



## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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### CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – April 12, 2017

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

**Commissioners Present:** Gale Bernhardt, Rick Brent, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Nathan Thompson, Jean Whittaker, Kerri Rollins (LC OLAB Liaison).

**Commissioners Absent:** Andy Hawbaker, Bill Zawacki.

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

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

**Approval of March 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes:** Ross Livingston made an amendment to the minutes to change “Pheasants Unlimited” to “Pheasants Forever” on page 2. Rick Brent made a motion to approve the minutes with this amendment. Jean Whittaker 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 has a signed contract to acquire a 400-acre parcel west of Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, which would provide a buffer from development, habitat for wildlife and a protected viewshed;
- 2) Plantings and other enhancements are underway at Lions Park and flood recovery work is ongoing at Hermit Park;
- 3) Trail closures are in effect at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space for wildlife resource monitoring;
- 4) A fishing access project is under construction at Eagles Nest Open Space.

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

- 1. Open Lands Policy Review.** Policies are reviewed annually by staff and every five years by the commission. OLAC members received copies of the draft revised Open Lands & Trails Policies 1-19, which were been updated with current terminology, consistent formatting, revision dates, and references to the 2014 *Parks & Recreation Master Plan* and Open Lands Management Types, for consistency throughout. Other policies will be presented for review and approval as needed. Information regarding trail rules and e-bikes will be presented for discussion at an upcoming meeting.
- 2. Boedecker North Property Review.** A developer has proposed annexation and development of this property and the City’s Development Review Team is reviewing submittals. The development may involve discussions with Open Lands.
- 3. Fort Collins Natural Areas Partnership Request.** Fort Collins Natural Areas has requested a partnership on a 40-acre property in the separator area, adjacent to Mudd Lake. The property is listed at \$689K and Fort Collins has it under contract for \$670K. OLAC expressed concern about dedicating funding outside Loveland’s land priorities and felt that this property is not a funding priority right now.
- 4. Naming of E. 1st St. Open Lands Property.** The 79-acre property will be named in accordance with the Naming Policy, including public notice to solicit proposed names. Suggestions will be accepted until May 31, including during public outreach for Project Outdoors, since this property is the focal point and will provide key public access for the GOCO Inspire Initiative effort. Priority consideration will be

given to names that reflect the site's ecological features, such as plants or wildlife native to the Big Thompson River corridor, geological features, habitat types, or physical identifying features. Proposed names should not create confusion with existing parks, streets, or subdivisions. Names will be presented at the June OLAC meeting for review and selection.

### **Reports/Correspondence:**

**1. Boards and Commissions Summit Report.** Jean Whittaker and Jim Roode attended as representatives of OLAC and gave a presentation on recent Open Lands activities, answered questions, and distributed information to other commissions. Other interesting presentations were Planning Commission's update on the Foundry downtown project, and the Youth Advisory Commission's report on their recent trip to Washington D.C.

**2. Property Acquisition Updates.** Several acquisitions are planned for the next few months. Boundary line adjustments for the two east Big Thompson River properties are nearly complete, which will allow the properties to close. The Nomina Nursery property was purchased except for approximately 3% on the north side of the river. Prescriptive access easements and a revocable license will be drafted to allow the neighboring landowner to use a portion of the property for access, but the city will own the fee simple land. A proposed access easement for Southside Reservoir has been requested by the developers of Waters Edge, adjacent to the Ryans Gulch property. The City owns shares of Southside Ditch water. Staff will research the city's ownership and the possibility of leasing the rights for passive public use only, such as non-motorized/wakeless boating.

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

High Plains Environmental Center. Construction of the new building is complete and the grand opening is scheduled for Saturday, May 13, along with HPEC's annual native plant sale. The City contributed \$400,000 towards construction of the new center and is collaborating with High Plains on environmental education and land management.

Invasive Phreatophyte Removal and Cleanup. Russian olive, tamarisk and Siberian elm trees have been removed and treated at Cottonwood Run North and Old St. Louis Natural Areas, with grant funding covering 75% of the cost. A group of CSU student volunteers removed 20 cubic yards of flood debris at Cottonwood Run after the invasive trees were removed. Work at Oxbow and Fairgrounds Natural Areas will continue in the fall.

