

MINUTES

Oregon Country Fair Path Planning Committee

Nov. 20, 2011, noon to 3:00 PM at Alice's living room

Members present: Colleen Bauman (co-chair in charge), Chris Browne, Dean Middleton, Dennis Todd, Jay Hogan, Jon Pincus (late), Justin Honea (co-chair), Michael Richard, Paxton Hoag, Susanna DeFazio, Tom Churchill, David Tipton

Staff: Charlie Ruff

Guests: Bear Pitts, Bill Wright, Howard McCartney, DJ Rogers, JAR Smith

There were no announcements.

Public comments: JAR asked whether there is a preference or a tendency to one of the three Crafts Lot sketches that have been proposed. He heads a crew of about 60 people (DeCon) that camps together, with car camping, in the Crafts Lot. He wants to be sure that they have some lead time so they can stay together when and if they move.

Colleen: Talk to the Camping Crew, especially Chewie. The PPC is committed to facilitating camp relocation.

Dennis: The design process is ongoing, with no plan preference emerging yet. What does DeCon need for us to incorporate into our planning process?

JAR: Fences will be split, with the lower panels moved up out of the flood water and fastened to the upper panels for off-season storage. Fence panels last longer if they are not taken down and moved off site for storage each year--and it takes less labor to leave them on site. We should design booths like the Child Care booth, where the floor, loft deck, counters and skirts fold up so they don't impede flood waters or vegetation re-growth. Semi-permanent booths like that are likely to last the longest and take the least effort from Construction to maintain. The re-design of the front of the Fair will include rebuilding and possibly relocating the sticker booth, which is a big project to install and remove each year. The effect on our carbon footprint of so much trucking is substantial. Wet springs make site preparation and installation of temporary booths difficult. When DeCon camping is moved, they need a secure close to tools, materials, and the work site.

Justin: JAR's feedback helps us choose between designs.

JAR: Talk to Heather, Construction co-coordinator, who deals with budget issues for the crew. The front of the Fair is undergoing change, especially the sticker booth and the Line in the Sand, to make it more welcoming and functional. The new sticker booth may be multi-purpose for both family and guests.

Paxton: There will be a BoD workshop on the "Front of the Fair" on February 11, 2012.

Agenda review: Dean asked whether we can add the communications map to the maps page of the PPC website. Dennis said he would get the file from Cartography and post it.

Paxton: We should specify the date for the Crafts Lot neighborhood refinement workshop in April 2012. The amended agenda was approved unanimously.

Minutes review: Two small amendments were made. Two members abstained from voting; the other approved of the amended minutes.

Staff report: Charlie confirmed the BoD work session on Feb. 11. The management team has invited Traffic coordinators to the BUM meeting this week. At the BoD retreat there were some members leaning toward moving the barter fair this year because Miss Piggy's lot will be needed for camping relocation. The sticker booth rebuild needs stakeholder input. The new site is not set. Staff and family parking has to move farther out to leave more space for the public--many of the cars parked in Trotter's Field during the event have OCF parking stickers.

Subcommittee report: Pocket parks. Susanna reported on the subcommittee's tour through about a third of the loops (the new loop and East 13th). They were excited about possible sites for parks and rest areas and especially about how booths could be re-designed and rebuilt to reduce path congestion and showcase heritage trees.

Jay: Being on the site was wonderful and inspiring.

Chris: Many trees are hidden from the public by booths.

Bill: Booths should be built so that customers come into the booths to shop.

Susanna: Booth fronts make the paths linear. Other booth designs that open to the path would be more exciting and interesting.

Bear: Root compaction is a problem for big trees. Where he camps, he builds decks to keep traffic off the soil.

Paxton: Can we post the pocket parks subcommittee report on the PPC web site?

Dennis: Soil compaction when Abbey Rode was opened in the 1980s was immediate and dramatic. Similar compaction will occur in newly developed paths. The roots of these big trees can extend 80 or 100 feet from the trunk, so they can survive localized compaction.

Jon: Trees at the WOW Hall are facing similar damage.

David: All the areas we looked at were already heavily used. We should include big trees as attractions in path design and development.

Charlie: Some tree species are more vulnerable to root damage than others.

