



**Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 10, 2019**

Members Present: Ron Ilgen, Carol Beckman, Daniel Bowan, Abby Simpson, Greg Thornton, Sarah Bryarly, Jason Rupinski, Michael Phan

Members Absent: David Siegel

Alternates Present: Lisa Wieland, Larry Bogue

Alternates Absent: Andrea Perry

Staff Present: Britt Haley, Kurt Schroeder, Christi Mehew, Tilah Larson, Scott Abbott, Gillian Rossi, Kelly Rajab

Called to Order: Board Chair Ron Ilgen brought the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

Citizen Discussion

Jim Coonradt, Cottonwood Disc Golf representative, stated brush piles are on the disc golf course. He has contacted the Forestry department and the piles remain. He requested that park staff please remove them.

Approval of Minutes – September 12, 2019

Motion – To approve the September 12, 2019 minutes

Motion by Carol Beckman, 2nd Abby Simpson, Approved, 7 to 0, Jason Rupinski abstained due to his absence at the September meeting.

Action Items

Jimmy Camp Creek – Prairie Preserve Acquisition (Presented by Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation, Jimmy Camp Creek – Prairie Preserve Acquisition and Kettle Creek Greenway Acquisition](#)

The Jimmy Camp Creek – Prairie Preserve acquisition consists of 295 acres and is currently owned by Colorado Springs Utilities. The total cost of the acquisition is \$3,190,500, which represents the appraised value of \$3,188,000, and the estimated real estate transaction costs of \$2,500. In addition, staff is asking up to \$400,000 for testing, demolition and disposal of unneeded structures from the TOPS Open Space Category provided that the 2020 TOPS Sales Tax revenues are collected in excess of the projected 2020 revenues.

This acquisition will create a link between Corral Bluffs Open Space and Jimmy Camp Creek Regional Park, which are two keystone park properties.

Parks staff has submitted a request to Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) for funding for \$800,000 to support this acquisition. Grant application awards will be announced in mid-December of this year.

The TOPS Working Committee at their October 2, 2019 meeting voted unanimously to recommend the acquisition of the Jimmy Camp Creek - Prairie Preserve properties.

Parks Board member Jason Rupinski asked:

- Is there is a process for demolition to bring the area back to prairie condition? Staff replied yes, demolitions have been done for properties in the Broadmoor Bluffs area. She will turn to Cody Bear Sutton, Natural Resource Specialist, for his expertise on restoration.
- Inquired about the two remaining stand-alone properties and what is the goal to protect them from any issues. Staff showed on a map that one property will have connectivity and the other property farther north will have a right-of-way on the east side of the road to connect. They are working with the owner on the right-of-first refusal for the property in between.
- About bridging both sides. Staff showed on a map the area that Nor'wood Development owns and said they want to work with us to make connections.

Parks Board member Carol Beckman asked:

- If you did not treat all property owners the same are there properties you would not want to buy? Staff showed on a map the properties that we do not want to own and explained why we did not pursue them. Staff stated the property on the top has value on its own and they are focusing on east to west connections.
- If the two properties on the side do not close, will you pursue them? Staff responded yes. The middle property has a 30-foot right-of-way that is being reserved. We just need to be patient.
- Why are we paying extra to buy houses and demolish them? Staff replied we take the ones that are the best and keep them and the ones that are not usable would be a liability.
- Will this area be annexed into the city as well as the Corral Bluffs properties? Staff replied yes and showed the area on a map stating it is a matter of cleaning up jurisdictional issues.
- What are the requirements for the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant? Staff said the grant requires that a conservation easement be placed on the property and we will have assistance from the Palmer Land Trust. In areas where there is a future use, we will put a building envelope into the application and a conservation easement will be on the entire property.
- Will there be public access? The TOPS Program Manager replied this is a critical piece to acquire before a master plan is completed and discussion needs to occur in regards to protecting these properties. She anticipates access to both Jimmy Camp Creek and

Corral Bluffs; however, we have to manage and protect them. She believes five years is the timeline for the master plan.

