



TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Virtual Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Members Present: Bob Falcone, Blaze Panariso, Nancy Hobbs, Ingrid Richter, Bob Shafer, Paula Krantz, Hank Scarangella, Michael Merrifield, Stephanie Surch

Alternates Present: Wendy Thomas, Jeff Davis

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Carol Beckman, Greg Thornton, Jason Rupinski

Staff Present: Britt Haley, Kurt Schroeder, Karen Palus, Kim King, Kelly Rajab, Anna White

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TOPS Working Committee Chair Bob Falcone brought the meeting to order at 7:36 a.m.

Agenda Preview

Committee Chair Bob Falcone announced the agenda for the meeting.

Announcements

Karen Palus, Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Director, gave the following updates:

- More of our facilities are opening to 25% capacity.
- Sports registration for spring is currently taking place.
- The baseball fields at Cottonwood Creek Park have been converted to turf through funding provided by 2B. We are hoping to have a ribbon cutting for the new fields.
- There are road closures taking place in North Cheyenne Cañon Park during bridge replacements throughout the park. Karen will continue to send out information as she receives it regarding these closures.
- The Pioneer’s Museum debuted their “COS 150” exhibit to kick off the sesquicentennial. You can make reservations online to see the exhibit.

Karen Palus also said that City Council had referred the ballot initiative to eliminate the thirty word limit on ballot language for tax increases due to TABOR laws for the April 2021 ballot.

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager, informed the Committee that City Council would be reviewing the Park Land Dedication Ordinance (PLDO) updates recommended by the Parks Advisory Board for approval. She said she would keep the Committee informed on any changes. Committee member Michael Merrifield asked if it would be appropriate for the Committee to give their recommendation on PLDO. Britt responded that the TOPS Working Committee is a working committee that makes recommendations to the Parks Advisory Board about TOPS funded activities, and the Parks Advisory Board had already passed their own

recommendations to City Council.

Approval of Minutes – January 6, 2021

Motion: To approve the minutes of the January 6, 2021 TOPS Working Committee meeting.
1st – Michael Merrifield, 2nd – Nancy Hobbs, Approved, Unanimously

Citizen Discussion

Susan Davies, Executive Director for the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), commented that TOSC had not taken a position on the PLDO recommendations made by the Parks Advisory Board. She noted that in the Park Advisory Board’s recommendation, there was language added to the motion about finding sustainable park funding. Susan also encouraged Committee members to speak with members of the public about the removal of the thirty word limit ballot initiative, to help the public better understand why this initiative needs to be successful for future ballot initiatives.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, said that his organization opposed the reduction of the acreage in the PLDO update from 7.5 to 5.5 acres per 1,000 residents.

Presentation Items

2021 Capital Improvement Projects and Budget Review (Presented by Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager, and Kelly Rajab, Analyst II)

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager, and Kelly Rajab, Analyst II, presented the Committee with the 2021 Capital Improvement Projects and Budget review. This presentation included the TOPS fund summary; TOPS fund future revenue; estimated 2021 revenue; TOPS administration and maintenance; TOPS trails category; proposed 2021 trails; TOPS parks category; Panorama Park; TOPS open space category; Open Space wayfinding; the stewardship programs; stewardship funding history; and finally, the stewardship funding percent of open space revenue.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation](#)

TOPS Application – 2424 Garden of the Gods (Presented by Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager)

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager, informed the Committee about potential acquisition at 2424 Garden of the Gods Road. This the first funding application submitted in 2021, and the property is included in a well-known planning department development application. Britt reminded the Committee about candidate open space areas in Colorado Springs, and said this property would fulfill many of the criteria the Department has for open space. She is working with the current land-owner to begin the assessment process. Typically with a new application

to TOPS, two Committee members assist in the initial review of the property for which the applicant is seeking a TOPS acquisition. Committee members Paula Krantz and Hank Scarangella volunteered.

Ballot Referral Policies and Procedures Refresher (Presented by Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager)

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager, received a request in light of the possibility of a TOPS ballot referral and due to election season, to inform the Committee about rules applying to different bodies. Karen Palus, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director, has identified that staff follow fair campaign practices, which are in the City Code. This does not allow staff to use City time or resources to campaign for ballot measures. Staff can respond to questions, though. As a Committee that advises the Parks Advisory Board, the Committee advises the Parks Board with its recommendations. Britt wanted to remind the Committee that media contact is the responsibility of the Chair, who is identified in the policies and procedures manual as the point for communication to the media and the Parks Advisory Board. As citizens, Committee members can have opinions and can express those opinions, as well as be part of the policy process. However, they are required to express these opinions as a citizen, not as a representative of or on behalf of the TOPS Working Committee.

Citizen Discussion

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, said his organization was looking into ways to make educational videos about the TOPS Program to help inform the public about all of the work done with TOPS funding ahead of the November ballot. He has been coordinating this with Vanessa Zink in City Communications.

Committee Vice Chair Nancy Hobbs asked about if staff is taking into account connectivity on the Rock Island Trail updates, to connect out to Falcon. Britt responded that the answer is yes, and our Department is working on connectivity. Committee Chair Bob Falcone asked where the gap is between the City's end of jurisdiction and where the County then owns the land. Britt said the area is in the Banning Lewis Ranch area that has not been developed yet. Nancy then asked if the Department was doing anything to support the 50th Anniversary of the El Paso County Parks. Britt replied that she would reach out to Leadership in El Paso County, and would like to invite them to the next TOPS meeting, to discuss other ways we can support their celebrations.

Motion to adjourn

1st – Nancy Hobbs, 2nd – Paula Krantz, Approved, Unanimously