

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
LAND USE PLANNING DIVISION
MULTNOMAH COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF February 6, 2023
Virtual Meeting/Zoom

This is not a full transcript. Time indicators reference the meeting recording, which is accessible at the following Dropbox link:
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2rfbi7o9qokg3ms/AAAWamGeLTnTpbOBHp3JtzDa?dl=0&preview=February+6+2023+Planning+Commission+Zoom+Recording.mp4>

1. Call to Order

(00:00:01) Chair John Ingle calls the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. on February 6, 2023.

2. Roll Call

(00:00:30) Chair Ingle conducts a role call and declares a quorum present.

- Present –John Ingle, Chris Foster, Bill Kabeiseman, Stephanie Nystrom, Victoria Purvine, Alicia Denny, Barbara Alexander
- Absent – Kari Egger, Tim Wood

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

(00:01:09) Minutes from the November 7, 2022 meeting are presented for adoption.

(00:01:30) A motion to approve is made by Commissioner Alexander.

(00:01:30) The motion is seconded by Chair Ingle.

(00:02:08) A roll call vote is held. The motion to approve minutes is passed unanimously.

4. Opportunity for Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

(00:02:42) Chair Ingle invites public comment on non-agenda items.

(00:03:09) Scott Robison informs the commission there isn't any public member wishing to comment on non-agenda items at this time.

5. Introductions – Welcome New Planning Commissioner Barbara Alexander

(00:03:39) Kevin Cook, Senior Planner, introduces the newest commissioner, Barbara Alexander, who is a Portland resident, and works for Port of Portland as a shared prosperity staff person. Kevin wanted to welcome Commissioner Alexander to the commission.

(00:04:18) Commissioner Alexander introduces herself and that she goes by Barbie, and is a lifelong Multnomah County resident, property owner, and a community leader. She has worked as a program analyst for the Port of Portland and is really excited to join the planning commission.

(00:06:22) Commissioner Foster introduces himself and said he's been doing farming on his property the last 30 years.

(00:06:54) Commissioner Kabeiseman introduces himself, and works as an attorney in town. He's really enjoyed his time on the commission.

(00:07:27) Commissioner Nystrom introduces herself, and she's been on the commission for four years in her first term. She lives in rural east Multnomah County and welcomes the new commissioner.

(00:07:55) Commissioner Purvine introduces herself, she lives in Corbett and does contracting with her husband. She welcomes the new commissioner.

6. Hearing – (Case # T4-2017-9166 / T3-2017-9165 / EP-2017-6780)

(00:10:18) Chair Ingle explains how the hearing will proceed, and reads off the applicable land use codes associated with the case. He opens the floor if any commissioners need to explain any possible conflicts they may have with the case.

(00:21:00) Commissioner Foster explains he doesn't have any conflicts of interest, but he does live about a mile up the road from the Burlington Forest site. He will not be financially impacted one way or the other by the project in question and will be impartial on hearing the matter.

(00:25:39) Adam Barber, Interim Planning Director, introduces Kevin Cook, Senior Planner, who has been working more closely on this project than anyone over the last few years and will be presenting the staff report. Next, he introduces Jessica, Barry, and Graham Martin from the County Transportation Planning Group. He also introduces Courtney Lords and David Blankfeld from the County Attorney's office to help us with procedural issues. He also introduces Scott Robison and Anna Shank-Root, who will help run the Zoom meeting. Lisa Estrin will work as tech support for any issues that may come up. Adam finishes by recognizing the large amount of work that has gone into this project over the years and to appreciate those who have brought it to this point.

(00:29:27) Kevin Cook, Senior Planner, explains the application consists of two main parts. The first is a proposal to designate the four forest units owned by Metro as a local park in the county comprehensive plan. The Planning Commission will vote on this question separately from the development of recreational development trails. The second component of the hearing is the community service use, and a suite of related permits to develop the trails and related parking area facilities. The applicable codes are from 2017, when the application was submitted. Kevin shares a presentation with maps to show specifics on where work would be done on the project. There will be a little over 1,300 acres for the nature park. After thorough review, the staff believes the applicant has satisfied the applicable criteria, and they are recommending approval of the application for both the comprehensive plan amendment for park and the recreational trail and trail head development and the Burlington Creek forest. They recommend approvals subject to the conditions on pages 9-18 of the staff report.

