



TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Virtual Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 7, 2020

Members Present: Bob Falcone, Blaze Panariso, Nancy Hobbs, Ingrid Richter, Bob Shafer, Paula Krantz

Alternates Present: Scott Lewandowski

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

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

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TOPS Working Committee Chair Bob Falcone brought the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

Agenda Preview

Committee Chair Bob Falcone announced the agenda for the meeting.

Announcements

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager, made the following announcement:

- The Sales and Use report shows TOPS is up 2.6% over this month last year. However, year-to-date, it is down 5.1%.
- Britt is finishing the process of selecting new TOPS Working Committee members with the Parks Advisory Board. Committee Chair Bob Falcone added that all of the applicants were great and he was very pleased with the choices.

Karen Palus, Parks Recreation and Cultural Services Director, gave the following Budget 2021 update:

- The Budget was released; \$400,000 was supplemented to Parks to support maintenance costs related to the loss of Conservation Trust Fund dollars. She said the Department was highly ranked in the need for facilities funding.
- Committee Chair Bob Falcone asked if Karen thought there would be any changes. Karen said both Council meetings regarding the budget had gone well and City Council was supportive of the budget.

Karen thanked members of the TOPS Working Committee for their kind words for former Committee Member Lee Milner at Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates' meeting where Lee was recognized for his many years of service.

Approval of Minutes – September 2, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of the September 2, 2020 TOPS Working Committee meeting

minutes.

1st – Blaze Panariso, 2nd – Nancy Hobbs, Approved, Unanimously

Citizen Discussion

Susan Davies, Executive Director for the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), informed the Committee about ballot issues 2B and 2C on the ballot for the upcoming election. She said TOSC prefers the 2C Council Supermajority choice. She added that the Chamber of Commerce Governance supports 2C as well. She and Kent Obee had a friendly debate over the issue in front of members of the Council of Neighbors and Organizations (CONO). She did encourage Committee Members to either vote "yes" on both 2B and 2C, or "yes" on just one of the options. She discouraged voting "yes" on one and "no" on the other, as that may cause both ballot issues to fail. Susan said her organization is also finishing up on the background paper for the renewal of the TOPS sales tax.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, thanked members for attending the meeting in which Lee Milner was recognized. Cory said he was out enjoying the Early Bird Hike and Bike event in Garden of the Gods and said he looked forward to more of these events.

Committee member Blaze Panariso brought up the closure of Palmer Park for the Apex Bike Race the week prior. He thought it was odd that the entire park was closed and hoped the event organizers were not taking too many liberties with their permit. Kurt Schroeder, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager, said closing the park was a Department decision due to the type of race as it utilized both trails and the road and was in the best interest of safety for racers and other users.

Action Items

TOPS Working Committee Chair and Vice-Chair Election (Committee Members)

Motion: To elect Bob Falcone as TOPS Working Committee Chair.

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

Committee Chair Bob Falcone thanked everyone for their support and said he looks forward to continuing to serve as Chair.

Motion: To elect Nancy Hobbs as TOPS Working Committee Vice-Chair.

1st – Blaze Panariso, 2nd - Paula Krantz, Approved, Unanimously

Committee Vice-Chair Nancy Hobbs also thanked everyone and looks forward to continuing to serve as Vice-Chair.

TOPS Program Manager Britt Haley thanked both Bob and Nancy for their service.

Presentations

TOPS Extension Discussion (Presented by Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager)

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager, reminded the Committee that during the previous meeting, they had discussed timing of the renewal of the TOPS sales tax. Britt wanted to get some opinions from the Committee on what they would like to see moving forward with the discussion.

Committee Chair Bob Falcone thinks a majority of the conversation is about the extension of the TOPS sales tax and a possible increase. He said conversations concerning this should involve the Committee as well as outside organizations, like TOSC. He suggested using the third Wednesday of each month, which is usually reserved for site visits, as a time to schedule a meeting to discuss this. Multiple Committee members agreed on this, and Committee member Blaze Panariso said he would prefer, if it was possible, to meet in person. Britt added that polling would begin in late November or early December to put this issue on the April 2021 ballot.

Overall, the Committee consensus was to use the third Wednesday of the month as an opportunity for the Committee to discuss the renewal. Britt said she would have to post the meeting with the City Clerk in accordance with the Colorado Open Meetings Law. The Committee will try to meet in-person for meetings outdoors weather permitting.

