

Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Meeting

MINUTES

April 5, 2007

Jean Marie Gaulke Community Meeting Room
Hood River County Public Library
Hood River, Oregon

Members Attending: William Pattison (Chair) , Wayne Stewart (Vice Chair), Jack Wiles, Rich Watanabe for Jason Tell, Ernie Drapela, Marc Berry, Art Carroll, James Hamrick, Jack Wiles

ODOT Staff Attending: Kristen Stallman, Magnus Bernhardt, Jason Grassman, Maggie Witty

Others Attending: Jeanette Kloos (Friends of the HCRH), Kelly Beamer (Friends of The Columbia Gorge), Peter Cornelison (Friends of The Columbia Gorge), Dave Bicks (Director, Hood River Public Works)

Call to Order

William Pattison, Chair, called the meeting to order. Kristen Stallman explained to the group that proper public notice wasn't given for the meeting. Therefore, no formal decisions can be made, nor can the minutes from the previous meeting be approved. Bill asked if there were any changes or additions to last month's meeting minutes and there were none.

Ernie Drapela asked if the group could continue with the meeting and make decisions on certain items. Bill replied that the group can look for a consensus and later convene in a teleconference if, of course, proper prior public notice is given.

Forest Lane/Cascade Locks Update

Kristen Stallman explained that there have been many small work groups on the Cascade Locks Resort Casino proposal but the advisory committee has not met formally since the November 16 work session.

Wayne Stewart and Magnus Bernhardt presented a draft memo prepared on behalf of the HCRH Advisory Committee and addressed to the signatories of the Cascade Locks Programmatic Agreement. Wayne explained that the intent of the draft memo is to describe Forest Lane within the larger context of the Historic Columbia River Highway Historic District.

Magnus then presented the recommended cross sections for Forest Lane, the overpass, and the Frontage Road. The project proponents originally wanted to expand Forest Lane to four lanes with a total width of 60' to 80' wide. However, the proponent's traffic consultants recently confirmed that a three-lane configuration would adequately serve the proposed development. The Cascade Locks Programmatic Agreement calls out a 36' cross section for Forest Lane. After analysis, an additional 7 feet is needed for safety and to accommodate large vehicles, expanding the recommended cross section to a maximum 43'.

Wayne explained that this memo keeps the HCRH Advisory Committee ahead of the curve and will clearly identify what the Advisory Committee deems a reasonable approach rather than reacting to proposals as they are presented. Kristen reminded the group that Forest Lane is a county road, not an ODOT road. The memo and the accompanying proposals will need to be presented to all of the agencies involved and will require an amendment to the Programmatic Agreement.

The draft memo outlines a proposal to widen the Herman Creek Bridge. Kristen noted that the project proponents may feel that work is beyond the project area. There is a pinch point at the bridge where the road weaves between Herman Creek and the railroad, making it difficult to accommodate separate bicycle/pedestrian facilities in this area. Wayne Stewart explained that the improvements recommended as part of the proposed development must complete the system and connect into existing facilities.

Ernie said there were two issues that the HCRH Advisory Committee needs to consider – preservation of the highway and protection and safety of the users. Ernie expressed concern for the bicyclists crossing the road at the intersection of Snyder Loop. Ernie proposed a separated trail that would go under the loop road. Wayne explained that the grades would not accommodate this without a ramp to get back up to the overpass structure. Magnus suggested that WaNaPa could serve as an alternate bike route through the community, bypassing the proposed development.

Don Wiley said most people who are commuting in the area by bike probably won't use the separated bike path in the first place but they still need to cross the road. Wayne explained that WaNaPa might serve as the best bike route but Forest Lane would still need to safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. Art Carroll noted that the through cyclists are most likely not interested in going to the casino and would avoid the interchange area if there was a safe alternative.

Ernie suggested that the Committee modify the word "recommended" to "conceptual" to keep the Committee's suggestions in motion and pro-active. Art believes there are some issues the Committee can't move past until they get more information. He supports moving forward but some items still need to be resolved, such as the area near the Herman Creek Bridge.

The question of "are we asking for a consensus" was raised. The draft should be amended to say "conceptual." Art said the scope is not adequate to the east only. Wayne believes that the plan outlined in the memo needs to explain the experience from a bicyclist's or pedestrian's perspective starting at the Shahala Subdivision to the Wyeth Bench Road. Art feels the geographic scope needs to be expanded east and west to include the WaNaPa to Frontage Road alternate route for bicyclists.

Jack Wiles asked about the procedures required to amend a Programmatic Agreement. Kelly Beamer explained that she believes the HCRH Advisory Committee should be concerned with the impact three million visitors will have on the highway. The Friends of the Gorge want to maintain the highway's historical character.

Kristen explained that the conditions of “no adverse effect” will be incorporated into the final Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Casino/Resort at Cascade Locks.

Jeanette Kloos voiced concern about where the bicyclists will go. In her opinion, Forest Lane is part of the HCRH experience. She understands that they can also choose to go down the frontage road. However, trucks coming out of the weigh station may create a problem.

Peter Cornelison, a resident of Hood River and also representing Friends of the Gorge, explained that the five lanes originally proposed seems like a substantial impact to the HCRH Historic District. However, he feels that three lanes plus a 25' overhead bridge and multiple traffic lights remains an impact. The closing of the weigh station will make traffic worse on Forest Lane. Trucks not currently allowed on Forest Lane will be moved to the frontage road where they will encounter wetlands and a very sharp turn, which will not be a good mix with the bicycles on the road.

