



**TOPS Working Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 5, 2014**

Members Present: Jason Alwine, P.J. Anderson, Paul Franco, Ian Kalmanowitz, Jeff Mohrmann, Jim Rees, Kirk Samelson, Leslie Thomas, Becky Wegner

Members Absent: none

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Liaison Present: Jackie Hilaire, Scot Hume, John Maynard

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Liaison Absent: none

Alternates Present: Emily Epstein, Joe Lavorini

Alternates Absent: none

Staff Present: Julie Lafitte, Chris Lieber, Kelly Rajab, Kurt Schroeder, Sarah Bryarly, Dennis Will

Ian Kalmanowitz brought the meeting to order at 7:35am.

Agenda Preview

No changes to the agenda.

Announcements--Chris Lieber

- Introduced Julie Lafitte as new admin for TOPS. Thanked Kelly Rajab for the service she has provided.
- Introduced Steve Bodette as new Construction Manager.
- Asked board members to consider and/or invite others to consider participating on the Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) as an advocate for non-motorized transportation.
- Requested RSVP's for the April 2 joint TOPS/PRAB meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from the February 5, 2014 meeting:

Kirk Samelson/Leslie Thomas

Approved – Unanimous

Citizen Discussion

None.

Staff Reports

- **Joint Parks and Recreation Advisory Board/TOPS Working Committee work session—Chris Lieber**
 - April 2 at El Pomar (Penrose House). Representatives from Design Workshop will:
 - present a draft of the Master Plan Survey results
 - answer questions and discuss issues relating to the survey

- **Forest Management Update—Dennis Will**
 - Treated 172 acres throughout TOPS and Parks portfolio, including—
 - Austin Bluffs Open Space Phase 1
 - Red Rock Canyon—some work completed; work to resume in late May
 - No injuries throughout work.
 - Union Meadows crew currently at work.
 - Upcoming projects:
 - Ute Valley Park—upcoming, currently in RFP process
 - Blodgett—proposed for summer
 - Stratton—on radar, no formal plans
 - Mile High Youth Corp involvement:
 - Section 16 trailhead
 - Blodgett Peak work areas
 - Ute Valley Park
 - Working on grant for North Cheyenne Canyon areas
 - 1/3 of \$1,000,000 set aside for forest management is left; cost of treatment is about \$3000 per acre due to handwork

- **Red Rock Canyon Trails Report-- Sarah Bryarly**
 - State trails grant money to be used
 - Repair existing in order of priority:
 - Greenlee trail—water bars previously installed need to be repaired; want to reduce footprint
 - Mesa trail—will add water bars, must be drivable for maintenance and emergency
 - Sand Canyon trail
 - Landfill road—road will stay open for access
 - Red Rock Canyon trail—friends of RRC have done some finishing repair work, along with Tony Boone
 - New construction:
 - Section 16 reroute, Tony Boone/volunteers
 - Extension of Sand Canyon trail—machine/volunteers (2015)
 - Flatlands trails—contractor
 - White Acres—Medicine Wheel will assist with funding/volunteers
 - “Ponds” trail—connecting Greenlee trail to the area behind the open air pavilion
 - Restoration—
 - Old road near new section of Section 16 will be restored/closed
 - Social trails near Contemplative trail will be restored/closed
 - Social trails in middle of meadow will be cleaned up and organized for least environmental impact
 - Bid out in April, construction from summer of 2014-summer of 2015
 - There is an alignment for Section 16. Tony Boone will work April 7-11

- **Ribbon Cutting Events—Chris Lieber**
 - Monument Valley Park Playground (combined with Spruce Up the Springs Volunteers and Cleanup)—April 26
 - Tennis Center and Handball—in May
 - Skyview Sports Complex—TBD, (renovating all fields with artificial turf; projected savings of \$75-100K per year in water fees)

- **FEMA Flood Repair—Chris Lieber**
 - Progress in project worksheets and grant requests
 - 45 projects, including Incline and High Drive
 - Penrose Fountain equipment damage—\$66K
 - Harlan Wolfe Park by Cheyenne Canyon—\$72K
 - Red Rock Canyon retaining wall—\$37K
 - Stratton Open space structures—\$48K
 - Sand Creek—\$15K
 - Grant conditions
 - 18 months to complete all projects
 - each project requires RFP and/or in-house labor which must be tracked
 - 87% of cost will be reimbursed: 75% from FEMA, 12% from state, remainder from the General Fund
 - Public Works Department will complete
 - Sinton Trail and two other projects
 - South Circle Bridge—temporary detour, repairs to start in mid-March
 - Garden of the Gods—sediment by Foothills trail to be removed; trail will be higher than Camp Creek
 - FEMA must be spent only on road and trails to previous state, but City is working with Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife departments re Bear Creek and High Drive
 - \$500K for the Incline—Sarah Bryarly:
 - The worst conditions (3-7) will be taken care of; more complete answers will be given at the May meeting
- **Legacy Loop—Chris Lieber**
 - At the February 25 Parks asked City Council to support a \$1M grant request to be submitted to Great Outdoors Colorado on March 5
 - Grant money would be used for land acquisition at the northern end of the Loop, including the Rock Island trail corridor; staff is currently in discussion with the property owner.
 - 3 year grant window, will possibly require some more money from TOPS
 - Purpose: to revitalize downtown, make final trail connections, include the creeks

