



OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD (OLAB) Minutes

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 23, 2014

5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Loveland Council Chambers, 500 E. Third St., Loveland

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.

Members Present

Peter Kast - At-large
Carl Sorrentino - At-large
Suzan Fritchel - At-large
Mary Banken - At-large
Nancy Wallace - Planning Commission
John Phipps - Town of Estes Park
Trudy Haines - At-large
Gerry Horak - City of Fort Collins

Staff Present

Kerri Rollins, Open Lands Program Manager
Zac Wiebe, Fund Development & Special Projects
Gary Buffington, Director of Natural Resources
Meegan Flenniken, Land Stewardship Program Manager
Sandy Werkmeister, Department Specialist
Charlie Johnson, Senior Land Agent
Travis Rollins, Open Space Operations Manager
Chris Sabina, Interning w/ Open Space Operations

Members Absent

Paul Alaback - Town of Berthoud
Ladonna Lee - At-large
Hugh McKean - City of Loveland
Steve Vessey - At-large

REGULAR MEETING

- Approval of the meeting minutes for November 13, 2013 - motion by Carl Sorrentino, 2nd by Mary Banken to approve the meeting minutes from November 13 as written. Motion carried unanimously.
Review Agenda and enclosures

PUBLIC COMMENT: Items not on the agenda. No public comment

INFORMATION:

- Gary Buffington distributed 2014 annual passes to the Board members, thanking them for their volunteerism. He reminded them that they are transferable to different vehicles within their family.
- Commissioner Donnelly - distributed thank you letters from the BCC and paper day timers for anyone who wanted one. The typical Board & Commissions Reception was cancelled this year due to the flood.
- The Natural Resources Boards Christmas party was wonderful – Kerri thanked Peter and Penny Kast for hosting us again in their beautiful home and thanked Sandy and Shannon for making all the arrangements.
- Kerri declared the fourth annual Regional Boards Summit a success. There was a recap of the Our Lands - Our Future results and the City of Loveland presented the results of a follow-up survey for their natural areas master planning process, which was heavily supportive of more open space and trails. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) presented on sales tax initiatives and there were breakout groups to discuss common issues.
- Kerri reported that Charlie closed on the Swets Trail Easement Acquisition on December 16, a small but mighty piece in our Poudre River Trail quest to connect from Fort Collins to Greeley. Special appreciation to Charlie for getting this done, on top of fire and flood demands of his time.

