

## OSN Steering Committee Meeting April 1, 2009

### Minutes

Present: Lorna Deckert, Brooke Dubois, Sharon Grant, Merle Johnson, George Last, Mike Lilga, Megan Neer, F. Oneza, Len Pavelka, Tom Page, Doug Strong, Scott Woodward, Debbie Berkowitz

1. How we do business. Mike, Tom, Sharon got together to come up with a proposed plan. The steering committee would be made up of the people who are currently on it. We need at least one business rep. Over the top, we have an Executive Committee (pres, vp, secy, treas, one at-large from steering committee). The Jurisdictional Council will be advisory and give us high-level input. The Movers and Shakers will help with fundraising, help with upper echelon business decisions. An Executive Director would be the focal point for our activities. S/He should report to the Executive Committee which would have hire/fire responsibilities. Hiring an executive director assumes we have money. The Technical Advisory Committee would be the experts to give us technical/scientific basis for decisions we make. The Action Committees are where most of the work gets done. There would be one for each of the geographic regions that we had at our workshops. We can add membership, publicity, fundraising. Members would be businesses, other groups; what would be the benefits of membership. How would members move onto the steering committee? How 501(c)3's develop - start with a steering committee, which is a Board of Directors. This is a working board, that doesn't worry about process. This gets to a point where it's limiting; one gets to a point where it needs to be run as a business. Need to put some structure in. An executive committee has ownership to see that things happen; sets up meetings, agendas. Volunteer committees cycle faster than executive committee can deal with. The board (steering committee) starts to focus on tactical issues, guidance, policy, vision, stops being a working board. If we decide to become legally incorporated, we're required to have officers – pres, vp, secy, treasurer, with roles they need to fulfill. We are at the point that we need some additional organizational structure. To be a 501(c)3, one needs money to pay filing fees. We're all members of multiple groups; we need a way for our multiple organizations to collaborate. Sharon gave a talk to Orchard Hills neighborhood association; they wanted to join. They wanted to know what they needed to do to become a member. We need a process. George suggested we need to develop bylaws – individual members, organizational members. Scott asked what comes later – the movers and shakers comes later. Everything else should be done now. We have to coordinate closely with jurisdictions; we can't just do our own thing. Most of what we're dealing with is land dealings; whether the steering committee deals with land dealings is something we have to decide. We could be advisory, make recommendations to the jurisdictions and let them go with it. We could be a 501(c)3, incorporated, dealing with bylaws, file for tax exempt status. Pros are that we could have a budget, do a project without having to get authorization from jurisdictions; we could gain grant funding, accept tax exempt donations. Cons are that if we're trying to purchase lands, get trail easements, this mechanism doesn't allow one to do this. We could be a land trust – we'd have the benefits of a 501(c)3, but could then start negotiating with property owners, could own or hold land, or purchase land and transfer to a jurisdiction. Some landowners might be more willing to negotiate with a nonprofit than with a jurisdiction. Land trust would sell or swap. Land trust has a legal definition by the federal government; it's highly recommended that land trusts become accredited. If we assume the role of land trust – e.g., with conservation easement, we'd have to ensure that it's used in the correct way and assume the liability if it's not. Accreditation by the Land Trust Alliance would cost a couple of thousand dollars. They'd lead us through the process. Will this be a longterm organization? Yes, that's the goal. How do the different conservation groups fit with this organization? The purpose of this group is to make sure that open space is preserved. A land trust would be focused on the same issue. We'd have to consult with an expert about foundation vs 501(c)3. We should have said nonprofit rather than 501(c)3. A land trust holds land and manages land; they might have a special agreement with who manages it. Mike thinks we should take on the land trust but then give the land to jurisdictions. Is there anything that restricts a land trust from doing this? We'd need to find out. We need a list of questions. As

a landowner, we might have greater flexibility on how to lay things out, rather than having the jurisdiction be the landowner. If land is purchased for conservation, one avoids state taxes. We need more information before making a decision. We need a committee to work on a white paper about different structures, foundation, land trust, 501(c)3 – **Mike, Tom, Sharon, Brooke**. Is there any risk on proceeding towards one option as we're gathering information? We'll go through the same process no matter which 501(c)3 we take on. No. Just time and energy. We need to come up with bylaws. The initial part of the steering committee is coming to an end. This process feeds the action plan. The plan and organization need to come together at the same time. We'll have something to show people about where we're going. There might need to be a change to the proposed structure because a 501(c)3 has a Board at the top, the Executive Director comes under that.

