

MINUTES OF THE METRO COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING

Tuesday, May 8, 2007
Hillsboro Parks and Recreation Office
4400 NW 229th, Hillsboro, Oregon

Councilors Present: David Bragdon (Council President), Kathryn Harrington, Carl Hosticka, Rod Park, Robert Liberty, Rex Burkholder, Brian Newman

Councilors Absent:

Council President Bragdon convened the Metro Council Work Session Meeting at 1:59 p.m.

1. **DISCUSSION OF AGENDA FOR COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING, MAY 10, 2007//ADMINISTRATIVE/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER COMMUNICATIONS**

Council President Bragdon reviewed the May 10, 2007 Metro Council agenda. He reported on the Measure 37 claims that were removed from the agenda, pending action in the Oregon legislature.

Councilor Communications was moved up due to the need to leave for the tour immediately after the meeting. Councilor Burkholder reported on the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). There was concern that there was not enough time to do the work. At the last Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) meeting, they asked for changes in the work plan. He talked about the timeline. One option would be to split the federal and state adoption out. This would be of advantage to staff in their planning. Councilor Harrington stated that the Chief Operating Officer performance appraisal was due on Monday, May 14.

2. **NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM TARGET AREA REFINEMENTS**

Jim Desmond, Parks Director, started with Wapato Lake, south of Forest Grove. The federal Department of Fish and Wildlife has approved a wildlife refuge here. We wanted to coordinate the best use of bond measure funds combined with other funds. This could be a highly significant visitor resource and bird habitat.

Mr. Desmond turned to the Chehalem Ridgetop to Refuge area. This was a separate target area very close to Wapato. It was very important for the Tualatin Basin and River. The science community felt that the area on the western flank, closer to the Wapato refuge, was at least as important as the ridgetop itself. It could support oak habitat, which has been identified as one of a handful of the most rare regional habitats. The ridgetop was more like a commercial tree farm, a lot of it owned by logging companies. The western slope had more fragmented ownership. The ridgetop would be more of an all or nothing acquisition. There were a few Measure 37 claims in the area. Councilor Harrington asked about the vineyards. What impact would more birds have on agriculture? Jim Morgan, Parks Manager, said that was an ongoing issue when bringing in any additional habitat. He talked about some successful mitigation techniques that had been used. Councilor Liberty noted that waterfowl were more of a threat to seed crops than to grapes.

Councilor Park asked when the federal project would be underway. Staff said the project was forging ahead. Mr. Desmond thought our timeframe was compatible with the refuge plans. Heather Nelson Kent, Parks Manager, asked Council to let staff know if there were target areas that they would prefer not to see in the open houses.

Councilor Harrington thought the wording “fill gaps” was too strong – just “gaps” would be better. We didn’t want anyone thinking it was a done deal.

Mr. Desmond then spoke about the Killin Wetland target area, two miles from Banks. We had success in this area last time. It included very significant and rare habitat. Buffering the areas around the habitat was critically important. There have been water drainage issues and problems with surrounding landowners. But the area was fairly well complete as it was, it would be filling in a few gaps. Mr. Morgan said the area was unique in having a peat soil type. The suggested expansion reflected trying to capture the soils and control hydrology. Mr. Desmond said birding was big in this area. Currently there was no trailhead or safe place to park. The community had asked for it. Even some agriculture owners supported some additional acquisition. Councilor Park asked about what farming work was taking place there. Mr. Morgan pointed it out.

Councilor Newman asked about whether acquisitions from the 1995 measure were eligible for swaps; he was a little nervous about doing a swap with a property that we had owned for 10 years. Mr. Desmond said the bond measure itself would not necessarily restrict it. There were options.

Regarding Dairy & McKay Creek Confluence, Mr. Desmond described it as a single target area. By the time we got to Tier 1, there would be a decision to make. Stakeholders had different desires. He pointed out the sub-areas and the previous acquisitions, including Council Creek. He reviewed some of the pros and cons of each area. Habitat diversity was generally high. There were some areas of fragmentation. The Port of Portland had some land and mitigation plans here. Some areas were considered of higher quality. There was a plethora of good choices.

