

Columbia River Gorge Commission

Meeting Minutes

May 11, 2004

A complete record of this meeting is available on audiotape

Location: Best Western Columbia River Inn at the Bridge of the Gods
735 WaNaPa Street Cascade Locks, Oregon

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Kenn Adcock
Doug Crow
Judy Davis
Michael Farrow
Dan Harkenrider
Walt Loehrke
Joe Palena
Dave Robertson
Kathy Sheehan
Anne Squier
Wayne Wooster

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jane Jacobsen
Joyce Reinig

STAFF PRESENT

Martha Bennett, Executive Director
Jeff Litwak, Counsel
Kathy Obayashi-Bartsch, Administrative Assistant

AUDIENCE PRESENT

Allen, Barbara. Lewis and Clark Bicentennial of Oregon (LCBO)
Andersen, Steven. Cascade Planning Associates
Carlson, June. Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
Curran, Claudia. Multnomah County resident
Johnson, Patrick. Skamania County Planning Department
Lang, Michael. Friends of the Columbia Gorge (FOCG)
Lichtenthaler, Eric. Multnomah County resident
Pizanelli, Phil. Multnomah County resident
Thiemann, Phyllis. Columbia River Gorge Visitors Association (CRVG)
Witherspoon, Karen. Skamania County Planning Department

Chair Squier called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Approval of Minutes –April 13, 2004

Chair Squier said approval of the minutes for the March 23rd meeting would be deferred until the next meeting. She asked if the Commission had any comments on the April 13th minutes. Commissioner Wooster asked to have the acronym "DLCD" on page 11, listed as Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). Commissioner Palena made a motion to adopt the minutes with the suggestion from Commissioner Wooster. Commissioner Wooster seconded and the Commission approved the minutes unanimously by voice vote.

Public Comment

Steven Andersen of Cascade Planning Associates read from prepared testimony (see attachment A).

Eric Lichtenthaler said he resides by the Women's Forum on the Columbia Historic Highway and spoke about commercial events. He said before the April 27th meeting he thought the Commission had determined commercial events would not be allowed in the Scenic Area and did not attend the April 27th meeting. He said only a few people will gain by the commercial events but the area in general will suffer and the landscape will be adversely affected. He said the Scenic Area is small in comparison to the rest of Oregon and the economic impact will not be significant enough to make any substantial impact.

Claudia Curran said she resides in Corbett and was speaking for herself and Phil Pizanelli. She said they were under the impression that the Commission had decided not to allow commercial events. The April 27th agenda did not list commercial events as a topic of discussion and there was no mention of a specific public comment period. She said this was unfair to people who were interested in this topic.

Chair Squier thanked the speakers for their testimony. She said because of potential litigation related to adoption of the revisions to the Management Plan, the Commission would not be asking questions or discussing these issues today.

Executive Committee Report

Commissioner Robertson provided an Executive Committee report. He said the committee considered the issue of Commission direction and goal setting. He provided a summary of the proposed Building Blocks Training Exercise (see attachment B-1) and described the process of screening various consultants for this training. He said funds from the Washington savings incentive funds would be used to pay for the project. He distributed copies of the proposal (see attachment B-2) from Sue Dicile, the consultant that the committee feels is best qualified for the training.

Commissioner Wooster said the consultant was well qualified.

Commissioner Crow asked whether references had been checked. Commissioner Robertson said references were called before any meetings with consultants were arranged. The City of Corvallis recommended Dicile for working specifically with their

City Council. Commissioner Crow asked if her resume was available and Martha Bennett, Executive Director, said she could provide this information.

Commissioner Sheehan asked when this project would begin as there may soon be a turnover of Commissioners. Sheehan also asked how in-depth the interviewing with stakeholders would be. Commissioner Robertson said the project would start in the summer and fall depending on scheduling. Bennett said the Commission would give Dicile a list of people to interview to manage the costs. She said this aspect was to give the Commission an idea of how they are perceived by various stakeholders. Commissioner Loehrke mentioned the need to involve county commissioners and the two Governors.

Commissioner Adcock said he was "on the fence" about the project. He said the committee did a great job in the selection process and Sue Dicile was impressive. He said some of the items on the proposal were questionable and doesn't think "team building" is necessary. He expressed concern about spending money on the project when there many other pressing needs, such as enforcement and suggested Bennett could facilitate this discussion with the Commission. Bennett explained the incentive funds are restricted for use on items that enhance efficiency and are one time costs. These funds can't be used for enforcement, rent, staff, supplies or other ongoing operating expenses. She said the four items that are currently planned for these funds were: Commissioner training, staff training, printing costs for the Scenic Handbook and an indicators project. These projects would use approximately half of the funds.

