



Meeting Minutes

Date: October 27, 2020—6:00 – 7:30pm

Location: Via Zoom

Project: Girdwood Trails Plan Subcommittee Meeting

Girdwood Trails Plan Subcommittee Voting members are defined as Girdwood residents or property owners age 18 years or older who have been appointed by the Girdwood Trails Committee to be a member of this subcommittee.

The Girdwood Board of Supervisors, its committees, and subcommittees are subject to the Alaska Open Meetings Act as found in Alaska Statute 44.62.310 and Anchorage Municipal Code 1.25 - Public Meetings.

Attendance

Holly Spoth-Torres (GTP Contractor), Leah Buron (Huddle AK),

Committee Members: Ron Tenny, Deb Essex, Brenden Raymond-Yakoubian, Paul Crews, Carolyn Brodin, Jonathon Lee, Eileen Halverson, Jessica Szlag, Christina Cope Hendrickson, Amanda Sassi

Joined later in the meeting: Nick Georgelos

Municipal Staff Members: Kyle Kelley (MOA), Shelley Rowton (MOA HLB)

Members of the Public: Kalie Harrison, Mike Edgington, Barbara Crews, Brianna Sullivan, Julie Raymond-Yakoubian, Debra Croghan

H. Spoth-Torres (HST) asks K. Kelley for Girdwood Trails Committee meeting update, specifically if J. Szlag and C. Cope-Hendrickson were appointed as sub-committee members.

K. Kelley confirms that J. Szlag and C. Cope Hendrickson were appointed as additional members of the sub-committee, but that they were not replacing C. Schubert or B. Burnett as members. K. Kelley stated that he reached out to B. Burnett but has not received a response and reiterates that he has not been active with the sub-committee. K. Kelley did not know if that topic had been discussed within the Girdwood Area Plan committee.

M. Edgington confirmed that this matter was discussed at the last meeting within the executive group and that C. Schubert stated that he does not have time to be on the sub-committee and that A. Sassi will be taking his place.

HST calls for meeting to begin.

R. Tenny asks for roll call.

Roll call given by HST.

Meeting begins 6:08pm.

HST states recording will be resumed. HST gives reminder of open meetings act and procedure and asks discussion to be kept to sub-committee members until the public discussion period at the end of the meeting and explains that the chat is set up to go directly to the host (HST) for this meeting.

HST turns meeting over to R. Tenny

R. Tenny calls for motion to approve the October 27th agenda

C. Cope Hendrickson made a motion

D. Essex seconded

E. Halverson calls for point of order to clarify if C. Cope Hendrickson is on the committee to be able to make the motion.

HST states C. Cope Hendrickson is on the committee.

The motion passed

R. Tenny calls for motion to approve the minutes from the October 6th meeting

P. Crews makes motion to approve

D. Essex seconded

E. Halverson makes an amendment to minutes based on the email she sent to HST.

HST asks for E. Halverson to state the proposed amendment.

E. Halverson proposes to have the line that reads minutes cannot be approved because "Eileen is not present" removed and to have the new language read because "there is no quorum." E. Halverson states she was not the only member not present so she would prefer that the minutes reflect this.

P. Crews moves to amend the minutes by including the proposed edit.

D. Essex states second stands

R. Tenny asks for clarification if they need to get rid of the previous motion or just have a roll call vote on the amended motion.

HST moves to roll call vote.

One vote abstained (C. Cope Hendrickson)

The motion passed

R. Tenny opens the floor for discussion on the workshop #2 before a vote is taken to approve the meeting minutes.

J. Szelag would like to be added as a meeting attending as she called in part way through the meeting.

HST incorporates edit into the minutes.

R. Tenny asks for edit to the language stating he was "missing". He clarified that he alerted the group to his absence and therefore should be listed as "excused".

HST incorporated edit into the minutes.

J. Lee stated he was also present he just was a little late. J. Lee states it is pertinent information since people are removed from the committee if they are shown as not attending so he was making sure the record shows he was there.

S. Rowton also states she attended and asked to be added.

HST states S. Rowton was represented in the minutes as attending. HST asks J. Lee the subject matter being discussed to provide a rough time of reference for when he joined.

J. Lee and HST discuss the timing of when J. Lee joined the meeting

HST makes edit and adds J. Lee to the minutes

E. Halverson asks for clarification about the official removal of committee members since it was mentioned that members are removed for not attending, however K. Kelley stated that C. Schubert and B. Burnett have not been removed yet.

