

CARSON CITY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the August 3, 2006 Meeting
Page 1

A meeting of the Carson City Open Space Advisory Committee was scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 3, 2006 in the Community Center Bonanza Room, 851 East William Street, Carson City, Nevada.

PRESENT: Vice Chairperson Dan Jacquet
Tricia Lincoln
Wayne Perock
Howard Riedl
Bruce Scott

STAFF: Linda Ritter, City Manager
Juan Guzman, Open Space / Property Manager
Ann Bollinger, Open Space Assistant
Stacy Giomi, Fire Chief
Kathleen King, Recording Secretary

NOTE: A tape recording of these proceedings, the committee's agenda materials, and any written comments or documentation provided to the recording secretary during the meeting are public record, on file in the Clerk-Recorder's Office. These materials are available for review during regular business hours.

CALL TO ORDER, DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM (1-0003) - Vice Chairperson Jacquet called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. A quorum was present. Chairperson Hartman and Member Fischer were absent.

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS (1-0021) - None.

1. **ACTION ON APPROVAL OF MINUTES** (1-0026) - None.

2. **MODIFICATION TO THE AGENDA** (1-0030) - None.

3. **AGENDA ITEMS:**

3-A. ACTION TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REGARDING THE POTENTIAL DISPOSITION AND ACQUISITION OF CITY AND FEDERAL LANDS LOCATED WITHIN THE CARSON RANGE, VIRGINIA RANGE, CARSON RIVER, AND CITY ENVIRONMENTS, THROUGH CONGRESS AND THE FEDERAL LANDS BILL PROCESS (1-0040) - Mr. Guzman thanked the committee members, staff, and the citizens for their attendance, and explained the purpose of the meeting. He advised that one of the main considerations in moving forward with the lands bill is the cost of the land to be managed.

(1-0081) Chief Giomi advised of concerns regarding ramifications, from a fire protection standpoint, of being responsible over open space land. He discussed expenses associated with fighting fires, and advised that the federal government, in recent years, has not been as generous in providing funding for fighting wild land fires. The Government Accounting Office has been particularly strict with the U.S. Forest Service and

CARSON CITY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the August 3, 2006 Meeting

Page 2

the Bureau of Land Management over ensuring that local government jurisdictions “pay for what is theirs.” Federal agencies have been “absolutely precluded” from paying any costs associated with protecting structures in relation to a wild land fire. Chief Giomi reviewed known costs associated with the Linehan fire. He requested the committee to consider that land immediately abutting structures is particularly expensive to manage from a fire protection standpoint.

In response to a question, Chief Giomi advised there is no difference in fire protection management costs associated with private lands and those which may be on the Open Space Program’s acquisition list. The federal government only allocates funding to extinguish fires on federal lands. Chief Giomi acknowledged that federal land converted to City-owned land is the issue. The Fire Department is already responsible for protecting private land. Costs of fighting fire are determined on the values at risk. Land immediately adjacent to homes has more values at risk than parcels of land surrounded only by natural resources. With regard to acquiring land, Chief Giomi advised that the fundamental consideration should be whether the City can manage lands better than the federal agencies. Consideration would then have to be given to maintaining defensible space, dealing with noxious weeds, etc. Chief Giomi advised that private land owners are required to perform these management responsibilities on their land. The City would, in turn, be required to perform the management on its land.

In response to a question, Chief Giomi advised of a very good relationship between the City, the BLM, the USFS, and the Nevada Division of Forestry in terms of fuels management work. The BLM fuels management process is far more streamlined and quicker than the USFS process. Chief Giomi advised that the City is working with NDF on designating a dedicated inmate crew, which would also be available to the Open Space Program. In response to a comment, Chief Giomi noted that the City can act very quickly with regard to lands it owns. The available resources to act are another issue. Chief Giomi advised that the BLM and the USFS want to be good neighbors and don’t want their land to create hazards to structures. Conversely, they don’t want structures on City property to create hazards to their wild land. On the west side of town, in Ash and Kings Canyons and in Timberline, the USFS has been very active in reducing fuels over the past five years.

