



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – May 13, 2015

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

Commissioners Present: Rick Brent, Andy Hawbaker, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Nathan Thompson, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki, Hugh McKean (City Council Liaison), Kerri Rollins (Larimer County Liaison).

Commissioners Absent: Gale Bernhardt.

Staff Present: Elizabeth Anderson, Debbie Eley, Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Michele Van Hare, Alan Krcmarik.

The public meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

Approval of April 8, 2015 Meeting Minutes: Ross Livingston made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Rick Brent seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment: John Lewis noted that cleanup of River's Edge Natural Area should be a priority, particularly around Dragonfly Pond. Staff responded that the site will be included in the Spring Waterway cleanup if possible and crews will give increased attention to trash cleanup in this area.

City Council Liaison Report. Hugh McKean reported that representatives from Timberlane Farm have met with City staff to discuss the future ownership and management of the property.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report. Kerri Rollins distributed copies of the Larimer County Natural Resources 2014 Annual Report.

Capital Expansion Fee (CEF) Update. Alan Krcmarik, Executive Economic Advisor, presented the current recommendation on the Open Lands CEF, calculated using a plan-based methodology. The recommended OL CEF would be an increase over current levels for single-family units and a decrease for multi-family units. Council is scheduled to discuss the CEF recommendations on June 9, along with the Capital Plan.

Video Presentation: The Parks & Recreation Department developed a promotional video for the Gold Medal application to the National Parks & Recreation Association. The video is available online at: <http://www.cityofloveland.org/parksrecreation>.

Discussion/Action:

1. Open Lands Manager Position. P&R Director Elizabeth Anderson reported that the department plans to evaluate the Open Lands Division with the goal of creating a strong foundation for the long-term success of the program. Marilyn Hilgenberg, P&R Administrative Business Manager, has been appointed interim OL manager for day-to-day management of the program during the transition. The focus will continue to be on conserving property and opening sites for public access and trails.

2. Proposed 2016 Budget and Review of Maintenance Reserve Policy. Capital project budgets were submitted to the Finance Dept. in April and will be discussed with City Management staff and City Council during the budget process. The five-year Open Lands capital plan was provided to OLAC, including projected revenues, expenditures, acquisitions and operations. The current policy to set aside 15% of annual sales tax revenues for future operations and maintenance is not sustainable. Staff proposed a reserve emergency/operating account balance of \$3M. Rick Brent made a motion that Natural Areas Policy B18 be revised to cap the designated reserve account balance at \$3M beginning in 2016, for future emergency uses. Andy Hawbaker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. A supplemental Open Lands budget request will be included for operation of newly purchased open lands (e.g., Nicholson, Sunset Vista) and development of other properties (e.g., Mineral, Ward).

Reports/Correspondence:

3. Big Thompson River Recreation & Conservation Assessment Update. Staff presented the draft vision plan, which is available on the project website (www.larimer.org/bigthompsonplan). Feedback is being sought at public meetings and via an online survey until May 31. Several focus areas relevant to Loveland were discussed, including Loveland West and Cedar Cove/Viestenz-Smith Park areas. Potential recreation uses and facilities for each area are included in the draft plan. The recommendations will be presented to City Council at the May 26 study session for discussion and feedback.

4. Property Acquisition Updates.

- Fort Collins Natural Areas would like Loveland to partner on a property in the separator area south of Fossil Creek Reservoir and identified in the *Plan for the Region between Fort Collins and Loveland* (1995). Possible uses of the property include community-supported agriculture, nature-based education, and trails. A formal partnership request will be presented in the near future.
- A west Loveland property acquisition was reviewed. Commission members visited the site in April and response was very favorable. Staff is continuing to research possible trail connections, parking, and access. Darren Pape made a motion recommending that staff proceed with negotiations to purchase the property; Ross Livingston seconded the motion. Rick Brent noted that development of the property may be difficult and expensive, so the value should reflect this, and the contract should include provisions for existing leases and maintenance costs. The motion passed unanimously.
- The Trust for Public Land is helping to negotiate acquisition of two significant parcels, one fee simple and the other a conservation easement. Appraisals are being ordered.

5. Open Lands Projects Report.

- **River's Edge Natural Area.** Construction began on April 13 with a 120-day time frame for completion. Project information, closure updates and photos are posted online on the City's website: www.cityofloveland.org/riversedge. A sign plan for the site is being developed to include informational, regulatory, directional, and interpretive signage. The flood-damaged Railroad Avenue entrance will be repaired with new fencing and maintenance access gate. Larimer County Youth Corps crews will assist with fencing and willow harvesting/staking this summer.
- **Morey Wildlife Reserve.** Amenities damaged or destroyed by the flood will be repaired or replaced, so the site can re-open to public access after the Waterway Cleanup on May 16. Plans for access trails, wetlands and riparian restoration are currently being discussed.

- **Sunset Vista Natural Area.** A structural assessment of the farmstead buildings is underway to assess four of the structures for evaluation of historic resources in the site management plan. Additional studies may be needed for recommendations on future use.

- **Big Thompson Natural Area.** Flood-damaged fences at the property south of the river at Hwy 287 are being replaced to delineate the property boundaries and provide pedestrian access. A site identification sign will be installed and damaged areas will be seeded for restoration. This site will also be included in the Waterway Cleanup on May 16.

Reminders:

6. Spring Waterway Cleanup (rescheduled) – May 16, 9 am-noon
7. Big Thompson Recreation & Conservation Assessment Tour – May 27, 1-4 pm
8. City Council Study Session – May 26, 6:30 pm

Commission Member Discussion Topics:

1. Jim Roode noted that if the Open Space Sales Tax is used to reduce CEFs, citizens' money would be redirected from its intended purpose.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.