

## MINUTES

Historic Columbia River Highway  
Advisory Committee  
September 15, 1994  
216 Columbia Avenue, Hood River

Members Present: Richard Blaine, Julie Curtis, James Hamrick, John Lundell, Lewis L. McArthur, Sharon Timko, Richard Walkoski, Bruce Warner and Carolyn Wood.

Staff Present: Jeanette Kloos, Randy Davis, Sam Wilkins, and Gail Smith.

Public Present: Ken Jernstedt; Brian Litt, Columbia River Gorge Commission; Nancy Russell, Lauri Aunan, Joe Walicki, Friends of the Columbia Gorge; Russ Jolley, Native Plant Society; Bibi Gaston, Bus Gibson, Sharr Prohaska, Richard Ross, Carroll, Davis, Karen Fost, Susan Karwoski, Barbara Robinson, Jerry Igo, Joy News, Martha Hall, Mike Stovall, E. H. Smith, and George Shepard III. Additional people attended but did not sign attendance list.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes were approved as written.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

Ken Jernstedt, who sponsored the bill creating the Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee and served on the Committee for four years, was presented with a plaque in appreciation for his dedicated service.

### **HOOD RIVER TO MOSIER PROJECT**

Lewis McArthur opened the public comment period on this project by reading parts of the attached letter to the Committee, explaining the current funding situation.

John Lundell asked what the termini are for the project and if they could be changed to increase

the length that is open to regular motor vehicle traffic and eligible for highway funding. Jeanette Kloos explained that the project is currently from gate to gate. The 1987 Study suggested that motor vehicle traffic could be allowed to the County Line, but during the development of the CRGNSA Management Plan, the motor vehicle area was moved west to the gate to allow a longer recreational facility.

Nancy Russell expressed that Friends of the Columbia Gorge strongly support the project as described in the Management Plan. There would be hiking, biking and access for handicapped people, but with no vehicle traffic allowed. Friends of the Columbia Gorge were not aware that vehicle traffic was being proposed until mid-July. She said that it may be appropriate for highway funds to be used for the trailheads, since they are accessible by motor vehicles. When she discussed this project with former State Park Director Dave Talbot, he suggested that creative thinking should occur (including investigation of the highway funding of the parking areas) and that he appreciated the effort to minimize use by motor vehicles on this section of the HCRH.

Joe Walicki, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, presented a petition with 130 signatures in support of a motor vehicle-free Linear State Park on the HCRH and a position paper with a list of 30 to 40 organizations supporting the ban of vehicles and a letter from Senator Mark Hatfield (attached). James Hamrick asked if the people and organizations had been made aware of the maintenance funding issues before they were asked to sign. Joe said they had, though some had receive more explanation than others.

Mr. Carroll Davis, Hood River Valley Residents Committee, commented that there has been considerable discussion about the project being handicapped accessible. From the east there is a considerable elevation gain. He suggested that motor vehicle usage be extended to the County Line Park so that it would be easier for handicapped people to get to the tunnels. Lewis McArthur said that 0.8 mile from the east is 5% grade. This is "accessible" but challenging for wheelchair users. He also mentioned that the money currently available can only be spent in Wasco County.

Richard Ross, Historic Preservation League of Oregon, stressed that this creative, unique project has a long history. He has participated in the 1981 National Park Service Study and the 1987 Study of the HCRH. He believes that it would be shortsighted to shorten the non-motor vehicle section. He supported the creative funding approach developed in the meeting with Anne Squire. This approach included private matching funds for the Federal funds, OPRD funding of on-going maintenance and ODOT use of the area as an emergency detour and highway funding of extraordinary maintenance, such as a catastrophic failure. He also related his personal experience with a 10-hour delay when I-5 was closed; emergencies do happen and require detours. We need to be creative and practical. Richard Ross proposed that other sources of funds be investigated to match any future Federal funds, include economic development funds available in the Immediate Opportunity Fund.

Bruce Warner clarified what are legal uses of highway funds. To use the HCRH as an emergency route is a very minimal motor vehicle use. The Decision Team felt that additional use would strengthen the position that this is a highway. If there are no motor vehicles on the section, then no highway funds can be used.