Member Scott suggested it is better to address pre-suppression issues than the costs associated with suppression or post-suppression. He agreed that the various agencies have serious issues with regard to funding for management. He noted that the City has a great deal of open space on the west side, in the form of utilities lands, that hasn’t been managed. He suggested a certain amount of back log and noted the many and varied activities in the aftermath of the Waterfall Fire. He expressed understanding for balancing Chief Giomi’s concerns over suppression costs, as more property is acquired, with the ability to conduct management projects. He expressed additional concern, with regard to the west side of town, that if some of the lower property is not acquired, the City may be left with a more dangerous condition in terms of the ability to reduce fuels and conduct pre-fire management projects. Chief Giomi agreed provided the land is acquired with the understanding that management funding will have to be allocated. He advised of a great deal of fuels management work done on the City’s utilities land two or three years prior to the Waterfall Fire. He noted the importance of recognizing that acquiring the land and performing fuels management doesn’t mean there won’t be fire. He reiterated that the responsibility for suppression will fall to the City. Member Scott agreed that open space resources have to be considered in terms of management.

CARSON CITY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the August 3, 2006 Meeting

Page 3

As more property is acquired, management potentially becomes a larger part of the Open Space Program budget. Chief Giomi reiterated the request for the committee to consider ongoing management and treatment of acquired lands into the future. Member Scott agreed that acquiring the land is a long-term commitment, not just ownership transfer.

Member Lincoln inquired as to costs associated with fire suppression and management of the checkerboard pattern; whether it would be better to eliminate the checkerboard as much as possible. Chief Giomi expressed the opinion that the checkerboard pattern is better because of being able to present a more convincing argument to the federal agencies that the threat to their lands was as great as the threat to the City's lands and, therefore, that suppression costs should be shared. In response to a further question regarding commitment of resources to fire suppression, Chief Giomi advised that assigning resources considers the values at risk. "Ownership doesn't matter; it's the threat."

Vice Chairperson Jacquet discussed the concept of "banding ownership," i.e., the high country becomes the ownership of the USFS, and the foothills become the ownership of the City. In response to a question regarding the ramifications of such a land pattern, Chief Giomi advised that, in terms of wild land fire fighting, the foothills are the most expensive lands to manage. "... taking over management of the ... foothills, which is the part most likely to be built up against or next to, then we're taking on the responsibility for providing the long-term management ... for that land, and it's going to be more expensive, over the long-term, ... to maintain that land close to the homes than it is to maintain the land that's half-way up the mountainside. The land that's half-way up the mountainside doesn't need fuel management work on it ... because it isn't a threat to the structures." In response to a question regarding costs associated with fire suppression and fuels management on forested versus non-forested lands, Chief Giomi advised that the answer would be too dependent upon the kind of fire and the kind of season. Non-forest fires typically follow wet winters. Fires occur more significantly in forested land following several years of drought. Chief Giomi advised that forest fires cost more to extinguish because they are typically longer-burning and burn more resources. Rehabilitation costs associated with forest fires are astronomical. Chief Giomi acknowledged that forest fires are less frequent but more costly in the long-term.

Chief Giomi acknowledged the City is responsible for structure protection as well as wild land protection of City-owned and private property. Member Riedl inquired as to which would be the better situation: to have USFS lands abutting developed areas or to have a City-owned buffer between federal lands and developed areas. He suggested there would be more control over management of the buffer area between USFS lands and the developed areas as opposed to relying on the USFS to manage their lands. He acknowledged the City would still be responsible for protecting structures whether the City owns "across the property line or the Forest Service." Chief Giomi reiterated that the City will always have the responsibility for protecting structures. Controlling the fire's perimeter is "really where you get down to brass tacks as to who pays." If the fire's perimeter comes on to City land, it is the City's responsibility to maintain and hold the perimeter. The USFS would pay for the ground forces required to maintain and hold the perimeter.

