

Columbia River Gorge Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2009

A complete record of this meeting is available on compact disc

Hood River Best Western Inn-Gorge Room
1108 East Marina Way, Hood River, Oregon

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Harold Abbe
Don Bonker (9:00 am-3:30 pm)
Judy Davis
Sara Grigsby
Dan Harkenrider
Walt Loehrke
Carl McNew
Jim Middaugh
Joe Palena (9:00 am-2:00 pm)
Barbara Roberts
Joyce Reinig

MEMBERS ABSENT

Lonny Macy-excused

STAFF PRESENT

Jill Arens, Executive Director
Tom Ascher, Planner
Jennifer Ball Kaden, Planner
Brian Litt, Principal Planner
Jeff Litwak, Counsel
Kathy Obayashi-Bartsch, Specialist

AUDIENCE PRESENT

Berger, David. Lyle, WA
Bronsveld, Stephen. Underwood, WA
Bryan, Peggy. Skamania County Economic Development Council and Port of Skamania
County for John McSherry
Canon, Mike. Klickitat County Economic Development
Cheatham, North. Hood River, OR
Closson, Mary. Hood River County Chamber of Commerce
Colacello, Amy.
Crow, Doug. Mosier, OR
Daughtry, Chuck. Port of Cascade Locks Marine Park
Durbin, Kathie. *The Columbian*
Eatwell, David. West Columbia Gorge Economic Development Consortium
Fashing, Bill. Hood River County Economic Development
Hollatz, Nicole. Skamania County Planning Department

Holliston, Marsha. Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce
Klaas, Andrea. Port of The Dalles
Lang, Michael. Friends of the Columbia Gorge (FOCG)
Leipper, Bob. Troutdale, OR
McElwee, Michael. Port of Hood River
McKeel, Diane. Multnomah County Commission
Metta, Jessica. Gorge Technology Alliance (GTA)
Minthorn, Armand. Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Remington, Amanda. Mid-Columbia Economic Development District
Repar, Mary. Stevenson, WA
Robinson, Barbara. Mosier, OR
Roeder, Casey. Skamania County Chamber
Sills, Kelly. Clark County Economic Development
Silver, Joan. Oregon Investment Board
Thiemann, Phyllis. Columbia River Visitors Association
Thorgard, Eirik. Grand Ronde Tribe
Thornsby, Marc. Port of Klickitat
VanOrman, Susan. Oregon State Legislature
Walling, Miland. Klickitat County Economic Development

Others were present during the day.

Call to Order and Role Call

Chair Reinig called the meeting to order and role was called.

Approval of Minutes-July 14, 2009

Chair Reinig asked the Commission to review the draft minutes. Commissioner Middaugh made a motion to adopt the minutes as drafted. Commissioner McNew seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Approval of Special Meeting Minutes-August 21, 2009

Chair Reinig asked the Commission to review the draft minutes. Commissioner Davis had notified staff of a typographical error on page 3, in which the last sentence should read "...so any requests *must* be made by mid-late September."

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to adopt the minutes with the correction. Commissioner Palena seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved. Commissioner Middaugh abstained.

Public Comment

Barbara Robinson of Mosier, OR spoke about the potential detriment to the Scenic Area if urban area boundary expansions are allowed. She said the Commission's work tends to represent local interests rather than national interests (**Attachment A**).

Peter Cornelison of Friends of the Columbia Gorge (FOCG) said a section of the Columbia River Historic Highway section near Viento State Park was recently reopened. He also spoke about the Blue Ridge pipeline proposal and its potential impact on the Scenic Area's natural, scenic, cultural and recreation resources.

Michael Lang of Friends of the Columbia Gorge (FOCG) provided testimony regarding the Oregon Supreme Court decisions (**Attachment B**).

Doug Crow of Mosier, OR congratulated staff on effectively defending the work of the Commission at the Oregon Supreme Court. He discussed the Mosier fire and said more Scenic Area fuel reduction should occur especially when private land and structures are nearby.

Mary Repar of Stevenson, WA said the Commission should focus on preservation, conservation and cumulative effects. She acknowledged former Commissioner Honna Sheffield for her service on the Commission and suggested a work session on cumulative effects.

Opportunity for Treaty Tribe Nations to address Commission

As part of the consultation process treaty tribe members may speak about any issue on the agenda or any other matter. There were no representatives.

Special Meeting Report

Chair Reinig provided an update on the special meeting/training session conducted on August 21st. The special meeting/training session was facilitated by Roy Sampsel and Michelle Singer of the Tribal Leadership Forum and the federal budgeting process was discussed. A proposed action plan to seek federal funding from the Administration's budget as well as the appropriations budget was developed for the full Commission's review and consideration as well as public comment.