Commissioner Robertson addressed the "team building" issue. He said the focus was on how Commissioners can voice dissenting or minority opinion and still enhance the Commission as a whole and on improved relationships that allow Commissioners to move past conflict. Commissioner Palena said he has been involved in this type of training before and feels it would be beneficial.

Commissioner Harkenrider said the Commission is faced with internal and external challenges. He identified one challenge being how the Commission members articulate decisions to others. Commissioner Loehrke said he was impressed by Dicile's proposal and noted she was very direct. Chair Squier said if the Commission proceeds with this training, it would be great if all Commission members make a personal commitment to this process.

Commissioner Crow asked for input as to her personality. Commissioner Loehrke said she was to the point without being abrasive. Commissioner Wooster concurred with Loehrke and said she listened well, was courteous and confident.

Commissioner Farrow said he wasn't sure about the need for the training. Commissioner Adcock wondered why the funds were so restricted. Commissioner Sheehan thanked the Committee for doing this work and said she sees the need for this training. She said in light of the restrictions on these funds, this was a good use.

Bennett said this training would also assist staff in resolving issues about delegations. Chair Squier said another benefit would be for new Commissioners.

Commissioner Crow said he was supportive of the training but had some reservations and would like to see putting more money in the indicators project.

Chair Squier asked if there was further discussion and Commissioner Sheehan moved to approve the proposal. Commissioner Loehrke seconded and a voice vote was taken. The motion passed 9-1 with Commissioner Farrow voting no.

Presentation on Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Oregon

Chair Squier welcomed Barbara Allen, Executive Director of Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Oregon (LCBO), who briefed the Commission on plans to commemorate the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial in Oregon (see attachment D). She explained the agency is a private non-profit, with a 30 member board and over 60 partner agencies. She said the vast majority of activities will be in 2005. She referred to the state wide brochure listing of Lewis and Clark sites and the sanctioned events. There are other events planned in individual communities as well and said she is supportive of bi-state programming and events. She said they have raised about \$ 2 million and have a goal of \$8 million.

Commissioner Palena asked Allen to comment on the anticipated economic benefit. Allen said studies were done two years ago. She said most visitors will be middle to upper middle class families and will likely travel by car. She said over 100,000 people have attended signature events so far. She said the Port of Portland is a partner agency and is providing kiosk space and informational support at the airport for visitors. She noted Fort Clatsop has instituted a timed ticket system to accommodate the increase in visitation.

Chair Squier asked for clarification of a signature event. Allen said signature events are focused regional events that are significant to the major milestones in the journey. Each event includes a certain amount of re-enactment. Commissioner Crow asked her to comment on the Columbia River Gorge Visitors Association (CRGVA) hospitality training program. Allen explained it is a training program for hospitality staff and she would like to see more funding to extend this program to other parts of Oregon.

Commissioner Robertson asked about specific events occurring in the National Scenic Area (NSA). Allen described many events and activities in the area.

Commissioner Wooster asked for figures of visitors and what efforts are planned to sustain interest in the area after the bicentennial is over. Phyllis Thiemann of CRGVA said they anticipate 2 million visitors in the area associated with the bicentennial and the next planned event is the ice age exhibit. Allen noted that the Confluence Project featuring the work of Maya Lin will also have a significant impact and the Fort Clatsop attendance has tripled. Commissioner Farrow commented on the impact of more

visitors in the area as this could create significant issues in light of limited public safety operations and facilities.

Commissioner Crow asked Allen to comment on Sustainable Northwest programs. Allen said the project is supported but not at the level originally anticipated. Commissioner Crow asked how much money had been given to this effort. Allen said approximately \$50,000 from the Port of Portland and an additional \$10,000 from other sources.

Chair Squier said there was mention of train excursions from Portland to Astoria. She noted there are boat tours up to The Dalles, and other bus excursions in the Gorge, but no discussion of trains into the Gorge. Allen said to her knowledge, there were no planned train excursions into the Gorge. Phyllis Thiemann said there are interpreters on Amtrak trains only. Chair Squier thanked Allen for the presentation and called for a break at 10:45 a.m.

Plan Review Process Debriefing

Chair Squier reconvened the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Jeff Litwak, Counsel, said he has received one notice of intent to appeal and is aware of one more possible appeal of the Commission's adoption of revisions to the Management Plan. He said the full extent of these appeals is unknown. He said the process, scope, monitoring, issues, public outreach, hearings, specific issues that were discussed or not and the final vote are all items that could be involved in litigation. He said if the Commissioners have any questions to contact staff.

