

CARSON CITY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the January 11, 2006 Meeting

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A meeting of the Carson City Open Space Advisory Committee was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 11, 2006 in the Cooperative Extensive Conference Room, 2621 Northgate Lane, Suite 12, Carson City, Nevada.

PRESENT: Chairperson Steve Hartman
Michael Fischer
Tricia Lincoln
Wayne Perock
Howard Riedl
Bruce Scott

STAFF: Roger Moellendorf, Parks and Recreation Department Director
Juan Guzman, Open Space Manager
Lee Plemel, Planning and Community Development Principal Planner
Jeff Winston, Consultant
Kathleen King, Recording Secretary

NOTE: A tape recording of these proceedings is available, in the Clerk-Recorder's Office, for review during regular business hours.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL (1-0007) - Chairperson Hartman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present. Vice Chairperson Jacquet was absent.

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS (1-0020) - Larry Taylor expressed concern over a January 6th newspaper article, and read a portion of the same into the record. He read his January 11th letter, copies of which he distributed to the committee members and staff, into the record.

1. ACTION ON APPROVAL OF MINUTES - October 31, 2005 (1-0072) - Member Riedl moved to approve the minutes. Member Perock seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA (1-0093) - None.

3. AGENDA ITEMS:

3-A. ACTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ADOPTION OF THE CARSON CITY MASTER PLAN (1-0099) - Mr. Plemel provided background information on the master plan, and advised of the possibility that other master plan elements will need to be updated. He advised that the draft master plan, included in the agenda materials, had been published since late November. Many comments had been received which staff was in the process of assembling and considering for incorporation. Mr. Plemel narrated a PowerPoint presentation, provided an overview of the comprehensive master plan, chapter-by-chapter, and reviewed changes to the comprehensive land use map. Discussion followed with regard to changes to the definition of low density residential. In response to a question, Mr. Plemel explained the difference between master plan and zoning designations. Additional discussion took place with regard to zoning requirements in conjunction with the master plan, accommodating mixed use development, affordable housing, the pathways master plan, and city signage.

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Mr. Guzman noted that the consultants had developed the plan according to the scope of work. He advised that Mr. Winston had expressed concern the plan may be too concise, without sufficient evolution or discussion to establish a foundation for the principles. Mr. Guzman expressed the opinion the master plan is “great because you go to the meat of the matter” without having to read a great deal of background. Chairperson Hartman expressed the opinion there is sufficient record to establish foundation for the principles. He expressed appreciation for the concise nature of the master plan. Member Scott suggested assembling the record carefully to preserve it, and that the master plan itself is more user friendly. He commented that the graphics are good. Chairperson Hartman agreed, and commented on the importance of helping people to visualize the written portion of the plan. Mr. Plemel advised that more of the initial flood plain maps and documentation which were the basis for the master plan will be included in the record. Chairperson Hartman commended staff and the consultants on the public process. Mr. Guzman expressed the opinion the draft plan reflects a great deal of the work previously done by this committee. Solutions are becoming more consistent with good, practical concepts. Member Scott expressed the opinion the process has been very open for those who chose to participate.

Chairperson Hartman entertained a motion. **Member Fischer moved to recommend to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors adoption of the Carson City Master Plan. Member Riedl seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.** Chairperson Hartman thanked Mr. Plemel and Mr. Winston.

3-B. ACTION TO ADOPT AND RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS A WORK PROGRAM CONTAINING PROJECTS AND OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION PRIORITIES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2006-07 (1-2155) - Mr. Guzman reviewed the staff report, and provided background information on the establishment of open space priorities. He discussed the various funding sources and mechanisms available for acquiring property. He reviewed the priority properties using displayed maps.

Member Scott suggested considering parcels in light of connectivity and open space value to determine the possibility of acquiring open space values without purchasing an entire parcel. He noted that many of the open space priority areas would be relatively difficult to develop, and the benefits of acquiring critical open space elements that would allow for the possibility of a trail without precluding development. Chairperson Hartman suggested that development rights attributable to trails could be retained by the developer. Member Scott suggested including development rights for trail attributes as an incentive. Chairperson Hartman suggested considering ways to create bonus densities that achieve open space, trails, and other community goals. Mr. Guzman agreed, and discussed the importance of educating the development community about the benefits of this approach. He advised there is presently quite a bit of apathy with regard to using density as a bonus. Member Scott noted the master plan considers density increases. Mr. Winston suggested ensuring the concept is included in the master plan. Member Riedl advised that developers in the City of Reno are being allowed high densities because of setting aside certain attributes. Mr. Guzman acknowledged the Bently property had been removed from the priority list. He advised that Mr. Bently is not interested in selling or developing the property.

