



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting  
Meeting Minutes – FINAL  
Wednesday, June 6, 2018**

**Members Present:** Jason Alwine, Cathy Grossman, Lily Weissgold, Becky Wegner, Lee Milner, Jim Klever, Joe Lavorini, Jeff Mohrmann, Nancy Hobbs

**Members Absent:** N/A

**Alternates Present:** N/A

**Parks Board Liaisons Present:** Jason Rupinski, Carol Beckman

**Parks Board Liaisons Absent:** Mina Liebert

**Staff Present:** Britt Haley, Kurt Schroeder, Kim King, Christi Mehew, David Deitemeyer, Kelly Rajab, Scott Abbott

.....  
Jason Alwine brought the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

**Agenda Preview** Committee Chair Jason Alwine announced the agenda for the meeting.

**Announcements**

**Britt Haley, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager**

- Connie Perry will be starting on Monday, June 11<sup>th</sup> as the new Design and Development Landscape Architect.
- Please attend a welcome breakfast for Connie Perry on Wednesday, June 13<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m. at Park Headquarters.
- The July TOPS Working Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 4<sup>th</sup>. Due to the holiday the meeting has been rescheduled for Wednesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>.
- A request has been made to have an update on the Blodgett Peak Expansion Acquisition. This will be an action item on the July TOPS Working Committee agenda.
- The trail underpass at Uintah which is a part of the Legacy Loop is almost completed.
- There will not be a TOPS Working Committee tour in June.

**Approval of Minutes** – May 2, 2018

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of the May 2, 2018 TOPS Working Committee meeting.  
1<sup>st</sup> – Nancy Hobbs, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Becky Wegner, Approved, Unanimous

**Citizen Discussion**

**Bill Koerner**, citizen, stated Manitou Springs is going through a master plan for the Creek

Walk Trail which is an extension of the Midland Trail.

**Action Items**

**Corral Bluffs Expansion** (Presented by Britt Haley, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

This action item provides the opportunity for the TOPS program to acquire, manage and protect over 220 acres of property located in the heart of the existing horseshoe shaped Corral Bluffs Open Space. Additionally, it offers access from the existing Corral Bluffs property to State Highway 94.

The 2014 Park System Master Plan identifies the Corral Bluffs Area as an Open Space Candidate Area. This area has long been identified for land conservation in advance of development and is identified as a candidate of open space area in the Park System Master Plan.

The City is under contract to acquire Parcel 1 and Parcel 2, contingent on City Council approval, for the appraised value of \$1,046,000. Acquisition of the property requires an appropriation in the amount of up to \$1,078,000 from the TOPS Open Space Category revenue to purchase the property, provide fencing to secure it and to pay for real estate transaction costs such as the ALTA survey, property appraisal, closing costs and recording fees.

Staff recommends approval of acquisition of up to 223.25 acres of property and approval to expend up to \$1,078,000 for the land acquisition and transaction costs from the TOPS Open Space Category revenue.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs asked the total operational acres, where the fence is located, the location of the sign to thank the family and if an easement exists. Britt Haley stated due to a master plan has not been completed she has not given thought to a location for the family sign. Possibly it could be erected at the entrance of the property or at the cabin. A bench could be a consideration to thank the family. The open space acreage is 634.14 with this acquisition being up to 223 acres. The fence is needed at the property boundary due to people using ATV's on the property and damaging the natural resources. Based on a survey and legal description an easement exists on property for road access but there is currently no road in this area.

The following citizens spoke in favor of this acquisition: Bill Koerner, Jackie Hilaire, Sharon Milito and Kent Obee.

TOPS Working Committee member Joe Lavorini asked now that we have acquired these two properties how does this effect the timeline of the master plan process? Britt Haley showed on a map the various properties and stated the department is working with Colorado Springs Utilities and property owners who reside in the Bluff area to have connectivity to Jimmy Camp Creek. The Gary Bostrom Water Reservoir will be to the south of Corral Bluffs and she suspects

that some trails should be built from this area to the Bishop area and into the Corral Bluffs Open Space.

