committee if the City owned a parcel next to Knife River and Grant responded it was something the City is working on. He said he thought it was a great idea.

**Moved By** Edward Monnig

AYES: (7): Eric Anderson, DeAnna Bublitz, Rob Erickson, Daniel Gundlach, Catherine Ipsen, Edward Monnig, and Regan Whitworth

NAYS: (1): Kristine Akland

ABSENT: (3): Charles Besancon, Julie Gardner, and Alexis Gibson

**Vote results: Approved (7 to 1)**

**6. Presentation/Discussions/Updates**

None

**7. Future or Held Items**

None

**8. Adjournment**

Adjournment at 5:22