Nancy Russell suggested that if a catastrophic event occurred, OPRD could go to the Emergency Board to request funds for repair.

Julie Curtis asked if OPRD has agreed to maintain the facility. At the Anne Squire meeting, OPRD did agree to routine maintenance, but not to catastrophic maintenance or maintenance of the rockfall catchment structure. A contract arrangement could be developed for ODOT to do the catchment maintenance work for OPRD. Richard Walkoski said OPRD expected to do general maintenance, including patrols, litter pickup and interpretation. They did not expect any adjustments to their budgets to reflect this additional workload and current OPRD budget is tight.

Lauri Aunan expressed her fear that limited motor vehicle use could fail if challenged in court, because the Oregon Constitution requirements for use of highway funds are quite strict. She asked the Advisory Committee to be creative and to support the grant proposal to the Meyer Memorial Trust. She suggested other potential solutions, including trades with city or county governments for non-gas tax funds or public/private partnerships.

Karen Fost from the Bicycle Alliance wants a facility that is less dominated by autos. She would like to see more people on bikes. This facility would be a good place to get people started. She hopes they would eventually move into being bike commuters.

Susie Karwoski is concerned that the project will not be done right because of the time commitment on the funding and she would like to wait if necessary. She said it is important to do it right because it will be there for a long time.

Barbara Robinson, a Mosier resident, wants a safe place to ride. She is afraid to let her 12-year-old ride on county roads, particularly those with no shoulders. She would like the section to have no auto use. She supports having the section available as an emergency detour, noting that there is no other way than I-84 to get to Hood River from Mosier.

Jerry Igo, Mosier resident and member of the Native Plant Society, has lead wildflower tours of this section. He would not want to lead a tour when cars are using it. He has biked from British Columbia to Florida and wants a safe place to bike near home. He asked if there was some level of motor vehicle usage that would satisfy both the requirements for use of highway funds and the need for a safe facility.

Bruce Warner said that the motor vehicle usage would only be one-way, due to the narrow tunnels. He thinks use of highway funds is justifiable with use as an emergency route, plus some regularly scheduled use. The current proposal is for motor vehicles to use the section two days a month during the summer. These days do not need to be weekend days. This exact situation has not been challenged in court, but if it was challenged, it could not be opened for two-way regular traffic. If it was successfully challenged, ODOT would try to trade the area to OPRD.

Russ Jolley, Native Plant Society, said that there is a great vision for the area and it should be done right. He thought that if the current money was not spent, that other funds would become available in the future to do the job right.

Jay Noise, Hood River, supports reopening the tunnels without vehicles. Washington State Route 14 is available as a possible emergency route. She supports doing the minimum needed to open the area for hikers and bikers and to make it safe.

Julie Curtis discussed having vehicular traffic limited to two days a month. She asked how people would learn which days were motor vehicle days. If it was not open on some weekends, it might be seen as discrimination against ordinary working people.

James Hamrick asked if legal advice had been requested. Jeanette said that the AG's office had reviewed the question of the use of highway funds if the section was open to motor vehicles as an emergency detour. Dale Hormann said that "realistic and necessary" motor vehicle use would be needed and that highway funds could be used. However, since there is no opinion or case that directly addresses this, a court could decide differently if the issue was challenged.

Someone asked if the rockfall catchment was needed. Lewis said that both ODOT and OPRD, having reviewed the records of rockfalls in the area, believe that the catchment is needed. Jerry Igo said that people are currently using the area. Lewis noted that they do so at their own risk.

John Lundell said that the main concern expressed at the Wasco County meeting was safety from rockfalls. He also noted that the \$2.5 million can only be spent in Wasco County because Hood River County has not approved their ordinances. He asked for and received clarification that the HCRH is open to motor vehicle traffic from Mosier to the junction with the gravel portion of Rock Creek Road.

Martha Hall said that she uses the area to hike, bike and ski. She does not want to see ODOT ruin it. She does not want the non-motor vehicle use area shortened. People start from Highway 35 and like the steepness of the hill for conditioning. She said that bikers cannot ride very far in any direction from Hood River. This section is the best bet, especially for kids.

