

Columbia River Gorge Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 11, 2017

Hood River County Administration Building
601 State Street, Hood River, Oregon

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Bridget Bailey
Bowen Blair
Don Bonker
Lynn Burditt
Keith Chamberlain
Lorrie DeKay
Dan Ericksen
Robert Liberty
Carl McNew
Antone Minthorn
Rodger Nichols
Janet Wainwright
Damon Webster

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Nancy Andring, Administrative Analyst
Jessica Gist, Natural Resources and Land Use Planner
Jason Hildreth, GIS Analyst/Land Use Planner
Jeff Litwak, Counsel
Krystyna Wolniakowski, Executive Director
Gordon Howard, Consultant Long-Range Planner

AUDIENCE PRESENT

Albaugh, Pat – Port of Skamania County
Bailey, Scott
Barney, Casey – Yakama Nation Cultural Resource Program
Brown, Keith – Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Cerbone, Michael – Multnomah County
Cornelison, Peter – Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Fridley, Dallas
Keister, Larry
Kiona, Gregg – Yakama Nation
Lang, Michael – Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Leon, Peter – Wishram Community Council
Leipper, Bob
Liburdy, Kevin – City of Hood River
Metta, Jessica – MCEDD
Newell, Sally – Underwood Community Council
Robbins, Theresa – Cape Horn Conservancy

Stone, Tyler – Wasco County
Strid, Eric

Others were present during the day.

AGENDA

Committee Meetings (9:00 AM)

- Communications Committee
- Outreach Committee

Call to Order and Roll (10:00 AM)

Chair Blair called the meeting to order and Nancy Andring called roll.

Welcome: New Gorge Commissioner Bridget Bailey, Hood River County (10:01 AM)

Approval of Minutes for March 14, 2017 Commission meetings (10:03 AM)

Commissioner Ericksen moved to adopt the March 14, 2017 meeting minutes. Commissioner DeKay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote. Commissioner Bailey abstained as she was absent from the March meeting.

Discussion of May 9 and June 13, 2017 Commission Meetings (10:04 AM)

Chair Blair proposed the Commission cancel the May meeting in light of the upcoming hearing in June and on-going Gorge 2020 work load. Commissioners Ericksen and Nichols offered support. Commissioner Liberty suggested that Committees could still meet, which was supported by staff and other members of the Commission. Commissioner Chamberlain commented that committees should take care to bring only recommendations to the full Commission; committees are not decision-making bodies. The May meeting is cancelled with committees meeting by phone as scheduled.

Opportunity for Treaty Tribe Nations to address Commission (10:14 AM)

As part of the Government to Government consultation process the Commission welcomes input from treaty tribe members on any issue on the agenda and any other matters. None was offered.

Opportunity for Public Comment (10:15 AM)

Michael Lang, Friends of the Columbia River Gorge provided an update on state legislation regarding coal and oil transport by rail.

Overview of the Columbia River Gorge Economy: (10:17 AM) Dallas Fridley and Scott Bailey, Gorge Economists, presented information on past and present economic trends in the Columbia River Gorge. They discussed employment, wages & income, real estate, labor trends, payroll, and other data that may assist the Commission in developing a set of economic indicators to use within the National Scenic Area. (see attachment A)

Summary and Discussion of Developing the Columbia River Gorge Commission's Economic Indicators: (11:49 AM) Jason Hildreth, GIS Analyst/Land Use Planner, discussed the staff report that identifies how the Gorge Commission has worked with regional economic development partners to support economic vitality in the National Scenic Area and the development of relevant economic indicators as part of the Vital Signs Indicators project. (see attachment B1 and B2)

Public Comment: Jessica Metta, MCEDD – appreciates staff coordination and encourages mutually supporting one another’s goals in an efficient way.

Commissioner Chamberlain – appreciates the conversation of the second purpose of the Act and asked Commission to think about what “protect” means in the second part of the Act. Discussion followed related to the relationship between the Commission and Urban Areas, resources protection and quality-of-life benefits. Commission can better communicate the economic benefits of implementing the Act so far, resource protection and its role (or the limits of its authority) in Urban Area development, highlighting successes (Skamania Lodge, etc) and potential for projects that create win-wins for both purposes of the Act. Quality of life is critical to economic development and is improved by protection of resources. Vice Chair Bonker noted that the Commission’s role is not promoting economic growth but rather supporting it where compatible with the National Scenic Area. Commissioner Chamberlain stated that the Commission must provide more than recreational trails development and has a responsibility to be involved in community economic development.

Commissioner Chamberlain stated that the Commission should have economic expertise on staff working on Management Plan revision. Discussions identified opportunities to utilize local expertise related to economic development and leveraging partner energy and willingness to work with us.

Commissioners discussed ways to better describe how we have and have not done well fulfilling the second purpose of the Act. Commissioner Ericksen mentioned the Commission is set up more to provide support to local economies than to take direct action to promote development. Commissioner Webster and others agreed that the Commission should consider carefully its role and what opportunities there are/could be to engage in economic development.

Commissioner Bailey encouraged the Commission to focus on indicators of education, noting schools are perhaps the most critical economic development driver in our communities.

