



**Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board Special Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 4, 2023**

Members Present: David Siegel, Sarah Bryarly, Larry Bogue, Steve Harris, Greg Thornton, Dr. Daniel Bowan, Julia Sands de Melendez, Abby Simpson, Andrea Perry

Alternates Absent: Steve Lenzo

Staff Present: Britt Haley, Kim King, Eric Becker, Anna White, David Deitemeyer, Gillian Rossi, Cody Bear-Sutton

Called to Order: Board Chair David Siegel brought the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

Citizen Discussion

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, informed the Board that there will be a memorial service for Lee Milner, former TOPS Working Committee member, on Saturday January 7th. Mr. Sutela can pass along details to anyone who would like to come.

Approval of Minutes – December 8, 2022 meeting minutes.

Motion – To approve the December 8, 2022 meeting minutes.

1st – Julia Sands de Melendez, 2nd – Greg Thornton, Approved, Unanimously.

Action Items

Garden of the Gods Trading Post Encroachment Correction (Presented by David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, and Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director)

David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, and Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director, presented the Board with the Garden of the Gods Trading Post Encroachment Correction. This presentation included an overview map; land exchange transaction elements; a summary of project goals; and finally, the recommendation. David also introduced Tim Haas, owner of the Garden of the Gods Trading Post, who gave his insight on the correction. Mr. Haas stated that the situation was a win-win for both the Trading Post and the Department.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Board member Steve Harris commented that he was happy that the right of first refusal in the past, led to this opportunity today. Mr. Harris thanked Mr. Haas for being a part of the process.

Susan Davies, Executive Director of the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), asked if the Friends of Garden of the Gods (FOGG) and the Garden of the Gods Foundation were in support of this correction. David Deitemeyer responded that this process was well supported. Finally, Ms. Davies added that she was delighted for this correction and that the arrangement worked well.

Bill Koerner, citizen, stated that he is on the Friends of Garden of the Gods Board, and said that while this was discussed in much depth for FOGG. However, he said as a private citizen, he is fully supportive of this correction.

Kurt Schroeder, citizen, shared his support for this correction. Mr. Schroeder reflected on his time working for the Department with Mr. Haas and stated that he had always been a great partner to work with.

Motion: Move to recommend the proposal to correct an encroachment at Garden of the Gods Park by completing a like for like exchange of property with the Garden of the Gods Trading Post.

1st – Steve Harris, 2nd – Andrea Perry, Approved, Unanimously.

TOPS (Trails, Open Space, and Parks) Ballot Measure(Presented by Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director)

Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director, presented the Board with the TOPS (Trails, Open Space and Parks) Ballot Measure. This presentation included an overview of the TOPS Program; pictures of parks, trails and open spaces that have been acquired and developed through the program's funding; ballot components; the revised ballot question; the TOPS funding division; the decision timeline for the ballot question; and finally, next steps. Britt also took a moment to clarify that the parentheses in the proposed language would not be in the final ballot language. Additionally, Britt thanked Board member Steve Harris, as well as members of the public, who were a part of the language revisions since the previous meeting. Britt stated that the Mayor and Chief of Staff were very happy with the compromise and the collaboration to get to this point.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Board member Greg Thornton asked how the rate of revenue has changed over the last twelve years. Britt Haley said she could speak on the last five that she has been with the Department for, and that the last five years have had strong economic growth. Britt added that the revenues never reduce, they just flatten out.

Board member Dr. Daniel Bowan thanked Britt for all of her work to bring this revised language forward and was very happy to see the collaboration between staff and concerned citizens.

Kent Obee, citizen, informed the Board that he was one of the citizens Britt had collaborated to get to this revised language. Mr. Obee stated that he is happy to endorse this measure, and thanked Britt for all of her work.

Linda Hodges, the Conservation Chair of Aiken Audubon Society, echoed Mr. Obee's comments and thanked Britt for her collaboration.

Kurt Schroeder, citizen, stated that he is a regular user of TOPS properties, and is delighted to see flexibility in the Trails Category. With the maintenance backlog as large as it is, Mr. Schroeder added that flexibility is necessary. Mr. Schroeder commented that this extension is critical, and he will be attending the January 10th City Council meeting to voice his support.

Susan Davies, Executive Director for TOSC, echoed the statements before her about the importance of this extension. Ms. Davies requested to see the cost of open space stewardship, if possible. Britt Haley said we could try to capture a number. Finally, Ms. Davies stated concern about buying open space and leaving it sitting, commenting that public access is just as important as acquisition. Nevertheless, Ms. Davies said she and her organization will be supporting this initiative. To Ms. Davies' comments, Britt responded that TOPS is a catalyst to other funding sources, adding that Fisher's Canyon and Panorama Park are two good examples of leveraging funding. Britt said she was confident we could keep using our various funding sources hand in hand with TOPS to be successful in creating public access.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director of Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, said his organization is very happy to support this measure. Board member Steve Harris thanked Mr. Sutela for his tireless efforts in getting endorsements for this revised language.

