



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes - FINAL
Wednesday, February 7, 2018**

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

Members Absent: Lee Milner

Alternates Present: N/A

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Jason Rupinski, Carol Beckman, Mina Liebert

Parks Board Liaisons Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Britt Haley, Kurt Schroeder, Kim King, Anna White, David Deitemeyer, Kelly Rajab

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Jason Alwine brought the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

Closed Executive Session (Presented by Britt Haley, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager)

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 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 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 If consent to the closed executive session is not given, the item may be discussed in open session or withdrawn from consideration.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 into a closed executive session.

1st – Joe Lavorini, 2nd – Cathy Grossman, Approved, Unanimous

Motion: To end the closed executive session.

1st – Lily Weissgold, 2nd – Nancy Hobbs, Approved, Unanimous

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

Announcements

Britt Haley, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager

- She stated there will not be a site tour in February; however, anticipates one in March.

Approval of Minutes – January 3, 2018

Motion: To approve the minutes of the January 3, 2018 TOPS Working Committee meeting.

1st – Cathy Grossman, 2nd – Joe Lavorini, Approved, Unanimous

Citizen Discussion

Judith Rice-Jones, citizen, asked about the ownership of the Rock Island Trail near Bonforte Park and has concerns in regards to the fence and safety. Britt Haley replied that the fence was a requirement per the railroad. The cost of the trail and fence was 1.7 million dollars. The cost to replace the fence is approximately \$300,000 dollars and the department is currently trying to identify funding for this project. She also inquired about volunteer clean-up opportunities for the vegetation around the trail and Britt Haley replied that Park Staff could work with her in setting up a volunteer opportunity.

Action Items

Rustic Hills Drainage Improvement at Rock Island Trail (Presented by David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

The PowerPoint presentation included: background information; project goals; existing conditions; conceptual plan; examples of proposed facilities; TOPS policy; project timeline; staff recommendations; proposed motion; and questions.

David Deitemeyer was joined by John Adair, Stormwater Construction Manager and Brian Kelley, Engineering Manager from the City's Water Resources Division.

TOPS Working Committee Chair Jason Alwine asked if the four design recommendations made in the proposed motion would become conditions if the motion was approved. John Adair replied that they hope to include the four design recommendations; however, there are other obligations that must be met in the building of the pond that could change the conditions. David Deitemeyer said he felt confident that the conditions could be met.

TOPS Working Committee member Becky Wegner asked how successful similar projects have been in restoration of the area and what types of invasive plants exist. John Adair responded that they have been very successful, and they have worked on many projects with the Forestry Division. There is an obligation in the permit guidelines for 70% revegetation and restoration. Brian Kelley stated they do independent contracting with revegetation specialists. John Adair replied they do not have a full inventory of invasive plants yet, but plan to survey the area.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board liaison Carol Beckman asked what kind of invasive plants have been removed to the west, as stated in the PowerPoint. David Deitemeyer responded that Chinese Elm had been removed.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs asked if there would be fencing around the detention pond. Britt Haley explained the use of the pond, as it is not a typical "pond." John Adair

added that because this is a stormwater feature, there is no plan for a fence, though one could be added. John Adair and Britt Haley continued to explain about the detention pond and how it works. Nancy Hobbs stated she would not be supportive of a fence around the pond and asked about what would happen to some of the trails around the pond and would there be signage. John Adair replied that at this time there was not a plan to pave trails as they have not come to that point in the design process and that signage could be explored in the future. Nancy asked if there was going to be any neighborhood involvement since most people who live in the area may have different opinions on what should happen to some of the trails. She inquired about the encroachment of a neighbor's property and stated concerns that the trail to the south could become inaccessible. John stated the encroachment would be addressed after the approval process and reassured her that the goal is to add connectivity to the area. In addition, Britt Haley explained that the encroachment would be addressed whether this project was approved or not. Kurt Schroeder, Parks Maintenance and Operations Manager responded that encroachments exist throughout many parks and steps are being taken to fix these encroachments.

TOPS Working Committee member Becky Wegner asked how many acres would be impacted and if projects similar to this have been completed in other open space areas. John Adair replied they do not have an exact number since the project is in the early stages and requires approval; however, he explained that the goal is to minimize impact. Britt Haley stated that this project is unique, as the Water Resources Division is usually not involved and with the renewed effort for caring about stormwater, certain steps need to be taken to care for open spaces.