CARSON CITY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the August 3, 2006 Meeting

Page 4

Vice Chairperson Jacquet suggested that it may make sense to acquire some of the land if the federal agencies can't adequately manage it and perform fuels projects and, thus, put the community at risk. If the relationship with the USFS and the BLM is good, and adequate service in terms of fuels management is being provided, Chief Giomi's argument becomes more important. Chief Giomi reiterated the fundamental question as to whether the City is better able to provide overall land management than the federal agencies. He advised that a lot of the funding received for fuel management projects was allocated from the federal government. Now, only the federal agencies are receiving funding for fuel management; there's no more grant funding "filtering down to local agencies."

Mr. Guzman commented on the vastness of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, and discussed the possibility of entering into management agreements with the USFS for work which is specific to Carson City. Chief Giomi commented "that would be the best of both worlds." He cautioned that there would be no federal funding allocated for fuels management projects. He noted the importance of a management agreement specifying that the USFS would maintain the responsibility for extinguishing fires on their land. He advised that the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is the largest forest in the United States, after Alaska. In response to a question, he advised that the USFS would likely not be requesting any federal funding, even as part of their budget, for managing the land covered by any management agreement with the City. In reference to an earlier comment, Mr. Guzman discussed difficulties associated with rehabilitation of the Waterfall Fire burn area in light of the existing checkerboard pattern. Chief Giomi agreed that the checkerboard pattern would be difficult in terms of rehabilitation. He suggested that relatively small parcels of land wouldn't be "that big a deal." Large parcels of land behind large subdivisions "start running into big costs." In response to a question, Chief Giomi agreed to make a Fire Department representative available to attend committee meetings whenever necessary.

(1-1115) Dave Hampton inquired as to the possibility of selling City lands back to the federal government. Chief Giomi advised that the more land owned by the federal government means less land over which the Fire Department is responsible.

Vice Chairperson Jacquet discussed frustrations over performance of federal agencies, in terms of fuels and general management. He agreed the City can accomplish projects more quickly, and that costs are always an issue. He noted the importance of "more dogs in the fight," and the ability to share resources and costs for the good of the community. Chief Giomi reiterated that the City Fire Department has done a good deal of fuels management work on private land with grant funding. He agreed that federal government processes are cumbersome and time-consuming, but noted that the processes provide for public input. He agreed the City is able to accomplish projects more quickly, but noted the same responsibility for due diligence.

In response to a question regarding access and fire danger, Chief Giomi expressed the opinion that a "fair amount of access" is reasonable because it provides a way to extinguish fires. He expressed the belief that people will find a way to get into wild land areas. Some access will provide the ability for enforcement and for fire protection. Chief Giomi expressed the opinion that it is difficult to completely restrict and control access. Member Riedl agreed and expressed the belief that people tend to be "self-policing." Chief Giomi discussed the Rifle and Pistol Range as an example of the importance of providing facilities rather

CARSON CITY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the August 3, 2006 Meeting

Page 5

than allowing people to recreate in relatively inaccessible areas. In response to a question regarding the possibility of a shooting range facility east of Deer Run Road, he advised that Fire Department staff could work with the Parks Department to incorporate fuel treatments into the design and operation of the facility. Vice Chairperson Jacquet and Mr. Guzman thanked Chief Giomi. Chief Giomi reiterated the offer to attend committee meetings and provide input on specific parcels.

Ms. Ritter provided background information on the purpose of this meeting to review the lands bill map to ensure the City is not taking on more liability and cost than is necessary. She expressed appreciation for the committee members reviewing the lands bill map. She discussed the importance of being able to testify before the congressional delegation with regard to the purpose of the lands included as well as the method by which they will be managed. She advised of having encouraged Mr. Guzman to develop broad management plans for some of the properties to ensure “we know exactly what we’re getting into.” She requested the committee members to consider the balance between the benefits of acquiring the properties and the liabilities. In response to a question, she provided background information with regard to development of the lands bill map. In response to a further question, she advised that the comprehensive master planning process was used to receive public input in development of the lands bill map. She expressed the belief that the public process, for such an endeavor, is very important. The congressional delegation has been assured that the City will take the lands bill through a very complete public process, including stakeholders, to “attempt to get full buy-in.”

