



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – October 14, 2015

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

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

Commissioners Absent: Rick Brent, Kerri Rollins (Larimer County Liaison).

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

Guest: Jim Tolstrup, Executive Director, High Plains Environmental Center

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

Public Comment: Kathy Hartman, 945 E. 6th Street, Loveland, commented that the River's Edge grand opening was a great event and she was glad to see many volunteers involved.

Approval of September 9, 2015 Meeting Minutes: Ross Livingston 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: Hugh McKean reported that Council approved the 2016 budget.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report. The Laramie Foothills Bison Reintroduction event will take place on Nov. 1 at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. Information will be forwarded to commission members.

Reports/Correspondence:

1. Third Quarter Financial Report. The financial report included line items for 2015 acquisitions from Fund 202 – Open Lands sales tax (Nicholson, Boedecker West, Wenninger, Black and the Fort Collins partnership project) and from the Open Lands CEF fund (Mineral and Swisher). During the budget process, the reserve account was adjusted to a flat \$3M, rather than 15% annual revenues. Flood reimbursements are expected to be approximately \$540,000, primarily for River's Edge. Purchased services will likely come in lower than expected, largely due to the change in scope for the Morey restoration project. Approximately \$6.8M is allocated for acquisitions, development projects and operations in 2015 and 2016, leaving a cash balance of \$2.3M unappropriated.

2. Open Lands Projects Report:

River's Edge Natural Area. Feedback on the grand opening was positive and the site is being used regularly by the public for fishing, walking, jogging, wildlife viewing etc. Commission members reported that several people have inquired about using kayaks and canoes on the ponds. Water access was identified in the P&R Master Plan as a highly desired public use. A 6-month review of management of the site could address issues such as boating, water access, dogs, etc. Catch and release fishing regulations also need to be emphasized to maintain the quality fishery. Additional trees are planned

and Darren Pape mentioned that Ketterer's Nursery may have some trees available. A watering trailer was recently ordered to facilitate irrigation of new plantings.

Quick-Win Projects. The contract for four quick-win projects was awarded to Mountain Constructors for small gravel parking areas and soft-surface trails at Old St. Louis and King's Crossing, and trails at Oxbow and Morey. Trail reconstruction at Morey is planned over the winter, following flood repairs at Mariana Butte Golf Course. A loop trail at Mariana Butte is being constructed in partnership with the local volunteer trail-building group Colorado Addicted Trail-builders Society (C.A.T.S.). Over 1,000 LF of trail has been cut in and the social trail was moved from private/HOA property to city land. Signage, including site rules and maps, will be installed at each site.

High Plains Environmental Center. The High Plains Open Space Agreement was established in 2006 to set aside funds generated by Millennium development for open space acquisition and conservation easements. The current balance is approximately \$400K and could be a potential source of funding for the E. 1st Street property acquisition, which is a possible hub for access to the river and partnership with the adjacent Boys & Girls Club, New Vision School, and Timberlane Farm. The High Plains Fund could also be a source of funding for a new environmental center at High Plains, with a nature center, living lab, and visitor center. Three issues need to be considered: 1) the current agreement designates the High Plains funds for acquisitions; 2) use of the funds for a building at High Plains would require a change in the agreement; and 3) possible future partnership opportunities with High Plains could include programming, facilities, etc. These topics will be discussed at a joint meeting with OLAC/HPEC tentatively planned for January 2016, to assess how we can complement each other's efforts.

GOCO Open Space Site Tour. Staff hosted a site tour of the 78-acre west Loveland property near Morey Wildlife Reserve for GOCO staff and board members on Oct. 2. GOCO staff indicated that they received \$4.3M in requests for the \$5M open space cycle. Loveland requested \$500,000 for this acquisition. Feedback from GOCO has been positive and the Open Space Committee will meet on Nov. 17 to make recommendations to the Board, who will announce final decisions at their Dec. 12 meeting.

GOCO Inspire Grant. GOCO awarded the Larimer County Inspire application a \$50,000 Tier 2 grant for an 18-month planning effort to determine how best to connect kids to nature.

Guided Bird Walks on Natural Areas. A volunteer-led guided bird walk was held on Oct. 3, starting at Mehaffey Park and following the Recreation Trail and Loudon Ditch Trail through Meadowbrook Natural Area. A total of 19 species were recorded, including a great-horned owl which was the highlight of the walk. A few guided bird walks may be offered this winter to look for and identify waterfowl at River's Edge or Meadowbrook ponds, and monthly bird walks will be planned beginning in the spring.

3. Property Acquisition Updates. The Fort Collins partnership property closed on September 30. Fort Collins will manage the property with a tenant farmer. The Swisher property cleanup should be complete by November 1. The property will be managed as part of River's Edge.

Discussion/Action Items:

4. Ryan's Gulch Property Review. Staff and the Trust for Public Land have been working with the owner of the 188-acre property south of CR 16 to complete an appraisal for a fee-simple purchase. Larimer County and Berthoud are interested in partnering on this key separator property that provides a connection for the regional Front Range Trail, protects an active golden eagle nest, and connects three existing conservation easements. The project is also a good fit for GOCO's upcoming new Protect and Connect Initiatives for large-scale projects. The acquisition includes 6 shares each of Southside

Reservoir, Ditch and Extension. A single-family home would also be acquired and management of all assets would be included in a comprehensive master plan for the site. Ross Livingston made a motion to recommend that staff proceed with acquisition NA-01-BE as described. Darren Pape seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. East First Street Property. A local developer has offered this property to the city as a potential park and open lands site. The parcel would require significant infrastructure costs for residential development and offers potential partnership opportunities with the Boys & Girls Club, New Vision School, Timberlane Farm, and High Plains Environmental Center. The acquisition includes $\frac{3}{4}$ share of Chubbuck Ditch (30 inches) of Chubbuck Ditch water, which may be usable for farming the upper portion of the property. A small pond resulting from gravel mining may require augmentation. Staff will continue to investigate the water rights and requirements associated with the property. Andy Hawbaker made a motion to recommend that staff proceed with acquisition NA-15-PF as described. Gale Bernhardt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. This property acquisition meets the criteria and intent of the High Plains Open Space Fund. Jean Whittaker made a motion recommending that Open Lands apply for funding from the High Plains Open Space Fund and plan to meet with HPEC to discuss future partnership opportunities. Andy Hawbaker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.