Bruce asked the AC if they could support the following: 1. Re-affirm a preference to have no ordinary use of vehicles (Maintenance vehicles would be allowed.) 2. Proceed with the present

plan to use the Federal dollars with a gas tax match. 3. To continue to look for funding for both ongoing and catastrophic maintenance and an alternate matching fund source which would eliminate the use of vehicular traffic. 4. A recommendation to the Oregon Transportation Commission for minimal motor vehicle use if gas tax funds are used.

Julie Curtis wanted to amend the suggestion to say that the AC would appoint a member to seek the funding and recommended the OPRD representative. James Hamrick said that several agencies will be involved. Carolyn suggest a trust fund could be established and possibly a "Friends of" group.

The first three points of Bruce Warner's recommendation were made in the form of a motion and unanimously approved (see attached final language). The fourth point was made as a separate motion, as a fall back position. The Advisory Committee, with three dissenting votes, agreed to support motor vehicle usage eastbound only as an emergency detour and eight days a year, if no other matching funds are found. All motor vehicle usage will be under controlled conditions. Richard Walkoski agreed to prepare an operational plan. He suggested that OPRD may use pilot cars or other means to control the motor vehicles.

Brian Litt said that the Gorge Commission decision is scheduled to be completed by mid-October. ODOT needs to convey its decision on motor vehicle usage to the Commission as input into the decision.

Randy Davis met with Wasco County Commissioners and Mosier City Council last week and will meet in Hood River, Monday, September 19, 1994, 3:30 - 4:00 p.m. at the Hood River County Court House. There is also a Public Open House scheduled for September 29, 1994 at the Mosier Senior Center, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. to discuss the Hood River to Mosier project.

## Architectural Details

Jeanette Kloos presented drawings of two fascia panel designs and two end treatments (attached). There was confusion concerning the costs of the different panel pieces. James Hamrick said that the projected return is preferable, because it creates more of a gateway, but he was not sure it was worth the estimated \$70,000. The Committee agreed to recommend that the direct return be included in the bid documents with the project return as an alternate. If the extra cost is reasonable and within the funding available, then the projected return should be built. The "A2" fascia panel design was preferred, because it is more compatible with other structure on the HCRH.

## Prioritization of Deferrals:

Randy Davis had the engineering estimate from the consultant to do the catchment, restoration, stabilization, removing debris, construct timber lining, and the cliffwalk. This estimate is \$4,100,000.00. This estimate does not include preliminary engineering, and property acquisition. Randy presented a list of project elements and asked the Committee to prioritize them. James asked why the facial panels were optional and made a motion to move them into the required list. James asked that ODOT get a bid on the cliff walk restoration, even if we do not believe it can be funded at this time. The bid will give us a better idea of the future cost. Bruce Warner suggested that the elements to be included in the contract should be determined by their costs and the amount available.

Mike Stovall asked how the drainage was going to be handled, particularly if there is the combination of a five-foot snow fall followed by a chinook and rapid melting. Bruce said that the consultant is designing the drainage.

## HCRH Cultural Resources Report Update:

The draft 106 report has been sent out to various agencies and the Cultural Resource Committee for review. Dwight Smith is waiting for Facia drawings and today's decisions to complete the report. James, SHPO, and the Gorge Commission are concerned about the weakness in the report regarding discussion of alternatives to the rock catchment structure. How was the decision made on structure and by whom? Bruce will see that James and Brian receive more information on the rockfall hazard.

## Archeology Report Update:

Update has been completed. The mitigation draft has been sent to the tribes. Nez Perce, Umatilla, and the Warm Springs tribes have responded. Bus Gibson asked what information was included in the draft. Jeanette responded that it was a well researched, very detailed document and most of the information is confidential.

The property acquisitions are in progress. State Parks is working on one of the properties and has acquired another one. All property is expected to be acquired by the beginning of 1995.

## **PROJECT UPDATE**

### CROWN POINT TURNOUTS

The first turnout is completed. The cost estimate for the second turnout needs to be determined so that funds can be sought.

### FOREST HIGHWAY

An agreement has been sent to FHWA in Vancouver, Washington for the wooden guardrail project. Funding is available in 1994. Preliminary engineering is complete and the project will be ready for Spring letting.

