



## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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### CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – September 9, 2015

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

**Commissioners Present:** Gale Bernhardt, Rick Brent, Andy Hawbaker, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Jean Whittaker, Kerri Rollins (Larimer County Liaison).

**Commissioners Absent:** Nathan Thompson, Bill Zawacki, Hugh McKean (City Council Liaison).

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

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

**Public Comment:** Mark DeGregorio, 1231 Riverview Dr. Loveland, former member of the Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board and 7-year member of Legacy Land Trust Board of Directors, noted that a City-owned property on Rossum Drive in west Loveland is being proposed for high-density development, along with two adjacent parcels. The property falls within the West Loveland Priority Area in the Big T Recreation and Conservation Plan. Mr. DeGregorio believes that development is not appropriate and that conservation as open lands is appropriate to preserve the viewshed. City Council has approved the sale of the City-owned parcel, and the purchase is contingent on zoning being approved.

**Approval of August 12, 2015 Meeting Minutes:** Rick Brent made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Darren Pape seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously as written.

**City Council Liaison Report.** Marilyn Hilgenberg distributed a memo regarding Capital Expansion Fees (CEFs) and upcoming public open house meetings. The proposed CEFs were determined using plans-based calculations. OLAC members were encouraged to attend and voice concerns previously forwarded to City Council regarding the new calculation methods, including using existing fund balances, which have changed recently with over \$2M spent in Open Lands acquisitions.

**Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report.** Kerri Rollins reported on several items: 1) Like Loveland, Larimer County has also been busy with acquisitions recently; 2) Larimer County submitted a GOCO Inspire Initiative Grant with Ft Collins, Loveland and the Larimer County Boys and Girls Club, based on the Plug into Nature study, to get more kids outside and into nature; 3) Larimer County also submitted a GOCO Open Space grant this cycle; and 4) the Colorado Open Space Alliance (COSA) annual conference will be held September 14-16 in Snowmass.

#### **Discussion/Action Items:**

**1. Larimer County Partnership Request – Devil’s Backbone Trailhead/Trail.** The Devil’s Backbone Management Plan 2014 update identified the need for trailhead and trail improvements to accommodate increasing public use of the site. The trailhead expansion will include 35 new parking spaces, webcams and interpretive signage. The trail expansion would include a new loop trail through

the Hidden Valley property, to help separate uses and relieve trail congestion. Construction is slated for 2016 with a total project cost of \$242,000. The county has requested \$5,000 from the Overland Mountain Bike Club and is requesting half of the remaining amount from Loveland Open Lands. Gale Bernhardt made a motion to recommend that Loveland partner with Larimer County for the requested amount of \$118,500. Darren Pape seconded the motion. Kerri explained that the Hidden Valley Trail will be multi-use allowing hiking, equestrian use, and mountain biking. The Wild Loop Trail will be converted to foot traffic only. Jim Roode made an amendment to the motion that if Loveland is not already acknowledged on the signage at Devil's Backbone, signage will be added. Rick Brent seconded the amendment. The motion passed unanimously.

**2. Naming of Big Thompson River Greenway Properties.** The public naming contest for four Big Thompson Greenway natural areas resulted in more than 130 names being submitted. The commission selected the following names based on those submissions:

- Oxbow Natural Area – 1135 Rossum Drive
- Cottonwood Run Natural Area – Recreation Trail natural areas between Wilson & Taft Ave.
- King's Crossing Natural Area – 990 S. Lincoln Ave.
- Old St. Louis Natural Area – 1010 S. St. Louis Ave.

Two recent acquisitions adjacent to River's Edge will be folded into the existing natural area for naming and management purposes. The recent Wenninger acquisition will be named through a public naming process once signage and fencing are installed to delineate city ownership.

### **Reports/Correspondence:**

### **3. Open Lands Projects Report.**

River's Edge Natural Area Grand Opening. The event is scheduled for Sept. 24 at 5 pm. Activities will include an opening ceremony, guided bird and plant walks, fishing demos and instruction, drawings, and children's activities. A volunteer group will help with site plantings, cleanup and final preparations during a Sept. 12 volunteer work day.

Quick-win Projects. Public access on five natural areas is being planned and designed, including soft-surface trail loops at all sites and small gravel parking areas at Old St. Louis and King's Crossing. All projects except Mariana Butte Trail will be bid together for construction. The Mariana Butte Trail is being built by a local volunteer trail-building group (C.A.T.S.) and a public volunteer work day is scheduled for Sept. 19. The trail is being formalized to be more sustainable and located further from private property. A future trail may be possible to connect to Oxbow Natural Area along the river.

Environmental Education/Volunteer Program. Volunteers will be in "uniform" (vests with Open Lands logo & name tags) for the River's Edge grand opening, to assist the public with wayfinding, environmental education, scavenger hunt, touch table, and recruiting. Trail Host volunteers have been patrolling River's Edge and reporting online for staff to access. The C.A.T.S. trail-building project is recruiting volunteers to help at Mariana Butte Trail. The Urban Wilderness Program for 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> graders will be held at Namaqua Park this fall and will be moved to River's Edge over the winter. A new 2<sup>nd</sup> grade program will be piloted at River's Edge this fall, using FOSS kits and focusing on plants. A middle school program is being developed to include map skills and orientation and will be piloted with a 7<sup>th</sup> grade PE class, with a focus on health and wellness in the outdoors. PEEPs preschool programs have grown to 80 attendees per month (two sessions on the third Thursday morning of each month).

**4. Property Acquisition Updates.** Brian reported on recent closings: the Wenninger property closed on Aug. 20, and the adjacent Black property closed on Aug. 31. The Swisher property on 1<sup>st</sup> Street closed on Sept. 1. The Fort Collins partnership project on CR 30 is scheduled to close on Sept. 30. City Council has approved the IGA for this partnership.

**Executive Session:**

Ross Livingston made a motion to suspend the regular session and convene Executive Session at 7:00 pm. The Executive Session ended at 8:00 pm and the regular session reconvened.

**Commission Member Discussion Topics:**

1. Rick Brent noted that the River's Edge trail to the school district building is in need of repair/resurfacing.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.