



LARIMER COUNTY OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 27, 2011, 5:00 - 8:00 p.m., Loveland Municipal Building, 500 E. 3rd St, Loveland, CO

The mission of the Larimer County Open Lands Program is to preserve and protect significant Open Space, natural areas, wildlife habitat, and develop parks and trails for present and future generations. These open lands provide opportunities for leisure, human renewal and protection of our natural and cultural resources.

Present:

Patricia Brennan	At-large	Peter Kast	At-large
Nancy Wallace	Planning Commission	Mary Banken	At-large
Suzan Fritchel	At-large	Trudy Haines	At-Large
John Ericson	Town of Estes Park	Jeff Hindman	Town of Berthoud

Staff Present:

Kerri Rollins	Open Lands Program Manager	Gary Buffington	Director
Charlie Johnson	Land Agent	Travis Rollins	Open Lands Operations Manager
Zac Wiebe	Natural Resource Technician	Kat Parker	Ranger
Sue Burke	Executive Assistant	Lori Smith	Senior Accountant

Absent:

Hugh McKean	City of Loveland	Don Griffith	At-large
Gerry Horak	City of Fort Collins	Steve Vessey	At-large

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:09 pm.

REGULAR MEETING

- Approval of the meeting minutes for September 22, 2011. **Suzan recommended that the minutes be approved, Trudy seconded and the motion approved unanimously.**
- Review Agenda and enclosures

PUBLIC COMMENT: Johanna Darden from Estes Park

Johanna introduced herself and thanked the Board. In regards to the Estes Park portion of the open space sales tax, she read a written opinion. See handout. After Johanna was finished, Kerri mentioned that she's had several conversations with Johanna and has attempted to address her concerns. She has gotten an opinion from the county attorney that OLAB cannot weigh in on any misuse of funds. John mentioned that he informed OLAB when Estes Park was considering Bond Park. John has no factual disagreements with Johanna and feels that the ballot language is an interpretation. Johanna has talked to the town for many months. Estes Park went through a very thorough process for the design, there were public focus groups, etc, and a lot of public involvement was sought. The town board made the decision to move forward based on a legal opinion that they received. Kerri mentioned that Steve McFarland, the chief financial officer for Estes Park, came to the board and mentioned the Bond Park project. Nancy asked what the procedure was at this point. She thinks that OLAB should direct staff and Peter to complete a written report that the Board can act on. OLAB needs a written recommendation, it's important to respond to her. Trudy agrees that it would be good to have a response. Nancy commented that the planning commission has a similar process; the staff draws up a written response and recommendation, then the board votes. Kerri has gotten the county attorney's opinion over a year ago. Kerri wondered if she gets the opinion, then brings it to the board. Peter asked if every municipality has specific language. They all do except Johnstown and Windsor, who grew in to the county after the tax was passed. John pointed out that they are all



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different. Peter wondered how binding the language is and what OLAB can do. Kerri mentioned the “umbrella” language that is very general, then the cities’ language are each more specific. If a city operates under the umbrella, does it still work? Peter likes Nancy’s suggestion about a staff recommendation. Jeff commented that Berthoud is very careful with how their money is spent but the County should provide guidance for how it is spent so communities can feel comfortable that they are spending it well. Trudy mentioned that this is an important issue for the upcoming ballot. The county attorney opinion was that Johanna can hire an attorney. Trudy wondered if there is any other opposition in Estes Park. John answered that there is very little. John agrees with Nancy. Mary commented that it would be an understatement to say that no one agrees with Johanna, they just aren’t as vocal. When this first came up, Steve checked with their attorney before spending any money. John agrees with Mary that there is never 100% agreement. Trudy wonders how big of an issue this is, it may warrant that the Estes Park trustees might spread the money around. Nancy thinks the main question is “do we have the authority to do this?” She’s not sure if OLAB should put itself in a policing position. Kerri reiterated that the attorney’s opinion was that OLAB does not have that authority.

OLAB ANNUAL PHOTO - smile!

