

City of Oregon City

Meeting Minutes

Natural Resources Committee

August 8, 2012 7:00 PM Commission Chambers

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

Present: 4 committee members - Jerry Herrmann, Bob Roth, Richard Craven, Erik Carr;
2 guests - Rita Baker and Brian Vaughn

Absent: 3 – Bryon Boyce, Marlo Smith, Andrew Senase

Staff: 1 - Pete Walter

2. Public comment on items not listed on agenda

No one is in the audience.

3. Presentations

- a. Presentation and discussion with Rita Baker - Greater Oregon City Watershed Council and Brian Vaughn - Metro on the Newell Creek Canyon Project Progress.

Rita Baker explained what the Watershed Council is, the mission of the group, and the watershed area. She displayed a map and informed the NRC about the action plan for Newell Creek.

Brian Vaughn communicated how Newell Canyon became a natural area purchased by Metro in 1996. In answer to a question by a committee member, Brian spoke generally about the amount of acreage purchased. He showed color-coded map of Oregon City area and how Newell Creek flows through to the Willamette.

Ms. Baker gave details about the restoration project. She averred that the purpose of the project is to increase the quality and quantity of the watershed area.

There was discussion regarding weeds – where they are growing and if they will be able to re-establish. Mr. Vaughn expressed that the focus is on positive plants, not completely eradicating the weeds.

Mr. Vaughn described the hydrology of the canyon, water quality monitoring, and that the project is trying to maintain habitats. He clarified that the project is working in concert with other landowners. There was a conversation regarding commercially zoned property on the map and pollutants from parking lots/developments in connection to the headwaters. Mr. Vaughn responded that there is an opportunity for the City to do voluntary actions to preserve headwaters. There was a dialogue about the historical development and Clackamas Community College (CCC) at the

headwaters. Mr. Vaughn mentioned a grant to CCC and offered to send more info about that to the NRC to help them understand what is happening at CCC.

Ms. Baker described future plans for preservation and funding for the project, including grants and project partners. There was a brief exchange regarding fish surveys and Mr. Vaughn provided details about fish spawning, which is highly possible in Newell Canyon. He informed the Committee that the canyon is not officially open to the public but there are informal trails that follow old logging roads and people utilize them; the long-term goal is a publicly open natural area. Ms. Baker related the informal use of the canyon and clean-up efforts. Mr. Vaughn requested feedback on a future project.

4. Discussion items

- a. Updates on Heritage Tree and Grove Designation Progress by committee member Jerry Herrmann.

Mr. Herrmann described a staff meeting he and committee member Richard Craven attended. In an aside, Mr. Herrmann questioned who was running the meeting and expressed that at some point they need to pick a new vice chairman. He asked why a past meeting had been cancelled and City Planner Pete Walter gave an explanation. Returning to the subject of the update, Mr. Herrmann related that staff feels the Heritage Tree ordinance needs some work; there is an agreement to work together to improve the ordinance and the Mayor agreed.

The committee started reviewing the ordinance. (Attached to the agenda, pp. 2-6, a copy of the ordinance itself with mark-ups.) Discussion on this included the scope of the work session, next steps and timeline. The Committee deliberated on adding an ecological perspective to the ordinance, City covenants, and public and private process, especially related to Waterboard Park. Mr. Walter informed the committee about the upcoming Heritage Tree nomination and the importance of getting arborists' reports. The Committee conversed about how to split up the work of editing the ordinance and how to define terms within the document. Committee member Erik Carr suggested that the document be sent out to everyone.

- b. Jughandle Project Wetland Construction and Restoration Project Update by City Planner Pete Walter

Mr. Walter shared a PowerPoint presentation. (Attached to the agenda, pp. 38-51: a high-level PowerPoint, first 13 slides only covered.) He indicated that this is a joint project between ODOT and the City to improve traffic on 213 and included a lot of natural resource expertise. He detailed boundaries and buffer sizes for water areas and wetlands and reported that the Army Corps of Engineers had reviewed and provided feedback. Mr. Walter reviewed City code, planting lists for mitigation site, and success criteria. He informed the Committee that this project was presented to the Planning Commission because of the large scope and they approved it. The Committee discussed the possibility of interpretive trails in an area that is not currently very accessible. Committee member Bob Roth expressed concern about

increased wildlife right next to 213. Committee member Jerry Herrmann asserted that there are opportunities that the Committee should keep track of and work with Alita Froman Goodrich, the engineer who is managing the project.

c. Review of NRC 2012-2013 Adopted Workplan by City Planner Pete Walter

Mr. Walter declared that the Natural Resources Committee (NRC) may amend the work plan at any time with consensus of group. (Attached to the agenda, pp.64-65: a document that details high-level project steps and timeline.) He updated the Committee that Public Works is in transition as they search for a new director; they are hiring for director and city engineer. He will report back regarding the Cove peninsula in September. Nothing currently underway on this. Committee member Jerry Herrmann gave some historical background and current information about state of the Cove. Mr. Walter confirmed that he will get it back on the agenda. Mr. Walter shared potential future development.

The Committee had a conversation about re-establishing Tree Sub-Committee and its scope of activities. Mr. Walter indicated that the City will partner with the County on a City plant list but until then they will use other lists as resources.

Mr. Walter informed the Committee that the deadline for Tree City USA program is in December. He stated that the City had observed Arbor Day and will continue to do tree plantings; the City has met most of the criteria for the program. He revealed that the Oregon Department of Forestry will look over draft application before deadline.

Mr. Walter mentioned a desire to get Friends of Trees to expand to Oregon City. Mr. Roth recommended staffing for volunteer coordinator. Mr. Roth also suggested having County's sustainability coordinator come talk to the group.

The recording ends here, at the two-hour mark, mid-discussion. There does not appear to be a video for this meeting on YouTube.

5. Staff Communications

6. Future Agenda Items

a. Join NRC / PRAC meeting

7. Adjourn

The meeting recording ends after two hours. Exact adjournment time unknown.