

Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Meeting

MINUTES

May 17, 2007

Troutdale Community Building

Troutdale, Oregon

- Members Attending:** William Pattison (Chair) , Jack Wiles, Jason Tell, Ernie Drapela, Marc Berry, Art Carroll, James Hamrick, Kristen Stallman
- ODOT Staff Attending:** Kristen Stallman, Magnus Bernhardt, Robert Hadlow, Maggie Witty,
- Others Attending:** Diana Ross, USFS; Jeanette Kloos, Friends of the HCRH; Peter Cornelison, Friends of the Gorge; Brian Bains, Quatrefoil, Inc.; John Anderson, Manager, City of Troutdale; Jeanine Breashears, Clackamas County Tourism Development Council; Jim Brussard, Interchange Level 1 Committee; Ed Manon, Warm Springs Tribe; Shelli Romero, ODOT; Michael Ray, ODOT; Kelly Beamer, Friends of the Gorge; Adam Markell, ODOT; Sam Wilkins, ODOT; John Morgan, City of Cascade Locks; Scott Beard, Kittleson Associates; David Kennedy, David Evans & Associates.

Site Visit: The meeting was preceded with a site visit to the Sandy River Delta area to visually inspect the area where the I-84 Bridge crosses the Sandy River and to explore options to the bike-pedestrian path/bridge access across the Sandy River.

Call to Order

William Pattison called the meeting to order. Bill asked if there were any members of the general public who wished to add to the agenda. There were none. Bill asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 5 meeting. Art Carroll moved and Marc Berry seconded the motion. There was no discussion and all voted to approve the minutes as written.

Jack Wiles Presentation

Bill Pattison honored Jack Wiles, who is retiring from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, with a Certificate of Appreciation. The Certificate was signed by the Advisory Committee members and included old HCRH photos and Jack's quote "The Columbia River Gorge... a work of art to be given the devotion of a lifetime." Kristen Stallman then presented Jack with an engraved plaque.

Jack believes that his tenure with the Committee has been a wonderful association and that the group ascribes to high standards and respects the visual quality of the Gorge and the historic significance of the HCRH. Jack explained that when he arrived in 1990 to the State Parks department it was then part of ODOT and showed the group his original ODOT

publicity photo. Jeanette Kloos passed around photos taken at Jack's retirement party at Champoege State Park earlier in the month.

Mitchell Park Site Concept

Brian Bains, a landscape architect, met with several members of the HCRH Advisory Committee at Mitchell Point, prior to the April 5 Committee Meeting. Brian presented three concepts of how the parking and overlook areas at the Mitchell Point could function. Two alternatives were distributed prior the HCRH AC meeting via email. The third design is a compilation.

Concept #1 provides a threshold at the intersection of the entrance road and the Historic Highway. This alternative includes a new gate which would close off the non-drivable portion of the highway. This concept would use the existing parking lot in its entirety (19 parking spaces), provide handicapped parking and a restroom. It restores the original alignment, retains the existing overlook and adds an additional overlook to the east. This overlook would require new rock fall catchments.

Concept #2 preserves the existing alignment of the entrance road, moves the gate back, retaining more of the historic road for non motorized use, and includes fewer parking spaces. The reduction of the parking lot addresses the continuous rock fall problem and restores the original highway past the overlook but does not provide access beyond the overlook.

Concept #3 includes a smaller parking area (14 spaces) and follows the natural topography of the site. There is a tighter vehicle access onto the old highway. The restroom is also located in the same place as it is in Concept #1. James Hamrick asked how visible the restroom would be and Brian said it would be fully visible from the parking lot but somewhat hidden otherwise, but added that it could be moved to another location. His overall goal was to achieve better pedestrian access to the historic highway.

Brian also presented photos of other park elements found within the Gorge and how they could be incorporated at the Mitchell Point site. These examples included the overlook at the Twin Tunnels, park entrances and signage.