Susanna: Hopes that the new loop will be designed around heritage trees.

Chris: For example, behind booth 193 is a beautiful tree not visible to the public.

Invited guest speaker (and PPC member) Jay Hogan is the co-coordinator of Ambience whose dominion includes parks, decor, smoking areas, and other matters. He discussed the design of Crafts Lot. He noted that stilt walkers and giant puppets need 12 feet of overhead clearance. Pocket parks are great places for ambient entertainment. New areas need to look and feel like the old areas at OCF. Every neighborhood needs a smoking area. Chela Mela has two, and Crafts Lot should have two or more. They need to be sited where the second-hand smoke affects the fewest people. Suitable sites may be found near the recycling stations or toilets.

Charlie: The footprint of a smoking area goes way beyond the immediate vicinity of the butt can. Wayward smoke can affect people quite a ways away.

Dean: Has there been a study of the wind at OCF?

Paxton: Smoking areas need chimneys.

Jay: Crafts Lot is an opportunity to site parks and smoking areas from the beginning of the design process. Tobacco smoking is not going to stop; providing a suitable site is a public service.

Justin: Where are the high chairs sited?

Jay: Sort of randomly.

JAR: Except that some are always placed near the stiltwalkers' drinking fountains.

Agenda item: Should we move Mellow Space and the kids' playground to the new loop this year?

David: Mellow Space could be moved, which would open a space for five temporary booths, meeting the committee's mandate to specify replacement booth space.

Construction has plenty to do this year and would rather not move or replace the play structures until later.

Charlie: Seconded David's comment. We'll know by mid-spring whether we need replacement booth space because of erosion. We can decide then whether to move Mellow Space.

Paxton: Favors moving Mellow Space this year and leaving the play structures until later.

Justin: Agrees that moving the play structures this year is premature.

Bill: We need more space for new crafters.

Colleen: Vi (Child Care co-coordinator) wants the play structure moved. Jeff Harrison of Booth Inventory said we need more booths. Because parents can sit with their younger children in Mellow Space and watch their older children playing on the play structures, the playground and Mellow Space should stay next to each other.

JAR: The kids' play structures are anchored three feet deep in the ground for safety and strength. They will not be easy to move. New play structures should be designed for the new space. Given time for thought and design, new structures would be better than the old. We should take our time to move stuff.

Colleen: The original plan was to move the kids' play structure to meet the need for replacement booths. OCF feedback indicates there's not enough stuff for kids. We should keep the old play structures as long as we can.

David: There's no reason to move Mellow Space unless it turns out this spring that we need the space for booths. Construction doesn't want to do temporary installations--they are a waste of time and materials and inhibit future opportunities. Wants the long view before construction.

Dennis moved "The sense of the committee is not to press forward with moving Kids Loop and Mellow Space this year unless later circumstances dictate otherwise."

Howard: If we don't move the play structure and Mellow Space, what is there for kids in the new area?

Chris: The goal of Child Care this year is duplication of the Sesame Street child care compound at "Mulberry Lane," the name Child Care proposes for the new loop.

Charlie: It's better to develop in stages.

Justin: Called the question. The motion passed.

Susanna wants the design process for Mulberry Lane to feature big trees.

JAR: Child safety issues are important in the design process. Last-minute, unexpected tasks and weather before the Fair can have an impact on what can be done.

Jay: Sent e-mails to committee members detailing history and siting considerations of smoking areas. Asked for questions or comments.

Jon: Nobody should be exposed to toxic fumes. Objects to giving priority to smoking. Is personally very affected by second-hand smoke. Site smoking areas away from everything else.

Tom: A crew member saw a butt can on fire. Is placement of the cans safe? Are there fire extinguishers or water in the smoking areas?

Jay: No, but booths have fire extinguishers.

Michael: Agrees with Jon. Liability is an issue around smoking. Minimizing smoking is the right thing to do.

Colleen: There is a BoD policy to provide smoking areas. It's too much to ask a smoker to go 8 hours or more (for guests) or days (for volunteers) without smoking.

Susanna: Son-in-law lives with her, is smoker, showed her that the social aspect of sharing leads to even more smoking. If smoking areas are attractive, there will be more smoking. Make them inconvenient, unattractive, and off the path.

