



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 12, 2023**

Members Present: Bob Falcone, Wendy Thomas, Ingrid Richter, Bob Shafer, Paula Krantz, Wendy Howe, Hank Scarangella, Blaze Panariso, Jeff Davis

Alternates Present: Ellen Senf

Alternates Absent: Chelsea Gondeck

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Larry Bogue, Abby Simpson

Parks Board Liaisons Absent: Greg Thornton

Staff Present: Britt Haley, Lonna Thelen, Kim King, Eric Becker, Stephanie Surch

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TOPS Working Committee Chair Bob Falcone brought the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Agenda Preview

Committee Chair Bob Falcone announced the agenda for the meeting.

Announcements

Britt Haley, Director, made the following announcements:

- Britt introduced Lonna Thelen to the Board. Lonna is the new Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager, having recently moved to the Department after seventeen years working for the Planning Department in Development Review. Lonna brings a wealth of planning knowledge to this position.
- Britt congratulated Anna Cordova, who has accepted the position of Garden of the Gods Manager. Anna has been serving as the acting Manager for the last 6 months. Previously, Anna worked as the Department's Archaeologist, and her experience in this role helped to set her apart from other candidates. Parks Advisory Board liaison Larry Bogue asked if the Archaeologist position will be filled. Britt responded that it will be filled, and in the meantime, contract archaeologists will be used as well as Anna as time permits.
- July is National Park and Recreation Month, and there are plenty of ways to celebrate, including a Family Fun Walk/Run at Memorial Park on Saturday, July 15th, and Music in the Park at Piñon Valley Park on July 28th. City Council also celebrated a resolution of July being National Park and Recreation Month earlier in the month. Finally, Britt encouraged everyone to show their support and appreciation for staff if they see them in the field.

Kim King, Assistant Director, made the following announcements:

- The last race in the Blue Moon Trail Run series will be on July 28th, ending in Piñon Valley with the Music in the Park to celebrate.

- The Westside Community Center has been open and operated by the City for the last year, and staff have been celebrating all the milestones reached in the past year.
- The Uncle Wilbur Fountain repairs will be completed next week.

Eric Becker, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager, introduced Kyle Wilson, the new Senior Park Ranger for the Urban Trails team. Kyle has a background in law enforcement, and will be helping to hire the other Ranger I positions on the Urban Trails Team.

Committee Chair Bob Falcone thanked both Councilmember Leinweber and Councilmember Talarico for attending the meeting.

Approval of Minutes – June 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of the June 7, 2023 TOPS Working Committee meeting.

1st – Wendy Howe, 2nd – Blaze Panariso, Approved, Unanimously.

Citizen Discussion

Susan Davies, Executive Director for the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), provided a few updates for the Committee. First, she said the Zumba event in Panorama Park the evening before was very successful and well attended. Next, Ms. Davies said TOSC has been hosting a series of meetings to discuss the unhoused population in Colorado Springs and resulting impacts to the parks. She added that Kyle Wilson, Senior Ranger, had attended the most recent meeting, as well as the Homeless Outreach Team. Many service providers said they would like to see additional bathrooms and trash receptacles for the unhoused to use. Finally, Ms. Davies invited Committee members, staff and citizens to participate in the Starlight Spectacular on August 5th. This yearly event is a fundraiser for TOSC, and they are welcoming both participants and volunteers.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, stated that his organization has been support staff on different maintenance projects. Mr. Sutela stated that his organization would like different surface options to be considered for future bike parks to be more sustainable, as dirt tracks can be difficult to maintain. A paved surface allows for easier maintenance.

Presentations

Naming Policy (Presented by Britt Haley, Director)

Britt Haley, Director, presented the Committee with the Naming Conventions and Policy Review presentation. This presentation included existing policies; considerations; and discussion of next steps. Britt clarified that this is not a decision that will be made by the TOPS Working Committee, but system-wide requests have come in from citizens, some of which would be on TOPS properties. While there is not a Citywide naming policy currently, Britt is committed to

creating a Department policy in the meantime, that will evaluate requests on a case-by-case basis. With this, Britt detailed the steps she is taking with City leadership to move forward. Britt also informed the Committee of current programs offered, including the Tribute Tree program and memorial bench program.

Following this presentation, a robust discussion between the Committee, staff and citizens took place where the following elements of a naming policy were discussed:

- Policies of other local authorities
- Waiting period and length
- Sponsorships
- Public process
- Changes to master plans
- Current processes and procedures
- Current requests

Committee Chair Bob Falcone stated that he was serving on the El Paso County Parks and Recreation Board when El Paso County finalized their naming policy, and would be happy to help staff moving forward.

Grants Update (Presented by Stephanie Surch, Analyst II – Grants)

Stephanie Surch, Analyst II – Grants, presented the Committee with the Grants update. This presentation included the grants summary; the grants summary related to TOPS; types and funders of grants; partnerships; and finally, future grant opportunities for 2023 and 2024.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

Citizen Discussion

There was no additional citizen discussion at this time.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion to adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 9:20 a.m.
1st – Blaze Panariso, 2nd – Wendy Thomas, Approved, Unanimously.