Brian recommended extending the existing wall and using a flush cobblestone curb to demarcate the bike/pedestrian trail. There could be a problem with using new materials that could conflict with the original materials. Art Carroll asked what the linear distance of the project site would be. Brian said it would now be 500 feet, adding 150-200' of restored highway to the site. Jeanette Kloos suggested a gate like the one of the eastern end of the Mosier Tunnels. She feels the Eagle Creek gate is too subtle. Marc Berry asked about the separation of vehicles from bicycles and pedestrians. Concept #2 features a bike/ped path. Ernie Drapela likes the idea of "softening" the parking lot and fencing around the rock fall area. He also asked about the use of white guardrail fencing. Brian said maybe it could be used along the drop-off area and/or the stream. Brian was asked what the original site looked like. He said that he had seen some photos from around the corner where once

there were buildings. Jeanette has also seen some old photos. Robert Hadlow added there was movie footage as well. Some evidence of the old alignment is there but it is primarily covered by rock fall. If the alignment for vehicle access is shortened up, there will be more room available for a bike/ped access. Diana Ross challenged Brian to make the rock fall protection not look like rock fall protection. Jack Wiles said it was possible and could be built into the design but better understanding of the topography would be required.

Brian explained that his goal is to stay within the original footprint of the disturbed areas. Concept #3 was designed to maximize the historic highway for pedestrians and includes softer angles. Bill explained that he believes there are two main elements to the site – coming into the parking lot and looking up at Little Mitchell – don't do anything to detract from that. He also sees the overlook as an integral part of the site. Jack said he liked Concept #3, especially since the curves in the parking lot take away that linear look it currently has. James likes the idea of two smaller overlooks as opposed to one large one. Ernie mentioned that at Starvation Creek, as well as at Rooster Rock and Corbett, large trucks (semi's) are not allowed and asked if they can put signs at Mitchell Point saying the same thing. He feared that this site may become a truck stop if not properly signed. Art said a 14 space parking lot is not really big enough to accommodate large trucks.

Bill asked if the group had a consensus on Concept #3. Bill also added that Wayne Stewart would probably want to see it to review the plans. Art asked if Brian wanted the Committee to take action on the third alternative. Jack commented that he gets to cut the check so the final decision is his anyway and added that anything done at Mitchell Point would be an improvement. Brian will revise Concept #3 as discussed and provide Kristen with the preferred alternative.

Cascade Locks Underground Utilities

David Kennedy of David Evans and Associates is assisting the City of Cascade Locks with the underground utility project. The City of Cascade Locks provides electrical service as far west as Bridal Veil along the HCRH and to the Union Pacific Railroad mainline. Maintenance of the power lines in that area has been extensive and expensive due to weather and tree fall. Phase 1 is currently underway (Cascade Locks to McCord Creek). Phase 2 will go all the way to Bridal Veil. The vaults will be underground, tops flush with the ground and hidden back. The pedestals for the transformers will sit above the ground about 3 feet, although they may be taller in some areas to protect from flooding. They will be dark green in color.

Jeanette said she thought the line was going to be moved closer to I-84. Dave replied that it could go in front of the Ainsworth Park area. Jeanette asked about the existing stone culverts on the original HCRH alignment (Frontage road) near Warrendale. David said that the line would probably go underneath the culverts and close to the shoulder, close to the pavement. They are studying the possibility of boring under the culverts.

Mt. Hood Scenic Byway Update

Jeannie Breashears of the Clackamas County Tourism Council gave a presentation on the Mt. Hood National Scenic Byway. She handed out their new brochure and explained that getting the Mt. Hood route designated as a National Scenic Byway was a ten-year process, ending in 2005. Although Hood River County fought the idea at first, they gave in as more counties and cities offered their support to the effort. The group worked with ODOT to get approval for the signs. Clackamas County Tourism Council provided funding for the brochure, which not only promotes the Mt. Hood National Scenic Byway but also the West Cascades Scenic Byway, which starts in Clackamas County. It also mentions the Historic Columbia River Highway/All American Road.

The all-volunteer byways proponents group has received a seed grant for \$24,000. They need to develop some internal management and design. They would like to market the HCRH and Mt. Hood Scenic Highway jointly and promote the “loop.” The route strategically starts in Troutdale, the starting point of the HCRH. They are looking to the Gorge Graphic Signing system as a good example of how to tie the route together graphically. Seed grants are only good for three years. She said a second partner will help develop a foundation or non profit that could attract additional partners and outside funding.

