



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – March 8, 2017

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, Bill Zawacki, Kerri Rollins (LC OLAB Liaison).

Commissioners Absent: Nathan Thompson, Leah Johnson (Interim City Council Liaison).

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

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

Approval of February 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes: Jim Roode made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Bill Zawacki seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report. Kerri Rollins reported on the following items: 1) The county recently launched Offero software for managing volunteer activity, event scheduling, participant registration and public outreach, the same software system to be implemented by Loveland; 2) The Spring Canyon Ranch acquisition was recently approved, including a 500-ac fee simple addition near Coyote Ridge and a 277-ac CE. A 400-acre fee simple addition to Horsetooth Mtn Open Space is part of 2,700 ac to be acquired in 5 transactions over the next 3 months, with funding from GOCO Protect Initiative and Open Space grants; 3) The Stegner Farm in Laporte is scheduled to close in April with \$600K in GOCO funding, \$400K in county funding. This partnership project includes a 50-ac CE held by CO Open Lands, contract water, and purchase of the residual land by a CSA farm through community fundraising efforts; 4) The Malchow Farm has been leased for corn, sugar beet, and alfalfa farming, and the water sharing agreement is being finalized.

Discussion/Action:

1. 2018 Open Lands & Trails Budget Information. Marilyn presented the for Open Lands sales tax and CEF funds, including projects, properties, management planning and development that will be submitted to the Budget Office in June for the 2018 budget process. The preliminary 5-year capital plans for Trails (Conservation Trust Funds and Trails CEF) were also presented. A City Council Study Session will be held in September, with public hearings planned for October. Expected operational costs are included on capital budgets. Soft-surface trails on open lands properties are funded by Open Lands, and the Recreation Trail System and regional trail connections are paid for using Conservation Trust Funds. The CEF funds are collected to provide capital improvements based on growth. Underpasses have not been included in these budgets as they are considered transportation infrastructure for safe passage and could possibly be included in a future city-wide tax.

Reports/Correspondence:

2. Property Acquisition Updates. The Ehrlich/Nomina property closed on March 1. The adverse possession lawsuit on 1.5 acres north of the river is still in mediation between the landowner and neighbor. The remainder of the property was purchased, along with the 3rd priority water right on the

river. An escrow of \$35K will be held for the future purchase of the 1.5-ac parcel pending successful mediation. Other property acquisitions still in process include two river parcels near the wastewater treatment plant, land near the Morey/Ward properties along the river, property on the north side of Boedecker Reservoir, and possibly additional property near the south end of Skyline Natural Area to address issues of trespassing, dumping, etc.

3. Open Lands Projects Report

Project Outdoors. Staff continues to work with teachers, schools, partners, program providers, and the Youth Advisory Council. Public input will help prioritize projects to include in the implementation grant. GOCO recently announced that the application process will include site visits after full applications are submitted in July, to determine which projects will move forward for Board consideration. OLAC members suggested ideas for public outreach including City Update, web apps, and a passport stamp/badge program.

Invasive Phreatophyte Removal Grant. Grant funding from the CO Water Conservation Board will help pay for the removal and treatment of hundreds of Russian olive, tamarisk and Siberian elm trees from Cottonwood Run North, Old St. Louis and Oxbow natural areas beginning this spring. Larimer County Weed District will provide monitoring and follow-up treatment as in-kind match.

Kings Crossing Pollinator Garden. The local chapter of Pheasants Forever will plant and maintain a pollinator garden at Kings Crossing Natural Area to improve wildlife habitat.

Barn Owl Nest Boxes. The Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute ([CARRI](#)) has installed two nest boxes for barn owls. One box has a live [webcam](#) which is monitored by CARRI staff daily.

Colorado Health Foundation Grant. CHF awarded full funding (\$85,200) for the purchase and implementation of Offero (formerly NatureTracker), a database management system for participant activity registration and volunteer management (<http://demo.offero.com>). The CHF grant will also help fund additional equipment and materials for public outreach and events, as well as a pilot program for middle school students in orienteering, art in nature, and technology mapping.

Environmental Education/Volunteer Program. The spring EE program includes 12 schools registered for a total of 18 days at River's Edge. Volunteers helped build and install three new Watershed activity boxes for students to create sand watersheds and learn about erosion, deposition and flooding. Two local high school students will be completing 40-hour internships in our EE program, arranged through Front Range Community College's Natural Resources Career Pathways Program.

4. Trail Updates

Trail Segment 10b – Namaqua to West US 34 underpass – The contractor plans to set the old Viestenz-Smith bridge in March. The north trail connection is complete and work is progressing with the first 200' of south trail poured in mid-February. The schedule is still tracking for the trail to open this spring.

Front Range Trail – Minor plan corrections were completed in February and advertising for the bids will start in March. Bids will open in early April and construction should start in late May and be completed in late August 2017. Clearances for Utilities, ROW and final environmental review are complete.

Long View Corridor Trail – Staff completed their review of the 35% plans and the biological report. The project budget has increased \$200K due to 57th St. left turn lanes and construction administrative expenses but these costs were anticipated and appropriated in the 2017 budget. Staff anticipates final designs will be completed by the end of March. The schedule now puts the project bidding in June 2017 for a construction start in fall 2017.

Trail Segment 10a – Wilson to Namaqua Avenue – Staff is preparing final concept plans for the new Namaqua underpass and the trail connection back to Wilson Avenue. Once the conceptual alignment is approved by the City, staff will meet with the landowner to discuss final easements. Funding has been appropriated in the 2017 budget for design and construction.

Grant awards – City Council approved the GOCO Connect Initiative Planning Grant agreement for \$97,000 to fund 75% of the design of the Namaqua Avenue Trail Underpass. Staff will be bringing the \$600,000 CDOT Transportation Alternative Program grant agreement to City Council for approval in March, which will provide almost half of the needed funds to construct the underpass in 2019 for a safe, grade-separated crossing.

Wilson Bridge and Taft/Wilson Trail – The new Wilson pedestrian bridge was placed on the abutments February 15. Progress on the remaining bank protection, concrete trail and stormwater improvements is going well and the trail is expected to re-open in late April 2017. The grand opening will be celebrated on National Trails Day on June 3 with a trail ride from the Fairgrounds Park event to the new bridge.

Commission Member Discussion Topics.

1. Rick Brent suggested that Open Lands leased for farming should practice conservation-appropriate techniques to reduce impacts to nearby water bodies.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm.