

Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee

MINUTES

April 20, 2006

Hood River County Library
Hood River, Oregon

- Members Attending:** Wayne Stewart, Jerry Igo, Art Carroll, Kevin Price, Ernie Drapela, Jason Tell, Carolyn Wood
- Staff Attending:** Jeanette Kloos, Robert Hadlow, Kristen Stallman
- Others Attending:** Diana Ross, USDA Forest Service; George Fekaris, FHWA-WFLHD; David Ellis, AINW; Carol Snead, HDR; Gerald Hendrickson, BIA; Tom Stevenson, DM Stevenson Ranch; Anne Debbaut, Hood River County Planning

Wayne Stewart chaired the meeting in Bill Pattison's absence. The Advisory Committee approved the minutes from the last meeting as mailed.

Stevenson Ranch (Meredith Motel Redevelopment Proposal):

After a site tour, HCRH Advisory Committee considered a development proposal at the former Meredith Motel site. The proposal was presented by Tom Stevenson, who represents DM Stevenson Ranch, which would like to develop 24 condominiums on the property adjacent to the HCRH on Westcliff Drive in Hood River. Westcliff Drive is managed by Hood River County and is currently under lease to Stevenson.

Mr. Stevenson has applied for review with Hood River County, but decision on the application was delayed to allow the HCRH Advisory Committee time to review the development proposal in relation to the HCRH State Trail proposal in this same area.

Mr. Stevenson plans to build an 11-foot sound wall along the ODOT I-84 right-of-way. However, preliminary engineering has not been completed and the height of the wall is negotiable. The sound wall will employ design concepts previously developed by ODOT to incorporate images from the HCRH, including arches and basalt rock.

Mr. Stevenson proposes that the HCRH trail for this area could go through the development's parking lot and that parking for people starting their bike trip in this area would be nearby at the county's Ruthton Park. The trail would continue east through Hood River along Westcliff Drive, Cascade Avenue, Oak Street, and Front Street to the Oregon 35 intersection.

Wayne Stewart expressed concern that DM Stevenson's site plan uses the right-of-way and the future state trail for private parking. Mr. Stevenson explained that the property was transferred from ODOT to the county in 1976, and sometime during the following 10 years Stevenson Ranch acquired a lease. Mr. Stevenson believes that they can use the right-of-way for their purposes if they don't build anything permanent on it. Hood River County's Senior

Planner, Anne Debbaut, stated that the County's legal counsel agrees with Mr. Stevenson on this point. Mr. Stevenson reiterated that he is willing to allow access to the part of the trail that's on the right-of-way. Mr. Stewart asked if there are requirements other than no building within the right-of-way. Definitive answers from County/ODOT are needed. There may be certain reserved rights that may supersede Stevenson's rights.

Carolyn Wood asked Mr. Stevenson if he would be willing to wait for ODOT as preliminary engineering for this trail segment is about to begin. He was reluctant to wait until ODOT started design work, but would be glad to work with them as they will have to work with ODOT on the sound wall.

Members stated their legal mandate to restore the HCRH as close to historic status as possible for biking and pedestrians. Members expressed concern with the proposal; especially about placing users in potentially dangerous situations with vehicles. They also believe that the proposal does not meet standards for HCRH State Trail segments. Finally, several members are concerned that the proposal violates the conditions of transfer of Westcliff Drive between the state and the county.

Anne Debbaut expressed that the Committee needs to act quickly as there has already been delay to allow comment from this committee. They need to finalize their decision and complete a staff report in the next few weeks. Ms. Debbaut said that the County would take the Commission's recommendation as comment and based on comments they receive, they would approve or deny the application. If this is not satisfactory to the Commission, the Committee has can be appeal the decision.

Carolyn Wood moved that the HCRH AC ask ODOT to seriously consider the concerns with sound wall development, traffic passage through what appears to be a parking lot, and the west end connection. She also moved that ODOT work with Stevenson Ranch to solve the problems as soon as possible. Art Carroll seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed with one abstention (Scott West).

Jason Tell will direct ODOT staff to research the conditions of use, and address the approach, sound wall, and parking issues.

Ms. Debbaut stated that her office will need suggestions within 2 weeks.

HCRH Master Plan Commission Meetings Report:

Wayne Stewart reported that he had asked the Tourism Commission to help with the HCRH 100th anniversary celebration events in 2016. The response seemed to be positive.

