COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2002
White Salmon Valley Public Library. White Salmon, Washington

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Kenn Adcock
Don Dunn
Joe Palena
Kathy Sheehan
Virginia Kelly (for Kim Titus)
Doug Crow
Walt Loehrke (9:40)
Dave Robertson
Anne Squier

MEMBERS EXCUSED

Michael Farrow
Joyce Reinig
Jane Jacobsen
Wayne Wooster

STAFF PRESENT

Martha Bennett
Brian Litt
Gary Pagenstecher
Keith Fredrickson
Bob McIntyre

AUDIENCE PRESENT

Borland, Stacey. Skamania County Planning Department
Bryan, Peggy. Skamania County Economic Development Council
Curtis, Lee. The Dalles, Oregon
Davis, Judy. LWVOR
Karabut, Diana. Multnomah County Resident
Kenslow, Tiffany. Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Sauter, David. Klickitat County
Thiemann, Phyllis. Columbia River Gorge Visitors Association
Watson, Kathy.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the October 8, 2002 meeting were reviewed. Minor changes were requested. Commissioner Sheehan moved to adopt the minutes with the requested changes; Commissioner Adcock seconded. A voice vote was taken, and the corrected minutes were adopted unanimously.

Commissioner Crow asked that it be noted for the record that at the previous meeting, statements had been made that an Oregon Department of Transportation wetland mitigation project had not been successful. He said he

had toured the site with Oregon Department of Transportation and US Forest Service staff and had found a functioning wetland.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Diana Karabut spoke to the Commission regarding Key Viewing Areas (see attachment A).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATION REQUESTS

Gary Pagenstecher, Planner, presented six economic development certification requests, briefly summarizing each (please see attachments B through G).

Chair Squier inquired about the location of the billboards discussed in the loan request by the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center and Wasco County Museum. Lee Curtis replied that they would all be located in the Hood River city limits.

Tiffany Kenslow, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, spoke in support of all economic certification requests, with added emphasis on the request by Hood River Library Foundation due to its direct impact on job creation (see attachment H).

Commissioner Robertson inquired about the impending Lewis and Clark celebration, and estimates of increased Gorge visitation. Peggy Bryan replied that current estimate ranges from a ten to seventy percent increase in Gorge visitation. Commissioner Crow stated that the bicentennial committee in charge of the Lewis and Clark celebration had appointed a group to revise their budget based on the concerns expressed regarding the level of funding to be provided to Clatsop County. Kathy Watson said there will be new data on Lewis and Clark visitors after the first of the year.

Commissioner Robertson moved to certify all requests as written. Commissioner Palena seconded. A voice vote was taken, and all requests were certified unanimously.

Commissioner Adcock emphasized that the Investment Boards of Oregon and Washington, not the Gorge Commission, dispense economic development funds. Chair Squier agreed, and emphasized that the Commission function is to determine if the requests are consistent with the National Scenic Area Act and Management Plan.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Martha Bennett began her presentation stating she would provide no monthly update on Plan Review, as this will be covered at-length during the December meeting. She stated that Plan Review is behind schedule and she asked Commissioners to be prepared to discuss this.

Bennett provided a status report on progress of the 2003-2005 agency budget. She said the recent cuts taken by the agency have not been applied to the next biennium, and the Oregon Department of Administrative Services has presented a budget that is approximately five thousand dollars higher than the current biennial budget. However, it also recommends the Governor either approve the budget as presented, or eliminate the agency on the basis that it has taken cuts already, and further budget cuts would immobilize the agency.

Bennett stated that two option packages are likely to be approved by Oregon: the office relocation and Plan Review. In regard to the risk management issue, Bennett said the states of Oregon and Washington are still working this out. Washington State will let the agency into the risk management pool, however it expects the State of Oregon to pay half of any judgments. The State of Oregon will not allow the agency into its risk management pool, because the Commission is technically not a state agency. The agency will likely buy into the Washington risk management pool regardless.

Bennett asked Bob McIntyre to briefly explain the procedures Commissioners will use to log-on to the Commission e-mail system. McIntyre pointed to the handout in the Commissioner packet, and very briefly walked the Commissioners through the process of logging onto the system, and its basic functions.

Allen Bell, Senior Planner, discussed a report given to the Commissioners regarding the cultural resources probability map project. Bell emphasized that the document is not a public document, and that information in it is to be kept confidential. He asked Commissioners to review the information, as a request-for-action will be put to them at the next Commission meeting. Chair Squier emphasized the need to treat the information with confidentiality, and asked they should take care to mentally sort the information out from that which is common knowledge when discussing the Gorge.

NSA MANAGER'S REPORT

Virginia Kelly, for Kim Titus, stated that the Forest Service is required to do a "roads analysis", a process of evaluating which roads need to be maintained, kept or eliminated. There will be two meetings on this: December 3, 2002 in Hood River and December 4, 2002 in Stevenson. Commissioner Crow requested a map. Kelly said this would be available by the next meeting, but that it is very large and anyone may stop by the Forest Service office and look at it.

Kelly stated that according to Forest Service budget projections, the "planning" sector of the budget would likely be reduced, as the preliminary budget is lower than expected.

Kelly stated that the field trip would occur directly after the meeting to look at some Forest Service land acquisition sites. Kelly stated Linda Fox from the land acquisition group would be attending. Commissioner Crow asked Kelly about

information that was to be provided by Commissioner Titus regarding land on Burdoin Mountain. Kelly stated that she was not prepared to provide that but would pass the reminder on to Commissioner Titus.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Robertson stated that there would be a Public Outreach meeting on November 18, 3:15 p.m. at the Gorge Commission Office. Commissioner Robertson also mentioned that there is a Scenic Resources Committee meeting the same day at 4 p.m. at the White Salmon public library.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Notes taken by Bob McIntyre

Date approved by Commission: December 12, 2002