Stevenson Project/Meredith Motel Update

Kristen Stallman noted the agenda and introduced Tom Stevenson to present a progress report on the redevelopment of the Meredith Motel Project. Phase I will include 12 units on the east end of the motel site and Phase II includes 12 units on the west end of the motel site. These phases include the construction of a sound wall in front with the HCRH State Trail on the opposite side of the wall adjacent to I-84. Phase III includes plans to redevelop the tribal fisheries building into condos.

Civil engineering data is being gathered now. ODOT is also doing a parallel survey of the property to ensure an accurate and consistent survey. The HCRH State Trail segment will originate at Ruthton Park. Tom was able to identify original Highway pavement running parallel to Westcliff Drive. He suggested that this would make an excellent State Trail alignment from the park. From the historic pavement, State Trail would cross Westcliff to the proposed trail adjacent to Interstate 84. The trail would be constructed on top of the existing retaining wall along I-84. Tom noted a “pinch” point where the existing Westcliff Drive is only 29 feet wide. To accommodate the trail and a private driveway, Westcliff would need to be widened to 34 feet.

Kristen reminded the committee of the proposal the committee reviewed one year ago and noted that great progress has been made to get to a solution. Wayne said he wasn't concerned about the alignment but rather if the plan will work. He would like to review the survey information. Tom agreed and said he had been asking for the information as well.

There was discussion of the overlook west of the Stevenson property. Original concepts for the plan show an overlook west of the motel site. Kristen noted that the maintenance manager believes that an overlook at this location would have risks associated with it and that the view is the same as the view offered at the Ruthton Park. Wayne disagreed, stating that HCRH Advisory Committee needs to be consulted on such decisions.

Ernie suggested that ODOT prepare an itemized list of what needs to happen with associated timelines.

Discussion of Programmatic Amendment Procedures in regard to Cascade Ave and Mt. Adams Avenue

Dave Bick, the Hood River Public Works Director, was introduced to the Committee. Dave presented a proposal to widen Cascade Avenue in Hood River to accommodate a right-turn lane at the proposed Mt. Adams Avenue. A detailed traffic study completed for the intersection indicates it does not meet ODOT mobility standards. Dave handed out a graphic depicting the proposed design compared to the design approved in the Programmatic Agreement.

Jack Wiles suggested that the HCRH Advisory Committee take broader look at Cascade Avenue and how bikes and pedestrians cross over the overpass structure. He expressed that just looking at one intersection seemed a little piece-meal.

Kristen Stallman noted that the Hood River Interchange Area Management Plan will be taking a closer look at this area and perhaps Cascade Avenue could be considered within that planning process

Bill Pattison inquired about landscaping in front of the marina. Dave explained that upon construction the landscaping will be installed. James Hamrick suggested that the group move forward and that amendments to the programmatic agreements with urban areas are to be expected. Dave Bick explained that Mt. Adams will most likely be the only intersection that will require an amendment.

Jeanette Kloos suggested that if the committee was going to amend the Programmatic Agreement that they consider including a cross section for Westcliff Drive. Art suggested that the group support Dave Bick's request to widen Cascade Avenue and take a comprehensive look at the area between the Meredith Motel and the proposed Mt Adams Avenue. Wayne and Magnus will meet with Dave to discuss minor modifications to the Mt Adams Plan and cross-section presented. The Committee will take action on the proposal at the next HCRH Advisory Committee Meeting.

Evaluation Criteria for the Mosier Pit Proposal

Kristen handed out sheet entitled "Evaluation Questions for Considering Proposals along the HCRH". She explained that the questions on the sheet were taken directly from the HCRH Advisory Committee's Adverse Effect primer prepared by James Hamrick and Bob Hadlow. Kristen suggested that the Advisory Committee appoint a subcommittee to develop a recommendation on the Mosier Pit Proposal prior to the May 17 Advisory Committee Meeting. James Hamrick urged the committee to avoid quantitative analysis. He suggested that Kristen send the form out to the committee electronically and that all HCRH Advisory Committee members send in their responses electronically. Then the appointed subcommittee could include the responses in their subcommittee recommendation report. Wayne explained that the Historical Highway is a legitimate highway and therefore, public uses should be maintained and enhanced. He asked what the Committee's role is in

determining who can access the Highway. He can only find a couple of places where it's an issue concerning trucks using a public highway.

A member from the public explained to the committee that the proponent noted the trucks would be making up to 30 round-trips per day which she feels equals heavy use on a historic highway. As the Highway is a shared use highway, she believes it's a serious issue for concern. Art suggested creating a subcommittee to punch out a draft suggestion to the Committee. "Volunteers" were Marc, Jack, James and Jerry Igo. Jerry was not present but is the HCRH AC Wasco County representative.

Some members of the public wanted to know if public comment would allowed at the May 17 meeting and if there would be more than two days notice of the meeting date, place, and time.

Moffett Creek to Warrendale Update

Magnus Bernhardt and Art Carroll discussed the Mt. Hood/Moffett Creek realignment study and made a power point presentation to the committee. Art Carroll provided a copy of a memo he prepared. He urged that the committee meet with the Forest Service staff. There was discussion about the trail standards. Kristen mentioned that she has applied for a grant to do a feasibility study. If the grant is successful, the Committee will take a closer look at the project this fall.

Project Updates

There has been an amendment proposed to the Struck land use application for Ruthton Point that will move the garage farther away from the Highway.

Next Meeting

The next Advisory Committee meeting will be held on May 17 at the Troutdale Community Building, 223 Buxton Street. A pre-meeting field trip is planned. The Field Trip will begin at the gravel parking lot at the base of the Exit 18 West Bound Ramp. The official meeting will start at 10:00 A.M. at the Troutdale Community Building.