HST turns the question over to K. Kelley

K. Kelley states that missing a meeting does not “remove” a member they are just noted as not being present and instead of replacing current members, the newly adopted members are just brought on as additional members.

R. Tenny asks for any further discussion on the minutes.

J. Szelag noted B. Raymond-Yakoubian’s tracked changes to the minutes and asks him to give a quick rundown on the changes.

HST asks B. Raymond-Yakoubian if she correctly incorporated all his changes and if he had any comment on them.

B. Raymond-Yakoubian felt his changes were incorporated.

HST gives summary of the changes she incorporated and B. Raymond-Yakoubian had no further comment.

J. Szelag moves to approve the workshop #2 meeting minutes

D. Essex seconded

Abstained votes (J. Lee, C. Cope Hendrickson, A. Sassi)

R. Tenny was not at meeting but read and approved minutes

HST asks how many votes are needed for quorum.

K. Kelley states seven votes are needed.

HST says seven votes were obtained and motion passes.

E. Halverson asks for clarification on the total number of committee members and what the new quorum is.

HST states there are 11 members, and that quorum is 6 members.

K. Kelley confirms.

R. Tenny calls for Old Business

HST says the goal of tonight’s meeting is to discuss the upcoming public meeting and to test the material beforehand with the sub-committee. HST states she would like sub-committee’s feedback for anticipated turnout. She proceeds to discuss date, time, meeting platform format (Zoom), which would include the use of the polling and whiteboard features in Zoom. HST discusses the challenge of conducting a large public meeting using virtual formats and states the importance of allowing for two-way conversation. She feels the polling and whiteboard features will provide an avenue for this type of engagement.

C. Cope Hendrickson feels turnout for the public meeting will be predicated on the success of the Imagine Girdwood meeting the week before but feels there will likely be a large turnout. States she would like to get to the content.

HST asks for any further input.

J. Szelag agrees with C. Copes Hendrickson’s statement on the Imagine Girdwood meeting. She also would like HST to speak to how the public meeting is going to be advertised, but says HST can continue and touch on that later.

HST notes that she sees that M. Edgington has a question, but reminds the attendees she would like to keep public comment until the end.

M. Edgington agrees.

HST moves to format of the public meeting. She states they will not be getting into the content in detail, but wants to make sure the committee is comfortable with the general process and would like feedback on that.

R. Tenny feels the next step is to get the meeting information out to the community because he feels there will be a lot of interest and potentially a large turnout.

HST says her Zoom subscription will allow for over 100 participants.

HST discusses the public meeting agenda.

HST is showing draft Power Point of meeting content as she discusses.

HST states the first item of meeting that she would like committee feedback on is the GT plan purpose. She states this is the first time the committee is seeing this and opens the floor for discussion.

E. Halverson says the statement does not include the term “natural spaces” that the committee has been talking a lot about.

J. Lee agrees. He says it is implied, but would like to see the terminology of natural spaces included in the statement.

D. Essex. Agreed. She also feels a 15-20 year timeline is more appropriate for Girdwood’s future.

B. Raymond-Yakoubian agrees on the inclusion of the term “natural spaces.” He also asks HST if the content is the same as what was sent to the sub-committee because he is noting differences.

HST states it is the same it has just been slightly more developed (i.e. the addition of photos).

P. Crews agrees with a 20 year timeline.

R. Tenny states he is having a hard time understanding where natural spaces and the trails plan come together.

B. Raymond-Yakoubian mentions that natural spaces have been part of the discussion since the beginning.

C. Cope Hendrickson agrees that natural spaces have been an aspect of the plan early on in the process and the involvement of the GirdWild as a stakeholder reflects that.

R. Tenny clarifies that he is for natural spaces he just thought where it is currently included in the trails plan proposal may not be the best fit, but he said he has no problem with it if others are content with it’s placement.

HST calls for any further discussion.

J. Szelag feels the term “natural space” may need to be more clearly defined and would like to discuss that later in the meeting.

C. Cope Hendrickson feels the term natural spaces has been clearly defined in passed meetings.

E. Halverson speaks to J. Szelag’s point and asks if maybe they need to further identify natural spaces, such as “preserved natural spaces” or “designated natural areas,” which may better represent which areas are intended to be protected from development.