Parks Board member Greg Thornton asked if the department does not acquire these properties what would happen. Staff stated that Norwood Development might be interested, or the neighbors surrounding the properties could purchase the parcels.

Parks Board Chair Ron Ilgen asked:

- How the Trails Open Space and Parks (TOPS) Working Committee voted on this item? Staff responded it was approved unanimously.
- Due to the archaeological and paleontological benefits, will there be restrictions on the properties for that purpose? Staff said they think it would be valuable to do a natural resource and cultural resources inventory. We have four areas to consider: a unique riparian habitat; archaeological; historical; and paleontological. We know from prior Native American and Tribal consultations, this area is significant for Native American history.
- Have there been any comments about the article in the Gazette newspaper about buying these properties from Colorado Springs Utilities, specifically to the fact that Colorado Springs Utilities had to pay two million dollars (\$2,000,000) for these properties versus what we will be paying if approval is given? Staff said it is a difficult situation when CSU was directed to acquire these properties, because in some cases they had to pay more than the fair market value. CSU also had to pay under federal regulations for relocation costs. Other requirements were imposed on them with certain costs that we do not have to pay in our acquisitions.
- If a site tour could be scheduled for this property. Staff replied a tour will be scheduled.

Parks Board member Daniel Bowan stated the easement with Banning Lewis Ranch leaves many question marks. Staff responded there have been in direct talks with them regarding the easements to get connectivity. He requested that we actively pursue these easements.

Bill Koerner, Corral Bluffs Alliance representative, distributed a map of Corral Bluffs from 2011. They would like to acquire all properties across the bluffs. This will protect resources and provide an open space and not just sections of properties. He commended staff for their work on this project and stated there is a letter from COBA and an Independent newspaper article that supports these acquisitions. He asked the board to approve the acquisitions.

Parks Board member Greg Thornton asked if there is access to these areas. Bill Koerner said no, the map shows proposed access points.

Motion: A motion to recommend acquisition of 295 acres currently owned by Colorado Springs Utilities for a total cost of \$3,190,500 which represents the appraised value of \$3,188,000 and the estimated real estate transaction costs of \$2,500. In addition, up to \$400,000 is approved for testing, demolition and disposal of unneeded structures from the TOPS Open Space Category provided that 2020 TOPS Sales Tax revenues are collected in excess of the projected 2020 revenues.

Motion Jason Rupinski, 2nd Sarah Bryarly, Approved 8 to 0, Unanimous

Kettle Creek Greenway Acquisition (Presented by Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

The Kettle Creek Greenway acquisition consists of approximately 154 acres. The purchase price is \$5,796,000 and will come from the TOPS Open Space Category. The acquisition is subject to appraisal updates prior to each closing to include up to a 5% increase in value and for associated real estate transaction costs, which are estimated to not exceed \$5,000.

The Kettle Creek property appraised for a value of \$5,796,000. The family members who own this property have agreed that the TOPS program may purchase the property in two phases over two years. The family has agreed to make a generous personal donation of \$500,000 to the TOPS program in support of stewardship activities on Kettle Creek or as a resource for future land acquisition.

The TOPS Working Committee unanimously approved this acquisition at its October 2, 2019 meeting.

Parks Board member Greg Thornton asked what the 5% for additional closing costs would amount to and Staff responded approximately \$289,000.

Parks Board member Carol Beckman asked:

- If they anticipate putting trails in the Preble's mouse habitat area? Staff said yes. The property owners hired an environmental firm to map the habitat. ERO consulting has a map of the existing trails and discussed existing habitat with the US Fish and Wildlife. They have done everything to put us in a good position for trail opportunities. They have contacted the property owner in Kettle Creek to the west where additional Prebles Meadow Jumping Mouse habitat exists, and they have an interest in TOPS managing this area for conservation and connectivity. This would provide an opportunity for future expansion.
- Are there enough sustainable cattle trails to use? Staff said there are some that are established and compatible with the habitat. We will have someone evaluate the trails. Trails could be built on the north side outside the Preble's mouse habitat.
- Inquired about the easements on the south side. Staff said the family has submitted an application to the Planning Department. The initial plan is to have residential homes up to the edge, which they showed on a map. In addition, they showed on a map, where the property owners offered to donate an acre that would be used for parking and trailhead access.
- If the GOCO grant requires conservation easements on the property? Staff replied yes.
- Is there a way to get access to the corner by Powers? Staff replied yes and showed it on a map.