Board Chair David Siegel echoed everyone's comments of support for the measure and thanks for the collaboration. Mr. Siegel reiterated Ms. Davies' comments of the need for public access to these areas, and that there is still an overall need to find more sustainable funding for parks instead of relying on programs like the TOPS Program.

Motion: To recommend that City Council refer the revised TOPS ballot question as proposed to the City of Colorado Springs' Municipal General Election scheduled for April 2023.

1st – David Siegel, 2nd – Abby Simpson, Approved, Unanimously.

Britt Haley asked if any Board members would volunteer to attend City Council and speak in support of this initiative. Board member Steve Harris said he would attend.

Presentation Items

Corral Bluffs Acquisition (Presented by Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director)

Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director, presented the Board with a 5.74 acre acquisition in Corral Bluffs. This presentation included the candidate open space map; a map of the property; information about the recent fossil discoveries in Corral Bluffs; and finally, details of the acquisition.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Staff Updates

Natural Resources Update (Presented by Cody Bear-Sutton, Natural Resources Specialist)

Cody Bear-Sutton, Natural Resource Specialist, presented the Board with the Natural Resources Update. This presentation included Natural Resources crew; wildlife monitoring; avian monitoring update; species richness; diversity; abundance (specifically in Bluestem Open Space); tracking disturbance points; prairie dog monitoring update; noxious weed management; Akerman Fire monitoring; natural resource monitoring; and finally, ArcGIS Online Transition.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

TOPS Stewardship Update (Presented by Gillian Rossi, Senior Park Ranger)

Gillian Rossi, Senior Park Ranger, presented the Board with the TOPS Stewardship Update. This presentation included the fulltime staff; Resource Technicians; Education Technicians; the Trail Technician; Biological Technician; ArcGIS QuickCapture; statistics; Law Enforcement; program statistics; interpretation and education throughout the community; Building Outdoor Leaders Today; Red Rock Canyon Open Space educational opportunities; the 2022 BioBlitz; petrified tree removal in Corral Bluffs Open Space; volunteer projects; Stewardship Workday; maintenance and land management; various staff trainings; collaborations; the Colorado Trail Symposium; contractor accomplishments; the Rocky Mountain Field Institute; community recognition; and finally, the Leave No Trace Stewardship Initiative.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Positions Update

Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director, updated the Board on the various position changes throughout the Department. First, she announced that Eric Becker had accepted the Park Maintenance and Operations Manager position. Eric had been serving this position in the interim following the retirement of Kurt Schroeder. Previously, Eric served as the Special Improvement Maintenance District (SIMD) Unit Administrator, and the Water Conservation Specialist before that. Additionally, Jake Butterfield accepted the position of Capital Improvement Projects Coordinator, which leaves an opening in his previous role of Construction Project Manager. The Design and Development Manager position is going through

the Human Resources process. And finally, all three vacant staff positions at the Westside Community Center have been filled: Jamie Bequette as a Program Coordinator I; Nathan Mannerberg as an Administrative Assistant; and Devin Jaramillo as a Maintenance Service Worker. Board members congratulated all employees on their new roles.

Board Business

Steve Harris – Mr. Harris asked about the status of the Prospect Lake aeration project. Kim King, Recreation and Administration Manager, responded that the Department had just received design alternatives and are evaluating. As we move further along in the project, there will be a very robust communications process and public forums. Kim did not anticipate the lake to be out of operation for any significant period of time.

Larry Bogue – Mr. Bogue asked if there is an update on the trail closure on Section 16 due to the rockslide that happened a few months prior. Eric Becker did not have an update at this time but said he would get one.

Abby Simpson – Ms. Simpson informed the Board that the next Coleman Park public meeting will be on January 17th at Sand Creek High School, from 5 pm to 7 pm.

Julia Sands de Melendez – Ms. Sands de Melendez thanked Eric Becker’s crew for their swift graffiti removal at Ivywild Park. Next, she informed the Board that the AdaMan Alley is open downtown, which is a new piece of public art.

Sarah Bryarly – Ms. Bryarly informed the Board that the Therapeutic Recreation Program’s Annual Arts and Cultural Ability Expo was a great event.

Adjournment

Motion: Move to adjourn the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meeting at 11:41 a.m.

1st – Greg Thornton, 2nd – Larry Bogue, Approved, Unanimously.