B. Raymond-Yakoubian notes a definition from the second work session to serve as a reference for J. Szelag’s comment.

J. Szelag states she will review the definition in the minutes, but agrees with E. Halverson’s comment that if they want to be more intentional about the places they are trying to protect in the plan that they may want to revisit how they define the term and consider how it is presented to the public and make sure it is clear.

R. Tenny says clarifies that the Girdwood Trails Plan Purpose title does not read well with the statement that follows and that one or the other should be revised so they are more cohesive.

HST asks committee if they are ready to move on and proposed that in the definition section of the plan it needs to be clear what “natural spaces” is, and states that was defined at the second workshop.

S. Rowton gives conclusion that while the terms may be defined and understood by the committee that they may need to be better defined when they are presented to the public.

HST asks group how they would like to deal with the term “natural spaces” on the Trails Plan Purpose slide specifically.

D. Essex says the word “protect” does a good job of defining the intent of the term natural spaces and that the term should come out in writing when it represents a value, because it is a value. Her opinion is to leave the definition fairly edited for that particular slide and follow with other values later in the presentation as needed.

B. Raymond-Yakoubian suggests they keep moving along and take note of any glossary type terms that may be confusing to the public. He feels the addition of the word “protected” natural spaces in the statement is sufficient for the intent of the statement in the Trails Purpose slide.

C. Cope Hendrickson agrees with D. Essex and B. Raymond-Yakoubian that it would be beneficial to create a fact sheet of common terms used. She asked S. Rowton if the Heritage Land Bank defines the term natural spaces that could potentially be incorporated into the definition defined in the workshop. S. Rowton did not think the Land Bank had a defined definition but suggested looking to the Girdwood Zoning Code definition of open space. She suggests it could read “develop, protect and promote Girdwood’s network of trail and recognized natural spaces,” indicating that the network of recognized natural spaces is still being developed.

HST states that a fact-sheet of terms for the public meeting is a solution.

HST moves discussion to existing conditions and context. She walks committee members through the presentation slides and their content:

- Existing Guiding Plans and most important items from each

- Physical Conditions

- Existing Trail Zones (HST says these will need to be updated from what is shown)

B. Raymond-Yakoubian points out that they are already well into the meeting and they have a lot of content for the public meeting to cover still. He also states that much of the material in the content packet they received before the meeting is not showing discussed changes by the sub-committee. He asks the sub-committee if they would like to just keep going and address each item as it comes or if they should discuss another course of action.

J. Lee feels that another sub-committee meeting before the public presentation would be a good idea since there is a lot of material left to cover.

HST asks committee for clarification on what they would like to do as the next course of action. She asks if they would they like to be able to review all the meeting content before it goes to the public. She asks for clarification on who is approving the material that will be going out to the public. She asks for K. Kelley’s input on the chain of approval.

K. Kelley states he wants the committee to be in support of what goes out to the public and feels the intention is to create a concise presentation while addressing the committees concerns if they feel there are missing components.

HST explains how she developed the trails map for the presentation by comparing the different class types of trails and what user groups they accommodate to be able to graphically represent the balance of trails in the valley in order to better understand the existing system.

P. Crews noted the trails classifications on the slide are not the same classifications as those in the GTP, but notes that what is currently in the trails plan might not accurately represent what’s currently out there.

HST explains that the yellow highlighted columns are the ones that don’t match what’s out there and identify where work needs to be done.

S. Rowton asks HST what the green columns mean.

HST says the green don’t have a class and they are not identified in the trails management plan so she defined the class herself and will need to get verification on those.

S. Rowton adds that the general public might not know the different trails classifications and says that should be added to the fact sheet.

HST agrees and says the Forest Service has good photos for identifying the different classes and that those may be a helpful visual aid to add.

C. Brodin notes that the GTC is updating their trails management plan and that rather than discussing the errors in this presentation that they can save time by incorporating the updated language from the trails management plan.

HST agrees, but states that the numbers from the trails class identification are essential to trails planning and asks the committee if they feel the trail numbers are important to them.

J. Szlag says yes, this represents the heart of where they are going. From this they are able to see where the demand is, but also the current supply. She feels the data helps identify the gaps in trail equity for different types of trails and users and from that they will be able to generate their goals.

E. Halverson discusses that the trails class representation shown is not an accurate assessment of the current trails system in the valley as a whole since it does not include all the trails (i.e. the trails going up to Alyeska) thus the numbers will be skewed. She feels it's a useful start though.

A. Sassi states that the Forest Service is regularly conducting trailhead surveys of users, which could be useful information to obtain.