Parks Board member Michael Phan inquired about the Skyline Trail and possible connections. Staff showed on a map the possible connections for the Skyline Trail and La Foret Trail. They will work with El Paso County to make these connections.

Parks Board member Daniel Bowan asked if this is the only section that is not developed in this area. Staff showed on a map the areas that are not developed and stated there is not much left to preserve in this area.

Parks Board member Daniel Bowan asked if the Parkland Dedication Ordinance could work on a trail by the creek. Staff stated that Parcel A is in the master plan and the PLDO requirement has already been satisfied.

Parks Board member Jason Rupinski asked about the two years for the transaction and if the cost will be split 50 – 50. Staff said they would like to pay half the cost in Phase I, which would close on December 31, 2019. The remaining acreage of Phase II would close no later than December 31, 2020.

Parks Board member Sarah Bryarly asked if staff has talked about which parcels they would close on first and if staff would first close on the commercial parcel, as it may go up in value versus the habitat parcel. Staff responded this was a smart approach, and details are still being worked out. They stated Real Estate Services wanted a “line” drawn that split the property into two phases.

Parks Board member Sarah Bryarly asked if there are any downfalls to apply for the open space grant for the 1st phase versus the 2nd phase. Staff stated GOCO has many specifications and they will have Tilah Larson address this question during her presentation.

Parks Board member Jason Rupinski asked if we were not successful with the grant this year, would we resubmit next year. Staff replied they think so; however, Tilah Larson is the best person to answer your question.

Parks Board member Sarah Bryarly asked if they’re developing the southern property, is there any way you can work with the community because when there is property between the house and open space, owners tend to think it is an invitation to expand their property. Staff responded the area is so deep and steep that they are not concerned. Staff asked Sarah Bryarly to send her an email reminding her about this concern.

Parks Board Chair Ron Ilgen asked if it is a requirement to complete the transaction by the end of the year and are there any expectations in regards to the donation. Staff said we have the funds, we can do it all in one year and it is a great opportunity to merge at this time. There are no expectations attached to the donation.

Parks Board member Greg Thornton inquired about the statement “to include a 5% value which calculates to \$289,800 to address a value increase if supported by the appraisal update” and if

we have ever seen the value go up more than 5% in a year. Staff replied that the real estate statistics indicate it could be between 4-9 %.

Motion: A motion to recommend acquisition of the approximately 154 acre Kettle Creek Greenway property with revenues from the TOPS Open Space Category for a purchase price of \$5,796,000, subject to appraisal updates prior to each closing to include up to a 5% increase in value and for the associated real estate transaction costs which are estimated to not exceed \$5,000.

Motion Carol Beckman, 2nd Jason Rupinski, Approved 8 to 0, Unanimous

GOCO Grant Resolution for an Open Space Grant Application – Kettle Creek (Presented by Tilah Larson, Senior Grant Analyst)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department submitted an application to the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Open Space Grant program to assist with the acquisition of 153 acres of the Kettle Creek property. Through Trails, Open Space and Parks funding the city will provide \$4,885,500 as match funding in order to complete the acquisition. The \$1,000,000 request will contribute to acquisition costs estimated at \$5,885,500. The department is seeking a resolution from City Council in support of the application.

Staff stated the additional requirements of the grant are a conservation easement; funding for the open space; passive recreation; and nothing that will affect the natural resources of the property. The trailhead will be a separate piece of property and GOCO likes to limit concrete trails and keep everything in its natural state as much as possible. We have two years to implement this project along with stewardship responsibilities.

