

Open Space Alliance Council Meeting

at 119 Grove Ave. Prescott, Arizona

December 17, 2008

Meeting called to order by President Tom Pettit at 1:00 PM

Present: Jim Lawrence, Howard Mechanic, Ed Parry, Mayor Jack Wilson, Elisabeth Ruffner, Chris Hosking, Dick Theis, and Tom Slaback.

Minutes of the November meeting were approved as submitted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Report is BELOW.

Correspondence: None

Open Space Acquisition Advisory Committee: No report this month. Jim Lawrence commented on the two recent acquisitions.

The Green family donated \$60,000 for an endowment at the Arizona Community Foundation that will provide about \$3000 per year for Open Space Maintenance. Others may donate to the endowment.

Ballot Proposition to Extend Sales Tax for Roads

Discussion regarding extension of 1% sales tax – Mayor Wilson asked that OSA take an organizational position.

Jim Lawrence mentioned that if the State Trust Land Initiative is put on the ballot and passes, there may not be a need for additional acquisition funds past the \$40.3 million already budgeted. The state matching funds have been protected in the past, but may not be protected in the future. We may need an additional extension for open space of about ¼ of 1%.

Currently, there is a lot of support from City Council regarding Open Space, so this may be the best time to proceed on long-term planning for funding. But we don't know what the funding needs may be – and that could be dependant on state action.

There is a backlog of roads and other public facilities projects. If the federal government economic stimulus package goes through and some of the money can be used by Prescott for its projects, the backlog may be reduced considerably.

The OSA might want to provide input on the amount of tax increase for roads.

A Motion was made and approved by consensus on our position:

## **Background on an Open Space Alliance Position on Sales Tax Extension for Roads**

Normally, The Open Space Alliance would not take a position on a tax for roads. However, since Open Space acquisition funding is now linked with the roads program in the 1% tax, and since in the eyes of the public funding for the two programs is linked, the Open Space Alliance will take a position on the Roads Tax Extension.

In 1995, voters approved a 1% sales tax for the assured streets program for ten years. In 2000, Prescott voters approved a ballot proposition which extended the 1% sales tax until 2015, for both city streets and open space acquisition. OSA worked diligently for the passage of that proposition. The resultant revenues have been split between streets and Open Space acquisitions. Council limited the expenditures on Open Space to \$40.7 million over the fifteen-year period. Mark Woodfill, City of Prescott Finance Director, estimated in 2006 that if sales tax revenues increased only 3% per year (much lower than was experienced at that time) total revenues from the 1% sales tax for the 10-year extension period will be about \$163 million. That means Open Space would get about 26% of the total projected revenues over the ten years, with 74% going to roads.

The Open Space Alliance is taking the following position:

For the period ending 2015, sales tax going to roads has been about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a %. If the city wishes to extend the sales tax going to roads, and not propose an increase, then the proposal to the voters should be for a tax of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a %. The extension for roads should not exceed  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a %. Otherwise there would be a substantial increase in road taxes, which could negatively affect future Open Space funding, as well as possible funding for other worthwhile purposes.

We will notify our organizational members of this policy. We took this position promptly because we will have to proceed with this expeditiously because we need to get this opinion to the city in a couple weeks.

Earth Day:

We will proceed with the Courthouse Plaza and use Granite Creek Park as backup. The date will be April 18<sup>th</sup>. Motion approved to allocate the funds for space rental and funds needed for insurance.

Greenways:

Chris Hosking reported:

He is working with others to establish a 6-foot wide hard path from Aubrey to Willis. There will be ramps at Carleton. The fence by Mile High Middle School has been moved to allow use of the ramps. All of the trail will have a "Select" surface of 1" minus to provide for a uniform and dry surface. There will be a trail bridge across the creek by the school.

PNF Visioning Group

Report by Tom Slaback: The group submitted the pre-grant letter. They were able to

apply for \$45,000 instead of \$40,000. The Hyde Mountain Vista Group has agreed to morph their group into the Stewardship group, so their 501(c)3 tax exempt status could be used.

Tom P. will ask Ashley if she will send out membership renewals.

Minutes submitted by Howard Mechanic