

Doney Park-Timberline-Fernwood Area Plan Update Committee
Meeting #9 Notes August 13, 2020 5:00-8:00 pm
Zoom Meeting

I. Welcome and Introductions

Committee members

Bryan Bates (co-chair for this meeting)
Rob Wilson (co-chair)
John Ruggles
Jim Clifford
Dave Browning
Monica Julian
Harriet Young
Saylor Caudill
Bernice Carver
Evelyn Wannie
Cameron Watson

County staff

Melissa Shaw
Jessica Simmons
Bethan Heng
Jess McNeely
Jay Christelman
Theresa Muñoz
Marc Della Rocca

County supervisor

Elizabeth Archuleta

Guest speakers

Pat McGervey – Recreation Program, Coconino NF
Josh Peck – Deputy District Ranger, Coconino NF

Members of the public

Dan Martin
Kris?
Steve Sessions
Bob L?
Jeanne Welnick

II. Note on Horsemen Lodge

Horsemen Lodge is considered a legal nonconforming use. This means that their commercial use does not match the zoning, which is residential, and they have been grandfathered in. The lodge is currently closed due to the pandemic. If they were to reopen within 180 days their nonconforming use could continue; if not they would lose their legal nonconforming status. Navajo Gaming does intend to reopen within the 180 days to retain that status. If they opened then closed again, the 180-day clock would

reset. There is no dispensation in the zoning ordinance about a pandemic or other emergency to adjust these rules.

III. Review of meeting notes from July 9

The notes were accepted.

IV. Presentation: National Forest Trails – Josh Peck and Pat McGervey

Current planning is mostly focused on Mt Elden/Dry Lake Hills (MEDL). Started about 2013. Working group started meeting last fall, and they delivered their recommendations regarding the proposed action to the Forest Service (FS) in the spring. That and public comments were used to develop a new proposed action, which will be out soon. Trailheads will be modified, parking and turnarounds will be expanded, and trails will be examined. Flagstaff Trails Initiative was used as a reference. Summarized planning/approval process.

The FS does not generally seek out land exchange opportunities; they are primarily proponent-driven. There is a stringent approval process, which takes into account cultural resources, sensitive wildlife species, wetlands, and recreational access, among other considerations. The exchange must be deemed to be in the public interest. The process, which includes a NEPA analysis, can take up to 10 years.

Question: There is an issue of online maps misrepresenting where forest roads are which are getting campers lost and bringing them onto private property. Answer: We can look into it.

Question: What about having volunteers around DPTF on holiday weekends handing out maps of where trails and trailheads are to avoid trespassing? Answer: That would be a good idea.

Question: Is connectivity between County roads and trails and FS roads and trails being considered? Answer: Definitely; with the City as well.

Question: What about Turkey Hills? Answer: That is a popular area with some unauthorized uses. It's not a top priority for the FS right now but they could take a look at it.

Question: If there is an official FS road, can private property owners block access? Who handles that? Answer: It depends on whether the FS has an easement on that road. Most roads do have an easement but not all. If there is no easement, property owners are within their rights to block access. Contact Josh or Deirdre McLaughlin for specific questions.

Question: What can be done about motorized use of non-motorized trails? Answer: Bring this to the front desk at the ranger station, or specifically to Josh or Matt McGrath.

Question: There's an issue with people shooting too close to residences. How can this be addressed? Answer: Josh is not sure how to best deal with that. Maybe a map or more signs. State law on this is more stringent than FS policy, but not all FS officers have the authority to write a citation for a state law on federal land.

Question: What is the FS stance on a free shooting range in DPTF? Answer: That use is increasing, and having certain designated areas for shooting seems like a good idea. It currently is not one of our priorities, but we're not opposed to it.

Question: Are there any trails planned on FS land in the southern part of the DPTF planning area, around Cosnino-Leupp-Winona? Answer: There has been some discussion about that, but there are no firm proposals right now.

Question: Are there any land exchanges proposed or anticipated right now in the DPTF area? Answer: Will check but don't think so.

Question: Are there plans to thin the untreated portion of forest on the western border of DPTF planning area? Answer: Will check but don't think so.

