



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Special Meeting Minutes – April 17, 2019

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

Commissioners Present: Gale Bernhardt, Rick Brent, Scott James, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki, Cindy Ticer (alternate).

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

Staff Present: Bryan Harding, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Dave Klockeman, Debbie Eley.

Guests: Nan Daniels and Curt Cole, Colorado Native Plant Society; Diane Kristoff, Vice President of Foothills Audubon.

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

Approval of March 13, 2019 Meeting Minutes. Jean Whittaker made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Bill Zawacki seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

OLAB Liaison Report: Marilyn Hilgenberg reported that: 1) Loveland and Larimer County continue to discuss management costs, in-kind assistance, and possible user fees at Devil's Backbone; 2) Marilyn's term as a Board member expires in May; she has re-applied. The OLAB bylaws are being updated to reflect the changes in ballot language that took effect on January 1, which will impact board membership and representation.

Discussion/Action:

1. Connect Loveland – Transportation Plan Updates. Dave Klockeman, Senior Civil Engineer in Public Works, presented the Connect Loveland project, which will update 3 existing plans – the 2012 Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, 2012 Transportation Plan, and 2009 Transit Master Plan. Connect Loveland will incorporate multi-modal transportation, transit, ridesharing, trail connections, and regional considerations. Two types of committees will help guide the planning process – the Connector committee will meet with the Transportation Advisory Board regularly and will provide a means for information sharing between the project team and each board/commission, and the CLSC committee will include a broad representation of the community via stakeholder groups such as Larimer County, CDOT, local clubs, major employers, MPO, Thompson School District, etc. Jim Roode volunteered to represent OLAC on the Connector committee, and Mike Hinterberg will serve on the CLSC committee.

2. City Manager Steve Adams, Boards & Commissions Survey Results. (postponed to May)

3. Skyline Natural Area Concept Plan. The Skyline Natural Area Management Plan process will provide opportunities for stakeholders, experts and the public to be involved in the formulation of a plan to provide public access while assuring protection of resources. Staff presented information gathered since the property was acquired in 2015, from studies of natural, cultural, historical, and visual resources. Concept ideas for the site were presented, with options for providing public access. Commissioner comments and questions included loop trail options, multi-use trails vs. separated uses,

protection of wildlife habitat, impact of potential fees at Devil's Backbone, trail connections to Devil's Backbone, dogs, enforcement, and hours of operation. A public open house meeting will be held on May 6 to share initial findings, alternatives, and proposed management practices, and gather input from the community, stakeholders and neighbors.

4. Long View Farm Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CCRs) Amendment and Policy Update. Long View Farm is jointly owned by Loveland, Larimer County, and Fort Collins and is protected by CCRs as a requirement of GOCO grant funding. An amendment to the CCRs in 2016 corrected a legal description error and removed 0.071 acres for a CDOT project at Hwy 287 and Carpenter Rd. However, the correction did not fix all of the legal description errors, and a second amendment is needed. The current Open Lands Policy #14 regarding Conservation Easement Amendments does not address CCR Amendments. The proposed revised policy incorporates CCR Amendments into Open Lands Policy #14. Bill Zawacki made a motion to recommend the Second Amendment to the Long View Farm CCRs. Darren Pape seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Bill Zawacki made a motion to recommend the updated Conservation Easement Amendment Policy #14 as presented. Darren Pape seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. Intergovernmental Agreement with Larimer County Weed District for Vegetation Management Services. An IGA with the Weed District will allow contracting for weed control, vegetation management, and restoration projects, as needed. The Water & Power Department will also have the ability to contract with the District for weed control on properties they manage. The IGA will not prohibit the city from contracting with other service providers. Open Lands currently spends approximately \$20K annually for weed control on 2,500 acres.

6. GOCO Habitat Restoration Grant at Medina's Crossing. Loveland was awarded a grant for \$84,309 from Great Outdoors Colorado for habitat restoration in conjunction with the Big Thompson Watershed Coalition's river restoration project at Medina's Crossing. Funding will help cover the cost of native plants, trees, and shrubs, invasive species removal, and design/planning services. Volunteers will help install and maintain the native plantings. Ross Livingston made a motion to recommend approval of the GOCO Habitat Restoration grant agreement in the amount of \$84,309. Jean Whittaker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Reports/Correspondence:

3. Property Acquisition Updates. Marilyn reported that staff is still pursuing options for acquisition of the inholding property at Skyline with a clear title.

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

Properties/Facilities/Projects/Maintenance/Operations

- Hoff Construction has completed the bridge abutments at the Farmer's Ditch just south of Madison Avenue for a future trail connection into Old St. Louis Natural Area. The bridge was placed on April 4 and the trail connection will be constructed late spring.
- Heavy construction continues in the Big Thompson River near and west of Namaqua Avenue. Larimer County has started constructing the new bridge over the Big Thompson River (Flat Iron Constructors). ECI has completed significant in-channel improvements from Namaqua to Rossum as a result of grant funding through the Big Thompson River Coalition. In the west Big T corridor, a separate project by Tezak Construction is realigning 0.5 mile of the river channel to be more resilient and similar to pre-flood conditions. Changes to the river corridor align with the goals of the Big Thompson River Master Plan and improve the sustainability of the Big Thompson River.

Partnerships, Planning and Grants

- Staff from Loveland and Fort Collins finalized the north-south trail alignment of the Prairie Ridge/Coyote Ridge Trail connection. Final design and environmental clearances for the Prairie Ridge Trail project are complete and the City is now working with Larimer County for site permitting. We anticipate the project will be put out for bid late spring. We hope to be under construction by May with completion by year-end.

Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteers

- Seasonal volunteers have begun raptor monitoring on Loveland's Open Land Sites. There are a number of active nests and a healthy raptor population. Data collected helps us assess locations and numbers and allows for environmental analysis and more accurate monitoring and protection of raptors on Open Lands Sites throughout town. Additionally, we will once again have live owl and kestrel cams available on-line to help educate the public and allow the community to experience nature up close, thanks to a partnership with the Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute (www.carriep.org).
- Staff is busy providing annual training to volunteers who assist with environmental education, trail monitoring, and assisting with community events. The open lands and trails programs rely heavily on volunteers to assist with providing quality, no-cost programming, events and stewardship projects. Currently, there are more than 1,000 registered volunteers that provide some 7,000 volunteer hours per year.
- Environmental education programs for 25 school groups are scheduled for April and May. These outdoor experiential learning programs are offered for grades pre-K through 5th grade and meet state education standards for each grade.

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

- Staff continue to work on closing the missing trail gap, known as the Copper Ridge Connector, at 57th Street and the BNSF Railroad. Design is complete for the section at Sunset Vista Natural Area and we have begun the process of permitting with the BNSF Railroad. Staff has worked with the Copper Ridge Development through the City's development review process to secure the last stretch of missing trail connection.
- Crews have started updating and installing new Recreation Trail Kiosks. Maps will be added in the next couple of weeks to improve communications and provide better wayfinding for trail users. The first signs and new kiosks are being installed as part of Loveland's new trail signage program to improve communications and provide better wayfinding for trail users. The ten new kiosks and more than 230 signs will provide more consistent information and a better trail experience for citizens and visitors.

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

/s/ Gale Bernhardt, Chair