TOPS Working Committee member Jim Klever asked if this infrastructure was similar to the one in Blodgett Peak Open Space. David Deitemeyer responded that they serve the same purpose and Brian Kelley explained in further detail the detention ponds at Blodgett Peak.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs asked about drainage on the far west side of the proposed area and where that water will drain. John Adair replied that it will drain eventually into the pond. She asked if paving a road in the Rustic Hills neighborhood would change water flow and how much would paving cost. John Adair responded that current culverts will be maintained and paving will maintain the water flow. The paving would be completed in three phases and the first phase would cost \$800,000 dollars.

TOPS Working Committee member Cathy Grossman stated that properties lose their value when open spaces are being washed away due to flooding and water mitigation.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs asked about the maintenance around the area, stating that the neighbors usually find themselves doing the mowing and maintenance around the surrounding trails. John Adair said that vehicles did not have access to get on those trails to mow and maintain and this project would create access.

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) Executive Director, asked if this connectivity would be a parks expense or stormwater expense. John Adair stated that funding would come from the Water Resources Division. Susan asked if significant changes to the proposed design were made would the proposal come back to the TOPS Working Committee for approval. John Adair replied he

would be working very closely with David Deitemeyer and Britt Haley; however, if substantial changes were made, this proposal would come back to the Committee for approval.

Bill Koerner, citizen, expressed concerns if a precedent is being set for things that are allowed to be done in our open spaces and how this seems like an open space is being converted into a stormwater project. He stated if this was something the Committee would have acquired if they were seeing it for the first time after this project was completed. John Adair responded that the water is destroying the open space and that would be happening regardless, and essentially the purpose of the project is to clean up the area. Britt Haley read the TOPS Ordinance (Section 4.6.101, F and subsection K) in relation to resource management and water improvements, and stated that this project is within the TOPS Ordinance. Bill Koerner stated that now the open space would be completely occupied by the water detention pond, which would change it's function. He hoped this would be an exception, not a precedent. Brian Kelley responded that the criteria for drainage and water quality has changed drastically since 2002, which is when this property was acquired, and that is why this property is just now being surveyed for drainage.

Motion: Approval of the Colorado Springs Water Resources Engineering Division's request for drainage improvements, including the water quality detention pond proposed on the 7.75 ac TOPS Open Space parcel along the Rock Island Trail Corridor implementation, to the extent possible, of the following additional measures in the design to create a more natural and aesthetically pleasing design including: (1) Using cobble in the trickle channel instead of a concrete chase, (2) consideration of using colored concrete to blend structures into the open space, (3) consideration of creating undulations in the grading of the pond (eliminating straight-line grading) for enhanced natural aesthetics, and (4) coordination with the Regional Parks, Trails, and Open Space Natural Resources Specialist for selection of the seed mix for onsite restoration.

1st – Nancy Hobbs, 2nd – Jim Klever

- 7 yays – Jason Alwine, Cathy Grossman, Jeff Mohrmann, Joe Lavorini, Nancy Hobbs, Lily Weissgold, Jim Klever
- 1 nay – Becky Wegner
- Approved 7-1 with the addition of a subsection (5) that there be a public process for trail input

Dixon Trail Easement (Presented by Britt Haley, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

The PowerPoint presentation included: a map of the Cheyenne Mountain State Park area; Dixon Trail connection; easement area; cost of the easement; key discussion points; financial implications; timeline and approval process; the challenge without the easement; and questions.

Britt Haley was joined by Jeanette Lara from Colorado Parks and Wildlife as representatives for Cheyenne Mountain State Park.

TOPS Working Committee member Becky Wegner asked if there would be a chance to purchase more of this property in the future. Britt Haley responded that at this time the owner is not interested in selling the entire property. Britt also reminded the Committee that the Parks Department has an agreement with Cheyenne Mountain State Park for the maintenance of property owned by the City in the State Park.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board liaison Carol Beckman inquired about the acreage of the property. Britt Haley replied that the property is 80 acres and the City will own the easement; however, it will be managed by the State Parks.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs asked if there was a trail above the easement in place, how long is it and who will build the trail. Britt Haley replied there is a trail and a contractor has not been selected yet for the project. Jeanette Lara stated the trail is a quarter mile long and they have used multiple contractors on different trails and funding will be available in July.