Mountain Shadows Open Space Acquisitions Update (Presented by Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager)

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager, gave an update on the Mountain Shadows Open Space acquisitions. This presentation included the vicinity map; a recap of events; the offer summary; an overview of the Black Canyon Quarry Property; the reclamation efforts of the Black Canyon Quarry Property; an overview of the Pikeview Frontage Property, both Phase I and Phase II; an overview of the donation property; a draft concept plan for the area; and finally, the TOPS estimated fund balance summary.

Britt also detailed the process of closing on the Phase I acquisition of the Mountain Shadows Open Space acquisitions. Along with an update on the contracts written for the acquisitions, Britt said there were changes to the acreages of the parcels after surveys were completed. New acreage was found at the Pikeview Frontage Property, increasing the total acreage to 152 acres. At the Black Canyon Quarry property, a federal survey, found that there was a boundary line change on the biggest part of the parcel. The total acreage of the Black Canyon Quarry property was found to be 28.9 acres less than the original information showed. Both Castle Concrete and City surveyors agreed on the acreage. Contracts were changed to reflect the value of the property available. The price per acre was applied to the actual acreage and added to the contracts in September.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation here](#)

Jimmy Camp Creek Connection Properties Update (Presented by Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager)

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager, updated the Committee on the Jimmy Camp Creek Connections Property. She has been working with Colorado Springs Utilities and the tenants of some of the properties. The final tenant has moved out, and two former tenants are finishing collecting their items from their properties. Homes that are not being occupied will be winterized. Britt is working on potentially having one of the residences be occupied by Parks staff as another means to keep an eye on the properties.

Citizen Discussion

Bill Koerner, citizen, had questions about each of the presentations. In regards to the TOPS extension discussion, he asked who writes the polling questions and does the polling. Karen Palus responded that a firm out of Denver works with the Trust for Public Land to write the questions and conduct the polling. In regards to the Black Canyon Quarry Properties, Bill said the southwest corner of the most western property extends into Williams Canyon. He asked how this affects the ability to get down into Williams Canyon from the Black Canyon Quarry Property. Britt Haley responded that David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, focused on the opportunity to have a trail that would go up through Williams Canyon to connect to the Black Canyon parcel. Britt said they have spoken with the Cave of the Winds about an easement to make this trail possible, and Cave of the Winds has been interested and supportive of this. We will continue to work with them to hopefully make this a reality. Finally, Bill asked about Nor'Wood Development's plans for their development of properties bordering Corral Bluffs. He asked if there was an update on their plans, to which Britt responded that Nor'Wood is focusing on another annexation that is taking up most of their focus, so there is not much to update.

Susan Davies, Executive Director for TOSC, said in regards to the TOPS extension, for the Committee to keep in mind a few things. She stated that, aside from the Parks Advisory Board and staff, no one is more intimately aware of the annual shortcomings of the Parks budget than the Committee is. She would ask that the Committee would mull over what percentage changes would make sense to them, what more flexibility in the program would look like without using TOPS as a replacement for the general fund budget, and what are the needs of the 2014 Park System Master Plan that TOPS could and should fulfill. These kinds of questions could help form the polling questions. Finally, she asked for an update on the Incline Reservation System and Parks Infrastructure Analysis, but said she could wait for those updates at the Parks Advisory Board meeting the following day. Kurt Schroeder said there could be modifications for the Incline Reservation system as numbers begin to taper with cold weather approaching. He said the trail counter data on the Incline shows us historical data for use that we can use to evaluate changes to the system.

Stephanie Surch, of CONO, asked Britt about the Mountain Shadows Open Space acquisition in regards to the donation property's reclamation. She asked if after the reclamation, the City can choose to accept or deny the property, and if the City does not accept the property, what happens with it. Britt said the reclamation property would be a big capital construction project with a lot of work to be done. She said before that work is done, they need to make sure the property is completely physically reclaimed to a standard that is safe for public use. If the City chose not to accept the donation, then the Company would be obligated to look for another owner to take over the property. If the property is well reclaimed, they could sell it to a third party. Britt said the best news is that we have an agreement that gives us the first chance to have the property, and collaboration between the different parties to turn this area into the bike park we want it to be.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, expressed support for the TOPS Working Committee to continue the discussions regarding the TOPS extension and offered support for the meetings. He also expressed support for the bike park concept in the Mountain Shadows Open Space acquisitions. He said in a press release about the acquisitions, the Reimagine Waldo Canyon process was referred to. He said there is no public process surrounding Waldo Canyon right now. Britt confirmed there was no public process currently.

Motion to adjourn

1st – Blaze Panariso, 2nd – Ingrid Richter, Approved, Unanimously