



## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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### CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – September 12, 2018

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

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

**Commissioners Absent:** Mike Hinterberg, Don Overcash (Council Liaison).

**Staff Present:** Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Debbie Eley, Bryan Harding, Jeanie Vetter.

**Guests:** Scott James and Andy Sheldon from CO Addicted Trailbuilders Society (CATS). Scott and Andy were recognized for their efforts and willingness to help with trail-building and maintenance.

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

**Introduction of Jeanie Vetter, Parks & Recreation Planner.**

**Approval of August 8, 2018 Meeting Minutes.** Darren Pape made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Bill Zawacki seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Public Comment.** None.

**City Council Liaison Report:** Kathi Wright noted that Don Overcash could not be present due to a death in the family. Kathi reported that: 1) Council began reviewing the 2019 budget and a “dashboard” is being developed to facilitate review of this large document with 10-year comparative data. All departments are affected by the recent reductions in sales tax and there have been some cost increases for the Foundry project. The new parking garage is now open. 2) The missing sidewalk on Wilson Ave will not be constructed at this time, after Council reviewed the map of all missing sidewalk segments, including those with no sidewalk on either side of the street. 3) The COLT bus system is offering a new loop and having an open house to gather public input. 4) A Broadband open house will be held on September 15 for public information and input.

**Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Liaison Report:** Marilyn Hilgenberg had the following report from OLAB: 1) Larimer County purchased the Gallegos inholding at Red Mountain Open Space. It was planned as a partnership with Fort Collins, but the city did not approve the funding due to lack of a policy on partnerships. Loveland’s partnership policy is to contribute up to 10% of annual revenues received from the Open Space sales tax. 2) Fees at Devil’s Backbone Open Space are still being considered. Loveland contributed about \$2 million towards the acquisition and development of Devil’s Backbone. The county will present the findings of a fee study conducted by a consultant to OLAC before voting on a fee structure. 3) Gary Buffington, Natural Resources Department Director, will be retiring at year-end.

#### **Discussion/Action:**

**1. Property Naming.** Names for three natural areas were solicited from the public, following the procedure outlined in the Open Lands Naming Policy. More than 75 ideas were submitted by 22 contributors. The following names were selected by the commission:

- Boise Bend Natural Area (East Big Thompson River property on S Boise Ave)
- Boedecker Bluff Natural Area (North Boedecker property on W 1<sup>st</sup> St)
- Eagle Vista Natural Area (Ryan Gulch property in southwest Loveland)
- Medina's Crossing Natural Area (Namaqua Ave property with historical significance)

**2. Initiatives for Innovation.** City Council and the Executive Leadership Team are leading an initiative about the city's guiding principles and the goals and strategies used by each department and division to attain those principles. The Open Lands & Trails Division employs a variety of programs, projects, and actions to support the city's guiding principles of Citizen Engagement, Utilities/Transportation, Economic Vitality, Public Safety, Quality of Life, Capacity/Organizational Health, and Efficiency and Improvement.

**3. Exemption from Open Lands Memorial Policy.** This summer, Gavin Meyer, a 13-year old and 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Irwin Middle School, was struck and killed by a vehicle when walking home from a fishing adventure at River's Edge Natural Area. Friends of the family asked the Department if they could donate a bench and tree in Gavin's honor to be placed at River's Edge Natural Area, Gavin's favorite place to fish. The commission discussed allowing a one-time exemption from this policy at its August meeting, based on the community impact losing this young life has had. The bench and a cottonwood tree would be placed near North Jayhawker Pond with a small memorial plaque. The bench and tree will be utilized by the community as a whole and be valued assets on-site. Darren Pape made a motion to allow this exemption; Andy Hawbaker seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

#### **Reports/Correspondence:**

**3. Property Updates.** Staff is continuing to work on acquisitions in the south Skyline area for parking, access and trails. Due diligence for the east Big Thompson properties is underway, with surveys, mineral ownership, easements and other issues being researched.

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

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

Staff is working with Larimer County on an IGA to add a pedestrian trail underpass with the County's bridge replacement project on Namaqua Avenue at the Big Thompson River.

Staff works with Larimer County, Fort Collins and Colorado Open Lands to complete annual monitoring of conservation easements, to confirm that the conservation values are continuing to be protected. Seven of the 14 required monitoring visits have been completed and all sites will be visited by early fall.

Wildlife has been abundant this summer. Staff reports seeing elk, deer, racoon, owls, mink, badger, fox, eagles, bear, bobcat, coyote and moose.

#### Partnerships, Planning and Grants

A private donation of \$100,000 will assist with purchases of open lands and development of soft-surface trails in Loveland.

Two significant capital/grant projects will be completed in cooperation with the Big Thompson River Coalition to improve and restore two reaches of the Big Thompson River upstream from Namaqua Avenue that run through City open lands and private properties. The projects are being funded by grant funding and address several implementation projects identified in the Big Thompson River Master Plan.

This year's Valley 5000 race course was modified and included utilizing Meadowbrook Natural Area and the Recreation Trail. Runners enjoyed the new course and variety of terrain it provided.

In preparation for the re-opening of Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park, volunteers helped clean out the old turbines. The historical turbine display was in the path of the 2013 flood and has been restored for historical interpretation.

### Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program

Fall volunteer recruiting is underway for environmental education, trail hosting and stewardship projects. A volunteer information open house is scheduled for September 13. Training opportunities are listed in Offero.

Fall field trips for Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes are available to public schools, charter schools, private schools and homeschool groups.

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

The new Long View Regional Trail and Sunset Vista Natural Area were opened for public access on August 18. Hundreds of citizens came out for the grand opening event, to enjoy this new 4.4-mile off-street paved trail connecting Loveland and Fort Collins.

The recreation trail signage program continues to be refined, with research on implementation costs, sign graphics, and numbers/ locations of signs needed for identification and wayfinding. Input from staff and commissions has been incorporated into the plans, including simplifying new signs and graphics, identifying trail sections by name, and re-using existing kiosk arches with new signs and graphics. Implementation is expected to begin by the end of 2018.

CATS volunteers and BioLife employees have completed about 90% of the new trail along the north side of Boedecker Reservoir. Staff is working with consultants to design the bridge crossing, which will need to be approved by Buckingham Ditch Company.

Parks & Recreation and Public Works staff meet quarterly to discuss and work on issues related to safe pedestrian and bicycle connectivity throughout the community.

Youth volunteers from Group Publishing's "Week of Hope" program helped with trailbuilding and other stewardship projects this summer at the Ward Boise property, in anticipation of opening this site to the public. A small parking area is being developed to provide access to this river corridor site.

Improvements to the Recreation Trail between Namaqua and Wilson Ave are being planned, to remove ruts, smooth the surface, replace gravel, and provide a better trail experience.

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

1. Rick Brent inquired about the future east trail connection to Centerra. One additional easement is being pursued to make this possible. The underpass at Boyd Lake Ave is scheduled to be built in 2019 with the bridge replacement, for a connection to the Centerra trail system.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm.

**/s/ Ross Livingston, Chair**