



WILDWOOD®

Parks Action Plan Update Committee Minutes from the Tuesday, June 26, 2018 Meeting

I. Welcome to Committee Members and Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order by Chair Garrett at 6:34 p.m.

II. Roll Call of Members

A roll call of members was taken, with the following results:

Committee Members Present: Broyles, Strand, Napoli, Coverdell, McCune, Pickett, Commission Liaison Beattie, Council Liaison Bertolino, Council Liaison Gragnani, and Chair Garrett

Committee Members Absent: Committee Member Gillman

Other Officials

and Staff in Attendance: Council Member Shea, Council Member Woerther, City Administrator Thomas, Director of Planning and Parks Vujnich, Assistant Director of Planning and Parks Arnett, and Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Crews.

III. Review and Action on the Meeting Minutes from May 16, 2018

A motion was made by Committee Member McCune, seconded by Committee Member Broyles, to approve the May 16, 2018 minutes. A voice vote was taken on the minutes, with no opposition, and the motion was declared approved by Chair Garrett.

IV. Review of Tonight's Agenda

The agenda was reviewed by Chair Garrett. There were no questions.

V. Belleview Farms – Conversation with Gateway Off-Road Cyclists (GORC)

Chair Garrett noted that, per the Committee's request from its April meeting, representatives from the area around Belleview Farms had been invited to the previous meeting and given an opportunity to address the Committee with their concerns. At this evening's meeting, time is being provided to Gateway Off-Road Cyclists (GORC) representatives to discuss their thoughts regarding the proposal presented to the City for use of this property. Director Vujnich provided an explanation about the invitation to GORC representatives and the similar opportunity for the Sherman residents completed last month. Chair Garrett welcomed the

attendees and provided an overview of the Committee's role, which is that of a recommendation to the City Council, and then welcomed public comment.

Bryan Adams, 3371 Johns Cabin Road, noted he is a GORC Executive Board Member and that he moved here from the City of St. Louis to be in close proximity to trails. He provided an overview of GORC, which is a 501(c)3, all volunteer organization that has built more than ninety (90) miles of trails in the region. The group has a history of partnering with public entities and assists with the construction and maintenance of trails in these areas. He then outlined the proposal for Belleview Farms, including flow trails and a skills park. He then outlined the rationales for why the proposal had been made and how it would be achieved. Trails will be narrow and minimize impact, as much as possible. Activities there will be for families. GORC would work with Wildwood to develop trails that meet environmental needs and fit within the park. The proposal is for three (3) trails, totaling 2 miles, one (1) trail would be multiple-use for hiking and biking. He then showed the tools used for construction, which included hand tools and a 42" skid steer. The trail corridor would utilize 2% of the 100 acres. GORC also proposes a connector trail to Sherman Beach, somewhere in the vicinity of the railroad tracks.

Discussion was then held among the Committee Members and Mr. Adams and included the following: the width of the multiple-use trail, which would be three (3) to four (4) feet wide (wider than flow trails) and a gentle slope; design and construction time would total one and a half (1½) years; erosion prevention measures, including trail stewards who will monitor trails and schedule work days for clean-up and correct any issues; the material for the trail surface; prevention measures of people going off-trail; if there are existing nature trails within Belleview Farms; the lack of compatibility of flow trails with hiking; minimal impact to wildlife by bike trails, i.e. Greensfelder County Park and Bluffview Park; area of skills park, which is proposed as two (2) to five (5) acres; the construction of the skills park, which is mostly bringing in dirt, not excavating; the higher level of maintenance in the skills park, which is why its location is proposed near the parking lot; the inclusion of a picnic area near the skills park; the potential for including a Sherman Museum with the flow trails; determination of structures not up to GORC, but no reason why both couldn't exist together; could use existing building for bike rental; GORC doesn't deal with racing, so not involved in that aspect or proposing any of these types of events at this time, but potential is there; and the proposed length of the multiple-use trail, which is one-half (½) mile long.

Steve Friedman, 3220 Pine Cliff Road, noted he is a realtor and real estate appraiser and he moved to Wildwood for the mountain biking trails. He visits Bentonville, Arkansas, where he has witnessed the good these types of trails can accomplish within a community.

Stephanie Adams, 3371 Johns Cabin Road, noted she moved to Wildwood for outdoor activities and access to trails. She believes this proposal will help fight the battle of childhood obesity and will give positivity to the future.