Bennett reviewed the Summary of Written Comments (attachment D) and said today's discussion was not intended for substantive discussion of issues but to discuss the process with a view to the future. She said a questionnaire was sent to everyone on the mailing list and is posted on the website. The Commission discussed the overall process that was followed during the 2001-2004 Plan Review Project and needs for the next Plan Review.

Commissioner Farrow said monitoring, data evaluation and analysis were important for forecasting purposes.

Chair Squier suggested the Commission start with the broadest themes to get a sense of the Commission's recommendations for a smoother process in the future.

Commissioner Robertson suggested a process improvement would be to look to other bodies that have engaged in similar projects. He added that it was easy to get sidetracked without a big picture context.

Commissioner Loehrke said better information is needed early in the process.

Commissioner Crow suggested Bennett develop a budget and timeline for the next Plan Review given our experience in this process.

Commissioner Sheehan suggested a more frequent review process, as ten years between reviews is too long.

Commissioner Davis said the process included a lot of rehashing issues even though a subcommittee had worked on the issue. She said it is important to clarify the extent to which decisions have been delegated to subcommittees or advisory groups.

Commissioner Robertson said the Commission should establish regular advisory committees that hold a quarterly meeting to assist in monitoring and develop more opportunities for public outreach. Chair Squier asked him for clarification. He said we could develop advisory committees as a way to involve others. Bennett said we have a staffing issue with existing committees as staff must provide meeting support as well as technical work. She asked the Commission to consider what they are most concerned about achieving as part of the next Plan Review and said different processes can be used with different pros and cons. For example a process with lots of input is slower but engages more people.

Commissioner Harkenrider suggested thinking of a way to use a more adaptive process rather than waiting for a five to ten year period. He also encouraged beginning a monitoring process as the lack of monitoring information was an Achilles heel.

Commissioner Loehrke said it was hard to make all the meetings and if the process was shorter, he would have had a difficult time being informed.

Commissioner Wooster said the Commission did a good job for a first effort and subsequent reviews should be easier. He suggested the Plan should be revised more frequently. People got entrenched in issues and opinions because of the length of time between reviews.

Commissioner Adcock suggested that all Commissioners be involved using a committee structure with two staff, two Forest Service staff and four Commissioners reviewing a portion of the Plan, with as many committees set up as needed. Commissioner Farrow suggested using a task group with a specific work plan and time commitment. He said with his work, he can't make long term commitments on advisory committees.

Commissioner Palena said it would help if the process and Plan had more of a "living" element to it. Chair Squier agreed in principle but called attention to the fact that each change creates work for the counties and the Forest Service. We need to keep this aspect in mind.

Commissioner Davis said there are other issues, such as who gets involved before determining a structure for Plan Review.

Commissioner Sheehan said that the role of advisory committees must be clearly identified. She suggested that for some issues, Commission committees should gather

information and develop pros and cons (like a staff report) without making a recommendation to the entire Commission; this approach would minimize lengthy committee discussions that are likely to be rehashed by the full Commission.

Commissioner Loehrke said before taking up Plan review again, we need to clearly define what the goals and guidelines are going to be.

Chair Squier said this is an issue that the Commission would discuss again.

Chair Squier recessed the meeting at 12:00 for lunch and reconvened the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

Preliminary Discussion – Budget and Workload Priorities

Bennett said the Executive Committee will be meeting next week to begin development of the 2005-2007 budget request. She asked the Commission to review the Agency's current work items, projected costs, and potential staffing levels (see attachment E). She encouraged the Commission to think about projects and tasks that could be included in a request for additional funding. Bennett reviewed the section "response to the Oregon Budget Note" and said most of the items had significant progress with the exception of implementing a fee schedule for Klickitat County.

Commissioner Adcock asked if the public was allowed at planner trainings and meetings. Bennett said the public were not typically allowed as a free and open exchange was impaired with the public present. Commissioner Adcock said he would like to discuss this issue at another time.

Bennett reviewed a forecast of anticipated costs versus expected base budgets. Commissioner Sheehan asked Bennett to comment on the Oregon and Washington match, noting the lower of "carry forward" figures was more significant. Bennett said her understanding was correct that even if Washington allows a greater amount, the agency can only use what is matched by Oregon for the joint account. Commissioner expenses do not need to match. Commissioner Adcock said he would like more information on individual items. He said each land use application and special interest groups should be charged for postage and printing. Commissioner Robertson asked if there are places in the budget to free up staff time and save money by outsourcing certain activities. Bennett said being in White Salmon, outsourcing opportunities are limited. She said the information presented shows what we think current service levels will cost and what the states think current service levels will cost .