TOPS Working Committee member Lee Milner said that he and Bill Koerner met with Chris Jenkins, President of Norwood, who owns the Banning Lewis Ranch (BLR) area. Norwood waited until the amended annexation agreement passed and now plans to begin a two year master plan process for their property. He stated it would be good a idea to keep some money in reserve for acquisition for this area.

TOPS Working Committee member Joe Lavorini inquired if the acquisition is completed can stewardship dollars be used for maintenance of the property. Britt Haley stated yes.

Motion - Move to recommend approval of acquisition of up to 223.25 acres of property identified by tax schedule numbers 44000 00 016 and 44000 00 506 and approval to expend up to \$1,078,000 for the land acquisition and transaction costs from the TOPS Open Space Category revenue.

1<sup>st</sup> – Lee Milner, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Cathy Grossman, Approved, Unanimous

### **Presentations**

**Budget Update** (Presented by Kelly Rajab, Parks Financial Analyst)

- Timelines have been pushed back due to schedule changes made by the Budget Office.
- A planning session has been scheduled with the Mayor's group prior to the departments building their budgets.

**Regional Parks Overview** (Presented by Kurt Schroeder, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager and Scott Abbott, Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space Manager)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

### **Action Items**

**2019 Capital Improvement Project Recommendations** (Presented by Kelly Rajab, Park Financial Analyst)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

This presentation is the same as last month's presentation with an addition at the end of the PowerPoint that includes two alternatives requested by the Committee.

### **2 Alternatives**

- Alternative 1 – Open Space Stewardship Rangers, 4 additional TOPS Rangers which would be a total of 8 park rangers.
- Alternative 2 – Open Space Wayfinding Installation Additional Funding, \$100,000 which

brings the total to \$200,000 for wayfinding.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs asked if the Committee has to spend the entire TOPS accounts by 2025. Kelly Rajab replied no. The Committee can continue to spend the remaining balance afterwards if the TOPS Sales Tax is not renewed.

TOPS Working Committee member Becky Wegner asked what does the \$935,710 that is budgeted for maintenance in open spaces go towards? Kurt Schroeder, Parks Maintenance and Operations Manager said it goes towards maintenance of all TOPS properties.

TOPS Working Committee member Lily Weissgold asked how the Sand Creek Trail project is being funded? Kelly Rajab stated Public Works is constructing a bridge over the Sand Creek Trail and they are asking the Parks Department to contribute \$400,000 towards this project to accommodate a trail bench. The department is proposing \$200,000 to move from the South Shooks Run for the Las Vegas/Railroad project and another \$200,000 which was being held for a project further down on the Sand Creek Trail from 2012 that hasn't been used to go towards the Public Works project. Britt Haley replied that Chris Lieber, former TOPS Manager, alerted her about the underpass project because Public Works would most likely propose infrastructure that is not tall enough to accommodate a trail bench. She worked with Karen Palus, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director and Kathleen Kraeger, Traffic Manager to make sure the infrastructure was tall enough to accommodate a trail bench for the future.

TOPS Working Committee member Becky Wegner asked how many staff positions are funded out of the education section of the stewardship program. Kelly Rajab stated the stewardship program is one pot of money. The seasonal Rangers and Conservation Technicians participate in the education part of the stewardship funding. The stewardship program is one budget and part of the \$115,000 will be used towards the education programs.

Kelly Rajab stated that the costs for 4 additional rangers breakdown to \$349,957. The on- going cost for salary and benefits will be \$205,956 per year.

The Trail Coordinator position will be funded 50 percent by the TOPS program and 50 percent by project money so they can work on all trails and not just TOPS trails.

TOPS Working Committee member Lee Milner inquired how the Trail Coordinator position is charged to budget categories. Kelly Rajab replied that their time spent on projects that are not TOPS areas will be charged to those projects and 50 percent will be funded by the TOPS Open Space Funding category. The Trail Project Specialist and Seasonal Trail Technician positions will work on all TOPS properties.