(00:48:57) Graham Martin, Transportation Planner, introduces himself and explains his role in reviewing this application over the past few years. There is no transportation requirement for the applicant in relation to the comprehensive plan amendment. Road rules that were initiated in 2004 and the Design and Construction Manual apply to the application. The applicant applied for a Road Rules variance, and the staff recommends approval of the variance with conditions. Those conditions include: requirement to undertake grading to meet sight distance requirement, and reconfigure access to improve grading, levels,

and condition. In summary, Graham believes that applicants met the criteria for the Road Rules and provided sufficient documentation for us to recommend approval for the road rules variance with the conditions of approval. The conditions should provide sufficient mitigation for the impact of the development, and will ensure a safe egress and ingress to the site.

(00:58:49) Gary Shepherd, Metro attorney, introduces himself and his colleagues who will present their application to the planning commission through a short presentation. He thanks the county staff who have been working on this application for years. The goal of the application is an effort to provide a safe and welcoming space for people to enjoy nature in a manner compatible with wildlife and the landscape. He introduces Karen Vitkay to speak to where we have been and trail improvements they are proposing.

(01:05:52) Karen Vitkay, Senior Park Planner for Metro, points out on a map the areas that will be involved, or about 1,300 acres. The planning process was informed by 5 community events, over 20 meetings with individual stakeholders, and more than 500 comments received through surveys, emails and Metro's website over a 2 year period. Metro will minimize erosion using the most current standards for sustainable trail design. Operations and land management staff will monitor and manage the trails and drainages over time. She introduces Jonathan Soll to speak to concerns over our access proposal and potential impacts to wildlife.

(01:14:29) Jonathan Soll, Metro Science and Stewardship Division Manager, introduces himself and says he's worked at Metro for 14 years in landscape and site scale conservation work for over 30 years. The science team worked closely with the planning team from the beginning to make sure to protect wildlife and water quality while creating opportunities for our community to experience nature close to home. The trail developments that are being proposed will have some impacts, but they will be modest. He then mentions salmon, elk, and red legged frogs as three types of wildlife that the community has been most worried about. The development project has been designed to minimize the impact on salmon, having the trail system that is proposed in a separate drainage from McCarthy, which is the most important salmon bearing stream in this area. Elk is being protected by fitting young forests and planting native shrubs, we are increasing the food supply which would otherwise be shaded out as the forest ages. The science shows the presence of a modest trail system is not likely to have a significant impact on the elk. The red legged frog will be protected as Metro will continue to improve their habitat in the breeding ponds at Burlington Bottoms. They will also monitor for frog mortality by cyclists or pedestrians and adapt operations and management if there are issues. He is confident the impacts of the park development that are proposed will be modest in comparison with its community benefit. He introduces Dan Moeller to finish the presentation.

(01:24:25) Dan Moeller, Metro Conservation Director, explains that his program is tasked with protecting fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, and provide meaningful access to nature. The modest trails that are being proposed will have a minimal impact on wildlife and is compatible with our wildlife, habitat, and water quality goals overall. The proposed trail density is approximately half the density found in Forest Park. The trails at Burlington Creek forest have been aligned and designed according to sustainable design practices with multiple user types in mind. As with other sites, it will be monitored for any issues over time. His team reviewed over 500 peer reviewed scientific studies of hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians to understand how they affect water quality and wildlife. It was found the impact of these groups in nature are marginal.

(01:29:38) Chair Ingle thanks Metro for their presentation, and now moves to the public testimony portion of the hearing.

(01:31:02) Scott Robison, Recording Secretary, reads off the instructions to give public testimony and explains there will be a three minute limit.

(01:31:50) April Gutierrez testifies in support of the project, and that her clients would really enjoy additional trails to ride her horses on.

(01:33:33) Chris Peskin testifies in support of the project, and hopes Metro and the county expedite approval and construction to meet the original bond goals without further delay.

(01:34:13) Sidney Walters testifies in support of the project. He's a PE teacher and sees the need for more access to trails for the kids he teaches. There are many benefits to being outdoors, and wants all his students to have access.

(01:36:18) Juntu Oberg testifies in support of the project. She is the president of Northwest Trail Alliance and believes working families should have more opportunities to gather and enjoy the benefits of the outdoors without the associated costs and burdens of destination travel.

(01:38:49) Steve Kruger testifies in support of the project. He believes our trails and parks infrastructure in the city and outside of it are underserving the growing population and thinks this project would really help.