Chair Reinig provided a review of the proposed action plan (**Attachment C**). The funding requests will include funding for economic development and recreation projects as identified in the original Scenic Area legislation, Recreation Management Plan and Vital Signs Indicators Project.

Public Comment

Michael Lang of Friends of the Columbia Gorge (FOCG) said the 25th Anniversary is a great opportunity for the Commission to seek federal support. He said FOCG plans to make requests for federal funds and would like to coordinate efforts with the Commission and the Forest Service.

The Commissioners discussed the proposed action plan. Commissioner Bonker said it is appropriate for the Commission to seek federal funding but more research and work is needed to secure funding as it is very competitive. It is important to be well prepared and to thoroughly research the issue.

Commissioner Roberts said she supports selecting a few top project priorities for funding as discussed at the special meeting. Commissioner Grigsby expressed her support of the proposed action plan.

Commissioner Middaugh suggested making a larger and more inclusive funding request.

Commissioner Harkenrider expressed support to focus on top project priorities such as the Vital Signs Indicators Project which he believes has a good chance of being funded.

Chair Reinig said the discussion from the special meeting focused on a few key projects: Vital Signs Indicators Project, a recreation management plan, appropriation of the remaining funds for economic development and recreation.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the proposed action plan. Commissioner Roberts seconded the motion.

A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Harold Abbe-aye
Don Bonker-aye
Judy Davis-aye
Sara Grigsby-aye
Walt Loehrke-aye
Carl McNew-aye
Jim Middaugh-aye
Joe Palena-aye
Barbara Roberts-aye
Joyce Reinig-aye

Chair Reinig said the Committee reports, NSA Manager and Executive Director reports and the legal review would be postponed to later today.

Break 10:15-10:30 am

Chair Reinig called the meeting back to order at 10:30 am and introduced Susan VanOrman, Oregon state representative and Multnomah County Commissioner Diane McKeel.

Forum on Regional Economics

Jill Arens, Executive Director introduced the representatives from the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards, economic development managers, regional chambers, ports, and Gorge Technology Alliance. These representatives provided a report on their activities and future directions.

Some of the key items discussed were unemployment, job retention, business development, business infrastructure, funding strategies, Oregon vs. Washington sales tax, federal funding for the Scenic Area, renewable energy industry, aerospace industry,

agribusiness, technology industry, tourism, environmental clean-up, family wage employment, cooperative efforts, entrepreneurial business efforts, operational efficiencies, marketing strategies and the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards.

The following representatives provided information to the Commission:

Peggy Bryan, Executive Director, Skamania County Economic Development Council

Mike Canon, Klickitat County Economic Development Director

Mary Closson, Executive Director, Hood River County Chamber of Commerce

Chuck Daughtry, General Manager, Port of Cascade Locks Marine Park

David Eatwell, Director, West Columbia Gorge Economic Development Consortium

Bill Fashing, Hood River County Economic Development Coordinator

Marsha Holliston, Director, Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce

Andrea Klaas, Executive Director, Port of The Dalles

Michael McElwee, Executive Director, Port of Hood River

Diane McKeel, Multnomah County Commission

Jessica Metta, Project Manager, Gorge Technology Alliance (GTA)

Amanda Remington, Executive Director, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

Casey Roeder, Executive Director, Skamania County Chamber of Commerce

Kelly Sills, Clark County Economic Development Manager

Joan Silver, Chair, Oregon Investment Board

Marc Thornsbury, Executive Director, Port of Klickitat

Several of the representatives provided newsletters, brochures and other material **(Attachments D1-D3)**. The Commission thanked the representatives for the information and ongoing efforts to encourage economic development in the Scenic Area consistent with resource protection.

Lunch 1:00-2:00 pm

Chair Reinig called the meeting to order. Jill Arens, Executive Director said at the July meeting the Commission expressed interest in a presentation on culture in the lives of Native Americans and introduced Armand Minthorn.

A tribal perspective on culture in the lives of Native Americans

Armand Minthorn is a member of the Board of Trustees for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) and a spiritual leader. He described the makeup and governing body of the CTUIR as well as the traditional lands of 6.4 million acres and reservation land. He described the broad meaning of culture for the treaty tribes. He described problems related to access of traditional lands and the impact of other users on these lands. He said food, language, spiritual beliefs, traditions and customs are intertwined and are passed from generation to generation. He discussed the importance of resource protection and its particular significance to Native Americans. He invited the Commission and staff to a first foods ceremony, which usually is in February. The Commission thanked him for the presentation and invitation.