Wayne Stewart asked that the Parks Commission commit \$1 million a year for 10 years for HCRH State Trail improvements. Wayne Stewart requested that the Transportation Commission consider designating \$2 million a year for 10 years. Response was non-committal, but encouraged seeking funding. It is hoped that both Parks and Transportation Commissions will put the HCRH into their regular annual budgets. The response from the Parks Commission was neutral.

Wayne Stewart proposed that the HCRH AC make annual reports to each commission. There is a need to have an annual line item for the HCRH as there are \$50 million of improvements needed by 2016. The AC must take aggressive stance to obtain funding or the connector trail sections will not be finished by 2016.

HCRH AC members were requested to provide additions to the list of people receiving the HCRH Master Plan and the Executive Summary.

International Road Congress 100th Anniversary:

Robert Hadlow spoke about the World Road Congress and its 100th anniversary in 2008. Sam Hill and three guests (Sam Lancaster, Henry Bowlby, and Reginald Thomson) represented the Pacific Northwest at the first Congress in 1908 in Paris. They also traveled the roads of Western Europe and the British Isles. The 2007 Congress will be in Paris and will include a historical symposium on the last 100 years of road building. Carolyn moved that Robert submit a paper proposal for the conference on the HCRH. Jerry seconded. The motion passed. Robert will email Road Congress website to HCRH Commission members. <http://www.piarc.org/en/>

HCRH Development Review Process:

Kristen has charted different area designations (Historic Highway, National Scenic Area, National Landmark), the areas of impact (urban: curb-to-curb, rural: wider), and the Advisory Committee's levels of responsibility within those areas (review development proposals for subordination to scenery, etc.) in order to know what type of impact the commission could make in what areas. Development proposal requests will be reviewed to determine the possibility of adverse effect. Adverse effect is development adjacent to highway that would make it not qualify for the designation.

HCRH discussed levels of responsibility of staff and members and determined the following plan of action.

- Staff and HCRH AC will work together to develop parameters around adverse effect vs. no adverse effect.
- Staff will review proposals and determine rules for the area and whether the Advisory Committee can make a decision or a recommendation.
- Staff will forward all development proposals along with an area map, the area's rules, effect parameters, staff's recommendation on whether or not HCRH should comment, and recommendation for map review or on-site review to Advisory Committee members for their review.
- Staff will also work on building relationships with county planners, etc., to train them in the Advisory Committee's authority and letting them know when the Committee should be advised of proposed developments near the highway.

Casino Update:

David Ellis, AINW; Carol Snead, HDR; and Gerald Hendrickson, BIA, spoke with the HCRH AC about the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs' casino development

proposal for Cascade Locks and its impact on the HCRH. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which they hope to release in July, will include a “conditional no-adverse affect” statement for the area. The current Cascade Locks casino development proposal appears to affect up to 900 feet of the Forest Lane section of the HCRH, where a new interchange would be completed. The redesign will have a significant view scape impact to the HCRH including two overpasses; one over the freeway and one over the highway and railroad to get to the Casino. The AC inquired why an underpass option was not considered and pointed to examples at the Port of Cascade Locks and the City of the Dalles.

AC members stated that the HCRH is not something to consider only after highway design is complete. They expressed extreme concern with the proposal and the fact that the presenters did not seem to be the right people to answer the member’s questions regarding roadway design.

ACTION ITEM: AC members will present a list of concerns to the Casino project team. If the AC members are not comfortable with answers they will request a special meeting between the AC and the project team. The Advisory Committee needs to determine its position on Forest Lane impacts and appropriate mitigations.

ACTIVITY STATUS REPORTS:

OPRD Update

The Vista House dedication is scheduled for May 5, 2006. There will be parking at the Corbett schools with a shuttle to the building. Festivities start at 10:30 A.M. which includes a flag raising. The lift has been installed. ABC’s Good Morning America will be airing a spot on the Columbia River Gorge on April 30.

USDA Forest Service Update

The Forest Service will be doing a vegetation management study on the highway near the Mosier Twin Tunnels. This will help determine what areas will and won’t be thinned.

The Eagle Creek bike lane final design is at 90 percent and the specifications are at 10 percent. Construction is planned for 2010.

Western Federal Lands Highway Division, FHWA, Update

George Fekaris reported that Matt Joerin is taking Dave Sell’s place at WFLHD and should be attending future HCRH meetings. Project costs are going higher and higher. FHWA thought that they would have another call for projects this year but now there is talk of postponing for another year.

