



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – September 10, 2014

Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 500 E. Third Street, Loveland, CO 80537

Commissioners Present: Lori Bell, Gale Bernhardt, Rick Brent, Andy Hawbaker, Ross Livingston, Ted Mioduski, Darren Pape, Bill Zawacki, Hugh McKean (City Council Liaison), Kerri Rollins (Larimer County Liaison).

Commissioners Absent: Jim Roode.

Staff Present: Keven Aggers, Rick Anderson, Brian Hayes, Janet Meisel-Burns, Debbie Eley.

The public meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm.

Introduction of Natural Areas Manager, Rick Anderson. Rick was previously with Adams County for 28 years, including the last 7 years as Open Space Director, and 8 years as Natural Resource Manager.

Approval of August 13, 2014 Meeting Minutes: Andy Hawbaker made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Bill Zawacki seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report – Kerri Rollins: The Big Thompson Canyon Recreation & Conservation Plan has been awarded to Logan Simpson Design. The tax renewal issue is on the November ballot, and the campaign is underway. Kerri was thanked for the county's \$200,000 partnership and support on the 57th and Taft property acquisition.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

1. Presentation on Board & Commission Roles & Responsibilities – Bill Cahill. City Manager Bill Cahill presented a PowerPoint and distributed the summary of *OLAC Roles & Duties* for commission members to review. The Open Lands Advisory Commission is one of the City's 22 standing boards and commissions, all of which advise City Council. The Larimer County Open Space Sales Tax ballot language provided the founding documents for the Loveland Open Lands Program and OLAC. The commission's role is to make recommendations based on technical staff input and other factors, such as community values. Staff is expected to provide support, information and recommendations, in writing in advance of meetings, with the exception of confidential papers for Executive Session. City Council has adopted the *Parks & Recreation Master Plan*, which provides recommendations to be carried out under the authority of the City Manager. If OLAC wishes to make a recommendation to City Council, the board should adopt a motion directing staff to communicate the issue to City Council. OLAC's City Council Liaison may also present an issue to the Council for consideration on behalf of the commission.

REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE:

2. Flood and Trails Update – Janet Meisel-Burns. Janet updated the commission on flood projects, FEMA and other grant funding, and progress on Recreation Trail connections. River’s Edge will receive FEMA funding of \$1.079M, including \$390K in hazard mitigation to prevent scour and erosion during future flood events. The parking lot and trail connections are being redesigned and a concept plan will be presented to OLAC in October. Construction is planned for spring 2015. GOCO grant funding will help pay for costs not funded by FEMA or CIRSA. Morey Wildlife Reserve was also approved by FEMA. River modeling for Morey and the Mariana Butte Golf Course will be completed jointly. Restoration may include a secondary channel through the former pond, settling ponds, and associated wetland/riparian habitats. Permanent repairs will also include reconstruction of the trail, benches, fence, etc. Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park was approved by FEMA as an “Alternative Pilot Project” (i.e., funding can be applied towards a new design). Total funding for bridge and road reconstruction and bank stabilization is \$2.126M, including \$992K for hazard mitigation. The RFP for river modeling, engineering, and design is being prepared. Trail Projects: Proposals are being reviewed for river modeling for the section from Wilson to Taft, which will include replacement of the Wilson bridge, trail reconstruction and possible realignment, and open lands restoration. The goal is to re-open this trail section by Memorial Day 2015. Staff has been working on the Front Range Trail connection north of Boyd Lake, acquiring trail easements, coordinating with Larimer County and Fort Collins, and securing funding including several grants. The “BNSF” trail connection, from 57th Street north to Trilby Road in Fort Collins, is also in the planning stages with Larimer County and Fort Collins. The new Open Lands acquisition at 57th and Taft will help secure this connection as well as the City’s Recreation Trail “missing link” to the east. Several grants are also being pursued for these trail connections, including a possible underpass at the BNSF railroad tracks.

3. Property Acquisition Updates.

Hwy 287 and Railroad Ave. properties – appraisals are underway by the landowners. Federal flood grants may be available for acquisition. Staff continues to communicate with the owners.

Big Thompson River west property – a written offer was presented to the landowners for acquisition. Staff will continue to work towards acquisition by resolving issues and concerns with the owners.

Canyon properties near Viestenz-Smith – the property owner has indicated that they are not ready to sell at this time, but are still interested in a possible future sale. Staff and Larimer County continue to have discussions with other landowners in this area as well.

Boedecker Lake property – an active bald eagle nest on this property will require coordination with the US Fish & Wildlife Service to determine possible future uses. An offer has been submitted to the owner by another party. Staff will follow up on the status of the offer.

River’s Edge inholding parcel (west) – an application has been submitted to the City for a single-family lot; however, the owner may be interested in selling to the City prior to approval of the lot.

4. Open Lands Projects Report.

57th & Taft Property. Larimer County approved a \$200,000 partnership for this acquisition. The process for soliciting names from the public is underway. Proposed names will be accepted online and an article about the acquisition and naming will be included in the October *City Update* newsletter, as well as other media releases, social media announcements, etc. The deadline to submit names is November 15, 2014.

Devil's Backbone Open Space Management Plan Update. County staff will present the latest information at the October OLAC meeting, including the results of public surveys and proposed conceptual plans.

Big Thompson Canyon Recreation and Conservation Assessment Plan. This county-led project has been awarded to Logan Simpson Design. Loveland is a partner, including up to \$20,000 in funding and active participation in the development of the plan.

Jayhawker Ponds Fill Project. A floodplain permit was approved to fill in a small channel on the eastern edge of Jayhawker Pond North, to address high ground water and flooding on adjacent property.

Open Space Signage. Signs will be installed at all fee simple-owned properties, to identify open space preserved using Open Space Sales Tax Revenue and increase visibility prior to the election.

Environmental Education Program. Staff is preparing for the fall season of the Urban Wilderness Program at Namaqua Park, recruiting volunteers and preparing the site for school groups. The program will run from September 16 through October 17.

Commission Member Discussion Topics:

- 1) Rick Brent commented that Open Lands must take advantage of opportunities as they arise, or opportunities may be lost. Timing is key in potential acquisitions.
- 2) Darren Pape asked about staff time constraints and whether Open Lands is understaffed. Temporary staff (planner Scott Sinn) has been hired to help with flood recovery and FEMA coordination. The permanent Parks Worker/Trails position is in the process of being refilled. Staff will take into account new acquisitions and opening sites to the public, including River's Edge, when considering future staffing levels.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.