Amendment to the Hood River Programmatic Agreement

Kristen explained that the proposed amendment to the programmatic agreement provides for the addition of a right-turn lane from Cascade Avenue on to Mt. Adams Avenue. The Proposed Motion reads: “The HCRH Advisory Committee supports the City’s efforts to amend Programmatic Agreement #19942 to accommodate a right hand turn lane at the intersection of Cascade Avenue and the proposed Mount Adams Avenue provided the existing cross section for Cascade Avenue outlined in both the City’s TSP and the Programmatic Agreement remains, with the only exception being the addition of a 12’ right hand turn lane and pedestrian refuge. As part of the PA amendment, the HCRH Advisory Committee recommends revising the attached cross-section to improve legibility and conformity with the 43’-44’ cross-section and the approved lane widths.” The City of Hood River has reviewed the drawings and supports the amendment. Bill Pattison asked for approval of the amendment. Ernie Drapela moved. James Hamrick said the word “with” should be deleted and then seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway

Jeanette Kloos, President of the Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway, said that they had a good kick-off meeting and they are getting great support. They have gone from five to 60 registrants for the Gorge Ride on June 16. The group will participate at the Edgefield concerts. They are also forming a subcommittee to work on the Historic Columbia River Highway Alternative Alignments Trails Project. Rick Kuehn from CH2M Hill is helping. Congressman Peter DeFazio wants to know the options for Moffett Creek section as well as at Mitchell Point.

Starvation Creek to Viento Trail Section

Magnus Bernhardt gave the Committee a project update. Magnus explained how he and the team have worked to eliminate or reduce wall heights. Wayne Stewart worked with Magnus to reduce the original 17-foot wall to 7 feet. Now it is possible that a wall is not needed. The embankment would cost less to build and ties in better with the environment. Art Carroll confirmed that the accepted standard trail width was 16 feet.

Jeanette inquired about the culvert in the meadow. She understood that fill was required to allow water to flow under the roadway through a culvert laid on the ground at the present road level. Magnus agreed to take a closer look at this.

The project team has a new leader who hopes to forge ahead with the design work and have the project ready for bids.

The Dalles “Shooting Range”

Sam Wilkins reported on the status of the “illegal” shooting range pit, which is located on ODOT property at the eastern end of the HCRH near The Dalles. Sam believes that the Wasco County Court can designate the property as “shooting prohibited.” The city of The Dalles will support the Court’s action. A public meeting will be held and Sam assured the Advisory Committee that “opposition will be there.” It will take four to five months from the time the ordinance is filed to the final approval. Bill asked if the Committee could provide some help by writing a letter to the county. The county commissioners are aware of the problem. There are few alternatives for shooters (e.g. National Forest Service land or The Dalles Rifle and Pistol Club, which charges fees and has rules). There is an interest in moving the urban growth boundary and the city limits west, which would eventually take in this parcel and make the shooting range pit a moot point.

Art Carroll suggested that the Committee craft a letter to ODOT and Wasco County in support of closing the area to its current use. Jack added that the whole specter of the scenic area and the long-term goal to clean up the HCRH means that this particular site needs to be restored to its previous visual quality. A restoration plan would have to be written and given to Wasco County for approval. Additionally, funds are needed to make it happen. James Hamrick moved that staff draft a support letter for the Committee to sign. Ernie Drapela seconded the motion. Art said this should be done as soon as possible and the letter should indicate that the committee has given the problem some thought and this project has been identified in the HCRH Master Plan. Ernie Drapela said the present status of the site is intolerable but offers an opportunity to turn a negative into a positive. Marc Berry said the language of the letter should be kept simple. Ernie added that it should be one letter with two parts – the first part supporting the County’s proposed action and the second part indicating the Committee sees an opportunity in the making. The motion passed unanimously.

Hood River to Mitchell Point Update

Magnus reported that ODOT has the survey map available to start incorporating the Ruthton Park improvement into the proposed trail alignment adjacent to the Stevenson property in Hood River.