V. Review of Key Points of the FS Presentation

- Make sure we keep the interface alive between FS and the committee, and discuss how to optimize it
- Important to communicate to recreational users where they are in relation to homes
- Important that in forest exchanges and other land management changes that trails are not blocked and that easements are maintained for public access
- Highway 89 is only one of the gateways in the area; I-40 is too. Highway 89 is a gateway whether we like it or not; it's a major route between the Grand Canyon, the reservation, and Flagstaff.
- There are situations in DPTF where private property owners try to control public access to public lands
- A reference to the description of the land exchange process should be included in the area plan
- A map showing proposed trails should be in the area plan, and the committee should follow FTI's website to keep tabs on which proposals might go forward

VI. Work Session: Visioning

- Reviewed lists of what committee thinks is important about DPTF from first meeting and visioning thoughts from previous meeting
- Where do we want retail, and where residential? The Regional Plan activity center and existing zoning already dictates that to a large extent. There isn't much commercial zoning in DPTF left, and the committee should be aware of this situation when developing policies that would affect projects. The committee should focus on saying what it does want as opposed to what it does not want.
- Affordable housing: Lots of people are moving to places like Flagstaff. How can we have affordable housing for teachers, etc.? High density housing? Where will it go? Lots of this is already in the zoning ordinance. The committee will look at those policies while crafting the area plan. Would be great to see sample drawings of affordable housing designs that would fit in with the DPTF aesthetic. Siting for anything new will be the big issue in the future; however, what should happen on specific parcels is out of the scope of the area plan.
- People live in DPTF because they want to live in the country, not near many commercial developments. Don't want it to be like Prescott Valley. Dan said no one in his group wants to see Highway 89 become a commercial corridor.
- Transportation:
 - o Roads that can support multimodal types of transportation (bike, equestrian, cars, etc.)
 - o Can we reduce truck traffic on 89? No, it's a state route; we can't control that.
 - o Can Jake brake use be limited? No, that would have to be done through ADOT.
 - o Need transportation that meets rider demand.
 - o Need public safety that is able to respond to emergencies.

- Dust abatement – depends on if the road is private or county-maintained. Anything that came about from the area plan would only apply to new development, not existing. If dust abatement is identified as a priority in the area plan, new developments could be required to address it through the Planning and Zoning process.
- Could emphasize the importance of accessibility for the handicapped in the area plan
- Sheriff’s substation: a location in DPTF isn’t being discussed currently but the area plan should support developing a substation if that does become an option.

VII. Presentation: Melissa Shaw

DPTF Build-out

- DPTF is 68% federal, 31% private, 2% state
- 97% of zoned land is zoned residential; 3% commercial, industrial, or mineral
- Residential private land: 10,031 acres developed, 1,884 acres vacant. Potential new single family dwellings: 380 (760 with ADUs).
- Commercial-industrial-mineral: 225 acres developed, 260 acres vacant
- Demonstration of Story Map tool to look at different parcels, their zoning, and whether they’re developed or vacant on the Coconino County Planning and Zoning website.
 - What if the area plan was a live interactive website like the Story Map instead of a traditional document?

DPTF Demographics

- Various summaries of different demographic data

Asset mapping

- What are the important assets to protect in DPTF?
- What resources support these assets?
- What are the barriers and gaps?
- If the committee is interested we could make an asset map and include it in the plan
- Melissa can send packets to the committee so each can look at the information individually then discuss at the next meeting; Melissa will discuss the packet with Bryan and Rob and they will decide on a plan to move forward –

VIII. Schedule

Current phase: vision goals and policies

Next step: put together survey and plan open houses

- Need a subcommittee of volunteers to draft and edit the survey; please let Melissa know if you would be willing to be on that subcommittee
- After subcommittee finishes survey, entire committee will look at final draft before it is distributed to the public
- Will do direct mailing out to community about survey, open houses; Rob will post info to DPTF Facebook page and Nextdoor – his Facebook post will be shareable so anyone can share it to other groups on Facebook as well; Dan will send distribute to his neighborhood group
- Melissa will distribute the Bellemont survey; that and the previous survey in the 2001 DPTF plan can be used as a template and example. Repeat questions from the 2001 DPTF survey when possible so that answers can be compared over time

Next meeting is **September 10 from 5-8 pm** over Zoom.

IX. Public comments

None

X. Final thoughts
None