Commissioner Liberty asked that the Assessment Committee take the information provided today and revisit the indicators to determine what are most appropriate and useful. Commissioner Ericksen said that MCEDD should be involved in that meeting. Commissioner Burditt urged a broad view of quality-of-life and holistic indicators by this group. Commissioner Minthorn noted that tribes should be involved in this conversation, with targeted outreach through the liaison position and other venues.

LUNCH (12:37 PM)

Preparation for Appeals Hearing (1:15 PM) Jeff Litwak, Legal Counsel, presented the Commission with information related to the Union Pacific case record and preparation for the hearing scheduled for June, 2017.

Summary and Comparisons between the Oregon and Washington Rules for Urban Area Expansion: (1:33 PM) Gordon Howard, Land Use Consultant, presented a comparison of the rules that apply to expanding urban area boundaries in Oregon and Washington, as well as the Gorge Urban Area Expansion Handbook. Staff recommended developing policies for Urban Area changes, determining if/how these will relate to existing OR and WA policies and processes, and creating some kind of guidance document for communities. The Commission requested from staff

some preliminary options for defining key terms and processes for consideration. (see attachment C1-C3)

Public comment: No public comments.

Results of the Phase I and II Scoping Process for the Gorge 2020 Management Plan Review and Update Process: (1: PM) Jessica Gist, Natural Resources and Land Use Planner, presented the list of categorized comments from the public listening sessions, local government and agency meetings. (see attachment D1-D5)

Public comment: Michael Lang pointed to several issues on page 6 and 7 of Attachment A that are within plan review and should be included in scope review including habitat fragmentation, logging, culverts, haze, rail expansion, light pollution, and split lot zoning

Keith Brown, Skamania county resident, applauded the commission for hosting substantive discussions, and for their work in protecting resources and economic development. He noted the listening sessions were well organized and created space for groups to share information, rather than just testify. He expressed his appreciation for engaging communities this way.

Sally Newell, Underwood resident, and former Gorge Commissioner, lives in GMA and built a house under NSA rules. Commented on several points in the summary: high privacy fences impede views; light pollution is an important issue; more equestrian opportunities would be great; disagrees with longer permit expiration timelines; violations and enforcement are an issue, retaliation against complaints is a concern in small rural communities; cultural resources – be practical in survey requirements; forestry—portable sawmill should be allowed to help with using the wood from cut trees. Agriculture in Underwood—all that land is being converted to vineyards which are water intensive and often linked to commercial wineries, HR Bridge—Commission should support a new bridge.

Feedback for Jessica:

Narrow the topics?

Janet—review materials and send written feedback to staff?

Bowen—send KW issues that need to be addressed in management plan review based on the materials

Rodger—what is staff capacity to address some of the comments to incorporate into the management plan

Lorrie—likes the way everything is well organized. We can take a lot of what the partners are already doing and integrate into the public input comments. Needs additional sifting.

Jessica: Plan process—page 1—feedback?

Robert Section 2: what is time consuming and not time consuming? Can we categorize them and rank the 100's of issues into what can be manageable.

Janet: Form an advisory committee to help with gorge 2020.

Rodger: Can we eliminate high hanging fruit.

Jessica: ready for a to-do list. We wanted to give Commission full range of issues comments

Bowen: buildable lands inventory critical, so need to have this.

Robert: Ensure each change is voted on and not wholesale approval—assume that is the way we will do this.

Lynn: heard the comment and the person wants each guideline be voted on.

Robert: Disproportionate time on some issues—rather than a broader view on more issues that can be part of the management plan.

Lynn: Ask staff about effective way of engaging people –advisory committee? Other methods? When staff uses “advisory committee” if the FS is involved then FACA is triggered. The question is how to best /effectively engage people in the management plan review?

Jessica: take advantage of public input through smaller focus groups to be more efficient and work more quickly.

Rodger: Serious concerns about experts that have “hidden agendas” who want to move their agenda forward.

Jessica: if you have suggestions about other presentations, please let us know. We will reframe public comments and staff recommendations on how we should be moving forward.

Keith: Send documents in word.

Committee Reports (2:52 PM)

Outreach and Communications Committees presented information about the outcomes from the morning discussions, as well as updates from other committees if needed.

Gorge Commission Executive Director’s Report (2:54 PM) Director Wolniakowski reported on:

- 2017-2019 Legislative/Budget Update and position recruitment
- Outreach to 4 Treaty Tribes and Gorge 2020 Management Plan Review and Update
- Nancy Andring was awarded the Public Service Ambassador award by Oregon Governor Kate Brown
- Introduced Bryce Guske, MPA student at PSU interning through May for CRGC

National Scenic Area Manager’s Report (3:02 PM) Commissioner Burditt reported on:

- Update on Continuing Resolution for federal budget
- Fire prevention outreach and seasonal hiring
- Trails maintenance
- Recreation sites and campgrounds opening May 1st
- Spring wildflowers are blooming and attracting crowds, Dog Mountain in particular
- National Forest Foundation grants
- ODOT congestion study and other FLAP grants
- Fish habitat improvements and studies
- Cultural resource staff work on development reviews

Adjourn (3:30 PM)

Approved 6.13.17