Adam Scott, 107 Hilltop Village Center Drive, noted he recently opened a bicycle shop in Eureka and then stated that, in the Midwest, St. Louis is a trail epicenter. He believes the bicycling community is full of positive people and these trails provide a safe location off-street for children. He noted he carries a hybrid bike good for people with disabilities and others that may not in the best fitness, allowing these types of venues to be utilized by a wide variety of interested users.

Chris and Will Nitzsche, 18164 Bent Ridge Drive, noted the potential for economic development on the area, with the addition of these trails. Their family supports the trail proposal. Will then read a letter explaining why he likes riding mountain bikes, especially in Wildwood.

Jeff Powell, 11 Windjammer Court, noted his support of GORC's proposal in Belleview Farms. He is a Physical Education Teacher in Wildwood and sees the need for children to be more active. He also teaches a mountain biking class that is very popular and there is a large amount of interest in the area for this type of use.

Phil Hurlbut, 4 Ballybunion Court, noted he has lived in Wildwood since its incorporation and is an avid off-road cyclist. He noted the trails, like the GORC proposal, bring people together, forge friendships, community, and healthy living, all of which are good for Wildwood. He supports the GORC proposal.

Krista Taves, 1470 St. Paul Road, noted she is a cyclist, but doesn't believe the trail will have the minimal amount of impact as GORC claims. She then noted Matson Hill Park Trails in St. Charles have negatively impacted the wildlife in this park, by displacing it. Missourians for Monarchs told her that mountain biking trails and monarchs cannot co-exist. She believes the turtle migration and snake population will be impacted. She is opposed to the GORC proposal. Their group wants to restore the Donnelly trails for pedestrians only and the minimum level of infrastructure. She provided a written document for the record, which is attached to these minutes.

Laurie Mecham, 1470 St. Paul Road, noted there is a decline in the bat population this year on the Belleview Farms property. She encourages all Committee Members to do their due diligence on the GORC proposal and the property itself. She is opposed to the GORC proposal and believes it would do damage to the Belleview Farms property and their community. She wants conservation of the property and provided a written statement to be included in the official record, which is attached to these minutes.

Donnie Heth, 384 Crest Drive, is fifth generation Sherman resident and supports preservation of Belleview Farms, which he believes was Mr. Donnelly's intention. He is opposed to the GORC proposal at this location. He is interested in developing an area museum in one of the buildings on the property and would also like to consider a wildlife center in the other buildings. His group is working on a proposal for their ideas on the property. He thinks the GORC proposal would be fine, but not in his backyard.

Lorisue, 547 Palisades Road, noted she does not live in Sherman or Wildwood. She has lots of hikers and bikers that come on to her private property and she believes the proposal doesn't accommodate enough parking for users. She believes the proposal should be in Castlewood and not Belleview Farms.

Schuyler Hagglund, 1591 St. Paul Road, read a portion of the deed, which he believes would not allow the GORC proposal. He is opposed to the GORC proposal because it will not preserve the wildlife, ruins the entire park, is an eyesore, is single use, attracts a type of person that they don't want in their neighborhood, and is in opposition to Mr. Donnelly's wishes. He doesn't want to tell his kids they can't use a trail in their backyard. He also noted he has signatures from 100% of Sherman residents in opposition to this proposal.

Scott Thompson, 341 Crest Drive, is opposed to the GORC proposal because it is in opposition to Mr. Donnelly's wishes and will trample on the rights of neighboring property owners. He believes the use is too singular and does not satisfy enough of the population. He doesn't want kids on X-Box, but he also doesn't

want them to get hurt on a flow trail and be hooked on OxyContin. He concluded by noting he joined GORC today.

Holly Walker, 1490 St. Paul Road, noted she is opposed to the GORC proposal and the flow trails, especially since they do not allow multiple uses upon them.

Spencer Savory, 500 Larry Elliott Drive, questioned how GORC plans to connect to the Al Foster Memorial Trail, without going on private or federal property, and who would be responsible for that improvement.

Ryan Boyer, 657 Hill Drive, noted he lives in Eureka and works in Ellisville and loves this area. He is not a member of GORC, but is supportive of the proposal. He noted he enjoys mountain biking with his family and loves the wildlife he witnesses when he is riding.

Mark Dunlap, 17061 Westridge Oaks Drive, noted he is a business owner (Wildwood Yoga & Wellness) and resident of Wildwood. He is supportive of the GORC proposal for his family and the community. He also noted many of the clients at his and his wife's yoga studio are cyclists. There are many mountain bikers, who are not GORC members.