Presentation Item: Proposed Chamberlain Trail Corridor—Chris Lieber

- Trail would help link Garden of the Gods to Cheyenne Mountain State Park
- Near the zoo; steep
- Proposal from Medicine Wheel to help make improvements to Tier 3 trail standard
- A tour of the site is scheduled for April 23
- A brief discussion of rerouting steep parts of existing trail came to no conclusion

Action Item: Northgate Property Donation—Chris Lieber

- Purpose: to consider acceptance of a parcel to be donated; has already been toured
 - Staff seeks committee’s support to continue moving forward
 - Key attribute: includes part of a pond, next to Northgate open space
 - Encumbered by conservation easement which would require City’s protection in line with TOPS ordinance
 - Weed management is the main maintenance issue
 - More due diligence required concerning the conservation easement; some provisions regarding indemnification, insurance requirement, etc.; Parks will seek a legal opinion from the City Attorney’s Office re “bargain sale” vs. donation options and use of TOPS money in the future
 - “Smith Creek” trail would run through to connect to Fox Run:
 - Conservation easement does not preclude public access or constructing a trail

- Easement protects “conservation values” from being compromised by property owner
- No new utilities, but currently existing can be replaced or maintained

Motion to recommend acceptance of the donation subject to the due diligence mentioned above and with consideration given to how to bring the property under the protections of the TOPS ordinance:

PJ Anderson/Leslie Thomas

Approved: unanimous

Action Item: Wedgewood Property—Tim Wolken, Director El Paso County Parks (with Sarah Jack, Larry Small, Christine Burns)

- Purpose: El Paso County seeks a letter of support from the TOPS WC for its GOCO grant application for acquisition of the Wedgewood Farms Preserve. Details to be given to the committee if/when the process moves forward.
 - 64 acre parcel w/in Fountain Creek watershed. Included in El Paso County Parks Master Plan. Next to open space property owned by City of COS.
 - Reasons for acquiring:
 - Access to Fountain Creek, ponds = more opportunities for fishing
 - Small open space for pavilions and other park amenities
 - Creek divides the property, one side adjoins Clear Spring Ranch
 - Values of the land: scenic views, plants, grasses, wildlife habitat, bird habitat, open space buffer, public recreation—fishing, bird watching, access to creek, environmental education, hiking trail connections, opportunities for community events
 - Budget:
 - Appraisal—\$666K
 - Purchase price—\$650K
 - GOCO-required conservation easement—30K,
 - Misc. costs—\$26.250K
 - Total: \$706K
 - Funding sources:
 - GOGO grant—\$512K
 - EPCO—\$144K
 - Fountain Creek Drainage District and TOPS—\$25k each
 - Q & A, Discussion:
 - County will assume maintenance; noxious weeds not too bad, general condition of property is well-maintained
 - The TOPS \$25K should go to conservation easement to establish ownership per regulations, in conjunction with Palmer Land Trust, rather than fee-simple acquisition—this must be determined by before committing any funds
 - Grant application due March 13
 - GOCO grant info:
 - will announce the recipient in June
 - no deadline for closing on the property, hope to purchase in 2015, approx. 18 month timeline
 - Susan Davies (TOSC) and Larry Small (Fountain Creek Watershed District) spoke in support of TOPS joining the partnership to purchase the land, citing regional cooperation, the ability to continue the Front Range trail, recreational opportunities (including tubing on the creek) and complementing various long-term strategic plans.

Motion to support the county’s GOCO application for the purchase of the Wedgewood Property, with the understanding that details of the acquisition are still to be worked out and knowing that TOPS will eventually be asked to contribute \$25K:

PJ Anderson/Becky Wegner

Approved- unanimous

Citizen Discussion

Bill Koerner mentioned that the new owners of the La Foret property in Black Forest are no longer pursuing a conservation easement.

Adjournment

Motion to enter a Closed Executive Session to discuss land acquisition and sensitive negotiation strategies:

Leslie Thomas/Jason Alwine

Approved- unanimous

The Working Committee went into a Closed Executive Session from 9:25am to 9:32am.

There being no further business, the Working Committee adjourned at 9:52am.