

**Sawtooth Bluff Visioning and Master Plan**  
**Steering Committee Meeting #2**  
**October 23, 2017 @ 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. – Cook County Courthouse**

**Attendees**

Sue Abrahamson	Lisa Kerr	David Demmer	Myron Bursheim
Mike Roth	Andy Hubley	Barb Caskey	

**Summary**

The meeting began at 12:30 at the Cook County Courthouse. Barb Caskey, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, welcomed everyone in attendance.

**Review of October 6, 2017 Meeting Summary**

The summary for the October 6, 2017 Steering Committee meeting was reviewed for accuracy, with one correction noted. Discussion topics for today’s meeting include those where additional information was required or consensus was not reached.

**Feasibility of Residential Development**

As a follow up to the last meeting, Andy Hubley contacted Randy Lasky (Northspan) regarding the feasibility study conducted in conjunction with the Nordic Star affordable housing development. During that process, 52 potential building sites were located within Cook County. None of those sites were located within the boundaries of the Sawtooth Bluff site. However, it was also noted that the feasibility study included conversations with Tim Kennedy and Mike Roth, neither of whom suggested sites within the boundaries of the Sawtooth Bluff site, which may have precluded further exploration of the feasibility of development in this area.

Dave Demmer and Myron Busheim reported they had walked areas of the site as a follow up to the discussion on October 6. While the vast majority of the site is not developable, they identified two areas that could be appropriate for more intensive development, including housing development. The first parcel is the isolated half-moon area east of the switchback. The other is just north of the water tank above the hospital, in the area adjacent to the ½ moon parcel (lower right hand corner of the map). While adding sewer would be costly, development would be more feasible in this area than in others due to proximity to existing infrastructure. It was noted that if this section was utilized for potential development, it would be important to maintain access/connectivity to the school. Group consensus was that since the need for housing is strong in Cook County, development in the two areas identified should not be precluded.

**Steering Committee Vision**

As a follow up to the initial vision discussion, the group review the draft proposed after the October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting:

*Sawtooth Bluff should be developed as a County/City-owned park of regional significance providing multi-use amenities and trails for local residents and destination travelers while preserving the diverse natural resources present on this site.*

While support for this statement was voiced, suggestions were made to incorporate wording to indicate that this area is a “key place to foster a healthy, active lifestyle” and potential uses and development should “spur economic growth”. It was also suggested that the word “facilities” be added, but through discussion it was decided that “amenities” was a broad enough word that encompassed facilities as long as it was listed before

“trails”. To allow more meeting time to be spent on discussing stakeholder engagement, Barb Caskey will revise the mission statement to incorporate the new concepts and will send a draft to the group by email for final review, electronic discussion and approval.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

### ***Who***

At this stage in the process, the group indicated a preference to engage and solicit feedback from key stakeholders before engaging the general public. The group reviewed the preliminary list offered via email by Dave Demmer (see below) and added the following stakeholders: residents of the old ski hill road, members of the former Sawtooth Bluff Consensus Committee, Grand Portage, the hospital, and all of the contact names (one per group, approximately 30) on the Parks and Trails user group list.

#### Public entities:

City of Grand Marais  
Cook County  
US Forest Service  
MN DNR  
ISD 166  
YMCA  
Cook County Extension  
Chamber of Commerce  
Cook County Visitor's Bureau  
Economic Development Authority  
Moving Matters

#### Trail User groups:

Cook County ATV club  
Ridge Rider snowmobile club  
Superior Hiking Trail  
Superior Cycling Association  
North Shore Run & Ski Club  
Go Dog North

### ***How***

Interest was expressed at the last meeting to consider using an interactive map in lieu of a large public meeting to enable stakeholders to identify what they would like to see available or developed at the site and where they would suggest it be developed. Two potential approaches were discussed, both with advantages and drawbacks:

- 1) **“Proposed” option:** Provide a map with suggested amenities, trails and their respective locations and seek feedback. Ask respondents what they support and what else they would like to see.

*Advantage:* There has been a significant amount of discussion about this site already and some have a vision for what could be developed and where it could be located. Presenting a preliminary plan/map could advance this discussion forward and begin to create a more cohesive vision for the regional park.

*Drawback:* There may be good ideas that have not yet been identified. Offering a proposed vision might narrow people’s thinking about this site and eliminate further exploration of potential ideas. There may be alternate options for the location of amenities that would not be brought forth under this scenario.

- 2) **“Blank Slate” option:** Provide a blank map with drag and drop capabilities and a drop down menu to allow people to express what they would like to see on this site and where they propose it be located.

*Advantage:* Creative use of the site and identification of other ideas would be enhanced by not presenting a preconceived idea of the potential uses and design. Stakeholders may appreciate being asked for input early in this process rather than being asked to react to a draft concept already created.

*Drawback:* There are constraints which will limit how this site can be used and where development of trails and amenities can occur. Many of the ideas that might be suggested may not be feasible and the group will need to respond about ideas not incorporated into the final plan. There may be more disgruntled people if it appears the list of options is “wide open” when in fact there are constraints and their ideas are dismissed.

Rather than choose one option or create a hybrid approach, the group agreed to employ both approaches. The process will begin with the “blank slate” approach to gather unbiased feedback. This information will be reviewed by the Steering Committee and used to inform the development of a proposed map, using ideas already identified by the group and adding options identified by the stakeholders that are deemed feasible. This “proposed” option would then be sent to the stakeholder group for review and comment. The concept map will employ a “fuzzy circle” approach to identify the general areas where facilities or amenities are proposed, as actual locations on the map cannot yet be determined.

An overall description of the site will also be included with the interactive map. Information used on the original application for designation will be used to develop this description, with additional information added as necessary.

#### ***When***

ARDC will build a draft of the interactive map tool for review by the Steering Committee at the next meeting. Once the tool is finalized, communication with stakeholders will occur. The planning process needs to be completed by the end of February 2018, so there is time to employ the two-phased approach to stakeholder engagement.

#### ***Messaging***

Various strategies for informing stakeholders were identified. Once the interactive map is created, invitations to view and comment on the map will be sent via email to all identified stakeholders. Media (radio, newspaper, website) will be used to inform the public that plans are being developed and input is sought. The City Council and County Commissioners will be updated on the process.

#### ***Next Meeting***

Monday, November 20, 2017 10:00 – 12:00 noon, ITV Room, Cook County Courthouse.