Dave Schulz, 4125 Alt Road, noted he is a disabled veteran, who uses an electric-assist hybrid bicycle, and the proposed flow trail would allow others like him to ride a bicycle. He worked in Glacier National Park and, in his experience, wildlife and mountain biking co-exist. He believes there can be compromise because a portion of the GORC proposal is also what Sherman residents are proposing.

Brian Larson, 16191 Clayton Hollow Lane, noted he is a Wildwood resident who stays here because of the cycling and trail opportunities. He is supportive of the GORC proposal and supports access to more and unique trails. He noted the impact between trails and nature is not negative in his opinion. He also noted this type of use would be low impact and low noise. He encouraged talking to the neighbors of Matson Hills Park.

Tom Herbig, 6746 Plainview Avenue, noted he lives in the City of St. Louis and hopes to move to Wildwood someday. He runs St. Louis Mountain Bike Camps which has grown quickly in the past few years and he is supportive of the GORC proposal.

Tammy Shea, Council Member Ward 3, thanked everyone for coming and noted she is hearing both sides of this issue and supports mountain biking and conservation. She emphasized this Committee is advisory and won't be making a decision on this proposal tonight. She suggested the Committee consider adding some of these proposed improvements to Community Park.

Elena Friedman, 3220 Pine Cliff Road, noted Shaw Nature Preserve could be a good resource for conservation, mixed with activity questions, because they host runs and other events in the preserve.

Karen Holtmann, 17062 Cambury Lane, submitted a card, but did not want to speak, instead she wanted her comments to be part of the record. Her comments were, "I am in favor of the Belleview Farm flow trail. I enjoy all the wildlife I see on mountain bike trails, such as turkey, hawks, owl, deer, snakes, etc."

Chair Garrett called for a five (5) minute recess, at the conclusion of public participation.

VI. Summary of Committee Decisions on Changes to “Citizens Committee for Park Progress Action Plan 2007”
Pages 1-46

The meeting reconvened at 8:50 p.m.

Chair Garrett noted the Goals and Recommendations portion of the Action Plan had been updated to incorporate Committee Member decisions and modifications to items that are now out-of-date. He requested the Committee Members take the next month to review this document. Any modifications to the proposed changes can be emailed to Department staff (Kathy). Director Vujnich noted the Committee’s efforts should be focused on goals and recommendations and would appreciate feedback on those portions of the plan. Supplemental Factors, Support Information, Priority, and Timelines will be edited, but that has not been completed.

Committee Member Napoli requested a breakdown of the phases for Community Park. Department staff will email a map that identifies all of the phases to the Committee Members.

VII. Next Steps

No comments, but consensus was reached that, sooner rather than later, the Committee wants to complete the process.

VIII. Next Meeting Date – July 24, 2018

No comments on meeting date.

IX. Public Comments

No additional comments.

X. Other Items of Interest

Dr. Gragnani invited everyone to a car show on July 15th, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The event is a fundraiser for Wildwood Historical Society and Marine Focus Foundation, and will be held at Stovall’s Grove.

City Administrator Thomas noted Babler State Park is having a Public Input Session on Saturday, June 30th, to gather comments on the park.

Chair Garrett noted that, once the Committee has taken action on the plan, it will hold a public meeting for feedback on the proposal.

XI. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

A motion was made by Committee Member Coverdell, seconded by Commission Member Beattie, to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken, with unanimous approval, and Chair Garrett declared the meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Wildwood copy

My name is Krista Taves, and I live at 1470 St. Paul Road. One of the arguments GORC is trying to make is that their mountain bike park will have minimal impact on the land and that Belleview Farm will remain a wildlife and nature preserve if they move in.

This just isn't born out by the facts. Let us offer you some facts.

Sherman Beach Park was also donated by Mr. Donnelly to the county, designated as the developed part of the property in the trust. Sherman Beach is 64 acres with total trail mileage of .95 miles. You can see on the map that the trail goes around the perimeter of the park and leaves the rest untouched. If you used the same ratio of trail mileage for Belleview Farm, which is 105 acres, that would come to 1.44 miles of trail. That's the trail density for a developed park.

But GORC is proposing 5 1/4 miles of trails, which is 350% greater trail density than Sherman Beach. And this despite Belleview being designated as undeveloped in the trust, which really means that even 1.44 miles of trails is too much for Belleview. It disturbs too much of the land.

And yet GORC maintains that you can have a wildlife and nature preserve and a dense network of switchback flow trails that co-exist together, with no cost to the wildlife, the habitat, the vegetation, or the natural features.