2. Letter to the jurisdictions. Purpose - we need to find out what the buy-in is now. Can the jurisdictions be a member of the Board involved in regional planning or would that be a conflict? We don't think so. We would like to have the jurisdictions on the Board. We want buy-in from the jurisdictions, representation on our Advisory Council/Board and want to know that we'll have access to their planning staffs. There would be an introductory letter, here's where we're at in the process, include our flyer, then ask for buy-in with a sign-off letter. This is an initial step for the jurisdictions to give the go-ahead. Will Scott come back to the jurisdictions to update them? Scott's talk to Councils should be short. Scott will be giving a talk to the Homeowners Association (thanks to Megan). The purpose of the letter is to ask for Council/Commission support. They agree with the concept, with the planning. Richland has as part of their strategic plan to work with this committee on open space planning. The Councils/Commissions so far are more likely to work with us as advisers, rather than on the Board. In the letter, replace "monthly" meetings with "periodic" meetings. The letter needs to go to the City Managers as well as the Councils. If the jurisdictions give us money (the way they do with the TCVCB), there's a commitment; they'll show up at the meetings to know what's going on. We might want to put a money value on this. We don't know if that would make some of the jurisdictions back off? Should we wait to send this letter til we're in a stronger position? TCVCB started off small and now are in a strong position – made the jurisdictions that weren't taking part, want to take part so they're not left out. This is a unique opportunity – there aren't that many places where one can have natural open space in close proximity to cities. A government can't contribute to a 501(c)3, but would have to receive something from the 501(c)3 in exchange for money. A staff person's time would be a contribution in kind. It would be important to show the economic value in order to get buy-in from the Councils/Commissions. Scott's presentation has a lot of the economic value in it. Sharon suggested we have the organizational structure put in place and the economic value information in place before we send in the letter. Waterfront Center information is on-line at TCVCB. Do we need to have some of the entities signed up before we do the plan? It would be nice to have the letters in our plan. If we do all this work and don't get the buy-in, it's worthless. Do we want to do the letters now or wait til we get the organizational structure next month. We need some more contact with the jurisdictions now, we've been talking to the public, are working on the organization and the plan, we'd like to have your continued support. Thank you for your past support and looking for your continuing engagement.
3. Start with an interim executive committee to start adding structure. Take some burden off Scott.
4. The questionnaire. New results are very similar to the older results, with some minor changes in priorities. The questionnaire powerpoint could be summarized in the plan and included in the appendix.
5. The flyer update got lots of feedback and is being updated.
6. Accomplishment list is being revised again.
7. The PowerPoint presentation has been updated and differs in length depending on the audience.
8. Other organizations. We're not ready organizationally to add members. We can add them to our e-mail address list, send them our minutes and ask them for their input. Sharon will be the liaison to the Orchard Hills Homeowners Association.
9. Framework Committee. Len's been talking to Carol Tobin, Planning Consultant for Municipal Research & Services Center of WA, and got a bunch of info from her that he passed out to us. She sent us a bunch of links; Len printed off tables of contents (TOC) from some of the OS plans from around the country. The Burlington, VT plan has some good examples. Len looks at a lot of