Parks Board member Abby Simpson inquired about the approval process. Staff stated it requires a resolution; it will go before the Parks Advisory Board for approval and then approval by City Council. We are trying to submit the resolution with the application; however, GOCO allows submission of the resolution post application.

Parks Board member Jason Rupinski asked do we need to update the costs in acreage in the resolution. Staff said it is not a requirement, as GOCO knows things can change and they are flexible.

Parks Board member Carol Beckman asked if we are not successful this year could we apply next year. Staff said it depends on how much is funded and then more discussion will occur.

Parks Board member Carol Beckman asked about the restrictions of the conservation easement and does it help that we are putting forth a large amount of money. Staff stated the conservation easement is dependent on the property and GOCO wants all acquired property to have a conservation easement. They said it is helpful that we are funding a large amount of

money. In addition, they consider what land could be potentially lost if they do not offer a grant for the project.

Parks Board member Greg Thornton asked does \$1,000,000 have to be spent in the first phase and does the City have a plan on how to spend the money. Staff replied the money would be spent over the two years per GOCO's requirements and after every acquisition we recalibrate if we are not successful and they have projected where we will be after every acquisition.

Motion: Move to support the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services' Kettle Creek Property Open Space Grant Application to Great Outdoors Colorado.

Motion Jason Rupinski, 2nd Carol Beckman, Approved, Unanimous

GOCO Grant Resolution for an Open Space Grant Application – Jimmy Camp Creek Prairie Preserve (Presented by Tilah Larson, Senior Grant Analyst)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department submitted an application to the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Open Space Grant program to assist with the acquisition of 385 acres of property located between Jimmy Camp Creek Regional Park and Corral Bluffs Open Space. The \$800,000 request will contribute to acquisition costs estimated at \$3,188,100. Through Trails, Open Space and Parks funding the city will provide \$2,388,100 as match funding in order to complete the acquisition. The department is seeking a resolution from City Council in support of the application.

Parks Board member Greg Thornton asked if the applications are completely separate. Staff replied they are separate and stand-alone. GOCO breaks the applications up into regions and the same panel reviews them. Points are given for each area of consideration and then the application that receives the highest points is awarded.

Motion: Move to support the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services' Jimmy Camp Creek Open Space Grant Application to Great Outdoors Colorado.

Motion Carol Beckman, 2nd Greg Thornton, Approved, Unanimous

Great Outdoors Colorado School Yard Initiative Grant – Atlas Preparatory School And Skyway Elementary School (Presented by Tilah Larson, Senior Grant Analyst)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department proposes to sponsor two Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) School Yard Initiative grant applications. The two \$110,000 grant applications will assist with supporting the construction of play and outdoor learning facilities for youth. Following the award of a grant, the City and the school will enter into an agreement

to define the roles and the responsibilities of the parties. Each grant application will request \$110,000 from GOCO and the required matching dollars will be raised by each school.

Parks Board member Abby Simpson asked what are the schools looking to do with the grant money. Staff said Atlas Preparatory School would like a schoolyard with a basic play area for kindergarten through 12th grade and an outdoor environmental educational component. Skyway Elementary School would like new equipment for their play area. GOCO has opened the grant to both traditional and education play and many applications have been submitted.

Parks Board member Michael Phan asked what is the difference between the School Yard grant versus the Open Space grant. Staff said they have different review committees and different people on each committee. We are their sponsor and submit their application through the portal. We receive reimbursement from GOCO and pass it on to the school. We serve as the middleman and this is per GOCO's charter requirements.

Parks Board member Carol Beckman stated she understands that the Harrison District is an underserved community; however, it is hard to understand that Cheyenne is an underserved community. Staff said the GOCO staff has encouraged them to submit an application. GOCO will say there are many wants versus needs so we will see what happens.