So I offer another example of a park that tried this and failed. St. Charles County, Matson Hill Park, which has become a destination for mountain bikers.

465 acres. 6.9 miles of trail. Coincidentally, the same ratio of trail mileage to acreage as Sherman Beach. But this is what has happened to Matson Hill Park, and I get this information from Missourians for Monarchs and Grow Native, two NGOs that focus on conservation restoration.

The impact of those 6.9 miles of trails, both in their construction and their use, has been devastating. Two concrete examples. There was a large paw paw grove. The switchback trails zigzagged right through it, and it's gone. There were also very old unique rock formations along the Daniel Boone trace. The trail construction and pursuant heavy use, the same kind of heavy use predicted in GORC's proposal, has crumbled these ancient rock formations. They are gone and they are irreplaceable. That also means that the wildlife that made those formations their habitat has been decimated. The wildlife that made their home in the paw paw grove, displaced. And that's what happened with the same level of trail density we see in Sherman

Beach Park. GORCs proposal for Belleview is 350% percent denser than either Sherman Beach or Matson Hill.

When I shared with Missourians for Monarchs that Wildwood is considering this mountain bike proposal, they asked me to tell you in no uncertain terms that mountain biking and nature preservation are incompatible. They cannot coexist. This is why there is no way that you can approve this bike proposal. Belleview can only be a wildlife and nature preserve, and to use Donnelly's words, "and nothing else in perpetuity." Even if you approved one phase of the plan, you would already match the trail density of Sherman Beach and Matson Hill, and the damage would be significant, and in some cases, irreversible.

Tomorrow morning, a representative of Missourians for Monarchs is coming to Belleview for an assessment. When they learned about the GORC proposal, their interest in partnering with Sherman and Wildwood to take Belleview as a conservation restoration project increased. They have a vested interest in preventing another Matson Hill.

At the last meeting, you challenged us to offer another vision and the money to pay for it. Missourians for Monarchs is getting ready to connect us to other NGOs— NGOs that restore grasslands, Ozark Forests, habitat for endangered species, and return wildlife to areas where they have gone extinct. When groups like these adopt a tract of land, that opens a relationship with the Missouri Department of Conservation, which brings in the Master Naturalists and the Master Gardeners, and the Audobon Society. This opens you up for national and state funding. Any of these NGOs will help us develop a restoration plan and grant applications to pay for it. And when you build these relationships, Belleview will become a destination for a huge conservation restoration minded community. And these visitors won't destroy the land, they will join you in protecting it.

This is completely in line with the vision that Mr. Donnelly had for Belleview, a vision that became your responsibility when Wildwood signed the lease.

Our community is asking that the GORC proposal be respectfully set aside, and that a task force be created, with residents of Sherman and Wildwood included, working together to make the decisions and build the proposal to come before Council, with conservation restoration as the driving force. We have already proven that we are ready to do this work with you.

Thank you very much.

Please record in official record.

My name is Laurie Mechem. I live at 1470 Saint Paul Rd just across the road from Bellevue Farms Park.

I encourage everyone here to do their due diligence in regards to the Gore proposal and to your approach to Bellevue Farm Park in general.

The questions remain of whether this sort of a park belongs in Bellevue.

Does it go against the deed?

Is it good for the natural environment?

What are the impacts of traffic and otherwise for the community of Sheman and beyond?

Does it help Wildwood in any way?

In the community of Sheman a mountain bike park does not benefit us in any way and would in fact be detrimental to us the land, ecosystem, watershed and countless and unknown ~~wild~~ wildlife that live there.

income \$80,000+

The demographic of mountain bikers is ~~male~~ ^{major} male age 25-44.

that is a small number ^{of select} people this mtn bike park would serve.

We would like to see a conservation area that puts the wildlife first here, and ~~all~~ people could enjoy + learn from.

In MD we have many endangered ^{species} and species of concern.

Much of that is due to habitat loss through human activities

We have only been aware of this plan for about 3 months even tho it has been in the works for years.

In that short time we have been able to find organizations that would be willing to partner with Wildwood for conservation and ecological purposes. I even found a possible 50,000\$ grant for such purposes and I've been told if Wildwood would go down the ~~the~~ conservation avenue there is possibly much more available in grant money.

We don't even know all the species that live in Bellevue farms.

Conservation is much more than saying you like nature and your trails are built so they don't erode.

We need professional conservationist to come and study this land + learn all that is there. Then we need to support the natural environment ~~not~~ ^{tear it up =} thank you

Way more use than 2 1/2 trails length + twist + 2-5 acres trails park + parking etc.