

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ABBREVIATED MINUTES
February 10, 2011
4:00 – 6:00 pm

Present:	Jenny Tollefson	Maureen Hartman	Absent:
	Jed Little	Tim Aldrich	Mary Manning
	Bob Clark	Gary Knudsen	Beth Hahn, Park Brd Rep
	Ethel MacDonald	Bert Lindler	
	Jeff Stevens	Adam Liljebld	

Also Present: Jackie Corday, Open Space Program Mgr, Peter Nielsen (County Health), Mike Kustudia (FWP), Pelah Hoyt & Greg Tollefson (FVLT) & Jim Habeck

Jacobs Property in East Missoula – Rough Cut Evaluation

Pelah Hoyt from Five Valleys Land Trust informed us that in December, FVLT purchased the ~65 acre Jacobs property for \$250,000 using “bridge funding.” This represents a bargain sale price or a \$50,000 "donation" from the Jacobs family as the appraised value was \$300,000. In addition to the sales price, FVLT will be incurring approximately \$19,415 in direct costs (appraisal, Phase I EA, legal fees, & misc. costs) and an estimated \$20,000 for indirect costs for a combined total of \$39,415 in costs over the sales price, which totals \$289,415. Jackie had questions about how the costs were presented and asked for more information/clarification, which Pelah said she would provide at the next OSAC meeting.

Last fall, FVLT applied for \$73,000 in funding through the Recreational Trails Program (managed by FWP) and began a fundraising campaign through their members. A purchase and sale agreement has been agreed upon to sell the western portion of the property (~35 acres) to the Western Montana Fish & Game Association (WMFGA), which operates the shooting range on the adjacent land. At this point in time, the tentative sales price is \$105,000. In addition to these sources of funds to repay the bridge loan, Five Valleys is seeking Open Space Bond funding of \$100,000.

Pelah presented a powerpoint to show how important this piece of property is to the over-all trail and park connections in the Bonner/Milltown area. In addition to providing a fantastic location for extending the Kim Williams trail eastward, the Jacobs property provides access to the outstanding recreational and interpretive opportunities that will be developed at the Milltown State Park. It would allow space for informational kiosks, a parking lot and other trailhead/access facilities that may be needed in the future to appropriately manage recreation at the site. This trail connection is a priority of the *Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan 2006 Update* and several other City/County planning documents. Pelah presented copies of 10 letters of support for the project, which included such organizations as Rails-to-Trails, Clark Fork Coalition, Bike Walk Alliance for Missoula, Friends of Two Rivers, and FWP.

FWP recently hired Mike Kustudia to serve as the manager for the new Milltown State Park. Mike introduced himself and informed members that the State has recently acquired the Bluff Overlook property that is adjacent to the Jacobs property. He is very excited about the Jacobs property becoming a part of the park in order to complete the trail access to the bluff and beyond over the river once the bridge is built. Some of Mike’s initial duties will include working with the community and public to take the state park from its conceptual phase to a new park that provides public access and built facilities. Peter Nielsen also voiced his strong support for this project for the same reasons – he has been working on tying together the greater East Missoula/Bonner/Milltown area with trails for over 20 years.

Greg informed members that he is working on negotiating a trail easement from WMFGA as part of the terms of the sale. Jackie stated that the desired location of the Milwaukee Trail (or Kim Williams extension), is actually on the north side of the RR tracks as far away from the shooting range and RR tracks as possible. However, if the City is not able to successfully acquire an easement on the north side, a trail easement from WMFGA is a good backup plan. Pelah mentioned in addition to the trail concession, FVLT has also negotiated a 100' setback buffer for buildings or parking lots from Deer Creek road in order to keep an open aesthetic corridor. Bert said he was happy to hear that FVLT negotiated those two terms as they add significant value/benefit for citizens to the deal with WMFGA.

Members unanimously scored the project high enough to move to the next step, final evaluation, which will happen at the March OSAC meeting.

Open Space Updates

USFS Motorpool site – Earlier today, Jackie, the Mayor, and the directors of OPG, MRA, and Parks met with Regional Forester Leslie Weldon, Lolo National Forest Supervisor Deb Austin, and other FS staff to discuss the City's interest in purchasing the Motorpool site. It was a good productive meeting for us all and the next step will be to get an approximate value of the site to determine what is feasible for the City to acquire (all of it verses a portion of it). Once we have that figure (which might take 2-3 months) we'll meet again to talk about the next steps. The Mayor stated his strong support and interest in working towards acquisition, but also made it clear that we don't know yet if and how it can be worked out.

Thompson/Huff project – After several months of waiting for Rod Huff to confirm that he will go forward with the conservation easement on his 20.5 acre parcel (he wanted written assurances from OPG that he did in fact have a right to one building site), he let Jackie know that he is ready to move forward and she has begun drafting the easement. Once he approves the draft, Jackie will begin the process of receiving bond funding approval.

CLAC/MJAC/CLTWG/GPAC – A subcommittee of Park Board and Jackie, Morgan, and Donna have been meeting to figure out how best to merge the 3 conservation land management groups (MJAC, GPAC & CLTWG) into one new group, CLAC. This is based upon a recommended action item in the Conservation Lands Management Plan. Marilyn Marler, Chair of the Conservation Committee, is supportive of the idea and made a referral to City Council to begin discussing how to achieve the merger. Morgan and Jackie met with GPAC members on Feb. 7th to discuss the merger. They expressed concerns with how a merger would work since there is a court decree from 1955 that sets forth 13 points on how the park must be managed in order to maintain its predominately natural open space status. Morgan and Jackie presented to the group draft CLAC bylaws that specifically require adherence to the court decree, but they were still concerned.

Jackie reported their concerns to the Park Board the following day on Feb. 8th at their board meeting and the Park Board decided to move forward with dissolving MJAC and CLTWG (which were both subcommittees of Park Board), but held off on dissolving GPAC due to the concerns. The following day on Feb. 9th, the Council also decided to hold off on the GPAC merger (which, like OSAC, is not a subcommittee of Park Board) and gave the Park Board subcommittee more time to work out how the bylaws should be amended.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm with the next meeting date scheduled for 4:00 – 5:30pm on Thursday, March 10th at Currents.