TOPS Working Committee member Lee Milner stated the proposal is actually for 4 Open Space Rangers and 3 ½ positions to include the Trail Development Coordinator, Trail Project Specialist and 2 seasonal Trail Technician positions. Kelly Rajab stated it is 4 Rangers, 1 ½ new full-time positions that consist of 50 percent Trail Development Coordinator and a Trail Project

Specialist. There are 2 additional seasonal part-time Trail Technician positions. Britt Haley stated the department currently has one Park Ranger and one Park Ranger Supervisor for all TOPS open space properties. The Trail Development Coordinator will focus on trails and land management which includes design, development and construction management freeing up the rangers time to address other issues in the TOPS Open Spaces.

TOPS Working Committee member Jim Klever asked what can users expect to see a year from now? Kurt Schroeder stated there are currently things the department cannot do on a regular basis. The department finds out after the fact and it has compromised facilities. The bottom line will be a higher level of service, better trail conditions and maintenance, management of natural resources and visibility. Britt Haley added staff will be able to do trail development for our master plan implementation, address noxious weeds earlier, more conservation easement monitoring and compliance work, and wayfinding that helps users on the trails. She would like an inventory on all TOPS Open Spaces that the department can rely on with scientific data.

TOPS Working Committee member Jim Klever asked with more land acquisitions will they see a faster implementation of trail development? Britt Haley responded during staff transitions the department wants to catch up on trail work that needs to be done and be more strategic with implementation.

TOPS Working Committee member Lee Milner asked to add a 3<sup>rd</sup> alternative for consideration to include \$100,000 for wayfinding and two new park rangers rather than the 4 park rangers that staff recommended.

TOPS Working Committee Chair Jason Alwine reviewed the recommendations and alternatives:

- Staff recommendation: 4 new park rangers
- Alternative 1: to add 4 additional rangers for a total of 8 rangers
- Alternative 2: is to add \$100,000 towards wayfinding for a total of \$200,000

TOPS Working Committee Vice Chair Cathy Grossman stated that when people are hiking and don't know where to go this creates damage as they create their own social trails. The sooner there is adequate wayfinding signage for users the sooner damage can be prevented. She made the recommendation to staff to increase the wayfinding by \$100,000.

TOPS Working Committee member Becky Wegner said she is conflicted being a proponent that you shouldn't purchase property if it can't be taken care of. The open spaces do not get enough care and staff is doing all they can. Also, when stewardship began open space dollars were used. This is a difficult conversation and each year there is growth in budget dollars for permanent salaries. She likes the idea of hiring 2 new rangers rather than 4 as a trial basis. She is concerned it will become a salary slush fund and some big purchases are coming up down the road.

Bill Koerner, citizen said he was confused with the stewardship ranger program budget. Kelly

Rajab explained the budget in more detail. North Cheyenne Canon has a \$100,000 in place and an additional amount of \$250,000 is enough to improve the Powell parking lot for drainage and have it paved. Bill Koerner stated that Red Rock Canyon has gravel and why wouldn't gravel be sufficient for the Powell Parking lot. Kurt Schroeder replied that the area has significant drainage problems and challenges and a wood parking block would not withstand due to activities going on after hours in this area. Paving is good for drainage and erosion and is the best option.

Kent Obee, citizen, stated he has been involved with the TOPS program since Stratton Open Space was acquired. He sees the program turning into a slush fund and this is not the original intent of the program. These are good projects and maybe these the rangers are needed; however, he would consider what Lee Milner is proposing, two park rangers and the \$100,000 wayfinding package.

Shanti Toll, citizen, agrees with Kent Obee's comments.

