



DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Date: April 6, 2021—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.

All meetings are recorded and available to public as part of the public record.

Attendance

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

Committee Members: Ron Tenny, Deb Essex, Paul Crews, Carolyn Brodin, Jonathon Lee, Eileen Halverson, Jessica Szlag, Christina Cope Hendrickson, Amanda Sassi, Brenden Raymond-Yakoubian
Not present: Nick Georgelos

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

Members of the Public: Kalie Harrison, Mike Edgington, Barbara Crews, Brianna Sullivan, Krystal Hoke, Shannon O'Brien, Julie Raymond-Yakoubian, Justin Thomas

HST asks for meeting to begin and starts recording.

R. Tenny opens meeting and asks for roll call.

Roll call given by HST.

Meeting begins 6:03pm.

R. Tenny asks for approval of the April 6 agenda and asks for comments.

E. Halverson made motion to approve

C. Brodin seconded

No discussion, motion passes

R. Tenny asks for motion to approve March 2 meeting minutes.

P. Crews made motion to approve

C. Brodin seconded

No discussion, motion passes

NEW BUSINESS

Draft Girdwood Trails Plan-Presentation

HST outlines the order of business:

1. Go through the structure of how the plan came together
2. Talk about how the sub-committee will move forward in the next 30 days (approximately)
 - a. Finding consensus
 - b. Providing comments

HST gives overview of the structure of the plan:

- 4-part plan (+ References)
 - Executive Summary
 - Intended to stand alone
 - Can be used as a smaller document to communicate the larger trails plan
 - Part 1-Introduction + Existing Conditions
 - Part 2-Recommendations + Implementation
 - References
 - Appendix

HST walks sub-committee through the layout of the document.

- Asks the committee to review the entire document, but to focus most of their energy on reviewing Part 2 of the plan.
- Added *How this Plan Improves the Balance and Diversity of the Trail and Natural Space* and *How This Plan Improves Connectivity and Access*.
- Explains how each individual project has a project description and intent (under the categories of: New Trails, Trailheads, Bridge Projects, Proposed Natural Areas, Proposed Mountain Bike Areas, and Special Projects).
 - Started to collaborate with planning department, so projects that will likely need additional UDC review have been identified.
 - The narrative of each project description will identify requirements that will need to be fulfilled before the project can be built.
 - Would like sub-committee to thoroughly review the descriptions on pg. 38-43 as they will be critically important to the plan.
 - Project descriptions will give direction on:
 - What type of trail
 - How wide
 - Type of trail surface
 - If there are any structures
 - What the intended experience is
 - Control points (i.e., where trail begins and ends)
 - Included trails identified in the Crow Creek Neighborhood Land Use Plan (T9). Group did not discuss however HST felt they were important to include as land may be developed/subdivided.

HST asks K. Kelley for additional thoughts.

K. Kelley's hope is that the sub-committee can provide comments/feedback on the DRAFT plan so that they can revise the document accordingly and present a plan that everyone is comfortable with to the

public. The draft provides equal share to the different interests that have been presented. Not everyone will be getting exactly what they wanted; however, the intent is to find middle ground.

HST opens for discussion.

J. Lee- Thank you to K. Kelley and HST. The document is a year's worth of work and the result is impressive.

Q: Can the map be split back into three maps (Upper, Middle and Lower Valley) as it is hard to read and does not enlarge well.

A: HST-Yes, she can create three separate maps for the committee to do their review. Her intent is to limit the amount of time spent altering the graphic during this phase of the process, but she will provide three separate maps for the final document.

C. Cope Hendrickson-Q: What is the goal of the feedback they are looking to receive from the public meeting? What is the desired outcome they are looking to achieve from presenting this to the public and various stakeholders?

A: HST-At this point she doesn't feel they want anything prioritized for funding. They should be looking to achieve a proposed trail and natural space network that is endorsed by the community.

C. Cope Hendrickson-Q: For stakeholders such as MOA and neighboring landowners (Forest Service, etc.) what has been their reflections on previews they have seen thus far? What is the intent for continued engagement moving the plan forward from draft to final, to ensure they will have good support down the road?

A: HST-So far, the interaction with the planning department has been positive.

A: K. Kelley-They were happy with the level of planning that the community has done. They were very impressed and helped them to address some of the issues (i.e., parking). They will continue to have input/comments throughout the process. He has also shared the draft plan with the Forest Service, and they were very pleased as well and will likely be submitting comments when the draft goes out to the public. A goal for what they should be looking to receive from the community is:

1. Do they accept this document as a planning and guiding document for Girdwood trails?
2. Let the sub-committee know what they like and what is missing so they can incorporate those comments into the final draft.

