



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 1, 2024**

Members Present: Bob Falcone, Paula Krantz, Wendy Howe, Jeff Davis, Bob Shafer, Chelsea Gondeck, Hank Scarangella, Blaze Panariso, Emily Danti

Alternates Absent: Randy Courduff, David Bundrick

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Larry Bogue, Abby Simpson

Parks Board Liaisons Absent: Greg Thornton

Staff Present: Britt Haley, Lonna Thelen, Eric Becker, Kim King, Anna Bingman, David Deitemeyer, Sandy Elliott

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TOPS Working Committee Chair Bob Falcone brought the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Agenda Preview

Committee Chair Bob Falcone announced the agenda for the meeting.

Announcements

Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager, made the following announcements:

- There will not be a site visit this month.
- The July TOPS Working Committee meeting is scheduled for July 3rd currently. Lonna asked the Committee if they would like to move the meeting to the following week on July 10th to accommodate the holiday. The Committee agreed to move the meeting to July 10th. Anna Bingman, Staff Assistant, will get the meeting dates updated online.
- Lonna announced two promotions within her staff: David Deitemeyer has been promoted to a Senior Program Administrator for TOPS and Emily Duncan has been promoted to a Landscape Architect II.
- The Department is pursuing a grant through the Department of Local Affairs' (DOLA) Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Fund (EIAF) for the Black Canyon Quarry.
- Mark Cervantes has been selected as the new Archaeologist for the Department.

Scott Abbott, Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space Manager, announced that his team had recently five new Ranger I positions for his division. Emma Stonesmyth, Thomas Orfan, Cassandra Rogers, and Stephanie DeVos have been hired as Ranger I's in the regional parks, trails and open space system. Aaron Lirette has been hired as the final Ranger I to complete the Urban Trails Ranger team.

David Deitemeyer, Senior Program Administrator, provided the following updates on the Fishers Canyon Open Space master plan process:

- The neighborhood meeting on April 24th was well attended. David said there was a lot of interesting conversation. David added that neighbors were surprised that Wellfleet Street is the only access point to the open space currently.
- Committee members Paula Krantz and Jeff Davis are the TOPS Working Committee liaisons to the process. David invited them to provide their feedback from the meeting.
 - Committee member Jeff Davis stated that he felt the crowd at the meeting was not representative of the entire surrounding neighborhood, and suggested continued outreach to the neighborhood, potentially via some mailed information, to try to involve them. Additionally, Jeff said he felt there was a normal amount of misinterpretation of the master planning process amongst neighbors that can sometimes occur early in a master plan process.
 - Committee member Paula Krantz said she sat at a table that seemed to consist of direct neighbors to the area. She stated that there were strong feelings against parking on Wellfleet Street. Ms. Krantz added that some of the neighbors voiced the feeling that their opinions on the plan don't matter and that the Department will do what they want regardless.
- David stated that the project website will be updated with the presentation from the meeting, and a survey that will be live for at least two weeks.
- David said the next meeting may be in June depending on survey responses.

Councilmember David Leinweber was in attendance, and informed the Committee that City Council receives a legislative report of what topics citizens are calling and emailing Council about. Councilmember Leinweber said the Blodgett Master and Management Plan is at the top of the list of topics.

Approval of Minutes – April 3, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of the April 3, 2024 TOPS Working Committee meeting.

1st – Blaze Panariso, 2nd – Paula Krantz, Approved, Unanimously.

Citizen Discussion

Susan Davies, Executive Director for the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), stated that she also attended the Fishers Canyon Open Space public meeting, and agreed that it was well-attended. Ms. Davies suggested that there be an option for tables to report on their conversations, as there was a feeling of longing after the meeting. Ms. Davies worried that people may not attend future meetings if they feel they won't get a chance to discuss feelings and ask questions about the process. Next, Ms. Davies said that her organization is participating in Crew Leader Training this upcoming weekend, which will take place in Bear Creek Cañon Park. Finally, Ms. Davies said TOSC will be promoting a new program, called the "One Bag Challenge," to help create a culture of keeping parks clean. TOSC will provide the bags at different events for people to use for cleaning up trash.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, said he felt the final outcome of the Blodgett Open Space Master and Management public process was a great plan. While he stated that his organization didn't get all of their recommendations to the plan met, they are very supportive overall.

Dr. Bob Craig, citizen, also attended the Fishers Canyon Open Space public meeting. He is a neighbor of the property. While he stated that the neighbors are happy that the resource is being protected, there is a general feeling that the opinions of the direct neighbors won't make a difference in the overall plan. He encouraged staff to continue communicating that their feedback and opinions matter, and the plan is not set in stone in any way. Committee Chair Bob Falcone agreed with Mr. Craig and encouraged him to talk with his neighbors to explain the process and ways to provide their feedback. Mr. Falcone explained how the robust public process for the Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan helped to shape the final plan, with much neighborhood feedback considered.