Council President Bragdon asked, when Council had to make their choices, would pros and cons on each sub-area be presented? Mr. Desmond said yes. If there were a clear consensus amongst stakeholders, that would be the recommendation for a Tier 1 priority. There would be a menu of choices. Council President Bragdon asked about trail opportunities. Mr. Morgan provided his perspective.

Councilor Burkholder asked about the connection to Jackson Bottom. William Eadie, Real Estate Negotiator, said there were three parcels. That had come up in stakeholder interviews. Councilor Liberty asked why we didn’t show the connection to Jackson Bottom. Mr. Desmond said it was in the narrative and would be shown on the map.

Councilor Hosticka asked, if we extended the northern boundary of Cornelius across Council Creek, did it make sense for us to buy in that area? Mr. Desmond agreed that would need discussion.

The next item was Rock Creek Headwaters and Greenway, basically from Forest Park down. It was a complicated area, but the stakeholders had a surprisingly unified view. There were a lot of moving parts, including major development in north Bethany, Forest Park, the Westside trail, lots of creeks, and high-end homes. There was opportunity for significant natural resource protection. He pointed out some of the corridors and options. Mr. Morgan said Rock Creek was a large wetland area; they were trying to establish something to act as a filter. Mr. Desmond said the other acute issue was sensitive species. Some strategic investment could provide a lot of protection. The Forest Park connection was important for wildlife passage and human trail potential. The Westside Trail group did not support any paved trail within Forest Park. The stakeholder groups had led to community discussion. There were still numerous large parcels.

There was opportunity for a larger regional park type or water protection. There was pressure from all sides in terms of development. There was interest in easements there as well. Councilor Park said it was hard to face stakeholders who had strong opinions about specific areas. Mr. Desmond said staff was working on a more detailed analysis of the issues as to the trail location.

Discussion turned to Lower Rock Creek, within the City of Hillsboro. It was in the target area last time. The jurisdictions had done a great job of protecting it. They have worked cooperatively with developers to get parcels donated. There was a decent core and tremendous support for finishing the job. There was a manageable number of landowners. Local partners would be supportive. Not a lot of issues other than, find the willing seller; prices would be high. Mary Ordal, Project Manager with Hillsboro Parks and Recreation, talked about the local vision and plans for the trail. Councilor Burkholder asked her what her priority would be. She said the local corridors, especially along Rock Creek. It cost more, but people had better access, and it was in the heart of a livable yet densely populated area. It was something people could see and touch. Mr. Desmond said land prices would run as high as \$500,000 per acre; it was a good chance to partner. Council President Bragdon asked about current land use patterns and ecological status. Mr. Morgan said there was older traditional development that still had resource value. Mr. Desmond said it was not pristine habitat, but there could be some great restoration in partnership with community groups.

Moving along to the Westside Trail. We knew a lot about the trail, the ownership, and where we wanted to buy. Mr. Desmond pointed out areas where Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District (THPRD) was active and areas that would be better for Metro to pursue. Councilor Burkholder commented on the Highway 26 crossing. Councilor Hosticka asked about public ownership on Bull Mountain. There was some that wasn't showing on the map. We had some parks, was it considered part of the target area to complete a park there? Mr. Desmond said that was a decision for Council. It was still a possibility. It would be a complex trail project, and every acquisition was critical. The trail wouldn't happen unless the public owned it all.