S. Rowton-Q: Can HST expand on the intent of the rest of the meeting?

B. Raymond-Yakoubian-Echoes the thanks for all of K. Kelley and HST's work. He feels there is something for everyone. He does have things he would change, especially regarding the natural spaces, but is overall happy with how the plan is coming together.

J. Szlag-Would like to ensure that the project identification/descriptions are consistent throughout the projects (example: they all read as project issue then opportunity).

HST overviews the review process will have 3 tiers:

- GTS review draft
- Internal review
 - Planning
 - HLB
 - Other Landowner partners (Forest Service, etc.)
 - Any other internal reviewers K. Kelley wants to route the draft to

- Public review

HST asks K. Kelley to overview how they will get through comment review and reach consensus within the GTS over the next 30 days.

K. Kelley states they are hoping that the group can facilitate producing a set of comments that can go back to HST for revision of the draft. This will likely require another meeting. This can happen one of two ways:

1. People submit comments in advance and then collectively work through each comment and come up with final solution.
 - a. Not looking for editing comments
 - b. Looking for comment/input on substance what people think or what is missing/could be changed
2. Or the committee can work within themselves to achieve a consensus.
 - a. HST and K. Kelley would facilitate

C. Cope Hendrickson offers to provide an Excel comment matrix that will allow for committee to enter their comments. It will include page number, sub-section, comment, resolution, and whether comment has been responded to or not. Comment document would then be included in the document.

R. Tenny feels the document is looking well balanced. He would like to take a quick poll to see how close they are to having a consensus.

B. Raymond-Yakoubian would like to see them agree on the format for collecting comments before they move on to polling for consensus. He like the spreadsheet idea.

C. Brodin was surprised to see the Crow Creek Neighborhood Plan trails in the document since they didn't discuss them as a committee.

HST states the committee should discuss whether they feel like they should be included or not.

C. Cope Hendrickson would like to be able to provide comments prior to taking a planned leave April 23rd-May 2nd.

D. Essex feels like the plan as is will not pass the GTC or the public. She feels the plan is more restrictive than what was presented at the last public meeting and does not feel like it is a balanced plan. Currently she is not in support of it.

R. Tenny suggests that they roll call, and everyone make a comment about how they feel on the draft plan.

Draft Plan roll call comments:

B. Raymond-Yakoubian-He will have a lot of substantive comments and likes the idea of organizing them in a spreadsheet. He feels K. Kelley and HST did a good job balancing user needs.

E. Halverson-She is disappointed with the natural area 2 designation not being wider. She is concerned with the summertime trails being so close to the wintertime trails.

P. Crews-He thinks the document is beautiful and commends the work. He feels they have discussed just about everything that is on the map, except the T9 area. At T13 (cat track) he was expecting to see a four seasons loop trail going from Arlberg parking lot and looping all the way around Arlberg meadow. Still need a bridge at T5 where it crosses California Creek. Suggests that T10 be realigned to connect to Stumpy's trail. Where they show the zones, they have backcountry zone between the highway and Glacier Creek when that is pretty much downtown, feels like that should be changed to a highway corridor zone.

A. Sassi-She loves it. Great draft, looks good and is well presented. She feels all the things they discussed have been included.

J. Szelag-Pros: This document is something that allows trail builders in the valley to seek funding and is close to where it should be. They have followed a process and synthesized the comments so she feels the group should expect there to be some things they like and some things they don't.

Cons: She wishes it were more ambitious and she would like to see more Class 4 trails.

C. Brodin-Overall she is pleasantly surprised with the plan. She is still concerned with the exact alignment of T12 and T13 trails, which she feels are very important. She would liked to have talked about T9 trails prior to them being included in the plan. She wonders if the public will be confused by the inclusion of those trails. Happy to see MB1 moved outside of Abe's trail area.

J. Lee-He is pleased with the document. He will have some comments and questions, but overall feels like every user group is getting a lot.

D. Essex-Her goal is to create a document that will pass the GTC and the public, she doesn't feel like they have addressed the feedback they have received to date.

Q: HST-What specifically does she feel would need to be added in order for the plan to be approved by the GTC and the public?

A: D. Essex-She wants to see a balance of trail classes; she feels Class 4 trails are under served. She would also like to see a graph/chart of where the trail classes were when they started and where they are as a result of the plan. She recommends that some of the other trails be represented as areas (like with the mountain bike areas) vs. single lines. She thinks the maps are very understandable and clear and appreciates all the work that has gone into it.