Paxton: Not in favor of prohibitions, but we need to control smoking. OCF feedback includes objections to drifting smoke. Solution: provide smoking areas off the path or in well-ventilated structures.

Jay: Hasn't ever smoked, has an uncle who smoked and has lung cancer and a non-smoking friend who has lung cancer from second-hand smoke, despises smoking, but recognizes the need to accommodate everyone. OCF needs smoking areas. He wants solutions that work for smokers and non-smokers.

David: Booths complain about smoking. Cigarettes are just one of the many crutches we use. Many places, including parks, prohibit smoking. We need smoking sites off the path.

Charlie: Said he's an ex-smoker (round of applause). OCF decided to ban alcohol. Don't waste committee time on policy decisions that are the province of the BoD. We need balance. Don't make smokers feel like second-class citizens, but don't make smoking areas a priority. The public needs smoking areas more than the family does.

Michael: Likes the idea of a smokers' path with tobacco-related booths.

JAR: Feedback indicates some want a park for medical marijuana patients. Others want to ban smoking. Smoking spots need to be isolated.

Paxton: Feedback shows a lot of illegal smoking on the path. Path rove should be expanded.

Dean: LCC has designated smoking areas in the parking lots.

Jay: We're talking about the public space. If we ban tobacco use by the public but our family can smoke behind the fences, it'll reinforce the "us vs. them" image.

Chris: Do our advertising or tickets tell the public that smoking sites are restricted?

Charlie: The Peach Pit and the poster say smoking is restricted.

Agenda item: Naming conventions

Paxton: We need naming conventions.

Charlie: The default is a recommendation to the BoD which may include names for new areas. There are many unspoken guidelines for naming but no organized procedures.

Often names appear through Cartography and are reviewed by management. It should be the purview of the BoD. PPC should include name suggestions for new areas.

Jay: "Mulberry Lane," as proposed by Child Care, is a good name.

Chris: Child Care, as the principal occupant, should be able to propose the name.

Colleen: Agrees that PPC can include name proposals with plans.

Jon: Agrees with Charlie. The wrong place name could have consequences for vendors if the name is changed.

Agenda item: Barter Fair

Charlie: The management team is talking to the BoD about the barter fair, which is a huge drain on the resources of the Fair for the sake of a few participants. Some people bring two or three box trucks full of manufactured goods to sell at the barter fair. It could be changed to a pedestrian-only event set up only on Monday. It could be sited in the northwest part of Trotter's Field if the area were designated for public parking only (all stickered cars would be towed away) during the Fair. PPC support could help. Unless the barter fair is moved, not much camping relocation or Crafts Lot development would be possible.

Michael: Vendors want the barter fair to be on their way to their cars on Monday.

Charlie: Has heard that some vendors couldn't do OCF if they didn't have income from the barter fair.

DJ: About five people from Arch Park participate in the barter fair.

JAR: Misses the old days when the barter fair actually involved barter.

Charlie: How could we enforce barter-only?

David: Likes the social aspect of the barter fair, feels ritual of closing each year's Fair, moved: "PPC recommends to the Board of Directors that the barter fair be moved from Miss Piggy's lot so we can open Crafts Lot to the public."

Susanna asked Charlie who needs barter fair income to come to the Fair. Charlie said he didn't know the answer, only that he had heard the argument.

Justin: The trend is that the barter fair is moving away from its original intent, an opportunity for OCF vendors to sell their own goods. It is more and more sales of non-OCF-originated merchandise, usually sold by OCF family.

The question was called. Paxton voted against calling the question, but all others voted in favor. David's motion passed unanimously.

Agenda item: Acquire GPS for mapping. Tabled because Chewie, the sponsor of the item, was absent.

Agenda item: Schedule Crafts Lot neighborhood plan workshop on April 15, 2012 (the scheduled PPC committee meeting date), at noon, on site at the Crafts Lot if conditions allow. Approved.

Meeting evaluation: We should not spend much time on policy issues that are beyond our purview. PPC procedures are inclusive and bring interested parties in. Action items are important committee products. Pointing out problems with policies and guidelines is an important responsibility of the committee. Dec. 29 is the deadline for guideline suggestions.

--minutes by Dennis Todd