Comp Plans and some flow and others don't. Clear Creek County, Colorado has a 20-pg plan, an example of how small a plan can be. Missoula area OS plan has a good table of contents; Len likes this plan. Monmouth County, NJ, OS plan – is ok; gave us TOC. Monroe County OS plan is 250 pgs. Two or three of the big ones had professional consultants work on the plan. How professional a layout do we want to have for the plan. We need 3 or 4 really well done color maps in our plan. Southern Nevada OS plan – TOC. Monroe County OS plan has evaluation tables of criteria for OS. Len has a list of things that we already have that could be incorporated into our plan. Does Sue have expectations of us? She wants to see a plan that the NPS will have in their library, but there are no specific expectations of what our plan should look like. We should all look at these OS plans and see what we think. Mike thought the Missoula plan has a good TOC – delivers a good message. How big of an effort will our first plan be? Our plan should be relatively succinct. A lot of detail should be in the appendices. Is this a strategic plan, fairly high level? Is this an action plan, a project management plan, this is what we're going to do, how we're going to do it, what's our first decision, what's the critical path, how will we measure progress? Having a strategic plan won't let us know what we're going to do. A strategic plan would help the jurisdictions, as they plan their budgets. We need a strategic plan and a project plan. This group would prioritize levels of interest. We've figured out what's important to the citizens of this area. We can indicate possible funding sources. The jurisdictions would be involved in the implementation of the plan. We'd need to identify land to be set aside, trails that would be put in, how much would it cost, what jurisdictions would it involve. We have to start with a strategic plan, then go to a program plan, then the project management plan. Our product needs to reflect each of these, tiered down. We had talked about a project on which to take action to publicize ourselves and have a quick success. Should this be in the plan? Should we act on it? To do something quickly would require something simple – and would be below the level in the action plan. How does that help people get on board? As a group it shows we can do it without other involvement, not necessarily what we want. Unless we have meaningful work for our committees, they won't be interested. We need to allow the action committees to use their own abilities/passion to move things along. Additional people need to join Len's committee to look at these TOCs and come up with a recommendation for a TOC for us for next month. Look at sheet that shows what we have; see if there are additions. There may be some obvious authors, e.g., a summary of the questionnaire data. We need to look at these plans and see what we can cut and paste. The committee members each take one TOC/plan and look at it and meet with Len when he gets back. And then put something together for next month. **Scott, Brooke, George, Debbie** are on this committee, with Len as chair. **Brooke** has Monmouth County and Burlington. **Debbie** has Missoula, Clear Creek County and Pierce County. **Scott** has Southern Nevada, Monroe County, and Whatcom County. **George** has Clark County and Jefferson County. The plans have "prepared by", "supported by" sections.

10. Would the Councils and planning commissions look at these plans and say it's good or say these are eastern plans and we do things differently in the west. Len suggested we use their ordering system, use some of their ideas. Our TOC and plan will evolve from these, they won't be copied from these. We'll give references and they'll be from all over the country.
11. Timeline discussion and decision. Sue produced the Excel spreadsheet last time. It would be nice to have an idea of what we've done so far – we went through and checked off some of the boxes on the spreadsheet for March 09. Much of the Public Outreach and Involvement section has been done. One possible category is ongoing. Another category is "no longer important." We need to solicit support from businesses, tribes. Develop a Communication Plan – we're working on a logo. We don't have a newsletter; our maps aren't professional – much of these are after the plan. The month of May – organizational structure, TOC, direct contact with jurisdictions for documentation of support in writing (after sending introductory letter and buy-in letter). The jurisdictions should write back on their own letterhead, fill in the gaps in our form letter. We should start writing now, based on Len's outline. Use Trebuchet font, left justified, double spaced between paragraphs, no other formatting. Background of OSN, project proposal - **Mike**. Questionnaire summary – **George (with Debbie)**. Public meeting summaries – **Scott**. Survey/discussion of existing OS with map – goes with public meeting summaries (map will be done later). Funding/implementation discussion – **Len**. (**Debbie** will send Len FOBM writeup on conservation futures.) Priority projects discussion – (from public meeting summaries) – **Scott**

([Debbie](#) will send [Scott](#) a spreadsheet that has a summary of the workshop/questionnaire data that has this information). Other sections will be added – looking through the other documents will help. Inventory – map of existing conditions and map from public input (overlay)? - [Scott](#). Do the jurisdictions already have descriptions and maps? Richland does. State/county/city regulations/ordinances – identifying constraints, working within the context of regulations. We want to look at these and see what we can suggest that cities can do to modify regulations for OS. We can look at places that we admire and see what they do and see what we can suggest. What's the impact of the GMA, Comp Plans, zoning. How do conditional use permits affect what cities do. What's the common ground among the cities? Land use ordinances and zoning code with respect to OS from the jurisdictions – Oneza (Kennewick), Rick Simon (Richland), Lorna (Benton City), Bob Leedy (West Richland), Jarrod (Franklin County), Rick White (Pasco), Mike Shuttleworth (Benton County) – [Megan](#) will compile. Mike has looked at some places with good OS codes – Boise, Flagstaff, Sun Valley, Boulder, Albuquerque. [Megan](#) will get info from Spokane, Tucson, others?