Ordinance consistency

Jennifer Ball Kaden, Planner, provided a review of the Multnomah County amendments (**Attachment E**) to its Scenic Area Ordinance. The amendments make changes to public notice procedures for legislative hearings.

The Gorge Commission conducted a hearing to determine consistency of amendments to Multnomah County's Scenic Area Ordinance with the Management Plan. .

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Middaugh made a motion to find the amendments consistent with the Management Plan. Commissioner Abbe seconded the motion.

A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Harold Abbe-aye

Don Bonker-aye

Judy Davis-aye

Sara Grigsby-aye

Walt Loehrke-aye

Carl McNew-aye

Jim Middaugh-aye

Barbara Roberts-aye

Joyce Reinig-aye

Brief Review of Decisions from the Oregon Supreme Court

Jeff Litwak, Counsel briefed the Commission on the outcome of the plan review and historic buildings plan amendment cases that the Oregon Supreme Court decided in July.

Commissioner Roberts asked for clarification regarding "winning" and "losing" on such points as cumulative effects and how something which was complex can now be handled with a simple "fix". She also asked how to resolve the issues once and for all rather than have these issues reappear in future litigation.

Litwak said the actual process of the "fix" could be relatively simple but the analysis has been and still is complex. Litwak said the court only provided a bare minimum solution and the Commission must decide how they want to resolve this issue.

Commissioner Roberts said she wants to satisfy the letter of the law but also the spirit of the law.

Litwak said he discussed process and substance options with Arens and will be providing options to the Commission. He said there is no schedule prescribed by the Supreme Court.

Commissioner Abbe asked that all options presented also include an analysis of staff costs.

Commissioner Bonker said it is important that action is underway to address the issues raised by the Supreme Court sooner rather than later.

External Affairs Committee Report

Commissioner Abbe provided an update on the Committee's meeting which focused on the need for outreach to the public, legislators and stakeholders. He said they are developing a consistent message and talking points to be used with editorial boards and the public. He said Commissioner Roberts will be co-chairing this Committee.

Executive Committee Report

Commissioner Abbe provided an update on the Committee's meeting which focused on the 25th Anniversary celebration and the formation of an ad-hoc committee that will work on this project. He said Chair Reinig offered to chair this ad-hoc committee.

25th Anniversary Event

Chair Reinig said following the special meeting on August 21st, members of the ad-hoc committee working on the 25th anniversary met and discussed the goals and purposes of the event. Also discussed was the need to enlist the support of other partners and develop a finance committee. She said because of work constraints, some Commissioners have more difficulty participating with Committee work. All Commissioners may be able to help with some aspect of the event without necessarily serving on the ad-hoc committee. She said staff will be contacting the Commission to schedule meetings in September and October.

Director's Report

Jill Arens, Executive Director announced that Honna Sheffield resigned from the Commission in July. She recognized Commissioner Sheffield's contribution to the Commission for the past 4 years and said the position as a Washington State Governor's appointee is vacant.

Arens reported on participation in the Trailblazers Program Conference in New York which is a program run by the National Center for Civic Innovation (NCCI). NCCI works to promote innovative public responsiveness through a variety of programs. She said all travel expenses were covered by the NCCI as well as a \$5,000 grant to the Commission for public outreach.

Brian Litt, Principal Planner said staff developed a user friendly fire safety flier (**Attachment F**) in the Scenic Area that is designed to clarify what landowners can do in the Scenic Area to reduce wildfire risks and provides local contact information for assistance. The flier is posted on the agency website and has been sent to fire districts, wildfire management agencies, and Gorge counties. Staff will also distribute it to libraries and Gorge media.

Arens provided an update on the most recent revenue reports issued by Washington and Oregon which are cautiously predicting a slow recovery. She said revenue shortfalls have been identified in both states and Washington has already mandated a 2% reduction of the 09-11 budget which will take effect in January. For the Commission, that amount will be doubled by the required match from Oregon. She said additional reductions are likely and more information will be available in late fall.

National Scenic Area (NSA) Manager's Report

Commissioner Harkenrider discussed wildfires in the NSA. He said other management practices are not allowed in the NSA but the overall coordination and response to the Mosier fire was exceptional and the undergrowth burning is a positive outcome of the wild fire. He said some places are not defensible, not only because of forest growth but because of other factors such as access and storage of flammable materials on private property.

Adjourn 4:00 pm

Approved on 11-10-09
KOB