



Open Space Steering Committee Meeting – Minutes

October 19, 2021

6:00 pm

Attendance

Steering Committee: Chris Boone, Jennifer Church, Matt Hart, Mike Warsaw, Nic Vesely, Ted McGavran, Josh Teal and Walter Dixon.

City Staff: Peyton Ratchford, Associate Planner and Project Manager; Shelley DeHart, Planning Director; Alex Robinson, Senior Planner.

Call the meeting to order, introductions and general housekeeping: The chair called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm. Each attendee shared why they are participating and why open space is important.

- Quality of Life
- Environment
- Active use of open space
- Passive use
- Connectivity and mobility very important
- Balanced approach between required and encouraged.
- Balance between built environment and open space
- No left-over land—land needs to have value whether usable or environmentally sensitive, etc.

Goals of the project exercise: Peyton reviewed the exercise directing them to prioritize the draft goals prior to leaving this evening. The results of the exercise will be presented at the next meeting.

Overview of Comprehensive Plan: Shelley DeHart provided an overview of what a Comprehensive Plan is, how is it use, why is it used, and when it is used. She shared the elements of the plan and how they are use. Chapter 4 consists of the vision statement and goals, chapter 5 consists of the future vision to implement the goals that include place types and maps, and chapter 6 outlines the implementation of the plan. The document can be found on our website at: <https://www.cityofbelmont.org/adopted-plans-and-maps/>. A handout of the “ Park and Open Space” place type was provided and reviewed. It was recommended that all place types be reviewed to evaluate the recommended open space within each type. Mr. Robinson pointed out that it is a guide and not an ordinance. The Land Development Code (LDC) are ordinances that are intended to implement the guide. This process, updating the open space regulations, will be fulfilling that action.

Completion of staff research presentation: Peyton provided an overview on research of other ordinances. These included:

- Requiring a maximum distance for open space from each residential lot measured at the street. It was recommended that we incorporated a minimum width, such as a full lot size, to ensure it can be usable. Other recommendations included amenities such as landscaping and benches.
- Larger developments (over 100 acres) shall have multiple common areas.
- Standards for urban vs rural open space
- Reduced percentage of qualifying open space credit for slopes greater than 15%.
- Requiring a certain percentage of open space be usable (or improved).
- Stormwater control measure may count towards open space however is limited to 50% credit with a minimum of two amenities such as a trail, fountain fixture, or education signage.
- Dedication options include 1.5 times credit of actual acreage to provide public open space.
- Density bonus for construction of public greenways.

A general discussion ensued related to the definitions of active vs. passive open spaces. Per example in presentation: Passive areas are areas of land and due to the presence of particular natural or environmental setting, should be preserved. This can include conservation land. It was mentioned that this could be used as an incentive to protect flood plain areas, tree preservation areas, streams, and other environmentally sensitive areas. However, some of the area should be usable.

Urban open space areas included amenity options such as ornamental fountains, seating, sculptures, planted bed, and art. Dog parks should include amenities to qualify such as water station, seating areas, and shade areas. A general discussion ensued regarding ordinance examples of open space detail:

- Text and diagrams
- Text alone
- Text and pictures

Some committee members were comfortable with the text and diagrams, overs voice improved diagrams are needed.

Next Steps: Peyton reviewed next steps including stakeholder meetings and survey. Survey comments are due back to her by October 29th.

Next meeting:

- ~~Tuesday, November 9th at 6:30 pm.~~ Next Meeting date was changed after the meeting via email to be November 30th at 6:00 p.m.