- Responding to a question about the overall Poudre River Trail connection to Greeley, Charlie said we are moving forward with two appraisals of properties as of today. We also continue to meet with the Town of Timnath on some areas of common interest and on establishing additional easements needed. The City of Fort Collins is working on the access over or under the interstate, slated for 2015 at this time.
- Kerri told the Board we missed the annual schedule to elect officers, so we will take care of it today. In addition, Jeannine Haag, from the County Attorney Office, is reviewing all citizen board bylaws, recommending some changes in the language. The Board has not reviewed the bylaws since 2008, so Kerri asked Nancy Wallace and Suzan Fritchel if they would review Jeannine's recommendations, recommend others if needed, and bring all recommendations to the Board for review. They both agreed to this.
- Meegan invited everyone to the reception for the fiber artist Linda Beach, the 2013 Visual Artist of the Year for Larimer County Natural Resources. Linda Beach will unveil her piece "Endless" at a reception on February 14 at 3 p.m. on the second floor of the County Courthouse Office Building.
- Meegan asked for a volunteer for the 2014 Visual Artist of the Year committee. The committee consists of one OLAB member, one Parks Board member, one community art critic and a former Visual Artist winner. Trudy Haines volunteered for 2014.
- Meegan Flenniken and Travis Rollins recapped the outcome of the public meetings regarding Horsetooth Mountain OS capacity issues (document included in meeting packet.) They are implementing all but one of the responses unless the Board has reservations. The proposed new trail connection between Swan Johnson and Stout trails is tabled for reconsideration during the next update to the Horsetooth Mountain Open Space Management Plan, which is probably 2-3 years away.
- Kerri informed the Board that we are partnering with Larimer County Environmental Health Department and Solid Waste Department to submit a request for proposal (RFP) for phase 1 of the tire cleanup at Roberts Ranch. Clean up is contingent on receiving a grant from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.
- Recall that in mid-December we were awarded \$155,000 from GOCO for improvements at Pinewood Reservoir. Zac Wiebe reported that unfortunately, we were only partially funded. We will submit a mini-grant application this spring for some of the components. He said GOCO grants cycles are getting more competitive all the time. Their last cycle received 50 applications and just 10 were awarded.
- Meegan reported that, also at Pinewood, we applied for a VOC project (Volunteers for Outdoors Colorado), a group that does trail and vegetation restoration statewide and they are coming for two days in August to camp and complete the trail along the north side of Pinewood. Additional volunteers are welcome, and food is provided for the day(s). Fun time! Go to their website to sign up if interested.
- GOCO announced a 5-million dollar flood relief opportunity. Kerri said we would submit an application to fund road restoration at Hermit Park. Also looking at a conservation & restoration assessment of the Big Thompson canyon area, in partnership with Loveland, Forest Services and the Restoration Coalition.
- In response to a question about the status of Glade Park, Travis Rollins stated that FEMA has evaluated the trees and left the ones they thought may have a chance. Our forester will review them more closely. For now, Glade Park will stay closed because of safety. There is no safe access to the river, parking or facilities. And in response to questions about the timing of the proposed Big Thompson canyon assessment for recreation, Kerri clarified that it is in response to the flood, because we have lost all of our properties up the canyon, and Loveland has lost Visten-Smith, so this is the time to consider alternatives. After the 1975 flood, Larimer County received 163 properties to manage, with a choice to refuse or change their use. Right now, we are trying to be pro-active so if properties are given to us again, we will have a plan for them. So far, we are planning to assess from Glade Park to at least Sleepy Hollow, and maybe up to the Olympus Dam.
- We signed the contract with FEMA for \$150,000 (their estimate to fix Hermit Park road.) We think it will cost \$400,000. FEMA says that is fine; they will pay 75% of whatever it costs.
- "Poudre River Forum," facilitated by the Colorado Water Institute at The Ranch, will be February 8 from 10am-6pm. A \$25 pre-registration is required at www.cwi.colostate.edu/thepondrunsthroughit
- An independent company that shoots seismograph recently contacted us. They are looking for permission from landowners to shoot the seismic to determine if there is oil and gas features. They want to put in north/south sensors every 400 feet (one by the trail, one in the center of property and one on the east boundary.) They have to have permission from the surface owner(s), of which we are a 1% owner.
- Chris Sabina, from CSU is interning with Travis and Open Space Operations.

PRESENTATION:

- Linda Beach, Fiber Artist and 2013 Natural Resources Visual Artist, gave an interesting and fascinating look into her process. The Board enjoyed a sneak peak at the “Endless” piece that will be unveiled officially on February 14.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Small Grants for Community Partnering – OLAB subcommittee recommendations

- Zac thanked the committee and Sue Burke for being involved in this year’s process. Sue has retired and Zac is assuming responsibility of the committee. Zac presented the recommendations for 2014.
 - Applications received 14
 - Total amount requested \$22,575.66
 - Recommended projects 12
 - **Funding recommended \$18, 575.66**
- After questions and discussion, motion by Carl Sorrentino and second by Suzan Fritchel to accept the recommendations as presented. Motion carried unanimously. The award letters will go out next week and awards will be made at an upcoming Board meeting.

2. CDOT Right of Way Acquisition Request

- Charlie reminded the Board that back in November of 2013; he brought the Board the CDOT Acquisition Right of Way on our Long View Farm Open Space. It is an improvement at Hwy 392 (formerly Carpenter Road) and Hwy 287 with a turn land added. They are also going to improve the drainage with a big culvert that extends onto our open space. They need 3,098 sf. Of permanent right of way and a Temporary construction easement of 1,328 sf. They have made us an offer (at \$15,000 per acre fair market value) of \$1,270, which will be split between GOCO, Larimer County, the City of Fort Collins and Loveland. The various entities are taking the request to their boards for review and approval, which is why Charlie is here tonight. One unique result of this is as a fee simple purchase, which will force an amendment to the covenant that is on this property. The Legacy Land Trust has already drafted an amendment to that covenant, to carve out the legal description of the 3,098 sq ft, resulting from this project. Typically, amendments should only be made to a covenant/easement when conservation is enhanced. Nancy Wallace asked that the amendment reflect that this request wasn’t a choice; it was a CDOT (Colorado Dept of Transportation) Right of Way for improving public access. Motion by Nancy Wallace that we approve the CDOT Right of Way Acquisition request for 3,098 sq ft and the temporary easement, on Long View Farm Open Space. Second by Suzan Fritzel. Motion carried. Charlie finished up by telling the Board that one day when a private company comes to us requesting a Right of Way, it will look completely different.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