Mr. Winston inquired as to the clarity of objectives on the Carson River. Consensus of the committee was that the objectives include circulation, trails, preserving the view corridor, habitat and environmental resource protection. Chairperson Hartman advised that some river properties score higher than others on the open space matrix. Discussion followed regarding aspects of trail development and the purview of this committee over the same. Mr. Guzman suggested the philosophy of the Open Space Program should

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change to include purchase of open space property and trail development, particularly in areas that are rural. Member Scott suggested the west side of town would also include watershed management and resource protection. He suggested the distinction between open space trails and recreation trails could be made at “rustic versus paved.” He reiterated the suggestion that the Open Space Program shouldn’t have to own an entire parcel if values such as trail connectivity, flood plain preservation, wildlife habitat, etc. could be protected. Member Fischer suggested Mr. Guzman should create management plans for open space properties which include rustic trails, if necessary. Mr. Winston noted that the Open Space Program and this committee are more attuned to environmental stewardship. He suggested that, in a stewardship role, the committee may find it necessary to close certain volunteer trails for environmental and visual purposes. Member Riedl discussed historic uses associated with the recently acquired Horse Creek Ranch property, and expressed the opinion the committee should be involved in managing the same. He expressed reluctance to becoming involved in engineering bicycle paths, etc. In response to an earlier comment, Mr. Moellendorf suggested, as trail systems develop particularly along the river, the committee may determine the need to convert rustic trails to more permanent surfaces. He advised that concrete trails will endure flood conditions better than DG trails. He expressed the opinion that, “for the end user, ... there shouldn’t be an awareness of ... open space trails and park trails.” Mr. Guzman referred to the Moffat property, as an example, and expressed the opinion it will eventually become more of an urban park.

Member Scott discussed the public perception of open space, and suggested trail linkages and creation of access opportunities will demonstrate better how open space “fits into the bigger picture.” Mr. Winston agreed, and commented the first priority was to “buy it before we lose it. Not lagging too far behind is this ability of the public to appreciate what you’ve acquired.” The experience of riding on trails is key and will help reinforce the ongoing desire for open space. Open space no one can use or access becomes “a bit of an academic exercise for a lot of people.” Member Scott advised there is a great deal of open space to consider, in the trails context, on the west side between a plan that includes USFS trails, watershed areas owned by the City’s Utilities Division, and some of the existing thoroughfares. He suggested the Open Space Program may be a better financing catalyst for initial phases than the Parks and Recreation Department. Chairperson Hartman referred to the Potter property as a prime example which will have more urbanized trails but also other portions which become a very different experience.

(2-0023) Mr. Winston commented that water is a magnet, and expressed the opinion the River would be the single most popular area in the City if everyone could get to a portion of it. He discussed the spectrum of abilities represented in the population, and estimated the River is presently restricted to 3% of the population. He advised that the trails plan proposes, in relation to Riverview Park, some extension of a paved system to accommodate roller bladers, strollers, handicapped people, etc. In reference to earlier comments, he agreed that telescoping trails is a current concept in development. Trails will taper off and, beyond a certain distance, become more rustic and “self selecting.” Mr. Winston expressed the opinion that providing a hard surface path for some portion of the River will be very beneficial to the entire community. Mr. Moellendorf related an example from Green River, Wyoming with regard to extending trail pavement as demand increases. He clarified that, in environmentally sensitive areas, this was sometimes impossible. Mr. Winston noted the importance of loop trail designs. [Chairperson Hartman passed the gavel to Member Scott and left the meeting at 7:32 p.m. A quorum was still present.]

In response to a question, Mr. Moellendorf discussed difficulties associated with continuing to extend a trail system based on public demand, and balancing preservation of the natural environment with increased use. He responded to additional questions regarding the trail system he helped to develop in Green River,

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Wyoming. In response to a comment, Mr. Moellendorf suggested connections could be established at Morgan Mill Road. Member Fischer expressed concern over citizens who will not make the connection between open space and funding trails. He suggested also including people who were active in passing Question #18 to discuss these concepts.

In response to previous comments, Mr. Guzman discussed the importance of “creating these discussions now before the problem arises.” Ideally, policies would be in place prior to situations presenting in order to have the opportunity to address them outside the “heat of the moment.” One of the master plan concepts provides for this, i.e., to develop a comprehensive policy and apply it accordingly. Mr. Guzman advised that further discussions will be agendized with regard to the distinction between parks and open space.