TOPS Working Committee member Joe Lavorini recused himself from voting due to being employed by RMFI who is a bidding contractor on this project.

TOPS Working Committee member Becky Wegner asked if this was an “up-and-back” trail. Jeanette Lara said there is a loop at the top of the mountain, but otherwise it would be an “up-and-back” trail.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board liaison Carol Beckman asked if there were plans to connect to the National Forest, how close the property was to the National Forest and when do they plan to open this trail. Jeannette Lara stated that while Colorado Parks and Wildlife is hopeful for connectivity in the future there are no plans yet. The property is not far and they hope to have this trail open for Fall 2018.

TOPS Committee member Nancy Hobbs asked the length of the trail. Jeannette Lara replied it would add about 6 miles bringing the total length to 28 miles.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs asked why the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department was not going to pay for the entire parcel instead of splitting the cost with the Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park. Britt Haley replied that the Department looks to save money wherever possible and this proved to be a great solution.

TOPS Working Committee member Jeff Mohrmann stated he was voting in full disclosure.

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) Executive Director, asked if this trail would be accessible for all users; including horses, bikers, and hikers. Jeanette Lara replied that all three user groups could use it, though the top is steep and could be limited to just hikers. This easement would make it easier for bikers and horses to use the trail.

Jennifer Peterson, Rocky Mountain Field Institute Executive Director asked how quickly the Parks Department could obtain the property. Britt Haley answered that the department is just waiting for

the closing on the sale of the property. The owner is ready to sell and the department would want to meet the available funding in July.

Bill Koerner, citizen, asked if the easement would be long-standing. Britt Haley replied yes. He voiced his support for the project.

Mike Scott, citizen, was supportive in the concept and hoped the easement would be long standing. He encouraged the completion of the project.

Motion: Move to recommend approval of an acquisition of an approximately 7.04 acre trail easement for the Dixon Trail with financial support from the Friends of Cheyenne Mountain Park for half of the easement purchase.

1st – Becky Wegner, 2nd - Nancy Hobbs

7 yays – Jason Alwine, Cathy Grossman, Jeff Mohrmann, Nancy Hobbs, Becky Wegner, Lily Weissgold, Jim Klever

1 abstained – Joe Lavorini

Approved, Unanimous

Presentations

Rocky Mountain Field Institute (RMFI) Update (Presented by Jennifer Peterson, Rocky Mountain Field Institute Executive Director)

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation](#)

The PowerPoint included: RMFI mission; TOPS stewardship contract; 2017 TOPS properties; 2017 work objectives; 2017 volunteer statistics; project pictures; partnership programs; opportunities for 2018; and questions.

Discussion included praise from multiple members of the Committee for RMFI's continued work in their application of stewardship and ability to leverage funding.

Susan Davies Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) Executive Director praised RMFI and asked if the Parks Department had an updated dollar amount on the cost per acre to maintain open space. Britt Haley said she could provide that information at a later time.

Rock Creek Property (Presented by David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect)

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation](#)

The PowerPoint Included: key discussion points; Cheyenne Mountain State Park expansion; the property at 1725 Rock Creek Canyon Road; site photos; historic access; Cheyenne Mountain Heritage Trail; Rock Creek Canyon parcels statistics; funding; financial implications; timeline and approval process; and questions.

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) Executive Director, asked how far away the property was from the proposed quarry. David Deitemeyer responded that it was an estimated 5 to 8 miles away.

Bill Koerner, citizen, asked how this acquisition fits in with the Forest Service plans once the Pike National Forest Plan is redone. David Deitemeyer said the plans are premature but moving forward with the Forest Service.

Citizen Discussion

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) Executive Director, provided information that included recommendations from the TOSC Board of Directors regarding the Banning Lewis Ranch Master Plan. The TOSC Board of Directors asked that the annexation agreement for Banning Lewis Ranch not proceed forward until the Master Plan is strongly considered or approved. In addition, they asked there be language in future agreements that include that developers provide land and how they will build and maintain the parks and trails.

Shanti Toll, citizen, thanked the TOPS Working Committee for their hard work and updated the Committee on some trail projects.

Bill Koerner, citizen, stated he wanted to see more forward movement and commitment in the Open Space plan for Corral Bluffs and reminded board members that he and Jackie Hilaire host hikes in the area.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 9:48 a.m.

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