In response to a question with regard to priorities, Ms. Ritter advised of three acres near Costco owned by the USFS on which the City has license agreements for drainage structures; and property adjacent to Arrowhead Drive which is “right in the middle of ... residences.” She discussed the shift in the practice of federal agencies providing funding for fire management and protection. Member Scott suggested that the USFS seems to be “more strapped and has more difficulty in management” than the BLM. He expressed concern over the community being more exposed in the future if all of the west side is under USFS ownership. Ms. Ritter reiterated concerns over balancing benefits and liabilities. She noted that some of the parcels are very large, and suggested some of them could be refined by specific uses. She advised of properties adjacent to the V&T Railway which are being considered for museum structures.

In response to a question, Ms. Ritter requested this committee to evaluate the properties in light of their uses. She offered to have the Parks and Recreation Department and Utilities Division staff provide input with regard to their vision for the properties. She requested input of this committee with regard to properties which will be manageable. Vice Chairperson Jacquet advised of public concern that a lands bill could be used to acquire property and then “turn around in a master plan amendment” and develop the property. Ms. Ritter advised that property acquired under the lands bill would be deed restricted. She acknowledged that taking action to do something different than that which is specified in the deed, would cause the land to revert back to the appropriate federal agency. She noted that public input into the master planning process indicated no desire to expand the borders of the City.

In response to a question, Mr. Guzman explained that the parcels depicted on the draft lands bill map represent staff’s “best guess” after having discussed the possibilities with State representatives, the City Manager, etc. He acknowledged having visited the parcels. He explained that the lands are depicted as

CARSON CITY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the August 3, 2006 Meeting
Page 6

square for ease in discussing parcels in sections and subsections. He provided an overview of the draft lands bill map which was included in the agenda materials and displayed in the meeting room. He reiterated the willingness to place deed restrictions on land acquired to specify it will not be developed for anything other than what is indicated during the public process. He noted there would be no such assurances if the land is owned by the USFS. Member Scott commented that perhaps some of the lands depicted on the map should be developed for drainage, parks and recreation facilities, etc. Mr. Guzman advised that each label on the draft lands bill map designates the purpose of the land. In response to a question, he advised that the City has worked very closely with the USFS and the BLM, over the past ten years, in terms of ownership patterns and desirable lands. He pointed out lands which the USFS is very interested in owning and those which the USFS is very interested in the City owning. Ms. Ritter advised that the USFS is very interested in land exchanges.

Member Riedl inquired as to the timing of tying land management agreements to the lands bill. He acknowledged liabilities associated with acquiring certain properties, but expressed the belief that risk management should be carefully considered. There are risks inherent in having federal agencies manage certain lands "that they aren't capable of managing..." Ms. Ritter suggested that management agreements may be the solution, and could be handled separately from the lands bill. Mr. Guzman advised of Supervisor Williamson's interest in increasing uses at the Silver Saddle Ranch. After some discussion with BLM representatives, the property was removed from the draft lands bill and the parties decided to develop a management agreement. That document has been drafted and is in the process of being considered by the City. Mr. Guzman agreed that properties which could be addressed by management agreement do not belong in the lands bill.

Vice Chairperson Jacquet discussed wilderness designations, and inquired as to the City's interest in exploring such a designation in the area of El Dorado Canyon and the more rural portions of the City. Ms. Ritter advised that discussions regarding wilderness areas have not entered into development of the draft lands bill. She explained that the City's lands bill is unique in that consideration is being given to maintaining parcels for public use rather than selling them for development. She advised of no request to consider a wilderness area in the Pine Nut Mountains. Vice Chairperson Jacquet suggested that wilderness designations would guarantee use restrictions on federal lands. Ms. Ritter expressed concern over guaranteeing access in wilderness designated areas. She suggested the possibility of other designations which would guarantee access.

(1-2374) Dave Hampton advised that the City has no property which would qualify as wilderness because of already-established vehicle access.

Vice Chairperson Jacquet agreed and advised of other designations, such as conservation areas, scenic areas, natural areas, etc. Ms. Ritter agreed the possibility could be explored. Vice Chairperson Jacquet and the committee members thanked Ms. Ritter for her attendance and participation.

(1-2445) Rob Potter expressed support for using inmate crews to assist with fuels and property management projects. He discussed his experience with inmate crews, as part of his employment.

