

March 3, 2025

To: Council Members

From: Mayor McLaughlin

Re: Falls Creek Recreational Area Access

This has been a contentious issue in the past few years and one that, I believe, can be solved in a straightforward manner given the right conditions and attitudes.

After a few emails and a video call with David and Michelle Olney, I reached out to Jeffrey (JD) Hoyle, who acts as a Dispute Resolution Adviser with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Mr. Hoyle worked with the Olneys and AP&T over the last two years to attempt to resolve the dispute over access through easements on the road used to reach hiking opportunities in the Falls Creek area.

There were issues regarding vehicle access, restricted access through easements, historical records, as well as allegations of vandalism, trespassing and harassment. A temporary agreement was reached while negotiations took place. Ultimately, Mr. Hoyle became frustrated with the poor cooperation of the parties involved and determined to withdraw from further arbitration efforts.

I have pledged my support to FERC, AP&T and the Olney family in finding a resolution that all parties can agree to. In return, they have asked that the City be involved if and when necessary and that we give our stamp of approval on the final agreement. I have made it clear that I have no interest in rehashing past allegations or disagreements.

I ask that you join me in committing to supporting the process in a positive manner. Further, I ask that you be open to considering reasonable alternatives and to be prepared to accept possible compromise.

Once Mr. Hoyle has confirmation of our commitment, he will proceed to reopen negotiations.

I provide this information as a starting point for tonight's discussion, leading to the development of a long-term resolution to the issue of access.