Acting Chairperson Scott suggested considering these types of discussions as part of the committee’s 2006 goals. He further suggested considering inventory and management of resources in addition to acquisition, and how plans may fit to sharpen the focus on future acquisitions. Member Perock suggested also considering co-management with federal and state agencies as a goal for the year. Mr. Guzman agreed, but suggested keeping in mind that approximately one year remains to apply for Question #1 funding. He noted the importance of taking advantage of the funding while it’s available. He agreed with the importance of shifting the focus of the Open Space Program to inventory and management, and reminded the committee of the commitment made to manage the 5,000 acres owned by the Utilities Division.

Mr. Guzman reviewed the hillside priorities, using the maps displayed in the meeting room. He advised of the need to begin considering the 40 acres of Cinderlite property over which the City owns a usage right for a period of 40 years. He pointed out the subject property, in response to a question, and described its characteristics. Discussion took place regarding the potential of the property.

Extensive discussion took place regarding the hillside priorities, including the Swafford property, private properties adjacent to Highway 50 West, and the C-Hill property. Mr. Guzman requested the committee members to consider open space priorities and provide feedback. In response to a question, he referred to the hillside development standards included in the agenda materials. In response to a question, Acting Chairperson Scott discussed the importance of establishing hillside development guidelines to ensure minimal visual impact. Mr. Winston suggested considering the desired experience and future opportunities in evaluating open space priorities. Member Fischer suggested considering the possibility of leasing property with the first right of refusal. Acting Chairperson Scott discussed the importance of ensuring design elements that minimize impacts of development.

Mr. Guzman discussed the Vicee Canyon specific plan area. Mr. Winston expressed the opinion that the public conservation designation on the property is “confusing and misleading.” He expressed the further opinion the designation on the land use map should indicate open space or for development and that the determination should be made in advance. He expressed concern that the present land use map designation may result in the City being “taken to task” if the state sells the property for development at some point in the future.

Mr. Guzman reiterated the request for the committee members to consider open space priorities and provide input. He reviewed the table of non-land acquisition projects included in the staff report, and discussion followed. He provided a ranking of the projects, as follows: C-Hill Fuels Reduction, Management Plans, and Reports to the Board of Supervisors. He requested input of the committee members with regard to their

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project priorities. Acting Chairperson Scott suggested that more could be covered if the committee helps to establish management priorities, and Mr. Guzman establishes priorities for his time. Mr. Guzman discussed his responsibilities as the City's property manager. Acting Chairperson Scott suggested utilizing consultants to accomplish certain aspects of the listed projects, and discussion took place with regard to the same. Mr. Guzman advised that some of the projects require quite a bit more time and dedication, and agreed with the idea of utilizing consultants. In consideration of management, he advised of the need to consider rangers and increasing the scope of the Open Space Program. Acting Chairperson Scott suggested tapping the Parks and Recreation Department as a resource for rangers, and contributing appropriately toward the established program.

In response to a question, Mr. Guzman reiterated the request for the committee members to consider the open space acquisition priorities and the non-land acquisition project priorities. He advised that the annual budget is in the process of being prepared and that it will reflect some of the discussion from this meeting. Acting Chairperson Scott suggested agendaizing the proposed priorities for action at a future meeting. He further suggested designating projects to which funding should be allocated to retain consultants. In response to a question, Mr. Guzman agreed to check into the possibility of property acquisition specialists who could focus on open space. In reference to earlier discussion, Member Lincoln noted the importance of requesting Chairperson Hartman to review provisions which dedicated certain parcels of Serpa property to the City. In response to a question, Mr. Guzman advised the committee usually reviews goals and priorities prior to the City's annual budget process.

4. NON-ACTION ITEMS:

STATUS REPORTS AND COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS (2-2967) - None.

STATUS REPORTS AND COMMENTS FROM STAFF (2-2743) - Mr. Guzman reviewed the tentative agenda for the January 23rd meeting. He provided a status report on the Vicee Canyon special planning area, and advised of the potential for a citizens group to request the committee to consider purchasing the property. He reviewed the "FYI" items included in the agenda materials and distributed prior to the start of the meeting. He responded to questions regarding how the Waterfall Fire restoration work fared during the last flood. He acknowledged the need for additional restoration work, particularly in the area of weed control. He advised that restoration work will continue through the next ten years.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS (2-2980) - Previously covered.

5. ACTION ON ADJOURNMENT (2-2982) - Member Fischer moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. Member Riedl seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

The Minutes of the January 11, 2006 Open Space Advisory Committee meeting are so approved this 20th day of March, 2006.

STEPHEN D. HARTMAN, Chair