She reviewed Services and Staffing Comparison (existing to desired levels) and said packages, which identify requested funds above the current service levels, will be submitted describing an increased service level as opposed to requesting individual items or specific projects.

Commissioner Wooster was excused from the meeting at 1:55 p.m for a prior commitment.

Bennett said a cut list will also be submitted and will impact staffing. The agency took a 20% reduction in the last biennium and another 10% will result in staff layoffs. Commissioner Adcock asked if volunteers can be used to assist staff. Bennett said there is a professional liability issue and a supervision issue. She said we currently have one volunteer who assists with clerical functions and has been very helpful.

Chair Squier said the real issue is how to present in a compelling way how constrained we are by the budget at the most fundamental level. Commissioner Farrow suggested contacting those who are in charge of finance subcommittees in the states. Commissioner Crow said politically there are some people who wish to keep the agency weak for potential eradication. Commissioner Robertson said others besides the Commission must approach the politicians for support. He said mobilizing stakeholders to support the agency was important and asked if a comparison of similar agencies had been made in terms of the reductions. Chair Squier said she did some research and the Commission received greater reductions than other agencies. Commissioner Sheehan suggested addressing the six county meeting for support. She suggested comparing the agency to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and other comparable agencies. Commissioner Robertson said the TRPA was structured quite differently than the Commission. Commissioner Farrow said the majority of people support land use planning in the Gorge and there will always be those who are critical. Commissioner Harkenrider said while he can't commit to specifics, he'd continue to work with Bennett to share staff and build efficiencies when possible. Chair Squier and Bennett thanked him for his support.

Director's Report

Bennett asked Commissioners to submit for their expense reports as soon as possible as the end of the fiscal year is approaching.

Bennett reminded any Commissioners to submit their financial disclosure forms if they have not already done so, as the due date was April 15th.

Bennett said the revised Plan will be sent to Secretary of Agriculture tomorrow and the ninety day window starts when it is received, likely Monday, May 17th.

Bennett said a hearing will be scheduled for a Skamania County appeal in June or July.

Bennett recently attended the bi-state advisory council with Commissioner Crow. The council is pleased about streamlining the certification process for economic development grants and loans. Air quality issues, federal appropriation for economic development funds, and hospitality training for the Lewis and Clark bicentennial were discussed. Commissioner Crow said \$4.2 million had been appropriated for grants and loans to each board. He noted \$604,000 was left in Washington and \$566,000 was left in Oregon. He said the next federal appropriation of \$800,000 will help. Commissioner Adcock asked if money flows through the Forest Service or the states. Commissioner

Crow said the funding is sent directly to the states. Commissioner Robertson suggested working with the two investment boards to request and increase in authorizations.

NSA Manager's Report

Commissioner Harkenrider thanked all the Commissioners for their hard work on the Management Plan, noting that they are all volunteers.

Commissioner Crow asked him to comment on the grounding of C130 planes and their role in fire suppression for the Gorge. Commissioner Harkenrider said the planes were grounded due to safety concerns. Crow also asked about the remaining dead trees near Cascade Locks. Harkenrider said the Forest Service has no immediate plans to remove trees unless they are a hazard. He said small fuels, such as brush, are a greater danger than large trees, even if the trees have already burned. Commissioner Crow said he participated in the Forest Service recreation focus group and asked about follow-up. Commissioner Harkenrider said a report will be shared at a later date.

Commissioner Adcock asked Harkenrider to comment on the Lewis and Clark landscape project, described by Barbara Allen. Commissioner Harkenrider said he did not have much information about the project but it focused on purchasing parcels identified in the 8.o process. Harkenrider also noted that funds for land acquisition have been lower than needed to purchase all of the high priority lands offered under Section 8.o.

Other Business

Chair Squier asked whether there was any other business. Commissioner Sheehan said there was a Cape Horn traffic safety corridor kickoff in Skamania at 6:00 p.m. on May 12th.

Bennett said there was a scheduled tour of the Vista House renovations at Crown Point following this meeting and Kevin Price, Oregon State Parks District Manger will be leading the tour. She asked that all those planning to attend, meet at the Vista House parking lot by 3:00 p.m.

Chair Squier adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2004 at The Columbia River Gorge Discovery Center, The Dalles Oregon

Minutes taken by Kathy Obayashi-Bartsch

Minutes approved on June 8, 2004