

## **OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**November 14, 2019**

**4:00 PM**

**Currents**

**600 Cregg Lane**

**Missoula, MT 59802**

**Members present:** Eric Anderson, Kristine Akland, Charles Besancon, DeAnna Bublitz, David Cole, Rob Erickson, Daniel Gundlach, Catherine Ipsen, Edward Monnig, John Smith, Regan Whitworth

**Members absent:** Alexis Gibson

**Others present:** Staff Present: Grant Carlton, Jolanda Cummings  
Guest Present: Jim Habeck

### **1. Administrative Business**

#### **1.1 Roll Call**

#### **1.2 Approval of Minutes October 10, 2019 and October 24, 2019**

Correction to the October 10, 2019 and October 24, 2019 Minutes:

Change the heading from COPEN to OPEN.

Catherine Ipsen motioned to approve minutes for October 10, 2019 and October 24, 2019 with amendments.

DeAnna Bublitz seconded the motion. Both meeting minutes were approved with amendments.

### **2. Public/Guest Comments**

Jim Habeck provided to the committee his work history and education in relation to Open Space and Conservation Lands. Jim has been following the committee meetings even when he is unable to attend in person.

### **3. Announcements**

#### **3.1 Update on 2019 Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan**

Grant Carlton communicated with the Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) that on October 21, 2019 the City staff presented the proposed 2019 Missoula Area Open Space Plan to Council and the Board of County Commissioners with the intent to adopt. The City and County will both hold one final public meeting with the objective to adopt the plan by early December. The last draft that OSAC saw was the final draft and there have been no revisions.

#### **3.2 Update on 2018 Open Space Bond Initial Capital Improvement Undertakings**

Grant informed OSAC that on November 4, 2019, Morgan and Grant presented to Council the 2018 Open Space Bond Initial Capital Improvement Undertakings. Council approved the \$775,000 in initial undertakings. It was unanimously approved, city council understands the need to take care of Missoula's open space land and protect the rivers.

OSAC members had questions regarding how lands will be managed and if it is appropriate to use open space funds to manage lands. The committee felt that the City should provide transparent reporting on where the stewardship money is being spent. This discussion prompted the question about Greenough Restoration and how that project is being funded. Grant Carlton didn't feel like he had enough information to answer this question, but stated he will consult appropriate City staff to answer the question at the next OSAC meeting.

### **3.3 Update on Interlocal Agreement between the City and County Related to Expenditures of 2018 Open Space Bond Funds**

Grant Carlton announced there are ongoing negotiations between the City of Missoula and Missoula County. It is nearing the end of the process and Grant will be meeting with the Mayor and the CAO to make final edits. Money is unable to be used on the ground until Interlocal agreement is completed.

Discussion was had if there are issues that are holding up the agreement. Grant informed the committee that there are just wording and timing issues that need to be discussed. This includes defining what the City and County roles will be because the county holds the risk. Grant explained that the county holds the money and then releases the money to the City for approved Open Space projects. The Board of County commissioners need to be assured that these funds are in compliance with the Open Space Bond ballot language and thus are legal use of funds.

## **4. Discussion Items**

### **4.1 Debrief on Dean Stone Phase II Project**

What questions do OSAC members have?

What does OSAC need in order to make a recommendation on the project in January?

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Grant Carlton updated the committee on Phase II and the possibility of including part of phase III in the purchase of Phase II. The part that would be included would be the part that is highlighted in purple on the map in Phase III. The potential request from Five Valleys Land Trust for this project is somewhere around \$1 million, and City staff's goal is to ensure the Bond request is appropriate and efficient given the rest of the project's budget and the values the project will provide and protect.

Discussion was had and OSAC members felt that the inclusion of the two Phase III parcels would make sense as the project would give the citizens of Missoula a final destination on the trail. OSAC members wonder why these parcels weren't originally included in Phase II and Grant informed the committee that it was just a product of timing

and finances. Grant also stated that he believes the purchase options are set to expire May 2020.

Members of the committee inquired if there were hold backs from purchasing phase II and Phase III. It was mentioned that Five Valleys Land Trust has not been able to identify owners for the parcels in phase III, and the city at this time doesn't feel that taking on an ownership interest before exploring potential partnerships and other due diligence is appropriate. The City feels the cost is too much to build and maintain the trails, especially without other public or private partners.

During discussion of Mount Dean Stone the committee compiled a list of questions for Pelah Hoyt from Five Valleys Land Trust and the City of Missoula that will be answered at the January 2020 meeting.