CARSON CITY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the August 3, 2006 Meeting
Page 7

Mr. Guzman provided a detailed overview of, and responded to questions regarding, the drafts lands bill map which was included in the agenda materials and displayed in the meeting room.

Member Scott suggested that the area maps will be particularly important in Areas 3 and 5, and noted that topography in those areas will have a great deal of bearing. He suggested considering those areas which either haven't been rejected or need to be determined in a broader, more philosophical way, such as the west side. Mr. Guzman suggested that some of the pertinent questions include whether to continue with the policy of pursuing purchase of lands available for sale, and whether to dedicate Open Space Program funds to management of interface lands. He explained the purpose of this meeting to expose the committee members to the concepts included in the draft lands bill.

Member Riedl discussed the importance of considering federal lands in terms of reducing the risks of fire damage, resource degradation, etc. due to the federal government agencies' inability to manage the lands. He expressed support for including properties such as C Hill, and disagreement with including the 40-acre parcel in Kings Canyon. He expressed support for recommending land transfers "as long as there was a commitment by Carson City and the federal government to come up with ... a joint management plan." He expressed concerns over transferring utility lands to the USFS. Mr. Guzman proposed that the committee formulate similar comments, and advised that this item would be reagendaized for the August 21st meeting. At this point, he advised that "other than Edmonds and Carson River Park, everything else is what staff believes that we should talk about to the federal government."

Member Scott suggested that the Carson City lands bill has the potential to be quite different than other lands bills around the state. He acknowledged the value in some of the economic development parcels and in those which are surrounded by private property. He expressed concern over the watershed areas. He expressed support for the City managing C Hill under a management agreement with the USFS. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to review the map, but suggested a "much scaled down version of this as something that might come forward."

Vice Chairperson Jacquet suggested the "bottom line is what obstacles do we have, as a community, that take an act of Congress to solve. And those are the opportunities you want to take." Other authorities to solve the problems should be pursued wherever possible. Vice Chairperson Jacquet expressed the belief the City shouldn't miss the opportunity to use the lands bill to address the majority of public lands existing east of the City boundary. "These will become the next frontier for open space. ... They look largely undevelopable now ... but that'll be the next place." Vice Chairperson Jacquet discussed the valuable resource represented by the Carson River, noting that it is presently a "jumble of different responsibilities and authorities" in terms of management. He suggested the lands bill may represent an opportunity to use an act of Congress to help consolidate some of the mission and purpose associated with the River. He referred to the Alpine Decree and noted people are fairly satisfied with it. "On the other hand, if an act of Congress was to designate the River corridor as a riparian area," the community may have greater access to federal funding for acquisition to help deal with water quality issues. Vice Chairperson Jacquet noted that the west side is the community's "scenic backdrop." He suggested the possibility of designating those lands as a scenic area. He reiterated the need to hear from Mr. Guzman the net result of the lands bill on the community's open space. Mr. Guzman advised that Principal Planner Lee Plemel has tables available

CARSON CITY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the August 3, 2006 Meeting
Page 8

whenever the committee is ready to analyze the issues. He expressed the opinion that more agreement is needed on “what it is that we want.” He advised that the City is considering using Open Space Program funding for management of the lands; there are no other funds available.

In response to a question, Mr. Guzman advised that it is the function of the Open Space Program to acquire lands and to manage them pursuant to a plan. In response to a further question, he advised that open space management includes noxious weeds, access, recreation, and fire prevention. He acknowledged that management of west side properties will be very different than of east side properties. He responded to additional questions regarding the lands bill time line.

4. NON-ACTION ITEMS:

STATUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM STAFF - None.

MEMBERS’ ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION - None.

5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (2-1950) - Vice Chairperson Jacquet and Mr. Guzman reviewed the tentative agenda for the August 21st committee meeting.

6. ACTION ON ADJOURNMENT (2-1987) - Member Scott moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:25 p.m. Member Perock seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

The Minutes of the August 3, 2006 Carson City Open Space Advisory Committee meeting are so approved this 21st day of August, 2006.

STEPHEN D. HARTMAN, Chair