

Columbia River Gorge Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2016

Port of Cascade Locks, Marine Park Pavilion
355 WaNaPa Street, Cascade Locks, Oregon

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Gorham Blaine
Bowen Blair
Lynn Burditt
Keith Chamberlain
Lorrie DeKay
Dan Ericksen
Carl McNew
Rodger Nichols
Janet Wainwright
Damon Webster

MEMBERS ABSENT

Don Bonker
Robert Liberty
Antone Minthorn

STAFF PRESENT

Nancy Andring, Administrative Analyst
Jessica Gist, Natural Resources and Land Use Planner
Jason Hildreth, GIS Analyst/Land Use Planner
Riley Marcus, Klickitat County Planner working with the Gorge Commission
Krystyna Wolniakowski, Executive Director

AUDIENCE PRESENT

Barney, Casey – Yakama Nation Cultural Resource Program
Brewer, Angie – Director, Wasco County Planning
Brown, Keith - Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Chang, Phil – Senator Jeff Merkley’s Office
Cornelison, Peter – Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Franklin, Richard – US Environmental Protection Agency
Herbert, P. Sydney – Trails Club of Oregon
Howsley Glover, Kelly – Wasco County Planning
Irish, Sherri
Keister, Larry
Kent, Brady – Yakama Nation
Leon, Peter – Wishram Community Council
LeVee, Ilene
McCoy, Steve - Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Repar, Mary – City of Stevenson
Robbins, Theresa – Cape Horn Conservancy
Watness, Philip - Skamania County Pioneer

Others were present during the day.

AGENDA

Committee Meetings (9:00 AM) (committees combined and met as a group)

- Outreach Committee
- Communications Committee

Call to Order and Roll (10:00 AM)

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

Welcome from local officials (10:02 AM)

Gordon Zimmerman, Cascade Locks City Administrator, welcomed the Gorge Commission and provided remarks, highlighting recent economic improvements, new businesses, and housing in Cascade Locks.

Approval of Minutes for May 10, 2016 Commission meetings (10:08 AM)

Commissioner DeKay moved to adopt the May 10, 2016 meeting minutes with a minor amendment. Commissioner Nichols seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Opportunity for Treaty Tribe Nations to address Commission (10:10 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.

Casey Barney, Yakama Nation Cultural Resources Program. Mr. Barney addressed the Windsurfer Association proposed step construction project. He will meet with Skamania County planning tomorrow.

Opportunity for Public Comment (10:15 AM)

The following provided public comment to the Commission on items not listed on the agenda:

- Mary Repar of Stevenson, Washington raised concern over population increase and housing costs associated with improving economy. She suggested VSI and cumulative impacts analysis are timely.

Committee Reports: Outreach and Communications (10:20 AM) Committees presented information about the outcomes from the morning discussions. Committees developed outreach talking points for legislators and will soon distribute an electronic newsletter.

Retreat Review—Where do we go from here? (10:23 AM)

Highlights of the June 14, 2016 retreat were reviewed and next steps determined to create a 10-year vision for the National Scenic Area.

Chair Blair noted the conversation about the political pressures experienced by County versus State appointed Commissioners to be helpful. Chair Blair noted the summary point about monitoring may be too narrow – monitoring resources through VSI is a high priority, but monitoring developments is an obligation not met due to lack of staff capacity. This is an obligation and noncompliance seems to be a growing problem.

Krystyna requested a follow up 2-day retreat in order to flesh out the vision and direction for the Commission, given the challenge of getting to clarity on these points while addressing Commission business in a single day meeting. Staff committed to prepare a retreat where the Commission will vet and develop strategic plans. Commissioners agreed a November or January retreat is preferable. Commissioner Wainwright volunteered to assist in planning and preparation.

Special Presentation: Oil and Coal Transport through the Gorge: (10:35 AM)

Brady B. Kent, Water Quality Specialist, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation Mr. Kent presented a powerpoint as a follow up to the Tribal listening session in April. (see attachment A) Mr. Kent will provide a future update. Mr. Kent noted railroad inspections have been increased and that the Tribe would consider requests to participate in monitoring partnerships.

Break: 11:00 – 11:20AM

Economic Development Strategy in the National Scenic Area (11:20 AM)

Amanda Hoey, Executive Director for Mid-Columbia Economic Development and Oregon Investment Board, and Pat Albaugh, Executive Director of the Economic Development Commission and Washington Investment Board, made a presentation on OIB/WIB grants and loans, program impact summary for 1990-2014, and their Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (approvals pending). (see attachment B1 and B2) Ms. Hoey demonstrated the Agora-platform.com site and invited Commission participation in the Agora Investment Platform. The site highlights proposed projects, matches funders to projects, and displays endorsements from various groups. She thanked the Commission for continued staff participation on Bi-state Advisory Council and for requesting full appropriation from states. Reminder: July 14th Economic Symposium in Hood River.

Lunch (12:10 PM)

2017-2019 Commission Budget (1:00 PM)

The Commission discussed a draft budget for the 2017-2019 biennium for Oregon and Washington. (see attachment C) The budget included the Commission's current priorities and emerging needs in the National Scenic Area. The Executive Director recommended continued support for additional administrative staff capacity/succession and two additional positions to support VSI and Tribal relations (3 FTE total).

Keith Brown, Friends of the Columbia River Gorge, voiced support for the budget approach. Commissioner Wainwright moved to approve the proposed budget request. Commissioner Webster seconded. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Gorge Commission Executive Director's Report (1:25 PM) Director Wolniakowski reported on:

- New Website re-design (view it at www.gorgecommission.org)
- Urban Area Boundaries update
- Management Plan review process

Commission recommended highlighting emerging staff partnerships with other planning organizations to make a case for budget increase.

Federal Response to the Mosier Train Derailment (1:45 PM)

Richard Franklin, Federal On-Scene Coordinator, U.S. EPA Region 10, Portland Office, discussed their coordinated emergency response to the train derailment in Mosier. (see attachment D1 and D2)

Regional Transportation Vision in the National Scenic Area (3:00 PM)

Director Wolniakowski reported on meetings held with Washington and Oregon transportation partners and discussed the “lens” by which the Commission may evaluate transportation project priorities in the NSA, and a general vision statement for the Commission to adopt. (see attachment E) Krystyna noted that requests for endorsement come in regularly. A vision statement, along with the lens criteria, would allow Executive Director to more quickly and easily provide endorsement where appropriate. Mary Repar, Stevenson, provided comment regarding text and the issue of overcrowding. She noted concern for Port of Cascade Locks toll rates and need for maintenance. Commissioner Webster moved the Commission approve the proposed policy statement. Commissioner Ericksen seconded. The Commission approved unanimously.

National Scenic Area Manager’s Report (3:20 PM) Commissioner Burditt provided and summarized various updates (see attachment F) including:

- Historic Columbia River Highway Trail near Hood River in progress
- Eagle Creek rededication and Cape Horn events Friday
- Congestion, transit, and capacity issues
 - Commissioner Chamberlain noted the “full” signs do not provide Plan B for visitors. These are short-term solutions. Commissioner Burditt responded that USFS is working with the Chamber and other groups to improve crowd management.

Adjourn (3:40 PM)

Approved 9.13.16