



## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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### CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – August 8, 2018

Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 500 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Loveland, CO 80537

**Commissioners Present:** Andy Hawbaker, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki, Rick Brent, Don Overcash (Council Liaison), Kathi Wright (Alternate Council Liaison).

**Commissioners Absent:** Gale Bernhardt, Mike Hinterberg.

**Staff Present:** Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Debbie Eley, Bryan Harding, Janet Meisel-Burns.

**Guests:** Scott James – CO Addicted Trailbuilders Society (CATS) and open lands & trails advocate. Nan Daniels, Curt Cole, and Kathy Maher – CO Native Plant Society and volunteers helping with native planting areas at River's Edge Natural Area.

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

**Introduction of Bryan Harding, Parks & Recreation Planning Manager.**

**Approval of June 13, 2018 Meeting Minutes.** Ross Livingston made a correction to the minutes to show that Astronomy Night on May 25 was cancelled due to weather. Ross Livingston made a motion to approve the minutes with this correction. Rick Brent seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Public Comment.** None.

**City Council Liaison Report:** Don Overcash reported that the 2019 budget process is underway with a detailed review by Council and final approval scheduled for October. The addition of a sidewalk on the west side of N. Wilson Ave. has been discussed. Options include building the sidewalk now as close to where future plans will call for sidewalk (est. \$100K), applying for Safe Routes to School grant funding, or delaying until development occurs, since a sidewalk exists on the east side of Wilson. Other items include median improvements along US 34 south of Lake Loveland. An infrastructure needs list and price tag of valued amenities should be developed. The cost of a regional police training facility has increased and grants are being sought to cover the \$1M shortage. The facility is scheduled to open in fall 2019. A police records system is being developed with Larimer County and Fort Collins. A proposal for increasing police reaction time for non-emergency situations is being reviewed. The new parking garage downtown by the Foundry will open in September and the first floor of the hotel is completed.

**Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Liaison Report:** Marilyn Hilgenberg had the following report from OLAB: 1) Meegan Flenniken has been appointed as Land Conservation, Planning & Resource Program Manager. She has been with the county for 15 years and was formerly the Resource Program Manager. 2) Larimer County and Fort Collins purchased the Gallegos property at Red Mountain Open Space that to avoid development of the Table Mountain inholding. The 800-acre ranch was acquired for \$2.25 million. 3) Applications for Small Grants for Community Partnering are being accepted until August 30.

## Discussion/Action:

**1. Recreation Trail Wayfinding Signage Program.** Janet Meisel-Burns presented a draft plan and concepts for an updated wayfinding and trail identification signage program for the Recreation Trail System. A detailed inventory of the trails system was completed in 2017, identifying existing signage and locations of needed signage. Safety and information for users are the highest priorities for this signage update. The 22-mile “loop trail” around the city is nearly complete and consists of 5 sections logically separated by geography, major roadways and other landmarks: the Big Thompson River, Civic Center, Boyd Lake, North, and Westside Trails. Additional regional trail connections include Long View, Front Range, and the future Centerra Trail. Identification of these sections on signs and maps will help trail users know their location and find their destination. Kiosk “arches” are proposed to be re-used, with updated paint and new sign panels. Commission members favored concepts with minimal text and logos, reducing clutter and simplifying signage. Trails should also be clearly identified as multi-use and bikers should be reminded to signal their presence to other trail users. Commission members were also in favor of the proposed trail section names, including the colors for each section and all bike trails and routes on maps, keeping the trail mile marker system, and re-using the kiosk arches with new signs in blue with white text/graphics.

**2. Development of a Department Drone Policy.** Parks & Recreation has received requests for drone use over parks, open lands and trails from photographers, real estate agents, families, etc. Motorized vehicles are already prohibited and a drone policy guided by FAA rules would clarify allowed uses and operators. Considerations for drone use include disturbance and impacts to wildlife, birds, environmentally sensitive areas, and the safety, privacy and disturbance of visitors. Allowed uses could include research, monitoring, inventories, emergency activities, and promotion. Any proposed use would need to justify the use and purpose and would be evaluated using a permit application process. Commission members suggested that any proposed policy be available to the public for review and comment.

## Reports/Correspondence:

**3. Property Updates.** Brian Hayes reported that two properties along the east Big Thompson River are under contract, with closings scheduled for January. The Wagner property would close first and the Bonser property would close contingent on the Wagner property. These properties are critical for the east Big T trail and an underpass at I-25. Surveys and due diligence are underway.

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

### Properties/Facilities/Projects/Maintenance/Operations

A naming contest is underway to name 3 properties: Boise Avenue, Boedecker North, and Ryan’s Gulch. Name suggestions are being accepted until August 31.

### Partnerships, Planning and Grants

A \$30K Fishing is Fun grant was awarded by Colorado Parks & Wildlife for a new fishing dock at Willow Bend Natural Area.

A new program with the Loveland Municipal Court sentenced juvenile defendants to work on open lands and trail projects this summer, providing more than 250 hours of community service.

A new van for Environmental Education programming was purchased thanks to a generous donation to the Open Lands program, to help improve staff and volunteer efficiency for public outreach programs.

Members of the Colorado Native Plant Society have been working with staff on a request for funding from Larimer County's small grant program to establish two new native plant pollinator garden areas at River's Edge. Plants could possibly be grown in cooperation with High Plains Environmental Center.

#### Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program

Raptor nest boxes installed and maintained by CARRI were very successful this season, with barn owl and kestrel nests each fledging five young. Live webcams allowed the public to watch the birds during the nesting season. The adult females and all young were banded for tracking purposes.

Public outreach events have included Dog Days of Summer, Storytelling at the River's Edge amphitheater, astronomy nights, bird walks, orienteering, and critter scene investigations.

Stewardship opportunities have included weed warriors, "Week of Hope" youth service groups, planting projects, trailbuilding, and cleanup projects.

#### **3. Trail Updates.** Staff provided the following trail updates.

The Grand Opening of Long View Trail will be held on August 18 at Sunset Vista Natural Area, highlighting the opening of the new regional trail connection, and three new natural areas (Sunset Vista, Fort Collins' Colina Mariposa and Hazaleus Natural Areas, and Larimer County's Long View Open Space).

The Colorado Health Foundation awarded Loveland \$129,000 for a neighborhood trail connection from Madison Avenue into Old St. Louis Natural Area and the Big Thompson River corridor.

A new trail corridor is being developed at the north Boecker Reservoir property, which will require a bridge across the Buckingham Ditch. Engineering and installation of the bridge are planned for fall/winter 2018-19 and the site will be open once safe access is established.

The Recreation Trail at Wilson Ave is closed temporarily for work on Wilson Avenue. The trail underpass, parking lot, and access to Wilson Ave. from the river trail will be closed for the duration of the project, expected to last until the end of 2018.

City staff have been working with CDOT to include the replacement of the Big Thompson River bridge at I-25 in order to improve river flows and allow adequate space for a future trail underpass.

City staff is working with CDOT on their PRK Study of Highway 34 from west Loveland to Kersey, to ensure that CDOT is aware of community desires for sidewalks, trails and underpasses for safety.

Parks and Recreation helped sponsor Bike to Work Day with stations at Civic Center, Mehaffey and Seven Lakes Parks.

#### **Commission Member Discussion Topics:**

1. Rick Brent noted that private property owners have access to assistance from CSU extension, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Larimer County Weed District.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

**/s/ Ross Livingston, Chair**