Next was the Tonquin Geologic Area and Trail. This had become complicated. It was a 1995 target area, close to I-5 and Wilsonville Road, going north up to Sherwood and Tualatin. There was a lot going on; it had a tremendous amount of potential. This was not a Forest Park or Sandy River, where we had done a lot last time and needed in to fill in a few gaps. We could be aggressive here, there were high quality resources and nature trail potential. It could be more like what we did in the East Buttes last time. This was a major target area worth a lot of attention. Councilor Harrington thought the dashed red line was distracting. Mr. Desmond described them as potential trail corridors. He pointed out areas of previous investment. Mr. Morgan presented some geologic information on the history and importance of the soils. There was fallout from the Missoula Floods. It was kind of an elfland and also supported unique vegetation. We could get a double whammy of a trail plus resource protection. Mr. Desmond pointed out where other purchases were taking place. There was community support. The jurisdictions would like to see Metro protect the unincorporated areas that no one else was protecting. The federal trail system did not support bicycle trails. There were still some very rare, exceptionally high value resources.

Councilor Newman recalled that a lot of that land had been brought in for industrial and employment purposes. It made sense for us to stay as contiguous as possible.

Councilor Harrington thought the red dashed line was going to be problematic when presented in the public open houses. Her chief concern was identifying the natural areas, and make sure people could see the property that we already had. Mr. Desmond instructed staff that the current public ownership needed to be more prominent, and the trails de-emphasized.

The final target area was Stafford Basin, near I-205. It spilled over a lot with the Tualatin River area. The stakeholders expressed surprising consensus on their vision. Mr. Desmond described the work that had been done by the jurisdictions. There were important drainage issues. There was strong support for strategic fill in the gap areas along the Tualatin. He referred to the complicating factor of Measure 37 claims. Councilor Harrington asked, what was the downside, if we didn't make acquisitions in these watershed areas? Mr. Morgan said they would be developed. These were small basins. It wouldn't take much to trash them. Lydia Neill, Principal Regional Planner, said it was unincorporated Clackamas County, a lot of it was rural residential, that was at the higher end. There wasn't a lot of farmland, which would be better protection. Councilor Park asked about the value of wildlife habitat. Mr. Morgan described it as fair. Councilor Harrington felt like the stakeholder interviews were asking for specific areas to be protected, in contrast to the bond measure values of water quality and habitat. Councilor Newman said there were different types of target areas, some would be higher on the water quality, some would be in closer areas where people could see them, but those would be the more developed areas.

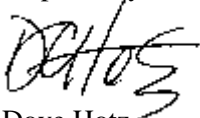
Kathleen Brennan-Hunter, Bond Program Manager, wrapped up. She previewed a prototype of a new map, with a lighter background and more regional focus. Staff wanted to be more consistent between the open houses and the web site. Ms. Kent said the aerial photographs would also be available separately; the overlay would be just on the hill shade. Councilor Neman thought the topography jumped out better with the new maps. Councilor Liberty asked if just one set of maps was necessary. Ms. Brennan-Hunter said the aerials would be available but without the overlay. Councilor Park said, whatever style, it should be consistent, otherwise it would create confusion.

Ms. Brennan-Hunter then asked Council—after seeing all 27 target areas, was there any feedback, trends, or general questions about what they'd seen so far? Councilor Newman commented that we seemed to be talking more about acquisitions than easements. Mr. Desmond said staff saw a conservation easement as equal to an acquisition; each resulted in the land being protected. Council President Bragdon said these decisions would involve choices, not just between parcels, but between policies. The public needed to know that we couldn't do it all. Ms. Brennan-Hunter said, in the open houses and on the web, there would be information on the science, and the pros and cons. Council and staff discussed how to present the choices to the public and how to frame their feedback. Mr. Desmond talked about how the information would be used to explain why we were focusing or not on an area. Councilor Park wondered how much we wanted to use the threat of development as a criterion for the public.

3. COUNCIL BRIEFINGS/COMMUNICATIONS

Covered under Item 1. There being no further business to come before the Metro Council, Council President Bragdon adjourned the meeting at 3:53 p.m.

Prepared by,



Dove Hotz

Council Operations Assistant

**ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF
MAY 8, 2007**

Item	Topic	Doc. Date	Document Description	Doc. Number
1	Agenda	5/10/07	Agenda: Metro Council regular meeting, May 10, 2007	050807c-01