Parks Board member Carol Beckman asked what plans the schools have to provide public access to the area. Staff said we entered into an intergovernmental agreement with the school as a part of the GOCO application. The school is required to offer public access as part of the agreement and she has seen various ways that schools have advertised public access.

Motion: Move to support the City's sponsorship of two School Yard Initiatives Grant applications to Great Outdoors Colorado on behalf of Atlas Preparatory School and Skyway Elementary School.

Motion Jason Rupinski, 2nd Michael Phan, Approved, Unanimous

Presentations

TOPS Stewardship Season-End Update (Presented by Scott Abbott, Regional Trails, Open Space and Parks Manager, and Gillian Rossi, TOPS Ranger Supervisor)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

Ceremonial Item (time certain 10:00 a.m.)

Springs in Bloom Judges Recognition (Presented by Donna Sanchez, Horticulturalist)

Donna Sanchez recognized the judges for the Springs in Bloom program. The judges were Karen Palus, Eric Becker, Jill Gaebler and Jan Martin. Jan Martin was present to accept her award.

Archaeology Update (Presented by Anna Cordova, Lead Archaeologist)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

Staff Updates

City Council Budget Sessions (Presented by Kelly Rajab, Parks Financial Analyst)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

Board Member Pictures

David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect took board pictures.

Board Business

Carol Beckman – Provided an update on the 30th Street Planning meeting and the Wayfinding Committee meeting.

Michael Phan – Stated a survey has gone out about the Downtown Historic Parks. They will review the results of the survey next month.

Abby Simpson – She attended a meeting at Deerfield Hills last night in regards to the southeast community. There were many comments and people seem to misunderstand what is going on in the Parks department. She would like to know the process of public engagement so she can relay the correct information to the public. Britt Haley suggested meeting with her so she can explain the public engagement process.

Ron Ilgen asked for an update about the discussion on e-bikes in Garden of the Gods Park that occurred during last month's Park Advisory Board meeting. Kurt Schroeder said a meeting took place to discuss what we are seeing and what to expect in the future. The discussion was good and laid the framework for the future.

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition Executive Director, stated ongoing discussion is happening about e-bikes and there are many misconceptions. More discussion is needed in regards to signage and education. She hopes that we can come up with a good policy.

Kurt Schroeder said the department is more concerned about class 2 e-bikes being allowed on trails. People can go online and get modification kits and this will be a challenge. Two people have asked for accommodations through the American Disabilities Act (ADA) for class 2 bikes and we are obligated to give approval. As the industry expands, it will be more challenging and we are moving thoughtfully and cautiously.

Michael Phan asked are their deliberate plans to find out where this is going and what we want to happen. Kurt Schroeder said a lot will be determined based on what we have seen and we have been in contact with many large departments throughout the state.

Carol Beckman asked if there would be public input. Kurt Schroeder replied not yet; however, public input will be a part of the process.

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition Executive Director, said she is very excited about these two acquisitions and is happy to see TOPS properties in the northern part of the city. She has been speaking to people about issue 2B that will be on the ballot. Multiple friends groups are on board and she received the Chambers endorsement today.

Kurt Schroeder announced the following meetings:

- Saturday, October 12th at 10:00 a.m. there will be a ribbon cutting at Starsmore Nature and Visitor Center for their ADA trail and technology exhibit.
- Tuesday, October 15th at 10:00 a.m. the Colorado Springs 150th Tree Challenge kick-off press event and ceremonial planting will happen in Alamo Square Park.
- Tuesday, October 22nd at 3:00 p.m. there will be a ribbon cutting for the Ute Valley Park Downhill Mountain Bike Trail.
- Wednesday, October 30th at 3:00 p.m. there will be a ribbon cutting for the Garden of the Gods restrooms.
- Wednesday, October 30th at 5:30 p.m., the 2020 Calendar Reveal event will take place at Patty Jewett Golf Course banquet room.

Adjournment

Motion: Move to adjourn the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meeting at 10:38 a.m.

Motion Carol Beckman, 2nd Michael Phan, Approved, Unanimous