- 1) The OSAC committee would like to see a budget and the amount of money Five Valleys Land Trust is requesting.
- 2) What is the total number of acres the city would end up with?
- 3) What is the budget and match for Phase II?
- 4) What is the appraised value?
- 5) What are the budget implications? Has there been a discussion about public/private partnerships? Could this change the intended use?
- 6) What if we end up spending 5 million instead of 3 million? Earmarks?
- 7) Who are the anticipated users and what does trail use look like?
- 8) Are there plans for any extended parking access?
- 9) Are there access easements on Phase III (purple area) and what are the implications for city access?
- 10) What is the time frame for the improvement and trails?
- 11) Who is going to build the trail? If the City is going to be involved in making the trail then should that money be taken out of the Open Space fund earmarked for trail construction? Grant informed the committee that the City Conservation Lands staff thinks that it would be cheaper for the city to use the staff that they have hired to complete a portion of the trails. The quality of trails that the City could build vs an outside organization was discussed amongst the committee.
- 12) What type of wildlife fencing will be used and where will it be located?
- 13) The Committee would like clarity on what projects in the past are multi use and what are the gaps that we should be filling with the bond? Is it wildlife habitat? What have we done in the past and what needs to be done in the future?
- 14) What are the other possibilities for other lands that we would be giving up if we purchased this land?
- 15) What are the different planning possibilities for trails or easements?
- 16) What is the future for other projects?

Grant Carlton spoke about an interest in Marshall Mountain and the OSAC members discussed the possibilities of Marshall being used in a multipurpose way. It was discussed the cost of getting Marshall and the updates that would need to be done to be usable.

Grant Carlton addressed the committee asking if it makes sense to make a decision after being given all the information at the January 2020 meeting? OSAC members would like to allocate time to making a decision. If a decision is unable to be made at the January meeting then they will be able to table the decision to a future meeting. It was discussed to have the agenda for January meeting posted 7 to 10 days in advance so committee members could review documents.

The OSAC committee inquired if projects would be brought to them if the city knew that they wouldn't be able to complete project. Grant told the committee that he isn't able to speak to all projects, but generally, unless there is a big red flag or risk to the City or other stakeholders, he plans on presenting all reasonable projects that are brought to staff. He informed the committee that money is not the only consideration with projects.

#### **4.2 Mount Dean Stone Phase III Project**

##### **Initial Discussion**

Grant Carlton shared with the committee that City is not absolutely averse to owning phase III lands, but the risks, management implications, and costs are major barriers at this time. There are different issues that come with managing the parcels that the city doesn't have experience with as there would be different management needs. The City wants to have more conversation with partners and research historic uses. The City is working with Five Valley's Land Trust to actively find partnerships. This might also be an opportunity to bridge the gap between County and City. Committee members recommended that the Open Space Advisory Committee and the County equivalent meet once a year.

Phase III will also expire May 2020 but Grant shared that this timeline could possibly be extended. The committee conversed on how including the purple area in Phase III really helps as it shows Five Valley Land Trust donors that Five Valleys Land Trust accomplished their goal in saving Mount Dean Stone. The earmarking of funds should be considered to ensure an appropriate amount of Open Space Bond funds are expended.

- 1) Does it make sense to do Phase III first? Would Phase III serve a group that is currently not catered to?
- 2) What are the ownership implications for the phase III and can we extend the timeline on Phase III?
- 3) What are the big concerns if the City doesn't purchase Phase III?
- 4) If the Nature Conservancy sells it who are the possible purchasers?

John Smith brought up the possibility of inviting Chris Bryant from the Nature Conservancy to discuss the land? OSAC members discussed recent projects completed by the Nature Conservancy and how they are restoring areas to their historic condition.

## **5. Action Items**

### **5.1 Form Subcommittee of OSAC**

Subcommittee will be tasked with creating scoring criteria/project evaluation tools and the related process(es) for analyzing 2018 Open Space Bond projects, including both acquisitions and capital improvement projects.

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Grant Carlton stated that the current process doesn't fully address OSAC's needs and doesn't encompass the 2018 Open Space Bond language, and that he would like to form a Subcommittee that could create new project evaluation tools. This would start in January 2020 and meet through April 2020. This would add two potential extra meetings every month for subcommittee members. The subcommittee would come to a conclusion during these meetings and then bring the ideas to Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC).

Grant Carlton - I would like to put out a call for volunteers for a subcommittee.

Members that showed interest on being a part of the Subcommittee included Charles Besancon, Edward Monnig, David Cole, DeAnna Bublitz and Kristine Akland.

The date was undecided for January and a Doodle poll was requested. The members would discuss during first meeting what dates would work best for future meetings.

John Smith presented a power point and excel spread sheet that was a project he completed while in school. He discussed that the subcommittee should potentially look at policy and what kind of questions members would like to have answered. The power point showed graphs regarding qualitative Characteristics and Values. This power point was based off of how the committee rated projects in the past. The excel spreadsheet and power point was donated by John Smith to help the subcommittee evaluate projects.

OSAC members felt the subcommittee should look at evaluating distribution during the planning phase. Grant Carlton will provide updated maps and historical data. It was expressed that under-served areas should be looked at when planning.

## **6. Presentation/Discussions/Updates**

None were discussed.

## **7. Future or Held Items**

No items for future or held.

## **8. Adjournment**

Adjournment at 5:42.

Minutes completed by Jolanda Cummings