



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – March 14, 2018

Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 500 E. 3rd St., Loveland, CO 80537

Commissioners Present: Gale Bernhardt, Mike Hinterberg, Ross Livingston, Jim Roode, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki.

Commissioners Absent: Rick Brent, Andy Hawbaker, Darren Pape, Don Overcash (Council Liaison).

Staff Present: Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Debbie Eley, Chris Carlson (Stormwater Engineering)

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

Approval of February 14, 2018 Meeting Minutes. Postponed until a quorum of members present.

Public Comment. Nan Daniels and Curt Cole, north Loveland residents, were in attendance.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Liaison Report: Marilyn reported that the position of Open Lands Manager will be posted shortly.

Discussion/Action:

1. Big Thompson River Master Plan Review. Commission members had the opportunity to review the plan, which was funded by a CDBG grant with the intent of creating guidance for future improvements for the river corridor. The document is not considered regulatory or part of the city's comprehensive plan. The plan identifies projects and improvements that most significantly reduce flood risk and have other benefits such as redevelopment and restoration possibilities. Jim Roode made a motion to recommend the plan as a guidance document for adoption by City Council. Bill Zawacki seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

2. Prairie Ridge Natural Area Management Plan Review. The Prairie Ridge Natural Area Management Plan has been developed over the past two years with significant input from partners, stakeholders, other experts, and the public. Staff from project partners Fort Collins, Larimer County, and Colorado Open Lands provided input with respect to natural resource conservation, sustainable trail-building, and public recreation. Surveys by Colorado Parks & Wildlife and the Colorado Natural Heritage Program also provided valuable source data. Public input was gathered via an open house meeting, online surveys, and in-person surveys at the adjacent Coyote Ridge Natural Area. Site development will include parking, trails, a restroom, and connections to neighboring trail systems and open lands. The original concept plan proposed a loop trail, however, in order to best protect the resources and limit impacts, a single trail will traverse the site from north to south, along with an east-west ADA trail connecting to the new parking area along Wilson Ave. Dryland farming will continue in cultivated areas until no longer feasible, as a conservation value identified in the easement and a land management tool. Wetlands adjacent to the trail will be removed from cultivation and restored with native species. Natural habitat in the western valleys will be restored with native shortgrass prairie species. Bill Zawacki made a motion recommending approval of the Prairie Ridge Management Plan. Ross Livingston seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. 2018 Open Land & Trails Work Goals. Each division of the Parks and Recreation Department sets goals and work plans for the upcoming year. Based on citizen feedback, priorities set by the commission, and available resources, the 2019 Open Lands and Trails work plan will include the following components: acquisition of priority parcels, development of management and stewardship plans, access projects, field projects, property management tasks, and public programming and outreach. Budget funding is appropriated for each of these items.

4. Open Lands & Trails 2019 Budget Information. Marilyn provided preliminary Open Lands and Trails budget information for commission discussion of the 2019 Budget. Projections include approximately \$2.2M in revenue from the county open space sales tax and \$500K from the Open Lands CEF. Expenditures are projected at \$1M, split about evenly between acquisitions and operations. Trail funding is provided by Conservation Trust dollars from the lottery (\$750K est.), the Trails CEF (\$285K), and grants (\$600K). Trail expenditures are projected at approximately \$2M for capital projects and operations.

Reports/Correspondence:

5. Boards & Commissions Appreciation Event Recap. Several commission members participated in the appreciation event and the “world café” style program, learning about other boards and commissions and providing input on a variety of city-wide topics. Members also provided input on potential items to be included in a tax ballot initiative.

6. Property Acquisition Updates. Potential acquisitions will be presented for discussion at the April meeting.

7. Open Lands Projects Report. Staff provided the following project updates.

- Russian olive, Siberian elm, and tamarisk trees were removed from a section of the Big Thompson River corridor south of Fairgrounds Park with funding from a Colorado Water Conservation Board grant.
- Asbestos has been removed from the structures at Sunset Vista Natural Area. The small stone structure will be preserved as part of the historical interpretation planned for the site.
- Loveland applied for an Infrastructure Grant from the Colorado Health Foundation to assist with making a trail connection from Madison Avenue into Old St. Louis Natural Area. This project also specifically addresses the need for intergenerational access and programming.
- The Department worked with Colorado Parks and Wildlife on a “Fishing is Fun” grant to install an accessible fishing dock at Willow Bend Natural Area to encourage youth and family fishing.

8. Trail Updates. Staff provided the following trail updates.

- The new section of paved Recreation Trail to Rossum Drive is complete. The contractor is waiting for warmer weather to finish seeding the areas along the new trail. National Trails Day activities on June 2 will feature this new trail and a stewardship project at Oxbow Natural Area.
- Staff is working with the contractor of the North Front Range Trail to address concerns about the uneven surface on a portion of Loveland’s section of the trail. Modifications are planned to address these issues and provide a more enjoyable trail experience.
- Construction of the Long View Corridor Trail is proceeding with a planned completion of Summer-Fall 2018. Bridge abutments have been poured for the two bridges in Loveland’s section of the trail.

- Loveland has finalized an IGA with Larimer County to share maintenance duties related to the north Front Range Trail. Loveland will mow the trail corridor and perform snow and trash removal. Larimer County will complete weed management and safety services.

Commission Member Discussion Topics.

1. A question was raised about whether 1% for the arts (AIPP) funding can be used for public art along regional trails, possibly incorporating a bicycle theme.

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