BREAK FOR LUNCH

Forest Lane Cascade Locks Update

The changes to the original draft memo had been distributed to Committee members before the meeting. Magnus Bernhardt reviewed the main components of the memo. He explained that the current Programmatic Agreement calls for a 36-foot-wide cross-section, which will not accommodate the traffic that the casino anticipates. The proposal outlined in the memo provides for continuity of the historic roadway.

Jack asked if there was anything considered in the design to help maintain the HCRH's integrity. James asked if this proposal was consistent with what was considered all along and Magnus said yes and that it's just a different type of drafting the group was seeing. Ernie Drapela asked how the HCRH's character is identified in this section of the Highway. He suggested using the white guardrail fencing. Ernie said he didn't see anything in the drawings that signifies the history of that section of the Highway.

Peter Cornelison reminded the Committee that the Friends of the Gorge opposes the casino in general and the overall effect that it will have on the HCRH. The Hood River County Engineer had said at the May 17 meeting that Views A and B on the drawings were not agreed to by the Warm Springs Tribes and the Tribe was not amenable to making improvements out that far. Kelley Beamer, also of the Friends of the Gorge, introduced and read a letter from Richard Randall who asks the Advisory Committee to join with others and protest the building of the casino in Cascade Locks.

John Morgan, speaking for Cascade Locks, said that the City needs a new interchange to accommodate future traffic associated with the industrial park, not specifically the proposed casino. His concern is over the lane design – three lanes will not accommodate anticipated traffic 30 or 40 years from now. Kristen said that Kittleson reported that three lanes will be sufficient. The wall at Section A is already being designed and installation is planned for this summer. John said he was concerned about how the transition was going to be made on the bike lane. Magnus said the split bike lane will transfer to one lane at the controlled intersection. There are natural area constraints and other issues that were considered for the lane design.

Jim Brussard from the Interchange Level 1 Committee has been a consultant to the Tribes for the last 10 years. He stated that the Tribes and others are not sure what the uses will be years down the road. A three-lane configuration at Point "D" may not be adequate 20 years from now. An allotment should be made for another lane. He likes the new vision of keeping one side "historic." The question is still open on pedestrian traffic "when and where" on the transition. They are looking at two different options. Regardless, they want to see the trail down on the south side of the road. Current traffic numbers are relatively

small. People's lives in Cascade Locks will change with the casino and planned industrial development. It is estimated there will be 5,000 cars a day on Forest Lane by 2020 which is still a low traffic count. It is huge for Cascade Locks, however. John said they are happy to assist in any way they can to make the trail look and feel historic.

Bill Pattison recognized Wayne Stewart's tremendous effort of wordsmithing the document and suggested the Committee approve the draft with the amended drawings.

Jack Wiles asked John Morgan if the railroad was going to be realigned. John replied that only the spur line was and that he didn't think it would be an issue. The storage area for the boxcars will be moved out of the area. Bill said the Advisory Committee needs to take action.

Jason Tell explained that final decisions on the road configuration will take place after the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and prior to the Final Environmental Impact Statement. The Advisory Committee will be asked to provide comments prior to the Final EIS. While the fence and details of the design can all be done later at a later date, the work the HCRH Advisory Committee has done to date has been great. The Committee needs to get the memo out while acknowledging that more work needs to be done.

Ernie sees the memo as the Committee's chance to put their oar in the water and he moved to accept the draft memo. Jason seconded the motion.

Art and Ernie both wanted assurance that the Advisory Committee continues to have a role in the process. They wonder if others will perceive the memo as if the Advisory Committee has had their say and that will be the end of it. Kristen said the changes will require an amendment to the Programmatic Agreement. James reminded all that the U.S. Department of the Interior is asking the Tribes for more alternatives in order to get the Department's approval for the project. Ernie commented on John's statement that the idea of a casino is irrelevant. James reminded the group that it is not the Committee's job to weigh in on the casino. Marc Berry commented that he is still not satisfied with bike riders safety through the area and whether the traffic is coming from the casino or industrial area, he would have the same fear.

The vote was called for and the motion unanimously.