INFORMATION:

- Hermit’s Hollow reconstruction project - Road work in the campgrounds has been completed and the county crew is building the new sites as well as sprucing up the old ones. The campground should be largely completed by end of the fall season. Vault toilets are in progress- the bid just went out this week. This will add 12 new vault restrooms to Hermit in 2012- 4 in the campground and 8 more singles at the cabins. Staff anticipates having them installed early spring. With crews in the area the switchbacks along the main road, which have become very degraded over time, will receive 4" of road base and re-grading.
- Other Hermit Park OS updates - Nice weather has kept the property steady on weekends. Staff will begin closing the other 2 campgrounds besides Bobcat after this weekend. Cabins will remain open for reservations. Plans are to close Hermit mid Dec-Feb again this winter. The closure worked well for staffing, and there were little to no negative comments from the public regarding the closure last year.
- Hermit Park OS grant projects – staff are working on two potential projects that will further complete the management plan. One is the Kruger Rock trailhead development and connector trail to Homestead Meadows, and the other the Kruger Equine Campground and trailer parking project. To date partners include Backcountry Horseman’s Association and the Friends Group. Grants to GOCO, State Trails and Roundup Riders will be pursued. It was a good meeting, the equestrians had some good input. \$160k will be split between the two projects.
- Submitted the Poudre River Trail concept paper in partnership with Fort Collins, Timnath and Windsor. It is currently estimated to be a \$3.6 million project. A GOCO decision to move forward with a full application will come on December 13th. 345k now, Kerri anticipates asking for another \$100k in the future.
- An orientation tour of the Poudre River project is scheduled for November 14 leaving the Courthouse at 1pm and returning by 4:30 or 5:00 pm. Please let us know if you plan to attend.
- A date for the Annual Board holiday party must be selected – please bring your calendars! It will be at Trudy’s house. A PAB member has also offered the space at his brewery. Nancy prefers having it at Trudy’s, Trudy votes for the brewery. Staff will decide the location. The Board agreed that Dec. 8 will work.
- The 2nd Regional Open Space Boards meeting is scheduled for 11/9 and will be held at the Courthouse Offices Building at 200 W Oak in the Boyd Lake room. An agenda will go out shortly. The November OLAB meeting will be held afterward. She heard that the grant is doing well for the regional study and the master plan grant may be resubmitted.



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- Prescribed burns occurred at Horsetooth Mountain OS (21 acres) and the west side of Devil's Backbone OS (.5 acres). Devil's Backbone fire had to be extinguished after a short time due to changing weather conditions but is rescheduled.
- Report from the Open Lands Operations Manager - See handout
 - Travis introduced Kat Parker and mentioned that it is important that field staff see all sides of the department. Kat introduced herself to the Board; she's a senior at CSU, has worked for open lands for 4 years and also thinks it's important to see this part of the Open Lands program.
 - Attended regular Agricultural Advisory Board and Habitat Partnership Program meetings
 - Free Firewood Program ran for two weekends (four days) in October at Horsetooth Mountain, 12 vehicles per day. This will probably be the last year as most of the forestry work is done.
 - Worked with Risk Management on insurance requirements for new grazing leases
 - Developed grazing information flyer to placed at kiosk of properties with grazing leases
 - In the process of completing conservation easement monitoring for 2011 on agricultural properties
 - Hosted first annual Scoop de Poop on 10/22/11 at Devil's Backbone and Horsetooth Mountain Open Space trail heads
 - Worked with Town of Windsor on agreement to plow Poudre River trail and River Bluff's trail head

Patrol-

- Rangers searched for and found two overdue fourteen year old hikers at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space
- Transferred Seasonal Park Ranger Rachel Leiner from Horsetooth parks to open spaces for the rest of 2011

Maintenance-

- Drainage work at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space trail head
 - Graded portions of Eagle's Nest roads and rebuilt water drainage bars
 - Crew completed work on roof and deck issues at Soderberg house
 - Crew is currently working at Hermit Park on campground renovations
- To sign up for Parks Advisory Board minutes go to <http://larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm> put in your email and click 'subscribe', then check "Parks Advisory Board" box
 - Natural Resource Events for October. See website <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>

PRESENTATION:

- Regional Food Assessment Study: From Plant to Plate – Linda Hoffmann, Division Director of Planning & Building Services – See presentation

ACTION:

- Small Grants for Community Partnering – Sue Burke, Project Manager

Sue reminded the Board about the earlier application date this year. There was only approximately \$17k applied for and the subcommittee is recommending funding for each project. Sue showed a slideshow that went through each project. Regarding the Buckeye Community Center project, Sue solicited board feedback about the selection criteria Kerri commented that it's an agricultural community meeting place. Trudy commented that it's near our open spaces and may be used for meetings. She also mentioned that no other agricultural community has asked for funding, DNR wants to build rapport. Patricia suggested encouraging the applicant to keep within the criteria a little better for future applications. Trudy mentioned that the community center has a national historic registry designation. Kerri clarified that they will be buying a port-o-let style restroom. Suzan



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has no problem with funding it, Peter agrees. Jeff asked about the funding amount and thinks DNR should be more lenient since there is no competition. **Nancy moved to approve staff recommendations for funding the Small Grants for Community Partnering program, John seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

DISCUSSION ITEMS: No discussion items

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- Annual review of cash flow for Acquisition and Long Term Management funds – Lori Smith

Lori introduced the detailed cash flow for open lands acquisitions and development (A&D) sheet which is from the beginning of the tax through 2018. She pointed out the gray section, which is before she started with DNR. The yellow sections are what have changed. The 2010 projection was about \$300k more than expected, 2011 and 2012 also show increases.

Lori then pointed out the bond payment line. Peter explained that DNR borrowed money against the tax income stream so it could be spent on open space and paid back over time. Lori commented that it was thought that the land was available then and would be more expensive in the future. When DNR bonded, there had to be a reserve in case sales tax didn't come in. The County finance director required a secondary reserve but now feels confident that the payments will be made so she's releasing approximately \$350k back for A&D.

The next line is an accounting accrual because it takes several months for funding to get to DNR once collected. Revenues are calculated with a 1.9% interest rate.

Under the Uses of Funds section Lori pointed out the admin costs line which is primarily salary. It was originally thought that salary would have to move to management but has been moved back to what managers have requested because it's more realistic. On the long term management line the amount coming out is at least 15% to 30% over the life of the tax. Right now it's 30% and projections show that it'll be 50% in 2018 and as high as 73%. The departmental reserve line is Gary's discretionary fund. Funding was added to the capital equipment replacement line in case DNR needs another car. John wondered why total operating costs are dropping. Lori mentioned that the part time Land Agent and Open Lands manager retired, resulting in a cost savings. She also reiterated that the 2010 figures are actual while 2011 and 2012 are projections.

The next section is a comprehensive list of individual projects including planning, acquisition and improvements. Lori went through the changes since last time (yellow). \$75k has been added for the master plan. Kerri commented that that could change depending on the success of grant applications. On page two, the State land board paid \$1500 for permanent easement for CDOT and its highway project that will affect Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space. A line was added for the Three Bells trail easement also. Charlie pointed out that it should say conservation easement or simply Three Bells. Lori will change it to Three Bell. Lori then pointed out that DNR's cost was about \$53k more than intended and the title company gave a refund of \$2463.

On Page 3, Lori pointed out that work at Chimney Hollow work is done, thus resulting in a 0. The line for the Crowder trail was spread over two years. On the Hermit Park line, when it was acquired, the plan was that DNR would borrow money from itself. The Lottery and Open Lands Program pitched in approximately \$79k. This line shows the repayment. Hermit Park isn't making a profit and Gary commented that it won't. On the Pleasant Valley trail, Red Mountain and Resource projects lines, they were also spread between two years. The Poudre River trail line was increased by \$19k and spread over two years. For resource projects: shifted between the years.



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Under the Acquisition section, a line was added for Heron Lakes, Regional trail acquisition (\$100k) and Sylvan Dale conservation easement acquisition (\$21,625). \$175k is set aside for unforeseen opportunities.

