



TO: Historic Preservation Commission
Open Lands Advisory Commission

FROM: Rob Burdine, Parks and Recreation
Bethany Clark, Development Services

DATE: August 5, 2013

RE: **Swartz Farmstead**

BACKGROUND

The Swartz Farmstead on South Roosevelt Avenue is located on property formerly owned by Agilent that the City acquired in 2011 and which is now being developed as the River's Edge Natural Area. The farmstead, estimated to be built in the late 1890s, includes a total of 11 structures, many of which are in fair condition. Since the City began developing plans for the River's Edge Natural Area, the farmstead has been a focus of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) as a historically significant property and intact example of a farmstead representing Loveland's agricultural roots. The Master Plan for the River's Edge Natural Area intentionally left the area around the Swartz Farmstead unplanned to allow the City to work with the various interested parties on a plan.

Since that time, the City has conducted a structural assessment of the buildings and had a consultant prepare an Order of Magnitude Estimate for restoring or rehabilitating all of the structures. The Loveland Historical Society (LHS) has continued to express an interest in the farmstead and have proposed to lease the property from the City for the purpose of rehabilitating the structures for educational and interpretive uses. The Open Lands Advisory Commission (OLAC) has indicated their desire to use the area for a secondary entry, parking lot and bus turnaround for the River's Edge Natural Area. The HPC has been actively engaged with the Loveland Historical Society in their efforts to preserve the farmstead, and have since submitted an application nominating the property to the Loveland Historic Register in response to a demolition permit application filed for the structures.

The City has been working with representatives from both the Historic Preservation Commission and Open Lands Advisory Commission over the past several months to develop a shared vision and concept plan for the farmstead site that encompasses both Commissions' interests.

STATEMENT OF INTEREST

In June, City staff worked with representatives from the Open Lands Advisory Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission to develop a statement outlining each Commission's interest in the Swartz Farmstead area with respect to their Commission's charge (*see Attachment A*). Staff found that the interests from each Commission had many commonalities and helped set up a framework within which a proposal could be developed. Following is a combined summary of the interest statements from both Commissions:

1. Ensure development, uses, and activities are compatible with the natural habitat, wildlife use, and long term sustainability of the open space.

2. Preserve the agricultural heritage of the Swartz Farmstead.
3. Provide historical, agricultural, and environmental education opportunities.
4. Retain the integrity of the Swartz Farmstead's setting to safeguard the property's eligibility for the National Historic Register.
5. Preserve and rehabilitate the Farmhouse, Barn, Chicken Shed, Tenant House, and Silo for future uses.
6. Stabilize remaining structures without a practical use for interpretive purposes.
7. Provide a secondary entrance and group parking lot from Railroad/Roosevelt Avenue.
8. Secure grant funding from historic preservation organizations.
9. Ensure that no Open Space funds are used for purposes not directly associated with the River's Edge Natural Area project.
10. Provide opportunities for citizens input.

FLOODWAY CONSIDERATIONS

The entire farmstead is within the FEMA 100 Year Floodway; FEMA regulations prohibit any of the buildings from being occupied or any moveable objects being stored on the property. However, these restrictions could be waived if the property is placed on the State or National Register of Historic Places. Any future use of the property would require this designation be in place, so maintaining the property's eligibility for designation is crucial.

SWARTZ FARMSTEAD WORKING COMMITTEE PROPOSAL

City Staff met with representatives from both Commissions to develop a conceptual site plan and proposal for the Swartz Farmstead that is consistent with the interests of the Historic Preservation Commission and the Open Lands Advisory Commission. The proposed site plan includes an unpaved access road and parking lot to be shared by River's Edge visitors and Swartz Farmstead visitors (*see Attachment B*). The main structures surrounding the courtyard (the Barn, Farmhouse, Root Cellar, Chicken Shed, and Tenant House) will remain and the Loveland Historical Society will be given the opportunity to lease these buildings long-term from the City. The lease area will be fenced in to control farmstead site access and deter free movement between the farmstead site and natural habitat area. The structures outside of the lease area (referred to as the Loafing Shed Ruins, Agricultural Outbuilding, Pump House, and Machine Shed) will be removed, with the exception of the Silo.

LOVELAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY LEASE

The City of Loveland intends to lease a defined area around the Swartz Farmstead long-term to the Loveland Historical Society for the purpose of preserving and rehabilitating the farmstead buildings for future use. The Loveland Historical Society will be responsible for all care and maintenance, the restoration and rehabilitation of the farmstead buildings, and all operational costs. The terms of the lease would include performance measures for the LHS to ensure the continued upkeep and use of the farmstead. The unpaved parking lot would be constructed and maintained by Open Lands for joint use between the Rivers Edge Natural Area visitors and Swartz Farmstead visitors.

