



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – August 12, 2015

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

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

Commissioners Absent: Gale Bernhardt, Jim Roode, Kerri Rollins (Larimer County Liaison).

Staff Present: Elizabeth Anderson, Debbie Eley, Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg.

Guests: Mark Sears, Fort Collins Natural Areas Department.

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

Public Comment: None.

Approval of July 8, 2015 Meeting Minutes: Rick Brent made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ross Livingston seconded the motion. Debbie Eley corrected the minutes to state that the July 8, 2015 meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm. The minutes were approved unanimously with this change.

City Council Liaison Report. Hugh McKean noted that Council will discuss the budget at the September 25th meeting.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report. Not present.

Discussion/Action Items:

1. Fort Collins Partnership Request/Property Review/Separator Area Plan. Staff visited the CR 30 property and other separator area properties with Fort Collins Natural Areas staff to look at potential acquisition, restoration and trail projects. The terms of the IGA for the 113-acre CR 30 property partnership include \$1.5M from Fort Collins Natural Areas and \$1.5M from Loveland, with \$1.1M from the Water Department for 50 units of CBT water, and \$400K from Open Lands. Fort Collins would own and manage the property and 4 shares of Loudon Ditch water. Loveland would have a right of first refusal if Fort Collins sells the property, and would co-hold the conservation easement (CE) if the property is sold to a third party with a CE. If the property is sold without a CE, Loveland would receive 22% of the proceeds, in proportion to the open lands acquisition percentage. Mark Sears added that this is the first opportunity Fort Collins and Loveland have had to partner in several years. The western separator area has been successful and this property adds to the Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space. Fort Collins would like to keep the property in irrigated ag use, restoring wetlands in the northwest corner (5-10 acres), leaving about 100 acres to be farmed, with ideal soils and flood irrigation. Partners could include CSU or CSA leases. Loveland would lease the CBT water to Fort Collins unless it was needed for drought or future use. Current CBT assessments are \$50/unit plus a 5% administrative fee charged by Northern Water. *Rick Brent made a motion that OLAC recommend*

a \$400K Open Lands partnership towards the acquisition of the CR 30 property by Fort Collins. *Jean Whittaker seconded the motion.* The IGA would go to City Council for approval on September 1, with closing scheduled for September 30. The Open Lands budget includes \$200K annually for partnerships, so \$400K represents 2 years' worth (2014 and 2015). *The motion passed unanimously.* Staff from Loveland and Fort Collins also discussed other opportunities in the separator area, including connecting trails from Prairie Ridge (LV) to Coyote Ridge (FC), and a possible trail corridor and parking in NW Loveland. Other projects could include restoration of separator properties currently farmed to native short-grass prairie.

2. Lazy J Bar S/Raptor Ridge CE Amendment Request. Staff presented an amendment request from the owner of the Raptor Ridge property to: 1) change the location of the building envelope on Parcel 1; 2) allow for hard-surface driveway connects (recycled asphalt or road base) from public roads to the building envelopes on Parcels 1 and 2; and 3) allow for winter shelters or "loafing sheds" for livestock on Parcels 1 and 2. The Conservation Easement Amendment Policy states that amendments cannot give the owner a financial gain or harm the property's conservation values. The owner plans to hold equestrian "combined driving events" on the property and develop and implement a habitat restoration plan. Colorado Parks & Wildlife recommended that the building envelope remain outside the ¼-mile buffer (no surface occupancy) from the active golden eagle nest, and if within the ½-mile buffer (seasonal restrictions), a monitoring plan should be coordinated with CPW and the US Fish & Wildlife Service to monitor nest activity if construction occurs during the breeding season. The location of the building envelopes and the nest site would be surveyed and recorded. *Darren Pape made a motion recommending approval of the proposed conservation easement amendment with the restrictions outlined above. Ross Livingston seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