Lori then pointed out the changes on the bottom line for some later years. Years ago, management was building funds while acquisition wanted to spend. DNR is now paying funds back to itself. During some of the later years, A&D will actually be spending more than is coming in so funds must be set aside. There is a significant increase (\$1.2mill) because of increased tax projections. Kerri and Charlie are putting together a “shopping list” now that there is money to spend. The Board can expect a prioritization exercise soon.

The 4th page is concerning the Parks program, there will be about \$40k to expend.

Lori then reviewed the financial report that OLAB sees every month with operating costs removed. She explained the spreadsheet and commented that ~\$20k will be saved on the Pleasant Valley project.

On the long term management (LTM) sheet, projecting to 2018, the changes are in yellow. Lori pointed out the dotted lines and explained that the first section is from the time when DNR first started managing lands and it wasn't known what it would cost. In the middle section, DNR thought it knew how much it costs and thus refined the system. The last time frame section is managed slightly differently and has been turned over to managers who create a budget for what they need. If it's approved, the budget system then determines the management cost? It's not a cost per acre.

Lori discussed the LTM% section. It started at about 15%, is now at 30%, and will be at 50% in 2018. She pointed out the percent of annual sales tax projected. Peter asked how DNR could ever do 0%. Lori will correct that mistake on the spreadsheet.

On the sales tax revenue section, Lori pointed out the increases and some of the highs and lows. It's projected to be about the same, probably only slightly higher, for years to come. The finance group advises these numbers, they don't come from DNR accounting. There is a lot of salary in the management and increases are mandated by the County, not DNR. The 7% reduction in 2009 was due to budget cuts and staff reduction. The increase for next year is due to the new maintenance situation along with staffing decisions. The interest income is not a big component but should be projected. Gary clarified that the annual expense increase of 15% is a projection. Lori pointed out that it looks big because the 2010 numbers are actual figures and 2011 are projected. Kerri pointed out that some salaries were shifted over to management. Lori explained that this is some of the cause for the increase. There is also a small shift because the Open Lands program wasn't getting as much from Horsetooth Mountain Open Space as it should.

On the startup costs line, in 2014 DNR will have to get more vehicles when Chimney Hollow Open Space opens. The reserve cost line is a director control cost for unexpected costs. Gary asked about the 2010 number, is it actual. It's for the Fossil creek pier. The increase in 2011 is due to the new requirement for drug testing new hires. On the regional open spaces line there is some shifting under the areas that Travis manages. Everything has been lumped together because it's easier for him to manage. At one point, managers thought there was needs to separate them but now don't see the need. Peter asked about the note for Chimney Hollow and Red Tail Ridge zoning. Kerri answered that it is related to the different management zones that won't be decided until they are closer to opening.

Gary commented that next year, there will be increased wages. Lori mentioned that there is more staff this year for field manager software. Nancy asked why the figures for 2010 are more than 2011. Gary commented that



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managers turn money in every year. Lori mentioned that it's probably due to forestry projects and will investigate. The Board thanked Lori for her report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Items not on the agenda

Gary showed the marketing flyer for group pavilions, there are 6 group pavilions in the system. DNR raises about \$5-6K a year but he thinks there is more room for revenue. Thanks to Sue and staff for putting it together. Patrician clarified that it's not on the reservation system yet. It will be in a few months. The brand new Sunrise day-use area is the most reserved with 22 reservations this year. Sunrise gives the public freedom and flexibility and staff will take note of that for future improvements. Unlike many places it allows dogs, visitors can actually take dogs along the reservoir.

Larimer County invites OLAB to the commissioner's board reception. It'll be at the courthouse. BOCC wants to know the board's opinion for why attendance is low. He solicited input. Mary commented that it's hard to take an afternoon off work. Nancy thinks it's a good networking opportunity but sees no other reason to go. Trudy suggested that a different time frame may work better. Patricia simply had a conflict, but it's a nice one time thing, the networking opportunity is good.

BOARD COMMENT: Items not on the agenda

Jeff moved to go into executive session, Trudy seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (24-6-402(4)(a) C.R.S. Purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real or personal property interest.

Trudy motioned to adjourn, Mary seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Next regular meeting: Thursday, November 9, 2011; Location: Larimer County Courthouse