



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 13, 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, Rick Brent (via phone), Don Overcash (Council Liaison).

Commissioners Absent: Andy Hawbaker, Darren Pape.

Staff Present: Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Michele Van Hare.

Guests: None.

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

Approval of May 18, 2018 Meeting Minutes. Jean Whittaker made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Jim Roode seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously (including an email approval from Darren Pape who could not be present).

Public Comment. None.

City Council Liaison Report: The Commission discussed the importance of having representation from the City Council at the OLAC meetings so that the councilor understands the issues and can speak to open lands and trails issues when they come up at City Council. The Commission values having regular communications with Council members. Commission members also inquired about City Council Capital Expansion Fee discussions. Commission members voiced the importance of Open Lands and Trails fees in meeting the goals of the Open Lands program.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Liaison Report: Marilyn reported that the County staff are still in the process of finalizing their recruiting process for the Open Lands Manager position. Marilyn also indicated that she communicated to the County Open Lands Board that Loveland would like to be part of the discussion when fee discussions occur regarding Devil's Backbone Open Space.

Discussion/Action:

1. Property Reviews. Brian Hayes, Open Lands Coordinator, presented two open land property reviews for the Commission's consideration. OL-18-CW is a 137-acre property located along the Big Thompson River Corridor in southeast Loveland. It is rated high for Environmental/ecological, scenic, outdoor recreation, and connectivity values. The owner would like to close on the property in early 2019 so staff will be asking that the funds appropriated for the property be moved from the 2018 budget and included in the 2019 budget.

OL-18-KB is a 22.5-acre property located along County Road 20E in southeast Loveland. The owner would like the property to be preserved for open space and would like benches or some feature to honor the heritage of her family on the site. The site is adjacent to the proposed OL-18-CW acquisition, Kauffman Conservation Easement, Koppes Conservation Easement and Big Thompson Ponds State Wildlife Area. The property buffers Natural Areas Sites #3 and #4 on The Big Thompson River and provides wildlife corridors, incredible views, agricultural values and access to County Road 20E.

Bill Zawacki made a motion that staff move forward to acquire these properties for open land purposes and the purchase of OL-18-KB only occur if OL-18-CW is acquired first. Michael Hinterberg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

2. Open Lands Property Naming (4 Sites). Open Lands properties are named in accordance with the Open Lands Naming Policy. Several properties have been acquired that need to be officially named through the Naming Policy process. The Commission discussed how to proceed forward with naming Ryan's Gulch II (2400 W CR 16), Namaqua West (731 N. Namaqua Ave.), Ward Boise (1321 S. Boise Ave.) and Boedecker Parkside (W. 1st St.). Gale Bernhardt made a motion to name the Namaqua West Property "Medina's Crossing" and to name the other three properties using a public naming contest. Bill Zawacki seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Staff will start this process and bring recommendations back to OLAC for consideration.

3. Review of Maintenance Reserve Policy

The Commission reviewed its currently designated cash policy regarding Loveland's share of the Larimer County Open Space Sales Tax designated for "Maintenance/Restoration" of open lands. For consistency with other City funds, staff recommended that the designated cash reserve be reduced from \$3 million to \$1.2 million, equal to one year of operations. This will allow the City to acquire highly rated natural areas while still having adequate reserves for emergencies. Jean Whittaker made a motion to approve this new reserve policy and Jim Roode seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Revised Policy:

B18 Loveland will set aside a minimum of \$1,200,000 in the Open Lands Fund as an Emergency/Liability reserve. These funds will be held in a designated reserve account and would only be utilized in an emergency, to assure the long-term sustainability of the open lands properties.

Reports/Correspondence:

4. Environmental Education and Community Outreach Update: Michele Van Hare, Environmental Education Coordinator, gave an update to the Commission on 2018 programs to date. The Commission discussed the Offero software system and the changes it has made to the program and communications. The Commission asked about the cost-benefit. Michele summarized attendance and participation numbers and discussed the new programs being offered.

5. Property 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. This project received a \$129K grant from the Colorado Health Foundation to assist with this project. Brian also reported that the old structure has been demolished at Oxbow Natural Area.

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

Properties/Facilities/Projects/Maintenance/Operations

- The draft Management Plan for Sunset Vista is available for review on-line.
- Weed management is one of the greatest challenges on open lands this time of year.
- A private donor has donated a small van to be used for Loveland's Environmental Education and Public Outreach Program.
- The Commission discussed a citizen request to allow kayaks at River's Edge. At this time, no change in policy is recommended but it will be reviewed with other policies at the beginning of 2019.

Partnerships, Planning and Grants

- Governor Hickenlooper signed HB18-1400 on May 18 at Sunset Vista Natural Area. The governor talked with those present about regional trails and challenges.
- CDOT is planning on replacing the highway bridge at I-25 and the Big Thompson River which will open up the possibility of a trail underpass, expanded regional trails and additional water capacity.

Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program

- Live owl and kestrel webcams on an open land site have allowed the community to watch the nesting process.
- On May 12, more than 20 members of the community participated in a stewardship project at River's Edge Natural Area, planting thousands of native milkweed seeds to encourage pollinator species, including the Monarch Butterfly. Staff worked with Bob Trout from the Loveland Initiative for Monarch Butterflies to promote and coordinate the project.
- Volunteer trail host training on May 20 recruited 8 new trail hosts and provided comprehensive information and authentic training situations with visitors at River's Edge Natural Area. Trail hosts actively help monitor and report on public use of open lands and trails.
- Spring environmental education programs wrapped up the season on May 23, hosting programs at River's Edge for 25 school groups, from kindergarten to 5th graders. Volunteer educators help make these programs possible, donating hundreds of hours of their time and talents.
- A special Astronomy Night program was scheduled for May 25, in partnership with Sylvan Dale Ranch and the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society. Unfortunately, inclement weather caused the program to be cancelled.

Staff provided the following trail updates

- Open Lands & Trails staff hosted a very successful National Trails Day event at Oxbow Natural Area, featuring the new Rossum Drive trail connection, a stewardship project to build a new soft-surface trail through Oxbow East, a guided bird walk at Morey Wildlife Reserve, and a public expo event with demos on bike safety, trail etiquette, Leave-No-Trace, and wildlife activities. More than 50 volunteers and staff helped with the trail-building project, 18 participants attended the bird walk, and many neighbors and trail users stopped by the event.
- Construction of the Long View Regional Trail is proceeding, with bridge work and concrete paving, widening of 57th Street, and planting of hundreds of native trees, shrubs, and wetland plants by volunteers and crews. We anticipate a mid-summer trail completion.
- Loveland is working with the developer of the Parkside residential area to cut in a trail corridor for Loveland's planned trail along the north shore of Boedecker Reservoir on property recently purchased for Open Land purposes.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

/s/ Ross Livingston, Chair