



Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Nature & Trails Advisory Committee (NTAC) meeting

Date: 1/31/2017

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Fanno Creek Service Center

In Attendance

Committee Members: Bernadette Le, Gerri Scheerens, Sam Scheerens, John Ratliff, Laura Porter, Matthew Shepherd, Cory Samia, Jack Shorr
Absent: Mitch Cruzan
Board Liaison: John Griffiths
Staff: Bruce Barbarasch (Superintendent of Natural Resources)
Deb Schoen (Superintendent of Community Programs)
Guests: Sandra Amolo, community organizer with Tualatin Riverkeepers

Ia. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. (It followed the quarterly Joint Advisory Committee meeting.)

Ib. Approval of Minutes

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

Move to accept was proposed by Laura and seconded by John Ratliff.

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

II. Guest Comments

Ms. Amolo introduced herself, gave a brief overview of Tualatin Riverkeepers' activities (including responding to members questions), and said she was attending to find out more about what NTAC does.

III. Old Business

Westside Trail

Bernadette proposed to add an unscheduled item to the agenda following an email Matthew had sent to committee members about construction of the Westside Trail south of NW Wendy Lane.

Bruce introduced the subject, sharing some photos that Matthew had taken. Matthew expressed his surprise at the scale of the construction, which raised the trail above the height of neighbors' back fences and snaked across the entire width of the powerline easement. He felt that such construction was inappropriate.

The trail project had been reviewed previously by the Trails AC and Natural Resources AC (when they were separate) and approved by the THPRD board. When presented to the committees and board, the plans included an alignment on the map but no indication of the engineering necessary nor the scale of the construction.

The following points were touched upon during the committee's discussion:

- Other members were also surprised by what the photos revealed.
- Large embankments were needed to build the trail with a 5% grade to meet ADA requirements
- Funding came from ODOT (origins in federal grants)
- There had been some complaints from local community members

- Landscaping around the trail may help soften the impact and provide some privacy for neighbors, although the overhead presence of powerlines limits vegetation height.
- How many other segments of the Westside Trail will need a similar level of construction?
 - At least one other, to the south of NW Laidlaw Rd
- What can be done to avoid this situation occurring in the future?
 - Ask staff for more information when reviewing plans
 - Learn which questions to ask to tease out appropriate information

Ropes Course

During the Joint Advisory Committee meeting in October, THPRD staff had made a presentation about possible development of ropes courses as public-private partnerships. In the months since, at least one company had been scoping out the Jenkins Estate as a potential location. Scores of trees had been recently flagged.

Bruce introduced the committee to the rubric that had been used to assess the suitability of THPRD properties for ropes courses. The existing rubrics in the Natural Resources Functional Plan didn't meet needs of ropes courses, so an amended rubric had been created, including site size, current access, and so on. Using this, a list of potential properties was generated.

Deb briefed the committee on the background to what's happening at the Jenkins Estate. THPRD is considering a ropes course because it serves the needs of adventure-oriented young adults, a community segment that is underserved. Only one company is interested in submitting a proposal, and it was only interested in one property, the Jenkins Estate. The company provides corporate team-building and such like, so proximity to Nike, Intel, and other major companies is important. The Estate hosts another public-private partnership, which runs the house and buildings. That principally serves private clients; the ropes course would be more public facing.

Bruce then outlined the situation with tree flagging that had been noted by committee members. In preparing its proposal, the company had temporarily flagged trees that may be suitable for supporting the course. The ropes are likely to be 20–30 feet up the trees. They would be fixed to 1"-diameter anchors through the trees. The trees would be limbed above and below the ropes. It is not sure where parking would be based, but it is likely that there is already adequate parking on the property.

During the discussion that ensued, the following issues were raised:

- Western squirrels live at the southern end of Jenkins Estate. They are largely restricted to oaks trees.
- There are no birds of "concern," i.e., no species that are identified under federal or state endangered species legislation or local ordinance. It was noted that migratory birds are protected when nesting.
- Typical recreation use creates zone of disturbance flanking and above trails. Concern over ropes courses moving that disturbance up into tree canopy.
- Minutes from the JAC presentation in October included questions asked by members who attended. Did we have answers yet? No.
- What disturbance or impacts would the construction cause, such as access for heavy machinery? Were there any construction impacts specific to a ropes course?
- What are the risks in a public-private partnership for a ropes course; are they greater or less than those associated with the proposed ice rink?
- Benefits to the district include programming for an underserved segment (16–35 year olds, adventure-oriented), adapting to the needs of a changing population in district.
- Previous proposal by unrelated company to locate ropes course at HMT Complex ended because of vendor (company) decision; reasons unsure
- Portland Parks haven't sited a ropes course, despite interest and more extensive land holdings.

III. New Business

Accomplishments

This meeting saw the completion of the first year for the NTAC, created by merging the Trails AC and Natural Resources AC. Bernadette asked committee members to share accomplishments of NTAC during previous 12 months. The members' suggestions are paraphrased below.

Laura	Committee members are still talking to each other. The agendas have addressed strategic needs of THPRD; she feels like her input is meaningful and helpful.
Cory	Successful merge of NRAC and TAC.
Gerri	Built an understanding of how natural resources and trails concerns overlap Site visit to Cooper Mountain to try natural resources site assessment matrix.
Matthew	Successful merge of NRAC and TAC. Site visit to Cooper Mountain to try natural resources site assessment matrix. Discussion of how to reach underserved communities.
Sam	Successful merge; members have established trust in each other. Gaining knowledge to address natural resource and trail issues. Being able to respond to Bruce's questions and requests; meaningful.
Jack	Working together to advance parks. Understanding needs of both natural resources and trails—and meeting them. Data-based decision making.
John	Liaison with bicycle advisory group. Participation in trails counts. Discussion about trail standards. Discussion about HAWK road crossing.
Bernadette	Field trip to Cooper Mountain; felt committee began to get feet on ground. Discussions on how to engage diverse communities.

Goals for the coming year

Committee members were tasked with thinking about goals to be discussed at the next meeting. Each member is requested to come to the next meeting with two goals to be considered.

IV. Next Meeting will be held on

Next Meeting: February 28 at 6:30 p.m.; Fanno Creek Service Center.

During this meeting, elections will be held for chair and recording secretary. Both Bernadette and Matthew are stepping down, so the two positions will be vacant.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Shepherd
Recording Secretary