Project Outdoors. Staff is working with program providers and partners to identify potential programs, career pathways and physical elements to include in the plan for public feedback. The Youth Advisory Council will tour the E. 1<sup>st</sup> St. property and create a draft plan to reach out to their peers for additional input. The Winona Elementary School community is also identifying potential outdoor improvements. A second public open house is planned for May 9 to help prioritize projects to include in the GOCO implementation grant. Applications are due July 26 and the GOCO site visit is scheduled for August 29.

Skyline Natural Area Management Plan. Dr. Jason LaBelle from CSU, along with a team of 8 graduate and undergraduate students, surveyed Skyline Natural Area on March 25 for archaeological resources.

Colorado Health Foundation Grant. Staff is working with the City Attorney's Office to finalize the contract with Squarei for the purchase and implementation of the Offero database management system for volunteer management and activity registration.

Environmental Education/Public Outreach/Volunteer Program. Spring training for volunteer environmental educators is complete and a total of 18 school programs are scheduled in April and May. Results of the volunteer-led bird walk on March 25 are available on ebird.org at: [Big Thompson River](#)

[Bike Trail Birding Hotspot](#). A volunteer trail project is scheduled for April 29 with Colorado Addicted Trailbuilders Society (CATS), to connect the Mariana Butte trail system to the Big Thompson River corridor. This trail system was planned in cooperation with the Golf Course to improve access and remove unsustainable social trails at Mariana Butte, as part of the Department-wide goal of providing public access and trails to access natural areas. The trail is pedestrian-only and will include signage and striping at cart path crossings. A site visit may be planned for OLAC to walk the trail corridor.

#### **4. Trail Updates.**

Trail Segment 10b – Namaqua Rd. to West US 34 Underpass – The old Viestenz-Smith Bridge was set over the Barnes Ditch on March 30. All but 200 feet of trail is complete; we hope to open the new trail in late April once all seeding, fencing, and signage is complete! We are a month ahead of schedule and the project is \$60K over budget due to a change in the fence design as requested by the landowner. We have made savings in other 2017 trail projects to account for the cost overrun.

Front Range Trail – The construction bids advertised in March and a pre-bid meeting is scheduled for April 5. Bids will be opened on April 14 and construction should start in late May. Construction is scheduled for completion in late August 2017. The project is a few weeks behind schedule but should still be completed by Labor Day 2017.

Long View Corridor Trail – The consultant completed 90% plans for CDOT FIR/FOR review and will meet with CDOT for final review in mid-April. Staff is coordinating with Xcel Energy to relocate the power lines on the south side of 57<sup>th</sup> Street and coordinating the bid schedule with the consultant. The schedule now puts the project bidding in June 2017 for a construction start in the fall of 2017.

Trail 10a – Wilson to Namaqua Avenue – Staff prepared final concept plans for the Namaqua underpass and the trail connection back to Wilson Avenue in March. The conceptual alignment is under review by City utility staff and a follow-up meeting with the landowner to discuss easements for this trail section is scheduled for early April. Staff hopes to secure easements for future construction.

Wilson Bridge and Taft/Wilson Trail – Work has proceeded quickly on the remaining trail work and the project is wrapping up. Bank protection work for the stormwater outfall is complete and the contractor is working on the final trail connection on the west side of Taft Ave. up to the roadway. RMC also completed pipe work in Centennial Park in late March and completed trail improvements in this area. A change order was issued to relocate a small section of trail west of Taft Avenue that was undercut from the river. The riverbank in this area will be lowered to accommodate a flood plain bench and will be stabilized once the 404 permit has been issued. Staff hopes to have all the work completed by mid-April and will reopen the entire trail in late April. A formal ribbon cutting for the new bridge is scheduled for June 3 to celebrate National Trails Day.

#### **Executive Session:**

A motion to convene Executive Session was made by Ross Livingston and seconded by Darren Pape. The regular session was suspended at 7:35 pm and the Executive Session was convened. Executive Session concluded and the regular session reconvened at 8:09 pm.

Rick Brent made a motion that the commission approve negotiating the best price on a potential acquisition, taking into consideration the terms set in the original contract. Jim Roode seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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