Mike Scott, citizen, voiced support for the addition of the Trail Development Coordinator and Trail Project Specialist. He is strategically looking at this in regards to the TOPS Sales Tax which will come before the voters in about four years. He hopes the Trail Development Coordinator and Trail Project Specialist positions are considered and agrees that the park rangers are needed; however, they should be funded by City Council which probably will not happen.

TOPS Working Committee member Lee Milner made the following motion:

Motion to increase the wayfinding package to \$100,000 (alternative 2) and decrease staff's recommendation from 4 rangers to 2 rangers.

Kurt Schroeder stated the department has huge needs and reducing rangers from 4 to 2 with what staff sees out there on an on-going business and protect all those resources and values will be difficult. These are very special properties like Corral Bluffs and staff has a lot of territory to cover. He fully appreciates where Lee Milner is coming from; however, from an operation and management standpoint staff is not able to do what they need to do to manage these properties.

TOPS Working Committee member Lee Milner stated he appreciated the staff's work. He is approaching these numbers as original founders of the program with the focus being acquisition of properties.

TOPS Working Committee member Joe Lavorini restated Lee Milner's comment that he doesn't want to take staffs recommendation and he wants to decrease the number of rangers to uphold the integrity of the ordinance. Lee Milner replied that it can be reevaluated next year with the consideration of two being added; however, the acquisition part of the program is being compromised.

TOPS Working Committee Chair Jason Alwine stated if the committee buys property how is staff going to be able to maintain it and he wants to be able to take care of the properties already acquired.

TOPS Working Committee member Lee Milner stated the TOPS Sales Tax will be considered for renewal by citizens and this will be a part of the consideration. Possibly it can be renewed to include acquisition and maintenance funding.

Motion to increase the wayfinding package to \$100,000 (alternative 2) and decrease staff's recommendation from 4 rangers to 2 rangers.

1<sup>st</sup> – Lee Milner, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Becky Wegner, the motion failed with a vote of 3 to 5.

Ayes: Lee Milner, Becky Wegner, Cathy Grossman

Nays: Jason Alwine, Jeff Mohrmann, Lily Weissgold, Joe Lavorini, Jim Klever

Motion to approve the 2019 TOPS CIP Budget as presented to include alternatives 1 and 2.

1<sup>st</sup> - Jeff Mohrmann, 2<sup>nd</sup> - Lily Weissgold, the motion failed with a vote of 2 to 6.

Ayes – Jeff Mohrmann, Lily Weissgold

Nays – Becky Wegner, Lee Milner, Cathy Grossman, Jason Alwine, Joe Lavorini, Jim Klever

Motion to approve the TOPS CIP Budget as presented and alternative 2.

1<sup>st</sup> – Cathy Grossman, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Jim Klever, motion passed 7 to 1.

Ayes – Cathy Grossman, Jim Klever, Becky Wegner, Lee Milner, Jason Alwine, Joe Lavorini, Lily Weissgold

Nays – Jeff Mohrmann

### **Citizen Presentation**

#### **White Acres Conservation Easement** (Presented by Glenn Pressman)

The Friends of Red Rock Canyon are requesting the City to place a conservation easement on White Acres Open Space to protect the land in perpetuity. The Friends group is requesting the TOPS Working Committee and the Parks Advisory Board to endorse the placement of a conservation easement on White Acres.

White Acres is part of the 2013 Red Rock Canyon Master and Management Plan. The Master Plan contains a specific recommendation to “pursue a Conservation Easement for the White Acres Parcel.... The public process revealed strong support for pursuing a Conservation Easement for the White Acres parcel.”

Committee discussion included: conservation easement funds; the property is part of the Park System Master Plan; the City Attorney's previous position; and a request for the City Attorney to present at the next meeting.

The following citizens voiced their support of a conservation easement on White Acres: Bill Koerner, Kent Obee, Linda Hodges, Sharon Milito, and Shanti Toll.

**Adjournment**

Motion: To adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 9:59 a.m.

1<sup>st</sup> – Lily Weissgold, 2nd – Joe Lavorini, Approved, Unanimous