



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – May 9, 2018

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

Commissioners Present: Mike Hinterberg, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Jean Whittaker, Don Overcash (Council Liaison).

Commissioners Absent: Gale Bernhardt, Rick Brent, Andy Hawbaker, Bill Zawacki.

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

Guests: Mayor Jacki Marsh, Councilor Kathi Wright.

The public meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm.

Approval of April 11, 2018 Meeting Minutes. Darren Pape made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mike Hinterberg seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

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

City Council Liaison Report: Marilyn Hilgenberg reported that Council continues to examine the Capital Expansion Fee (CEF) funding mechanism, to get a complete picture of how Loveland compares to other communities with respect to affordability and livability. A study session will be planned with Council for the Open Lands Advisory Commission to provide an update on tangible results of CEF funding and future plans. Mayor Jacki Marsh reported on the following items: 1) Council will have a discussion with the Thompson School District, Police and Emergency Services regarding school safety; 2) Aims Community College is moving its Aviation Program to the Regional Airport; 3) Bill Reed Middle School celebrated its 100th anniversary. Councilor Kathi Wright reported that the Youth Advisory Commission is actively involved in efforts to boost ridership in the city's mass transit system. Council Liaison Don Overcash reported that the increased presence of police officers on bike trails and open lands will improve safety and police awareness.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Liaison Report: Marilyn reported on several items: 1) Larimer County is working on its capital plan and will perform an audit on the Open Lands Sales Tax funds, since 2018 is the final year of the original sales tax percentages and allocations. Loveland's share will be reduced beginning in 2019, which helps justify the continuation of the Open Lands CEF; 2) the county is also looking into charging an entrance fee at Devil's Backbone Open Space. As a partial owner, Loveland would not be in favor of a fee at the only foothills trail available to this community. Staff will check the IGAs for these acquisitions and follow up with the county.

Discussion/Action:

1. Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park Project Update. Kelly Smith, Project Manager for the reconstruction project, provided an update on Phase II of the project. Phase II includes improvements to historic structures, environmental education facilities, interpretive signage, expanded parking capacity, ADA walkway, and an overlook to the river. The construction contract will go before Council on May 15. If approved, construction would begin in June and be completed in September. Art in Public Places funding for this project will be combined with other AIPP funding for a plan of recreating a flood

memorial in an artistic way. Interpretive signage will include information about the history of water and power facilities in the canyon, flooding, wildlife and fisheries, native vegetation, history of the Louis Papa cabin and the CCC-era structures. The State Historic Preservation Commission must review and approve improvements to historic structures, which will be implemented in fall-winter 2019. An IGA with Larimer County Natural Resources will provide for maintenance and patrol of the park.

2. Sunset Vista Natural Area Management Plan Review. The draft management plan for Sunset Vista Natural Area has been developed over the past several years with input from partners, stakeholders, resource specialists and the public. The property is the site of the Long View Trail connecting Loveland and Fort Collins, which provided the basis for the management plan. Documentation of existing conditions included vegetation resource inventories, historical assessments, wildlife monitoring, and wetland delineation. The management plan includes the paved Long View Trail and Loveland Recreation Trail sections, a new parking area/trailhead, a soft-surface trail through restored short-grass prairie and wetlands south of the Loudon Ditch, continued agricultural use of areas north of the ditch, and historical interpretation in the former farmstead area. Darren Pape made a motion to recommend approval of the Sunset Vista Natural Area Management Plan. Jim Roode seconded the motion. Ross Livingston noted that minimizing rattlesnake encounters would be ideal. The plan calls for on-trail access only, and trail margins will be mowed to increase visibility and safety. The motion passed unanimously. The plan will be made available online for public comment.

Reports/Correspondence:

3. Property Acquisition Updates. Staff has been working with Larimer County on a transfer of two county-owned parcels at the south end of Madison Ave. to provide an off-street trail connection from the Mirasol/Winona neighborhood to Old St. Louis Natural Area and the Big Thompson River corridor. Crossing of the Farmers Ditch will also be required for this project. Three possible property additions to Skyline Natural Area are being resolved, along with a trail easement near Morning Drive to provide public access to Skyline. Two properties with potential trail components are being discussed in the Namaqua Rd. area, and three properties in the east Big Thompson River corridor are still under negotiation. A crossing of the Buckingham Ditch has been requested and a trail is under development at the north Boedecker property. The equipment shed at Oxbow East will be maintained, but the small depot building will be demolished due to its condition and location in the floodway. A trail easement from Denver Ave. east to Boyd Lake and two park acquisitions are also being negotiated.

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

Properties/Facilities/Projects/Maintenance/Operations

- Flush restrooms and drinking water at River's Edge Natural Area have been turned on for the season. Public use has noticeably increased with the warm weather.
- At the annual Waterway Cleanup on April 28 dozens of volunteers helped clean up the Big Thompson River corridor, River's Edge Natural Area, and Kings Crossing Natural Area.
- Volunteer planting projects on April 18 and April 28 at Sunset Vista Natural Area installed 280+ native shrubs and 15 cottonwood trees, to enhance and improve the wetland corridors and wildlife habitat on the property.

Partnerships, Planning and Grants

- The Loveland Municipal Court is assigning youth to help with open lands projects this summer through a new Alternative Sentencing program, to help complete stewardship projects and provide a sense of purpose and community ownership to these youth.

- The possibility of an “eagle cam” is being discussed with researchers, sponsors, and staff, to provide a live nest cam on an active raptor nest at a Loveland natural area site.
- Staff will present the Fishing is Fun grant to Colorado Parks & Wildlife on May 22, for their consideration of funding a fishing dock and access for youth fishing at Willow Bend.
- The final draft Prairie Ridge Natural Area Management Plan was presented for public review and feedback until April 30. Comments were incorporated into the final plan, which is available online.

Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program

- A new event at River’s Edge, “Fishing Your Loveland Open Lands,” attracted 100 participants of all ages on April 28. Activities included learning to cast, identifying insects, fishing stewardship, rules and regulations, and where to fish in the Loveland area. The Loveland Fishing Club helped Loveland’s volunteers with this family-friendly event.
- School programs at River’s Edge have been going smoothly, with 13 programs held in April and only two classes rescheduled due to weather. Teachers, students, parents and volunteers have all given excellent feedback to the spring programs.

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

- Recent Long View Trail construction includes bridges being placed and concrete trail being poured. 57th Street has been widened for a left-turn lane into the new parking lot.
- The contractor has resolved the issue on the North Front Range Trail with the uneven surface on Loveland’s section of the trail.
- National Trails Day will be celebrated on June 2 at Oxbow Natural Area, to feature the new paved recreation trail connection to Rossum Drive and a stewardship project to build a soft-surface trail through Oxbow East.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.

/s/ Ross Livingston, Chair