- Motion by Trudy Haines that we elect Peter Kast as Chair and Nancy Wallace as Vice Chair for 2014. Second by Suzan Fritchel. Motion carried unanimously.

4. FINAL REVIEW - Sheep Draw third party CE co-hold with Town of Windsor

- Kerri reported that Greeley is about to acquire their first acquisition for the Poudre River Trail Project. Recall that part of the condition of Greeley purchasing the Sheep Draw property is a third party conservation easement. Greeley would like us to partner with the Town of Windsor on co-holding the easement. Windsor will be the primary manager and monitor of the easement. Kerri added that they were also able to partner with their Water Department to acquire this piece of ground that has mutual interest for open space and storm drainage.
- Meegan Flenniken went over the details of the Final Review document, pointing out the planned located of the trail and other features of the property. Once Greeley takes ownership it will be annexed into the city. Discussion noted that there are three active oil and gas wells on the property, one of the first properties with such features to be under conservation easement monitoring.
- Motion by Nancy Wallace to co-hold the easement with the Town of Windsor on the Sheep Draw property. Second by Mary Banken. Motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:**Open Lands Master Plan Update**

- Zac Wiebe reported that we are beginning work on our master plan, building off the information we garnered in the OLOF study. Because of the breadth of that study, we have decided to try to go with the consultant that did that study. The planned timing is to start as soon as possible, and end around August or the end of summer. The process will include:
 - Identifying priority conservation areas, exploring recreation opportunities, protecting water resources, and updating Open Lands policies & procedures.
- There will be draft plans for public and the Board along the way.
- Kerri added that there is a budget request associated with this item that is not shown on the Capital Development and Acquisition Summary yet. We had allocated \$75,000 for the regional study and master plan update. After exploring costs, we are going to need about \$10,000 more because the master plan update is coming in at \$50,000, rather than the planned \$40,000. On the spreadsheet, this is listed under Identified Projects - Regional Study & Master Plan.
- The money will come from the fund balance for Acquisition & Development – which is at ~3.5 million / billion. Discussion followed about the budget for each, and where the cost had increased. Zac also shared that GOCO did not fund the portion of a grant asking for money to complete a master plan.
- Motion by Nancy Wallace that we allocate an additional \$10,000 for the master plan update. Second by Trudy Haines. Discussion included a request that we obtain information like this with the packet, rather than at the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Sales Tax Subcommittee Report (Sub-committee members are Ladonna, Steve, Peter & Nancy. Staff: Kerri)

Kerri reported -

- The OLOF study included a financial analysis tool to help with making cost predictions into the future. Our Finance Department has double-checked the estimates created with that tool and they are within 100K of each other out to 2018. We are feeling comfortable with the numbers we are starting to work with. The committee is comparing revenue projections against cost projections with just a 1/4 cent extension, up to as much as a 3/8 of cent increase. Also meeting with the citizens committee and keeping the cities up-to-date on the process. Kerri said she and the committee would be coming to the Board with options eventually.
- Peter added that some of the options under consideration are:
 - Just as for an extension on the existing tax
 - Ask for an increase in the existing tax
 - Break that into two pieces (one year for extension, one for an increase later.)
- TPL has started on the feasibility study, and it is due to be completed toward the end of February. TPL is planning to conduct polling the last couple of weeks in March. Some Board members suggested caution on the timing of the polling because Estes is voting on a 1% sales tax increase on an April 1 election for general operations and there is an open space item for that election as well.

Trudy mentioned including population probability in predictions. The Board also discussed referendum vs. initiative and the pros and cons of both. The HPOS has an 18-year citizen history, making referendum seem feasible.

Meeting adjourned at 6:52.