

OSN Steering Committee Meeting Feb. 3, 2010

Minutes

Present: Skip Claeson, Brooke Dubois, Adam Fyall, Sharon Grant, George Last, Mike Lilga, Tom Page, Len Pavelka, Kate Perry, Mike Shuttleworth, Rick White, Scott Woodward, Debbie Berkowitz

1. News: Sharon - FOBM announced that we acquired 25 additional acres to add to the Badger Preserve with the same covenants as for the original Preserve. It was purchased with money FOBM raised in past campaigns. Scott – TGA is doing a huge fundraiser this weekend; there are a few tickets left for the winetasting at Bookwalter's on Friday and a lot of tickets for the concert on Sat. at Battelle. Dr. Kate Perry is representing the Health Alliance and Mike Shuttleworth is representing Benton County Planning. TGA is going after the remaining parcel at Amon Basin; they will go public on Sat. at the concert; the buy-sell agreement is in place for \$2M; 2 ½ yrs to buy; USF&W is the lead agency; TPL is working with TGA. The assessment value is set with the landowners who are willing sellers. This acquisition would add 125 acres to the 100 acres already there. The idea is a Central Park for this area. Pompy's lessons group is trying to get 16 more signs out – they are for specific sites. If you have ideas, send them to George.
2. JC de-brief (Scott). It was good to see everybody there. Scott asked if staff had any input from the elected officials. Adam indicated that Jim B. had a positive reaction. Joyce O. wasn't there long enough, but she's been briefed. So far, there's not a lot to object to. Once we get to details and recommendations, we'll see where it goes. At the DG meeting, we talked about opening it up to more representation if everybody is comfortable with that. Do we want to invite more elected officials to attend, though we'd keep our core JC group? We could have one person who is on board the whole time and who is responsible for reporting back to their councils/commissions. Rick suggested it might complicate things more than is necessary right now. Councils typically have one representative on a given committee, no reason to make this group any different. We don't want to undercut that person, want them to be responsible for their group. The DG also discussed whether there were too many RROSN members at the JC meeting? The DG could be the steering committee representatives there. Staff members should be there to support their elected officials. The Executive Board of the DG was originally supposed to be the link to the JC and they bring the JC discussions back to the steering committee and the rest of the DG. Mike suggested the meeting should be open to anybody who wants to attend. Maybe the JC and the Executive Board should sit around a table and visitors around the outside. Sue A. was impressed and excited about the JC meeting. Scott did send her a thank you and a copy of the Powerpoint. **Scott** could expand the invitation through the JC members, explain what we're contemplating – anybody (staff, elected official) who would like to come is welcome, though the JC members are the official representatives. We were very pleased that all the jurisdictions were represented. What do we expect to get from the JC? Everybody was being nice; there's not a lot that's objectionable in the first 2 chapters. This was the initial meeting; the main goal was to get acquainted and discuss the process. We think this was successful. We need to establish a working relationship first. We want to make sure that the JC is well grounded in the basics of the plan and to hear what we've come up with before we go public. The JC was very interested in the maps, especially when the area was in their jurisdiction. We're asking it to be the responsibility of the **staff** to emphasize to the JC member what's critical in what's going to be discussed; what the elected official will need to be aware of and what s/he will want to think about before the meeting.
3. Next JC meeting content. Mike suggested talking about Chapters 3, 4, and 5. Chapter 3 – existing condition (what's in the Mid-Columbia today). There shouldn't be too much that's controversial in this chapter. Chapter 4 - the planning process – not too much of interest in here. These two chapters don't have enough meat to make it worthwhile to have the JC meet just for a discussion of these. Chapter 5 – policy and recommendations – this will be controversial. We discussed whether to break between Chaps. 3 & 4 and Chap. 5. When we put forward Chap. 5, there will be at least several meetings on this. But it was suggested that the last JC meeting was too long. So, breaking it up would be good. Maybe we should do Chap. 3 & 4 and introduce Chap. 5. Maybe

we should just talk about the trails/OS recommendations and leave the policy recommendations for another time. That would give the JC rep a chance to go back to the rest of their councils/commissions. **Staff** could discuss the recommendations with the JC member to give them a heads up as to what we'll be discussing at the next JC meeting.

