

CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – May 8, 2013

Parks & Recreation Conference Room

Commissioners Present: Lori Bell, Gale Bernhardt, Rick Brent, Andy Hawbaker, Ross Livingston, Steve McMillan, Bill Zawacki, Jim Roode (alternate), Hugh McKean (City Council Liaison).

Commissioners Absent: Ted Mioduski, Darren Pape.

Staff Present: Rob Burdine, Gary Havener, Brian Hayes, Debbie Eley.

The public meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

Public Comment: Kathy Hartman, 945 E. 6th Street, was present.

Approval of the April 10, 2013 Commission Meeting Minutes: Tabled until a quorum is present.

Council Liaison Report: Hugh McKean reported that he plans to attend the Joint Elected Officials' Meeting on May 23, where a presentation will be given regarding the preliminary results of the "Our Lands-Our Future" regional open space study.

Discussion/Action:

1. Swartz Farmstead Structures at River's Edge. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and Loveland Historical Society (LHS) continue in their interests and efforts to preserve and restore the Swartz Farmstead structures. The most recent proposal from the Loveland Historical Society (LHS) includes uses (e.g., weddings, barn dances) that are incompatible with the natural areas and wildlife habitat preserved and enhanced at River's Edge. LHS and HPC plan to prepare a revised proposal for operation and funding of the structures, with no definitive timeframe. A demolition permit would put into motion a process and timeline for a determination on the future of the buildings. Steve McMillan made a motion to recommend that staff submit a demolition permit for all of the structures, with the understanding that the permit would not require all buildings to be demolished. Lori Bell seconded the motion and it carried.

2. Open Lands Tax Funds – Program Philosophy. Staff is compiling an information package for City Council members in preparation for the May 23 Joint Elected Officials' Meeting. The package will include funding spent/acquisitions to date, future projects planned through 2018, and policies such as reserving 15% of revenues for future operations and maintenance. Data and results from the regional study will help identify quality parcels supported by the public. Several acquisitions planned in the next few years will help increase visibility for Loveland's Open Lands program. Loveland's philosophy has been to reserve funding to use when opportunities arise for desirable acquisitions. The program is poised to grow with the addition of new staff members in 2012-2013 and the development of a site-specific 5-year capital plan.

Reports/Correspondence:

3. Larimer County Regional Open Space Study Update. The consultant is developing a financial model to analyze future acquisitions, operations and maintenance, and past acquisitions. The partners will review the analysis before finalizing for a presentation to the Advisory Board on May 16. The team will also present the study findings at the Joint Elected Officials' Meeting on May 23. The results will be useful in the preparation of the Open Lands Plan update.

4. River's Edge Natural Area Update. Construction continues with grading underway and concrete being installed. The wetlands will be started after consultation with the wetland scientist, Parks & Open Lands staff, and the contractor regarding final elevations and water levels. The easement with Thompson R2-J has been completed, providing public access to the trail and parking in the south parking lot at the Administration Building on S. Taft Ave. The Agilent easement is nearly complete, for the trail to cross the northwest corner of the remaining Agilent parcel. The Ryan Gulch and Big T Ditch easements will be reviewed by the ditch companies' attorneys. A construction sign will be posted along 1st Street with information about the project. Kiosks and wayfinding signage are being developed by the new Open Lands Planner. Staff will work with Colorado Parks & Wildlife regarding the fishing component (regulations, signage, etc). CPW delivered 1,200 rainbow trout to Dragonfly Pond and will install a fish feeder to encourage growth. An article in the City Update will be sent out with utility bills in June. The commission encouraged more public information, including website updates, a newspaper article, and a construction webcam. Loveland H.S. Honor Students planted more than 170 trees and shrubs to create a wildlife thicket in celebration of Arbor Day on April 27. Planning has communicated with the enclave property owner that their parcel will be annexed with the Jayhawker Annexation application.

5. Open Lands Projects Report

- a. Big Thompson Canyon Property. Staff met with the landowners on 5/3, and discussed public access to the site, current easements, and surrounding property owners. Staff will continue to look at access opportunities, connectivity with Bobcat Ridge, and development costs. Loop trails could be developed if a regional trail proves unfeasible. The landowners have confirmed there is additional interest in the property and would prefer to work with Loveland Open Lands. The landowners have presented staff a firm asking price of the property for discussion with OLAC.
- b. 57th and Taft Property. Staff visited the site in late April with Parks staff and Amy Laartz from EDM. Conceptually it appears that the property could connect the City's Recreation Trail, as well as the Regional Trail north to Fort Collins. Parks/Trails would construct the Recreation Trail and possibly an underpass at the railroad crossing. Amy Laartz confirmed that the property appears to have possibilities as an initial wetland banking site. Staff will meet with the landowner on 5/13.
- c. Big Thompson River West Upland Property. A contract was sent to the landowner for signature on 5/10. Cedar Valley Drive is currently a private road, but Larimer County will accept it as a county road. A boundary line adjustment will be submitted to the county. The property is planned to close in July and the water will close in June. The water will be held in the City water bank in Open Lands' ownership, to be used on River's Edge or other future properties. The water could also be leased to the Parks or Golf Divisions.

- d. Rossum Drive Property. A Purchase Contract and Option Agreement have been sent to the landowner for signature. Closing is scheduled for late June, and any lien(s) will need to be resolved prior to closing as Open Lands will only accept a clear title.
- e. Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update. The update will consolidate Parks, Recreation, Golf, Open Lands, and Trails. The recent open lands regional study survey and maps will be used, as well as lands recently identified as priorities in the Capital Plan. The consultant will meet with OLAC for input.
- f. Marketing Plan. The new Parks and Open Lands Planner, Bill Wildenberg, is developing an integrated signage program for Open Lands properties. Site naming will also be initiated for 1-2 properties, including Brose and possibly Wild. Marketing Committee will work on developing a “brand” to identify the program and communicate organizational philosophy.

Commission Member Discussion Topics: None.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.