



Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Nature & Trails Advisory Committee (NTAC) meeting

Date: 7/19/2016

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Fanno Creek Service Center

In Attendance

Committee Members: Bernadette Le, Cory Samia, Jack Shorr, John Ratliff, Laura Porter, Matthew Shepherd, Mitch Cruzan
Absent: Gerri & Sam Scheerens
Board liaison: (None)
Staff: Bruce Barbarasch
Guests: Panos Stratis

Ia. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. (It followed the quarterly Joint Advisory Committee meeting.)

Ib. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the May 2016 meeting were presented to the committee.

Move to accept was proposed by John and seconded by Mitch.

There were no questions from the committee members and no discussion. The minutes were **accepted by unanimous vote**.

II. Guest Comments

Mr. Stratis said he was considering joining NTAC and attended to learn more about the committee. It was agreed that he would be able to comment as appropriate during the meeting.

III. The View from Bruce's Office

Bruce introduced an agenda item that had been a regular fixture during Natural Resource Advisory Committee meetings, the View from Bruce's Office, during which he introduces members to a different natural resources or trails issue that his staff are addressing. This month he spoke about water and trails.

Flooded trails are an issue across the district. Trail users typically accept it in the winter, especially when trails are in flood plains, as many are, but are more likely to question what's happening when they encounter a flooded trail during the summer. In a word, beavers.

Balancing the needs of people and beavers is an ongoing issue. The options are fourfold: trail closure (temporary or permanent); reroute the trail or build a boardwalk; fencing to reduce beaver feeding and activity; or install pipes in the dams ("beaver deceiver").

The committee asked the following questions:

- What's happening in Center Street Park? Public consultation led to the decision to decommission the lower trail. (Upper trail with a bridge is 500 feet away.)

- What happened to the nutria that used to be prevalent? Numbers have fallen significantly; nutria used to damage creek banks. From that perspective, beavers are better, and they likely occupy all available niches in the district.
- The bridge in Greenway Park has debris against it and high water level—is it safe? Historically, bridges were flat with footings built on the banks, hence the debris build up. New bridges have footings away from banks and are arched. A replacement is on the cards.

IV. **New Business**

Measuring trail quality

The district has an extensive network of interconnected trails of differing ages, construction standards, and amenities. THPRD has developed a Trail Quality Measure to guide investment in trails and monitor progress. Worksheets are used to assess both regional/community trails and neighborhood trails based on safety, basic amenities (meeting lowest acceptable provision), and higher level of amenities such as seats, dog poop disposal, water fountains, bathrooms, etc. The scoring on these worksheets reflect the expectations and available options for different trail types. Staff have rated all trails in the district and produced a color-coded map to give an overview of the trail conditions; green for best, orange for OK, and red for least amenities. All trails meet the minimum safety requirements. (Any safety issues were fixed as a priority.)

During the ensuing discussion, committee members touched on the following points:

- Can the minimum acceptable score for a trail be met by rating amenities and not safety? No, any safety issues are resolved immediately.
- At light-controlled road crossings, can there be a timer to tell trail users how long they have to wait for the next walk light? City of Beaverton crossings recognize the traffic pressure and will adjust wait time to suit. During busy traffic periods there is a 1-minute wait; during low traffic times, the lights will change instantly.
- What kind of amenities are needed on trails? It will depend on the demographics of users: bicyclists like curb cuts; runners typically bring own water; walkers' needs vary with age.
- Parking can lead to more use by older patrons, which may increase demand of other amenities such as bathrooms and benches.
- Higher use may justify more amenities.
- Is there demographic data to guide need for amenities? Overall use is the same across the district.
- Should the district be trying to raise the trail quality rating for all trails—but what is the appropriate level of amenities for each trail segment?
- Do fewer amenities mean a need for improvement or are fewer amenities are appropriate in those trail segments?
- The current policy for distribution of trail maintenance funds isn't consistent, hence the need for the Trail Quality Measure.
- How should spending be allocated? Should it be spread to reflect geographic equity?
- Direct spending to high-use areas, especially those with fewer amenities.
- Does the presence of amenities lead to higher use?
- Address basic needs first (such as curb cuts, narrow trails, etc.)
- Focus on red segments.
- It was noted that for committee members to make a detailed comparison between individual color-coded segments, there was a need to see the survey data. Bruce said that staff could provide that.
- Will Trail Quality Measure affect existing priorities for regional and intercity trails and safe routes to schools?

V. Announcements

Bernadette Metro has engaged Verde to assist with outreach to underserved communities.

VI. Next Meeting will be held on

Next Meeting: Field trip on Tuesday, August 16. Members should meet at Fanno Creek Service Center at 6:30 p.m. A van will be there to transport members.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Shepherd
Recording secretary