



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Civic Center • 500 East Third Street, Suite 200 • Loveland, Colorado 80537
(970) 962-2727 • FAX (970) 962-2903 • TDD (970) 962-2620

www.cityofloveland.org

CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – June 8, 2016

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

Commissioners Present: Gale Bernhardt, Rick Brent, Andy Hawbaker, Ross Livingston, Jim Roode, Nathan Thompson, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki, Hugh McKean (City Council Liaison), Kerri Rollins (Larimer County Liaison).

Commissioners Absent: Darren Pape.

Staff Present: Elizabeth Anderson, Debbie Eley, Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Janet Meisel-Burns, Kelly Smith.

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

Public Comment:

1. Kathy Hartman, 945 E. 6th St., informed the commission that public tours are being offered to a recently-discovered 1,200-year old archeological site at Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area.

Approval of May 11, 2016 Meeting Minutes: Rick Brent made a motion to approve the minutes as written; Jean Whittaker seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously as written.

City Council Liaison Report. Hugh McKean reported that the City Manager's contract was not renewed and a search process will begin as soon as possible. Hugh also reported on the recent City Council meeting regarding annexation and zoning of the Waters Edge property, north of the Ryan Gulch open lands acquisition. Neighbors requested that the city purchase the Waters Edge property for open land property rather than annex for development. City Council approved the annexation on first reading, but delayed the second reading until August 2, to give the neighbors time to raise funds via special improvement district, mill levy, etc. to acquire the property. Council supported OLAC and staff having vetted this property previously and determining there was not a willing seller at a price Open Lands could afford.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report. Zac Wiebe reported on the following items: 1) The COSA Annual Conference will be in Estes Park on Sept. 12-14. Commission members are encouraged to attend. 2) A new Passport program for the 20th anniversary of the Open Space Tax was launched recently. Participants can visit 8 open spaces with 2 rubbing posts at each to complete their passport and be entered for prizes and drawings. 3) GOCO staff informed Larimer County that their Protect Initiative grant will be recommended for full funding at the June 10 GOCO Board meeting. The project includes 4 properties between Devil's Backbone and Horsetooth Mountain, protecting 2,300 acres and connecting existing areas using fee simple purchases and conservation easements. 4. The new trail at Devil's Backbone will be completed and opened soon.

Reports/Correspondence

1. Sunset Vista Natural Area Concept Plan. Parks and Recreation Planner Kelly Smith presented concept plans for trails, land management, wildlife habitat, historic resources, and interpretive education at Sunset Vista. Goals for the property include preserving natural and cultural resources,

providing Regional Trail connectivity, and creating a neighborhood open space for passive recreation. The Recreation Trail and Longview Trail will both traverse the property, and a new trailhead parking lot will be located on 57th St. Existing natural areas nearby include Long View Farm and Coyote Ridge Natural Area. The farmstead structures are potentially eligible for listing on a historic register but have seen better days. The Loudon Ditch was historically used for farming in the area. Several high points on the property offer expansive views of Long's Peak and the Front Range. Land management objectives include continued farming of winter wheat and restoration of native short-grass prairie and wetlands. Staff has been working with High Plains Environmental Center on native species and wetland enhancement. Two options for soft-surface trails were presented – Option A takes advantage of high points and viewsheds traveling north through agricultural lands on the eastern side of the property, and Option B has a more inward focus, along lower wetland areas and through restored shortgrass prairie. OLAC preferred Option B with modifications to move the southern portion of the trail to the east a bit, to take advantage of high points and views, and then continuing back down towards the wetlands. Funding will come from Conservation Trust funds (\$900K), Open Lands (\$400K) and grant awards, which will be used towards the paved trail and parking lot, bridges, and intersection improvements at 57th and Taft Ave. Interpretive signage could include natural and cultural resources, historic structures, agricultural heritage, mountain peak identification, wildlife, wetlands and hydrology. The concept plans will be presented to the public in July for feedback. Commission members asked about the condition and eligibility of the historic structures. Most of the buildings are in poor condition but were identified as potentially eligible within a multiple property designation with the theme of agriculture. The stone structure dating to the 1800s is the most interesting feature. Cost would be a major consideration of any historic restoration project. A site visit will be scheduled for commission members to tour the property.

2. Property Acquisition Updates. Brian reported that the 8.6-ac Nicholson Tract T (Oxbow) property closed on May 20 and the 9.5-ac Mihelich property at Namaqua Skyline closed on May 31. Two additional properties are being pursued near Namaqua Skyline. The Ward Trust property will likely close in September. The appraisal has been completed and approved by GOCO. The draft conservation easement and baseline inventory should both be completed shortly. A contract on the 55-acre West Big Thompson River property will be sent to the property owner soon.

3. Open Lands Projects Report. Quick-win sites have received positive reviews and have been featured in the Reporter-Herald, along with articles about the High Plains partnership and other projects. Morey Wildlife Reserve is the featured *Site of the Month* for June, with activities including a trail-building project celebrating National Trails Day on June 4, when 16 volunteers came out to help construct the loop trail. A guided bird walk will be held on June 11 and a family nature walk is planned for June 24. King's Crossing will be the *Site of the Month* in July, with similar educational and stewardship activities. At River's Edge, Dog Day Afternoon was rescheduled to June 18 due to rainy May weather. Fishing line recycle tubes have been donated and installed to protect wildlife and resources. Trees donated by Ketterer's Nursery have been planted at River's Edge and other parks. A memorial tree for Brian's mother will be planted at the River's Edge overlook. An Active Generation tour of Open Lands was offered on May 31, with 11 interested and active participants.

Discussion/Action:

4. Open Lands Policy Review. Policy OL-6 Signage has been revised to include new categories and standards for signs and kiosks. Categories include 1. Regulation and Enforcement (rules and safety); 2. Information and Education (maps, interpretive signs, recognition of partners); and 3. Identification and Wayfinding (site names, addresses). Rick Brent made a motion to approve Policy OL-6 as

presented, with the addition of “by name or logo” for recognition of partners and grants on informational signs. Nate Thompson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. Placement of Sculpture on Open Lands and Natural Areas. The Cultural Services Department contacted Open Lands regarding a bear sculpture in the city’s art collection that needs to be moved for downtown development. Staff asked OLAC if the placement of sculpture on open lands and natural areas fits the intention of the Open Lands program. Commission members agreed that art is more appropriate in parks and that open lands should be kept as natural as possible. Trailheads may be appropriate locations for sculptures of animals, history or culture representative of a site. Placement of sculpture will be considered by OLAC on a site-by-site basis.

Reminders:

June 11 – Guided Bird Walk at Morey Wildlife Reserve – 7:30-9:30 am

June 14 – Community Stewardship Lecture “Loveland Open Lands” at Grimm Brothers – 6:00pm

June 16 – PEEPs Program, "What Does the Fox Say?" at Namaqua Park, 9:30 & 11 am

June 18 – Dog Day Afternoon at River’s Edge Natural Area – 1:00-3:00 pm

June 24 – Family Nature Walk at Morey Wildlife Reserve – 10:00-11:00 am

June 25, 26 – Volunteer Trail Host Training

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.