B. Raymond-Yakoubian agrees with E. Halverson that there are more complexities behind just the numbers shown. *Gives several examples of how existing trails differ from what is represented.*

P. Crews would like the group to keep in mind the valley only has so much room to build sustainable trail. He thinks if the group decides where they want to put trails they may find that they fill up the places that sustainable trails could go and that it may not match the class formula for how many and what types of trails you should have.

D. Essex suggests adding a column to the spreadsheet that is summer vs. winter use or both.

R. Tenny agrees with Deb. He also feels they have discussed the issues a lot and that it is time to get input from the public.

C. Cope Hendrickson also agrees that it is time to go to the public for input rather than continuing to discuss the baseline data just within the sub-committee.

J. Lee seconds D. Essex in adding a column for summer/winter trails. The reason being is to make a clear designation to the public about the proper seasonal use of the different trails in order to avoid negative environmental impacts to the trails.

HST overviews the point of this first public meeting:

-Give the public context

-Discuss the values, visions, and goals (including the sub-committees process for producing them) and then get public input on these topics in the form of polling. HST has the committee do a sample polling.

Discussion follows on the polling as the group runs through the polling exercise. The group asks questions and makes suggestions to HST as they work through the exercise. B. Raymond-Yakoubian has several comments regarding the wording of the polling questions. HST explains the intent of the questions (do they agree with the sub-committee's conclusions on values, visions and goals). More discussion follows on the wording of the polling questions.

-Send the public home with the interactive mapping exercise that will provide supplemental information to the mapping exercises that the sub-committee already performed.

HST moves to Draft Vision and Goals statements. There is confusion over whether or not the sub-committee finalized a vision and goals statement. HST felt that the vision and goals statements were never finalized. Some members feel the discussion was tabled, others felt they were drafted to relative completeness.

J. Szelag asks if the group can move forward and edit the statement on the slide. She feels the information should go out to the public and that the wording of the vision and goals statement should not be the hang up.

C. Cope Hendrickson says in lieu of the amount of time they have left (15 min.), she suggests outside of the meeting that they collectively review the meeting notes and work on a Google Drive document together with tracked changes in order to group edit and generate a final vision and goals statement.

A. Sassi offers instead of tracked changes maybe just leave comments in order to avoid a messy document.

HST asks the committee if this is the starting point they want to go from.

K. Kelley asks HST if the statement on the screen right now the vision that was created out of the workshop.

HST states that document is the reason they had a second workshop.

K. Kelley says they will probably push for a work session to get that figured out before the public meeting since there is a lot of conflict on this topic at this point. His understanding from past meetings is that they were pretty close on the vision and goals statements. He asks the committee if this is what they remember for the vision as well. *Opens the floor for discussion beginning with B. Raymond-Yakoubian.*

B. Raymond-Yakoubian agrees with K. Kelley, he felt they were close to finalizing vision and goals, HST synthesized their preliminary thoughts on goals, and then they moved discussion to values.

K. Kelley asks B. Raymond-Yakoubian if the vision they see on the slide is the one the group came up with.

B. Raymond-Yakoubian says that looks similar to the document.

K. Kelley feels that they have already done the work and does not want to repeat what they've already done. He suggests they just move forward and offer comments on the existing one vs. doing tracked changes as a group for the sake of timing and budget as well.

B. Raymond-Yakoubian suggests for the sake of time the group does some homework and each go through the packet and send any suggestions or comments to Holly or bring those comments to the next work session. He also suggests they move on to the mapping portion so they can have time to cover that as well.

N. Georgelos joins meeting 7:17pm

R. Tenny suggests they could have two mission statements that the public is able to give comment on as well.

HST moves into how polling will work for draft vision statement and the intent behind how it will work. From there they will move into the goals and how they got to the goals, followed by a polling example for the goals.

B. Raymond-Yakoubian asks if these polling questions have the ability for qualitative input.

HST says no, but they will be able to provide input in the chat, which she can then bring up on the screen.

B. Raymond-Yakoubian feels qualitative data will be the most valuable.

HST explains after goals they will have an ideas generation session for how they might achieve each goal.

K. Kelley states they are out of time and suggests they have an additional work session to finish this discussion. They will send out a poll for picking a date.

HST asks for any public comments.

N. Georgelos states he did not know the meeting was happening tonight.

P. Crews moves for adjournment
C. Cope Hendrickson seconded
Meeting adjourned 7:30pm