



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes - FINAL
Wednesday, February 1, 2017**

Members Present: Jason Alwine, Silas Musick, Becky Wegner, Cathy Grossman, Nancy Hobbs, Jeff Mohrmann, Joe Lavorini

Members Absent: Lee Milner, Sarah Blakeslee

Alternates Present: Jim Klever

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Charles Castle, Scot Hume, Jason Rupinski

Parks Board Liaisons Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Sarah Bryarly, Karen Palus, Christi Mehew, Kurt Schroeder, Kim King, Tilah Larson, David Deitemeyer

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

Executive Session

- Jason Alwine, TOPS Working Committee Chair, read the following information to the Committee:

In accord with the City Charter Art. III, §3-60(d) and the Colorado Open Meetings Act, C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(a, b and e), the TOPS Working Committee, in Open Session, is to determine whether it will hold a Closed Executive Session. The issues to be discussed involve receipt of legal advice and determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations and instructing negotiators regarding a land acquisition matter. The Chair shall poll the TOPS Working Committee members, and, upon consent of two-thirds of the members present, may hold a closed executive session. If consent to the closed executive session is not given, the item may be discussed in open session or withdrawn from consideration.

Motion: To enter a closed executive session.
1st – Nancy Hobbs, 2nd – Cathy Grossman, Approved, Unanimous

Motion: To close a closed executive session at 7:52 a.m.
1st – Nancy Hobbs, 2nd – Silas Musick, Approved, Unanimous

Approval of Minutes – January 4, 2017

Motion: To approve the minutes of the January 4, 2017 TOPS Working Committee meeting.
1st – Becky Wegner, 2nd – Cathy Grossman, Approved, Unanimous

Agenda Preview

Announcements

Sarah Bryarly

- The American Numismatic Property acquisition will be presented to City Council on February 14th for approval.
- The North Cheyenne Cañon master plan process will begin soon and will include looking at trails within Stratton Open Space and making sure they are connecting properly. Becky Wegner volunteered to be the TOPS Working Committee member to assist with this process.
- Two applications for funding have been received for Open Space acquisitions. Both properties are located near the Watkins property that has already been acquired. Nancy Hobbs, Cathy Grossman and Jason Rupinski volunteered to tour the properties.

Citizen Discussion

Susan Davies – The Parks Initiative will not be on the ballot for the April election. She has been communicating with community leaders to receive feedback, ideas and solutions regarding park funding and will keep the Committee updated. She thanked everyone for their support and indicated it might be on the November ballot. The Economic Benefit Study report didn't answer the question, what happens if we don't take care of our parks, especially the ones that receive a great deal of wear and tear. Parks need to be taken care of so they stay beautiful for years to come.

Presentations

Trust for Public Lands: Parks Economic Benefits Study (Presented by Karen Palus, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director)

- The Trust for Public Land examined the measurable economic benefits of parks, trails and open spaces in Colorado Springs and translated the perceived values into dollars.
- The Economic Benefit Study Release event held on January 12th at the Broadmoor and hosted by El Pomar was a success and created a lot of great dialogue throughout the community. Thank you to the committee members that attended.
- Statistics:
 - \$502 million enhanced property value
 - \$2.58 million in additional property tax revenue annually
 - \$1.49 billion in visitors spending annually and 9% of tourist come to visit the outdoors
 - \$135 million in visitor spending annually is attributable to parks
 - \$6.36 million in local tax revenue
 - \$23.5 million visits to parks and facilities annually

- \$58.7 million in recreational use value
- \$56.5 million in health care cost savings annually
- Household spend an average of \$183 per year on sports, recreation and exercise equipment or \$32.4 million total. This attributes to 88 sporting goods stores, \$178 million in sales and 986 employees.
- \$3.06 million stormwater infiltration value
- \$201,000 total air pollution removal benefit annually

TOPS 20th Anniversary Calendar of Events (Presented by Tilah Larson, Senior Grant Administrator)

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation](#)

The PowerPoint presentation included: a social media campaign; BioBlitz – 24 hour events; youth and family activities and a TOPS 20th Celebration.

- A handout was distributed to the Committee and a video was shown.
- The TOPS 20th Anniversary started with the Parks Department 2017 Calendar which highlighted TOPS properties.
- A social media campaign has begun and a TOPS 20th Anniversary Celebration party will be held this year.
- A Nature Discovery Challenge will be held at various TOPS properties and pictures and drawings can be submitted.
- Four BioBlitz's will occur in 2017 throughout the community from May to September. A BioBlitz is a 24 hour event where scientists conduct studies on properties and present their findings. The public will be invited at various times with most community activities being held on Saturdays.
- Sharon Milito is the lead scientist coordinating the BioBlitzes. The scientists will use the INaturalist website to record their data so the community can actively participate at real time.
- TOPS Working Committee members are encouraged to attend and volunteer.
- Friends groups will be asked to participate and have information tables.

State of Conservation on TOPS Conservation Easements (Presented by Stephanie Thomas, Palmer Land Trust Stewardship Director)

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation](#)

The PowerPoint presentation included: Palmer Land Trust role; what is a conservation easement; what does a conservation easement do; conservation values; other important facts; TOPS properties; Palmer's role and the state of TOPS properties.

- Palmer Land Trust protects land and builds a conservation-minded community to

ensure outdoor recreation, working farms and ranches, and inspiring scenic vistas remain a part of southern Colorado's identity forever.

- A conservation easement protects the conservation values of a property and remains with the property forever regardless of who owns the property.
- PLT has five conservation easements and one deed restriction on TOPS properties.
- PLT conducts annual monitoring to ensure conservation values are protected and documented, enforces easement terms and approves exercise of any reserved rights.
- They are partners with the City and participate in the master and management planning processes for the various open spaces with conservation easements.
- The 2016 TOPS properties annual visits showed all properties are in compliance with easement terms. The properties that receive the most use all have some issues related to erosion and noxious weeds which is being addressed by City staff.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 9:21 a.m.

1st – Nancy Hobbs, 2nd – Cathy Grossman, Approved, Unanimous