C. Cope Hendrickson-She looks forward to being able to provide a template and comments.

End roll call comments.

R. Tenny-Q: Is the cat track that goes up to the biking loop a Class 4?

A: HST-She did not classify the cat track because the Girdwood Valley Trails Management Plan does that, and they show it as a Class 4.

P. Crews-Cat Track is Class 4, but that is in the winter.

E. Halverson feels there is still a confusing layer of summer vs. winter classes of trails.

K. Kelley is agreeable to going the route of the Excel comment matrix and will see what they can do in their office to coordinate with HST on the task. C. Cope Hendrickson to send K. Kelley the template. Once all comments are received, does the committee want to meet again and discuss the submitted comments or just leave the revising of the draft to him and HST?

C. Cope Hendrickson suggests that K. Kelley and HST respond to the comments and provide whether the comment was included or not in the document in the comment matrix and then they check in and make sure the committee agrees with the changes made.

K. Kelley agrees with that solution. They will make the document simple for committee members to navigate.

E. Halverson would like the committee to meet after to discuss the comments.

HST would like to correct an error she made. The Snow Cat Trail is 4 miles long and is Trail Class 1.

Discuss return to regular in person public meetings/continuation of virtual meetings once Emergency Orders have been lifted

K. Kelley states they cannot return to in-person public meetings at this time. They can meet in groups up to 35, but they do not want to restrict participation so they will continue to stay virtual for now.

However, he would like the subcommittee to be aware that things could change over the next month.

OLD BUSINESS

Public Comment

Mike Edgington agrees with P. Crew's comment about adding a bridge at T5. He is still confused how this plan interacts with other plans. For example, there is a plan for the cemetery which includes several trails, however he does not see that plan included, yet much older plans are being reference. The relationship between the Girdwood Area Plan is confusing to him as well. He feels there are some points of conflict between the plans. He hopes to see those relationships addressed somewhere in the document. He thinks the plan looks great and is looking forward to reading it.

Q: M. Edgington-Once the plan gets to a point where it is supported by the community are the individual projects able to be vetoed?

A: K. Kelley- In the plan it talks about the process the trails will need to go through on a local level. If a project doesn't make it through the trail plan matrix outlined in the plan, it won't be accepted. That's what they are trying to show to planning is that there is an extensive local planning process that the individual projects will be subject to.

Q: M. Edgington-Will that be enforceable through changes to code? At the moment all they are is advisory.

A: K. Kelley- That is a question for planning.

HST-*in response to how the plans interact*: The plan interaction has not been completely resolved yet. She has tried to match the trail areas up with existing zoning.

R. Tenny reminds everyone that the sub-committee was tasked with submitting a DRAFT plan to the GTC, this is not a final document.

Barbara Crews comments that there are two things they pulled from the Girdwood Trails Management Plan. One was the flow chart of the approval process. She loves the new graphic, but there is an item that she would like to change. She will bring the change before the Girdwood Trails Committee for approval. There is also a change to Map 4 on page 23 that she would like to bring before the committee for approval. If those two changes are approved, then HST can make the changes to the draft plan. ***Flow chart and Map 4 on page 23 to be revised if changes are adopted by GTC.***

HST will include whatever resolutions they adopt.

Julie Raymond-Yakoubian hopes that the extensive public comments that have been previously submitted are being tracked and responded to. She was also surprised to see the shrinking of the Virgin Creek/Crow Creek natural space area. She would like to see it go back to how it was in the previous version. They have a multi-use circum valley trail proposed, which she thinks is great. They also have a primitive natural space system that is supporting a huge variety of human uses, as well as supporting ecosystem functioning and she would like to see that maintained as the plan moves forward. It is functioning as a system and should stay a system as it goes through the different review bodies.

Shannon O'Brien agrees with what Julie just said. She wants to thank the sub-committee team. She feels like the plan is looking balanced. She likes the graphic on page 20 and is wondering if they can document the trails by user group. Can HST add the miles of the trails if the subcommittee feels that would be a valuable addition.

HST states she has done that in the past and can add that if they feel it is valuable. She would expand the table on page 20 and can do that for the proposed trails. She says she can add length to the trails, but it would just be a ballpark number.

K. Kelley calls to adjourn the meeting. He states they will work on getting the comment matrix out to the committee via email in the next week or two.

R. Tenny calls for adjournment.

J. Lee motion to adjourn

D. Essex seconded

Meeting adjourned 7:30 pm