(01:43:45) Lisa Olivares testifies in support of the project. She is the executive director of Northwest Trail Alliance and thinks we need more green spaces in the Metro area, with bike access to serve all of our communities, not just those that can afford long travel distances to access bike trails.

(01:45:59) Jered Bogli testifies in support of the project. He is a board member of Northwest Trail Alliance and is thrilled at the prospect of new trails close to town, and that this is an opportunity to create equitable access to nature close to home.

(01:48:40) Nancy Stone testifies in support of the project. She is the Education and Sustainability Director of Northwest Trail Alliance and admires Metro's commitment to expanding access to the outdoors, and making green spaces a priority.

(01:52:53) Georgena Moran testifies in support of the project. She is the Director of Access Recreation and Co-owner of Access for All. She believes this plan successfully balances Metro's continuing restoration efforts along with creating safe experiences for people who want to enjoy nature close to home.

(01:55:17) Bridget Campbell testifies in support of the project. She does hope that in the future there will be some horse trailer parking. She hopes Metro will keep the equestrian community in mind as the project continues.

(01:57:10) Michael Baker supports Metro on the conservation work that they're doing, but raises the point that the voters approved a bond twice for the preservation of the habitat, not turning Burlington Creek into a bike park.

(01:58:58) Aiden Jensen testifies in support of the project. He lives about a mile away from the proposed Burlington Park Creek and voices his support of the multi-use aspect of the proposed land development.

(02:00:41) Ahmed Al Ali believes this project has not gone through the scrutiny that he and his wife have gone through to develop their own house. He is concerned about the impact on the environment and the elk that live there.

(02:02:45) Landon Holbert testifies in support of the project. He lives in SW Portland and works for the Northwest Trail Alliance. He sees this multi-use trail system as a great opportunity to enable more access for all of Portland.

(02:04:44) Andrew Jansky testifies in support of the project. He lives in Southwest Portland and was a member of the Metro Citizens Advisory Group for this project, and thinks this has been a well thought process with a plan carefully balancing conservation and development.

(02:06:16) Elliot Michael is an avid hiker and outdoor enthusiast who doesn't believe conservation is enough of a priority in this project. He believes elk, cougars, and other animals will simply move away as more visitors come into the area.

(02:09:16) Scott Burns testifies in support of the project. He is a geology professor at Portland State University and thinks the whole team has done a great job in avoiding steep areas with high erosion potential and geological hazards.

(02:11:01) Ted Labbe testifies in support of the project. He is the Executive Director of the Urban Green Spaces Institute and has been tracking this work for many years. He thinks the metro planners and ecologists have done a nice job with a balanced plan that protects sensitive sites, with the need to access the site to grow our access to nature in the region.

(02:13:33) Ruandy Albisurez testifies in support of the project. He is the Community Director of the Northwest Trail Alliance and believes this project will help Portland metropolitan, as a whole, be more inclusive for marginalized communities.

(02:16:34) Marcy Houle is a professional wildlife biologist who doesn't believe a thorough ecological inventory and assessment has been done, as noted in Metro's own report. It's prudent that Metro should at least have some conservation goals for the red legged frogs as a minimum.

(02:19:50) Carol Chesarek thanks the county planners for reviewing such a complex application. She too believes the red legged frogs are vulnerable and that Metro must develop a population monitoring plan for them as a condition of approval of this project.

(02:23:14) Ron Peck wanted to add on to what Carol Chesarek had said. He did not agree with experts in the earlier presentations saying these parks will not influence wildlife in the area. He proposes that there is a process where the experts can share data directly with the people that live in the area.

(02:25:58) Katie Miranda owns a lot in the area of the proposed project, and Metro has put a lot of restrictions on what she and her husband can do based on wildlife issues. She believes it's unfair the Metro doesn't have to play by the same restrictions, and that this project will have a negative impact on wildlife in the area.

(02:29:03) Chair Ingle entertains a motion to leave the record open and continue the hearing to March 6th, 2023. Commissioner Kabeiseman makes the motion and Chair Ingle seconds it. The rest of the

commissioners support the motion. The record will remain open, and hearing will resume on March 6th at 6:30pm.

7. Director's Comments

(02:31:15) Adam Barber, Interim Planning Director, hopes to have an announcement soon on the permanent replacement for the Multnomah County Land Use Director position that has been under recruitment.

(02:32:30) The meeting is adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Recording Secretary,

Scott Robison