ODOT Project Updates:

HCRH Gutters— One mile of gutter has been exposed. Some sections will be replaced; others will be repaired. The gutters are in all shapes, sizes and forms making it a challenge to replicate. Wall work near Shepperd's Dell will be done next autumn and will require a month-long road closure.

Oneonta Tunnel/Parking—The project was delivered to ODOT and has been advertised. Bid opening is April 26.

Crown Point Viaduct Restoration—The bid for Preliminary Engineering work was twice the estimated cost, so WFLHD is determining the next steps. It is not anticipated that the work will shut down the highway. It does not appear that the viaduct sidewalk has any structural integrity with the highway but an engineering exam will confirm this. The HCRH between Larch Mountain and Crown Point is slumping but no investigations are being done in the area.

SAFETEA-LU—\$500,000 has been earmarked in SAFETEA-LU for "Hood River to McCord Creek" will be used to begin PE on the HCRH State Trail segment from Mitchell Point to Hood River (Meredith Motel is the eastern termini of this section).

Cascade Locks Electric Under grounding—Phase The City of Cascade Locks has obtained a Congressional earmark to bury electrical lines in two phases—Tanner Creek to McCord Creek in Phase 1 and Ainsworth to Multnomah Falls in Phase 2. Phase 2 will be more difficult to carry out because of potential impacts to the HCRH around Multnomah Falls.

HCRH Interpretive Sites & Signs—Bid Opening was November 10, 2005; four bidders. All were rejected as non-responsive. ODOT plans to reschedule bidding for November 2006. The City of Cascade Locks received a proposal to build a restroom facility/espresso stand at intersection of Forest Lane and WaNaPa. The AC is concerned about how the proposal affects on the interpretive signs and traffic flow.

Rowena Pit Restoration—The project is in the plant establishment phase. OPRD will make sure the plants are watered.

Wasco County Industrial Lands—Google, the internet search engine, has bought up all the industrial land in The Dalles. The city is required by law to identify a 20 year supply of industrial lands. Some areas that may become industrial land for The Dalles may abut the HCRH west of Chenoweth Creek.

Warrendale to Moffett Creek- This project is in concept development. Staff is developing a grant proposal for the alternative modes in public lands grant program. The funding would cover Phase 1 for \$1 million.

City Programmatic Agreements—In the signature phase.

HCRH at Viento—The project is in the concept plans phase. Staff hopes to have proposal in September Advisory Committee Meeting. Staff will be applying for Transportation Enhancement funds and staff will be requesting support letters shortly.

Latourell Falls/Guy Talbot State Park—OPRD is the lead. Enhancement planned in 2008.

Interstate 84 Fencing—National Scenic Area permits will be done this summer with construction beginning in the spring of 2007.

Interstate 84 Corridor Strategy—Staff will begin investigation of vegetation management proposals and the NSA entrance signs.

Historic Routes Signs—Robert Hadlow presented an example of the sign. Design is progressing. Color and font is being worked on. Staff will be developing an inventory and an implementation plan for Advisory Committee review next fall.

Sandy River Delta—The Confluence Project is proposing that a Maya Lin bird blind be placed at the confluence of the Sandy River and the Columbia River, as part of the Lewis and Clark bicentennial celebration, with a walkway to the river. Sandy River Delta parking relocation is planned as a separate project. Forest Service sent letter of intent for a transportation enhancement project and got an OK to submit the application. All phases need funding.

Development Reviews:

Wasco County Review (SAR-05-142—Henry Moore) Follow-up on wrought iron fence and ivy along the HCRH: The applicant was notified of the Advisory Committee's concerns and was sent the HCRH "Family of Railing Designs" report. The applicant decided to set the fence back from the highway and incorporate HCRH design elements. This is a good example of the design review assistance provided by the Advisory Committee.

Other Business:

This is Carolyn Wood's last meeting. She has encouraged Marc Berry, mayor of Mosier, to apply for the seat. If he is approved, he will be participating in the next meeting. Otherwise, Carolyn will be back.

The next regularly scheduled HCRH AC meeting is September 21, 2006, at the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center in The Dalles. The AC may decide to have a special meeting before then to address the proposed casino.

(Please Note: Meeting Location Change. CASCADE LOCKS, Best Western Conference Room, September 21, 2006.)