### OVERLAY PROJECTS

A request was given to Jeanette to standardize the width of overlay for the HCRH. It was suggested the highway be widened to 32 feet. This is not possible due to the layout of the HCRH and the way it varies. The highway from Sandy River to Larch Mountain highway is less sensitive and a standardized two-foot shoulder area may be worth considering. The Advisory Committee would like to review a proposal for the pavement width.

### INTERPRETIVE SIGNS

Consultants are continuing with the design work.

### SIGN POST CAP AND PLAQUE

The designer for the sign post cap is proceeding in completing the design.

### DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

Jeanette has received several development reviews. A draft was received for a proposed berm at the parcel owned by Howard Houston located across from the George Quarry. The current use (stockpiling) has been described an illegal industrial use. The berm, which must be located off state right-of-way, will screen operations from the HCRH. Visual impact from the HCRH would be on the east side of the highway. Vegetation coverup of this area will cost \$15,000 - \$20,000. The Gorge Commission has jurisdiction over land uses in this area.

## **ACTIVITY STATUS REPORTS**

### HIGHWAY

Jeanette received information from Karla Keller, District 2C Manager, regarding the old trees

near the new turnouts that could be a safety hazard. Karla had a tree expert at the site and his opinion was the over hanging trees are loosening the soil as they move back and forth in the wind and should be removed. Bids went out and came back at approximately \$4,000.00. Karla requested permission to proceed. The Advisory Committee agree that she should proceed.

Sam Wilkins, from District 9, reported his crew is doing minor blade patching from Mosier to Rowena. Grant and Marilyn Wilson have asked move their driveway access to HCRH due to bad sight distance. They propose to build a new driveway further down the road about 200 feet on their property and remove the old driveway.

### PARKS

Richard reported the pedestrian crossing at Viento Park has been sent on to the Gorge Commission for approval. Plans for the crossing include pedestrian, not vehicular traffic, to be completed in about 1 1/2 years.

The signing for the radio station to be installed at Vista House is nearing completion. Karla Keller has some standard signs and ODOT needs to decide where they should be placed.

A private vendor has requested to install telescopes at the Portland Women's Forum. Richard Walkoski is waiting for approval from SHPO. He will bring the proposal to the Committee at the next meeting.

Bob Anderson has been appointed the new Eastern Park Manager for State Parks. He will be stationed at Viento.

### GORGE COMMISSION

Brian reported the Gorge Commission has approved the wooden guardrail from Mosier to The Dalles. A decision on the Hood River to Mosier project is expected by the middle of October.

A violation has been issued to Howard Houston because of his illegal stockpiling across from the George Quarry site near the gate.

George Bryant has appealed the phasing out of the George Quarry. The hearing is set for September 28, 1994.

### FOREST SERVICE

No report.

### FRIENDS OF THE HIGHWAY

A call from Janet Tomkin has again raised the question why film companies using the HCRH are not being charged for the use of the highway. Lewis will look into finding an answer to this question.

## OTHER ISSUES

### SCENIC BYWAYS

Julie Curtis and Joe Walicki will be having a meeting with Sandy Kennedy and the Gorge Visitors Association at Skamania Lodge to discuss Scenic Byways. Jeanette has suggested that ODOT and WSDOT should consider filing a joint application designating I-84, HCRH, and State Highway 14 in Washington as a bi-state scenic byway. The current funding cycle deadlines have passed, but we should continue to try to determine if this designation is desirable in a time frame that would allow these highways to be eligible for funding next year.

### DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

Multnomah County has asked for comments to be sent in by October 13, 1994 in regards to demolishing 17 buildings in Bridal Veil. The HCRH AC will request more information from Multnomah County; specifically which buildings are included?

A new Corbett Elementary School is proposed, immediately west of the Middle School and High School. Comments on this development review should include that this is the Historic (not Historical) Columbia River Highway, and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

### MEMBERS ISSUES

Jeanette asked if anyone else was interested in going on gorge tour she has planned for September 23, 1994.

### **Next Meeting:**

**Tuesday, November 1, 1994**

### Attachments

September 14, 1994 letter from Lewis McArthur to Advisory Committee  
Friends of the Columbia Gorge Petition and Letters

Drawings of Rockfall Catchment