3. Hopkins/Hollander CE Amendment Request. Staff presented an amendment request from the owner of the Hopkins CE property to change the location of the building envelope due to slope and soil constraints for building and septic. The building envelopes were originally laid out to be clustered and the new location remains adjacent to the second building envelope. Staff recommends the same restrictions for construction during the golden eagle breeding season as for Lazy J Bar S CE above – development and implementation of a monitoring plan in consultation with CPW and USFWS. *Andy Hawbaker recommended approval of the CE amendment with the restrictions outlined above. Nate Thompson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

Reports/Correspondence:

4. Property Acquisition Updates. Staff provided an update on property acquisitions. The city has closed on the Mineral Addition, Boedecker, and Nicholson properties. The hogback property is scheduled to close on August 20, and the adjacent parcel that provides additional access is scheduled to close on August 31. The 1st Street enclave property is scheduled to close on September 1.

Executive Session:

Bill Zawacki made a motion to suspend the regular session and convene Executive Session at 6:29 pm. Executive Session concluded and the regular session reconvened at 6:46 pm.

5. Open Lands Projects Report.

River's Edge Natural Area. The Grand Re-Opening is scheduled for Thursday, September 24 at 5:00 pm and will include fishing and environmental education activities for the public. The stone amphitheater, rock retaining walls, trails and pond access points are nearly complete. Concrete walks in the Core Area, asphalt paving of the access road, and demolition and reconstruction of the

boardwalk will begin soon. A sign plan has been developed, including new kiosks with maps, rules, fishing regulations, and interpretive information.

Morey Wildlife Reserve. The “Pre-Assessment Environmental Report” identified potential habitat for two plant species. Occurrence surveys conducted the first week of August did not locate any populations of either plant. Post-flood re-construction at Mariana Butte Golf Course will use the Morey haul road so trail and access road re-construction at Morey is planned for late fall/winter.

Sunset Vista Natural Area. Staff is working with Fort Collins and Larimer County on an IGA to design, plan and construct the Long View Corridor Trail cooperatively. Construction is planned for fall 2016. The Sunset Vista management plan will include evaluation and analysis of site resources, opportunities, constraints, and proposed uses.

Big Thompson Recreation and Conservation Plan. *A Bigger Vision for the Big T* was approved by City Council on July 21. Larimer County will take the plan to Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners for approval in August/September.

GOCO Grants. Staff worked with the Trust for Public Land to submit a GOCO Open Space grant request for \$500,000 for a 73-acre west Loveland property near Morey Wildlife Reserve. Larimer County has committed a \$250,000 partnership to the project. Awards will be announced in December. Larimer County and Fort Collins are also working with other entities, including Loveland, to submit a planning grant request for the GOCO Inspire Initiative. These awards will be announced in October.

Quick-Win Projects. Staff is planning public access on five natural areas, to include soft-surface trails and two gravel parking areas for 5-10 vehicles, as part of an effort to open more sites and provide more access to open lands. New sign kiosks similar to those developed for River’s Edge will be used to identify each site and increase Open Lands visibility. Sites along the river will named as part of the public Big Thompson Greenway Naming contest. The deadline to submit names is August 31 and proposed names will be presented to OLAC for selection in September.

Environmental Education/Volunteer Program. Pre-school environmental education programs (PEEPs) continue to grow, with two sessions now offered each month. Fall sessions for 4th and 5th grade Urban Wilderness programs are being scheduled. Due to construction at River’s Edge, fall programs will be held at Namaqua Park, and the program will be moved to River’s Edge for spring 2016 sessions.

Conservation Easement Monitoring. Staff has completed 8 of the 16 required annual CE monitoring visits with Legacy Land Trust, Larimer County, and Fort Collins. The remaining site visits will be scheduled in the next few months. No major violations have been observed.

Commission Member Discussion Topics:

1. Nate Thompson inquired about the status of the 2015 budget, considering the recent property closings. Staff reported that total amount spent is similar to the budgeted amount, but some properties have changed. Approximately \$5M is budgeted for 2015 including rollovers and current year funding. Darren Pape requested a spreadsheet showing the 2015 budget and properties closed. Staff can provide a summary at the October meeting, after all scheduled closings are completed.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.