

Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

PR&CS Administration, 1401 Recreation Way, Colorado Springs, CO 80905



Agenda

TOPS Working Committee

Please silence your phone during the meeting.

Wednesday, April 4, 2018

7:30 a.m.

Open Space Room

Executive Session

Britt Haley

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 If consent to the closed executive session is not given, the item may be discussed in open session or withdrawn from consideration.

Agenda Preview

Committee and Staff

Announcements

Staff

Approval of Minutes – March 7, 2017

Committee

Citizen Discussion

Citizens

Action Items

Rock Creek Property

David Deitemeyer

Presentations

North Cheyenne Canon TOPS Master Plan Update

David Deitemeyer

Citizen Discussion

Citizens

Adjournment

COLORADO SPRINGS PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Date: April 4, 2018

Item Number: Action Item #1

Item Name: Rock Creek Canyon Acquisition

SUMMARY:

On April 1, 1997, an ordinance implementing a sales tax for trails, open space and parks (TOPS) was approved by the citizens of Colorado Springs. This tax went into effect on July 1, 1997. In 2003 this ordinance was amended to extend the TOPS sales tax through 2025. The TOPS Working Committee is responsible for setting priorities and making recommendations for the expenditures of TOPS funds. The TOPS Working Committee has identified the 31.22-acre Snell property, located adjacent to Cheyenne Mountain State Park and along Rock Creek as having open space values that merit preservation. Acquisition of the property would serve as an extension of Cheyenne Mountain State Park, provide future trail access for the Cheyenne Mountain Heritage Trail, and connect the Cheyenne Mountain State Park to Rock Creek. The acquisition was originally approved by the TOPS Working Committee and the Parks Board in March of 2018 for the offer provided to the seller at \$125,500. Following the meetings the purchase price was negotiated with the seller who ultimately accepted the revised offer of \$135,500.

BACKGROUND:

The proposed acquisition of this parcel, owned by Jacob Snell, more specifically known as Tax Schedule Number 75000-00-244, consists of approximately 31.22-acres.

The property is located west of Highway 115 at the terminus of Rock Creek Canyon Road and adjacent to Cheyenne Mountain State Park.

The 2014 Park System Master Plan identifies this area as an open space candidate area. The 1997 Open Space Master Plan identified this area as having some of the highest natural resource values in our community. The Snell property boasts outstanding perennial water resources, unique geology, wildlife habitat and vegetation. However, the coniferous trees along Rock Creek were severely impacted by the 2014 and 2015 Front Range Tussock Moth epidemic. The TOPS Program partnered with Colorado State Parks in 2001 to acquire the original 1,600-acre Cheyenne Mountain State Park. In 2008-2011 and in 2016, the City purchased additional property to the west of the Park to provide trail connections to the top of Cheyenne Mountain. This trail connection, known as the Dixon Trail is currently under construction. The Snell property provides an opportunity to advance the future development of the Cheyenne Mountain Heritage Trail, offering a truly unique trail experience around the base of Cheyenne Mountain.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife has agreed to manage, maintain and operate the property. This management responsibility is consistent with other City owned property that comprises Cheyenne Mountain State Park. Public access to the property would be provided through Cheyenne Mountain State Park, via the existing trail system within the Park. Acquisition of the Snell property would include an easement through the 8.33-acres of property to remain in private ownership by Mr. Snell. The easement will serve as ingress/egress for management and maintenance purposes.

An existing easement provides access along the Rock Creek Corridor east of the property for management and maintenance purposes to the Snell property. The existing easement does not provide for public access from Rock Creek Canyon Road.

The proposed acquisition of the property was presented and approved unanimously by the TOPS Working Committee on March 7th, and by the Parks Advisory Board on March 8th for an initial offer of \$125,500. At the time of the presentation the offer was not accepted by the seller. Additional negotiations followed with the seller agreeing to the revised purchase price of \$135,500 for the acquisition of the 31.22-acres and an access easement across the 8.33-acres Mr. Snell will retain. The property will be purchased through the Open Space Category.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Acquisition: Acquisition of the Snell property will require funding of \$135,500 from the TOPS Open Space Category.

Operations: Colorado State Parks will be responsible for management, operations and maintenance the Property. The City will amend the current Cheyenne Mountain Management Agreement between the City of Colorado Springs and Colorado State Parks to include the Property.

Stakeholder Process:

The TOPS Working Committee meetings and Parks Advisory Board meetings provide opportunities for public comment. In addition, TOPS staff has met with the Cheyenne Mountain State Park Manager who supports the acquisition.

BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

The TOPS Working Committee voted unanimously to approve the acquisition of the parcel for \$125,500 at its March 7th, 2018 meeting. The Parks Advisory Board voted unanimously to approve the acquisition of the parcel for \$125,500 at its March 8th, 2018 meeting.

ALTERNATIVES: The TOPS Working Committee may decline to recommend acquisition of the property at the negotiated price.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends acquisition of the approximately 31.22-acre Snell property and associated access easement as an extension of Cheyenne Mountain State Park in the amount of \$135,500 from the TOPS Open Space Category.

PROPOSED MOTION:

A motion to approve the acquisition of the approximately 31.22-acre Snell property and associated access easement as an extension of Cheyenne Mountain State Park in the amount of \$135,500 from the TOPS Open Space Category.

Attachments:

Power Point Presentation