Spotlighting the HCRH

Jason Tell invited Shelli Romero, the governmental liaison for ODOT Region 1, to assist the Advisory Committee to strategize ways to spotlight the completed connection projects on the HCRH. Routine grant awards are not going to meet future project needs. With the recently adopted Master Plan and 2016 goal, the spotlight is on the HCRH. However, Jason understands that there needs to be much more of a groundswell of support for the projects before additional funding becomes available. James offered to ask Mary Oberst, Oregon's First Lady, if she was interested in taking on this cause.

Shelli added that consistency and continuity are really important. SAFETEA-LU will be up for reauthorization soon so we really need to get support now. Art suggested for consideration historical groups, museums, etc. James said to add chambers of commerce, tourist associations, and antique car groups. Shelli commented that the local groups are going to be easier to get time with than state and federal groups. Jason said start locally, then build momentum and work your way up. He suggested that Scott West work on a subcommittee as Scott has some experience with these types of presentations. Jack said to add the Federal Highway Administration, especially as they are already supportive of the project. Jeanette added not only FHWA in the Vancouver office but the Salem office as well.

Jack said to mention the monetary/employment pluses to the presentation. Shelli added that some agencies can dovetail programs with other agencies. Art said emphasis should be on "by the Centennial." Shelli thanked everyone for their support so far. Art added that the presentation should also focus on what has been accomplished already as that is the focus of the Master Plan. James said that we must be more aggressive with the congressional delegates. James would be willing to work on the group a little bit and Scott West and Art Carroll would be the core members.

Project Updates

- **Oneonta Tunnel**

Adam Markell gave a report on Oneonta Tunnel Project. The tunnel extension and the collapsed part have required additional funds to complete the project. The Region has applied for Transportation Enhancement discretionary funds. They will know in June if the Region is successful in obtaining those funds.

Adam reported that they are also having trouble with the contractor verifying costs. They are trying to work with the existing contractor but ODOT may decide to go with another contractor. The original work is not all done. The tunnel extension and strengthening need to be done first. Jason explained that the original cost has now doubled.

- **Crown Point**

Adam explained that the Crown Point Viaduct rehab project will be delivered as design/build as opposed to design/bid/build. The Public Lands Highway (PLH) discretionary funds grant request results should be known in July. The funds need to be obligated by the end of the federal fiscal year (end of September). With the normal design/bid/build process, this would mean having a project ready for bids by September 30. With the design/build process, the project only needs to have a request for proposals for designing and building completed by September 30 to obligate the funds. The SHPO, Friends of Vista House, and others will be part of the project development process.

- **Multnomah Falls Rock Fences**

Robert Hadlow reported that Fred Gullixson, an ODOT geotech, inspected the rock protection fences that the agency had installed in 1996 on slopes along the HCRH just west of Multnomah Falls Lodge and the West Multnomah Falls Viaduct. Fred recommended that the fence near the lodge was no longer needed and should be removed. He recommended that this fall, the agency remove and reinstall the fence near the viaduct.

- **World Heritage Site Application**

Robert Hadlow completed an application to have the HCRH considered for the United State's World Heritage site tentative list. At this point there are 36 properties from around the US that sent in applications. The portions of the Highway in the application are owned by the state of Oregon or the USDA Forest Service. Governor Kulongoski has endorsed our application, as the highest state official. We are awaiting approval from the Chief of the US Forest Service for the application to be deemed appropriate.

- **World Road Congress**

Dave Sell, George Fekaris and Robert Hadlow had a paper on the HCRH accepted for the World Road Congress in Paris in September. Sam Hill, the visionary for the HCRH, was a delegate to the first road congress in Paris in 1908. A special historical symposium will address a century of roads, including our highway.

- **McCord to Moffett Creek Trail**

Kristen informed the Committee that they would hear by July whether they were successful in competition to receive a grant from the Federal Transit Administration for the McCord Creek to Moffett Creek Trail project. Jason said the idea for looking at transit funds was that the Federal Parks are getting so crowded the government wanted transit to get more involved in park congestion issues.

Next Meeting

Kristen said she would like to hold an HCRH AC meeting and a field trip this summer.

The meeting closed at 2:55 pm. The next meeting date, time and location will be announced at a later date.