4. Council/Commissioner workshop attendance and strategy. Steve Young indicated after the JC meeting that he thought it would be useful for RROSN to come to workshops and make presentations. Ed Revell also suggested this. Sue wondered if there was a way to do a multi-jurisdictional workshop. Ed and Steve both suggested getting into a workshop before their Council retreats. It would probably be better to have workshops for each jurisdiction. **Scott** will ask Steve and Ed if they can bring it up and get us into a workshop. He will ask them if they had anything specific in mind when they brought it up, what they'd like to hear about. Scott can do the workshop based on what he did for the JC.
5. What is adoption standard for the plan? We would like the councils/commissions to adopt the plan into their Comp Plans. Adopting the whole plan would be ideal. What is the process? We've started calling this a vision, not a plan per se. Do the jurisdictions agree to adhere to the principles and recommendations? Is this incorporated into the Comp Plan as is – that would take years. If we could get all the jurisdictions to agree on the policies, it would make it pretty easy because we have a roadmap as to how to proceed. We want an overall vision about how to build new trails and connect OS. Jim B. said it well when he indicated that nobody wanted to build the last piece of trail, to be perceived as being the one holding up the process. We did have an action plan with timeline predicted as to when the parts of the plan should be implemented. What does this attach to? We don't need to be too concerned about our timeline right now, what do we want to see happen? What are we trying to incorporate into the Comp Plan? Policy statements, trail/OS recommendations. The history of Benton County is that OS doesn't work well – not maintained well. Maybe it's possible for an idea to gain a critical mass – elected officials may listen to public input. Advocacy groups drive the preservation of OS. Maybe the plan will give more people the sense of possibility and the citizens will be the drivers. Conservation Futures is a possible method for attaining OS. OS gets talked about a lot – 2 ½ acre lot, the homeowner says, I have my OS, don't need public OS. Recent court rulings talk about the need to have an impact (connectivity) before the jurisdiction can require OS. Different jurisdictions will likely embrace more or less in their Comp Plans. Success is getting the jurisdictions to move from where they are. A Plan is just a Plan; how it's implemented is something different. The Comp Plan raises a level of awareness; advocacy group can say this is in your plan, what are you doing about it? It gives an entrée to discussion, but it doesn't guarantee that it's going to happen. Staff can say we're doing goals and policies, let's put info in the Comp Plan, reference RROSN plan. This will be an incremental process. The timeline might be something we can use. If 5 yrs out, there's a comment, adopt a plan – we can ask them to look at the intermediate steps. Having RROSN show up at Planning Commission hearings, being in the conversation is important. Having a plan out there that the public can look at is important. We can do presentations to homeowners' associations; show them what the possibilities are. A timeline is useful. Having an OS definition in common could be our goal for the first year. Do we want to separate trails from OS – they come with different funding sources. If the BFCOG can endorse a plan, that'll allow the counties to adopt a consistent plan. This has funding implications for specific projects – they need a lead agency to be the home agency; a city or county has to apply for federal or state funds. TREC took about 10 years – high visibility. We can't depend on the jurisdictions to promote the plan. RROSN still has to move this along. Our interactions with the JC are partly educational; down the road, we might say we have a policy idea, are you interested in implementing this. We still need jurisdictional buy-in early on. We need to work the public-private partnership early on to make this work. We need to talk to the jurisdictions early-on. We can move ahead piece by piece, while asking the jurisdictions to buy in. We'd like the jurisdictions to buy in on the vision early. Can we get the jurisdictions to say, "We support the vision in principle"? The **DG** can start drafting a document that asks the jurisdictions to sign a resolution of support for this process. This is what we stand for, this is what we're doing. A resolution supports what we're doing, but it doesn't commit them to anything. This would allow the staff to move forward and work on this; it gives staff a direction. We hope the different liaisons will have communications with their fellow elected officials and we hope that staff will facilitate this. FOBM has always said we work only with

- willing sellers; that's what conservation futures does; would it be helpful to say right up front that RROSN deals only with willing sellers. Do we want this to be part of the resolution? Probably not, the resolution is more vague. The key to the resolution is to use the cities/counties language – use the language in their visions (or goals and policies). This should be “Whereas, whereas, whereas.... Therefore.” The language is already there to be borrowed from Chaps. 1 & 2.
6. Preserve vs. Conserve – Brad P. commented that we hadn't defined the terms, preservation and conservation, and we needed to be careful about how we used them. Debbie searched on Google for land preservation and conservation. They appear to be used interchangeably. Preservation and conservation both provide for public access. Several groups talk about preserving land to “give people a place to enjoy the natural beauty of our region.” She tried to find definitions of preservation and conservation through NEPA, SEPA, and RCWs. The RCWs talk about preserving open space to conserve and enhance natural or scenic resources. The RCWs tend to use ‘preservation’ for historical preservation and ‘conservation’ for open space. But they also talk about preserving open space for public purposes, preserving visual quality. Conversation with a USF&W employee – there's no real difference and no legal distinction between preservation and conservation. Brad was talking about wilderness in Alaska and ALE – wilderness has its own legal definition and so does research natural area. Wilderness won't apply to any of our urban OS, not even to ALE. Different agencies have different mandates. Preservation has a multiple use mandate, typically. We should probably have a statement that preservation and conservation are used interchangeably. They both allow public access, though the public access may be limited, e.g., to non-motorized vehicles. **Tom** will provide a definition of preservation/conservation. **Debbie** will send the information she found to Tom.

Action Items are bolded, underlined and in red.

- **Scott** could expand the invitation through the JC members, explain what we're contemplating – anybody (staff, elected official) who would like to come is welcome, though the JC members are the official representatives.
- We're asking **staff** to emphasize to the JC member what's critical in what's going to be discussed; what the elected official will need to be aware of and what s/he will want to think about before the meeting.
- **Staff** could discuss the recommendations with the corresponding JC member to give them a heads up as to what we'll be discussing at the next JC meeting.
- **Scott** will ask Steve Y. and Ed R. if they can bring follow up on their suggestions and get us invited to a workshop for their respective Councils. Scott will ask them if they had anything specific in mind when they brought it up, what they'd like to hear about. Scott can do the workshop based on what he did for the JC.
- The **DG** can start drafting a document that asks the jurisdictions to sign a resolution of support for this OS planning process.
- **Tom** will provide a definition of preservation/conservation. **Debbie** will send the information she found to Tom.