Action Items

Property Acquisition (Presented by Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager, and David Deitemeyer, Senior Program Administrator)

Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager, and David Deitemeyer, Senior Program Administrator, presented the Committee with a presentation on a potential property acquisition. This presentation on a potential property acquisition at 1680 South 26th Street included a map of where the property is located; details about the property; photos of the house on the property; the Park System Master Plan; general property overview; transaction information; the TOPS Open Space Fund Balance; site opportunities; and finally, additional aerial images.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

Committee member Blaze Panariso asked if the house is on sewer or septic. Lonna Thelen responded that it is on septic currently.

Committee member Jeff Davis asked what costs were associated with the property currently being zoned in the County. Lonna Thelen answered that the property would need to be annexed into the City at some point if purchased. However, the annexation fees would be waived, though the Department would have to pay for supporting documents.

Committee Chair Bob Falcone asked if the house itself could be removed from the property and sold. Lonna Thelen responded that is an option. Mr. Falcone stated he believed this property is a great opportunity and link into the County.

Councilmember David Leinweber stated that he lives near Red Rock Canyon, and parking is not always reliable on this side of the park. He said this would be a great area to create a new entrance to the park. Additionally, Councilmember Leinweber stated this is a great opportunity to partner with the County to come up with ideas for further connectivity.

Citizen Comments

Glen Pressman, citizen, is a neighbor of the property, and familiar with the traffic pattern of the area. Additionally, Mr. Pressman is a member of the Friends of Red Rock Canyon. Mr. Pressman stated that he is opposed to the creation of a parking lot at this location. With the current amount of nefarious activity that already takes place in the area, Mr. Pressman did not believe it would be a good idea to create a space for people to gather. He informed the Committee that issues with after-hours activity in the area is one of the main reasons the current owner is selling. Mr. Pressman felt that neighbors were not contacted about the City's potential plans for the area. Finally, Mr. Pressman noted that under the current zoning, parking is not an acceptable use. Lonna Thelen responded that no changes would happen until the property was annexed under PK zoning in the City. Additionally, Lonna said staff had been looking into installing a gate at the property, which would hopefully detour some of the after-hours activity. Committee Chair Bob Falcone also explained the acquisition process, and why Mr. Pressman and other neighbors were not alerted.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, stated that his organization is provisionally supportive of this acquisition, as they understand the access challenges of the area. However, Mr. Sutela said he would like some clarity on what the future public process might look like. Lonna Thelen answered that nothing is set in stone, though there would likely be a public meeting to discuss potential uses or opportunities and concerns with the neighborhood.

Motion: A motion to recommend the acquisition of approximately 2.54 acres of property located at 1680 S 26th Street (TSN 7415300044) and a supplemental appropriation of \$875,000 to include the purchase price and associated real estate transaction costs from the TOPS Open Space category fund balance.

1st – Blaze Panariso, 2nd – Paula Krantz, Approved, Unanimously.

Presentations

2025 Capital Improvement Project Recommendations (Presented by Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager, and Kim King, Assistant Director)

Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager, and Kim King, Assistant Director, presented the Committee with the 2025 Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Recommendations. This presentation included informing the budget process; assumptions; TOPS Proposed 2025 CIP Budget; the TOPS Ordinance; 2023 End-of-Year Revenue Report; TOPS Fund future revenue for 2024 through 2028; TOPS Fund Summary Q1 2024 estimated fund balance; preliminary 2025 revenue; TOPS Administration; Smith Creek Management Plan; Jimmy Camp Creek/Corral Bluffs planning; TOPS Maintenance; TOPS Trails Category; University Park Trail; Urban Trail System wayfinding design package; Garden of the Gods trail wayfinding; Red Rock extension circulation/connectivity plan; Blodgett Open Space implementation; North Douglas Trail; Fishers Canyon implementation; high priority trails; TOPS Parks Category; Grey Hawk Park implementation; TOPS Parks proposed 2025 budget; playground renovation; TOPS Open Space – 25% Stewardship category; and finally, Stewardship funding history.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

After a robust conversation between staff and the Committee about the various funding sources for the Department, the following comments were agreed upon:

- It would be helpful for staff to conduct a budget workshop with the Committee to understand some of the changes in the different funding sources over the past few years, and future opportunities.
- It would be helpful for the Committee to see a longer-term CIP plan, potentially for up to five years, to better understand year to year projects and implementation.
- The Committee wants to understand how the story of Department funding can be conveyed better so citizens understand the needs of the Department.

Citizen Discussion

Susan Davies, Executive Director for TOSC, commented that the CIP budget discussion is a very long discussion to have. She remarked that having fifty playgrounds with needs to be addressed is very difficult to hear. While she understands that people care about the TOPS Program, the current breakdown of percentages just doesn't work. Ms. Davies said it's important to ask the questions, the right way. Ms. Davies encouraged the Committee to continue asking the tough questions and to advocate. She urged the staff to address more than one playground a year, and to stay on top of irrigation improvements.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, stated that he is looking forward to future discussions about the budget. He stated that the TOPS Program extension was passed because of the acquisition elements, and said he stands behind the work it took to land on the final number.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion to adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 10:21 a.m.
1st – Blaze Panariso, 2nd – Jeff Davis, Approved, Unanimously.