FARMSTEAD ELIGIBILITY

The State Historic Preservation Office Eligibility Committee has reviewed the site plan and proposal from the Swartz Farmstead Working Committee and made a determination that the site, with the remaining structures

and addition of an unpaved access road and parking lot, would be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff is recommending that the ***Open Lands Advisory Commission***: *motion to approve in concept the Swartz Farmstead Working Committee Proposal.*

Staff is recommending that the ***Historic Preservation Commission***: *motion to approve in concept the Swartz Farmstead Working Committee Proposal and direct staff to modify the nomination application for the Swartz Farmstead to be consistent with the proposal, provided that the demolition permit is amended to reflect the proposal.*

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Commissions Statement of Interests

Attachment B: Swartz Farmstead Site Plan

Attachment C: Swartz Farmstead Working Committee Meeting Notes

Historic Preservation Commission Swartz Farmstead Committee Statement of Interest

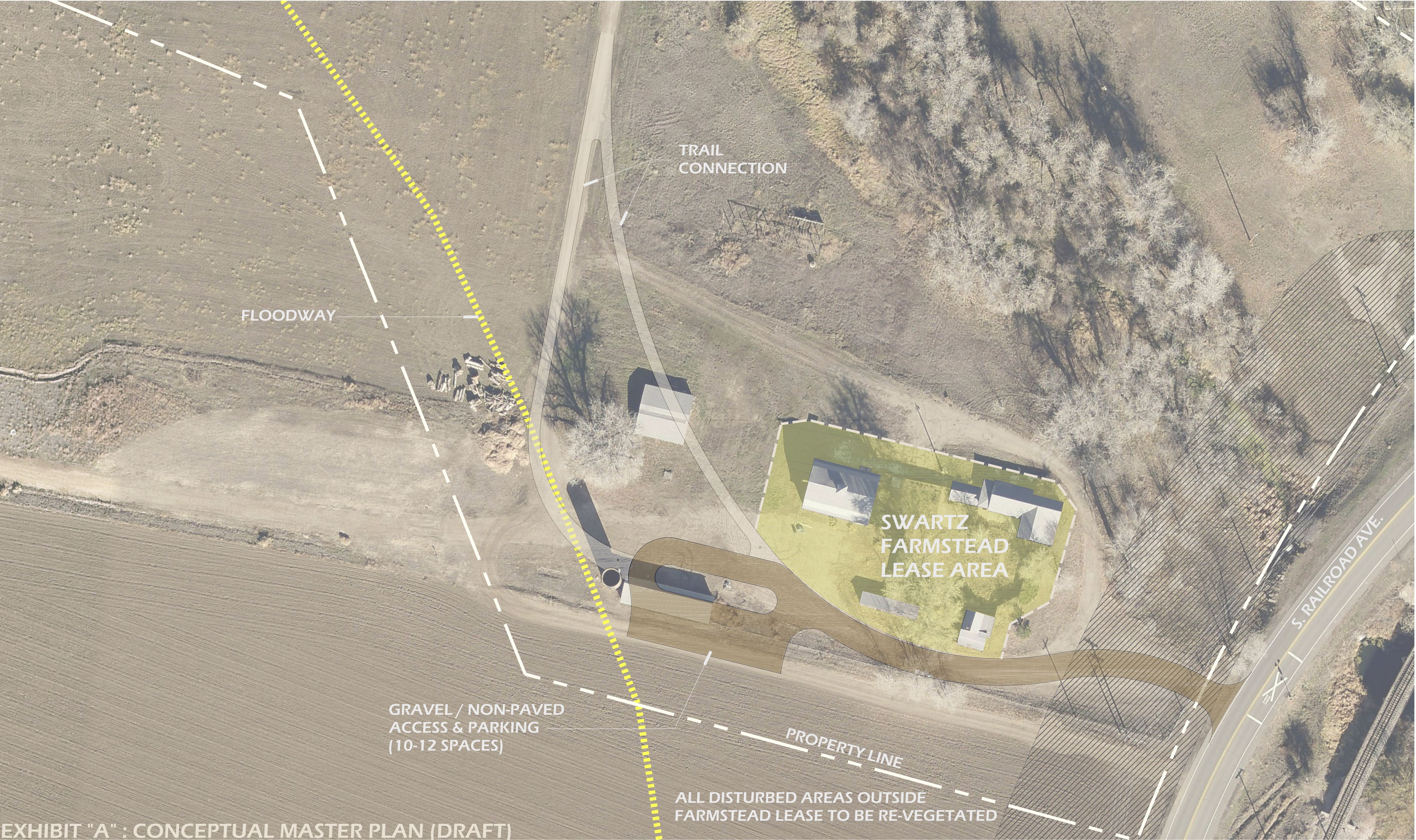
The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is charged with safeguarding the City's historic and cultural heritage, fostering civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past, and promoting the use of historic landmarks for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the public. As such, the interests of the Historic Preservation Commission for the Swartz Farmstead are as follows:

1. The Swartz Farmstead has been found to be historically significant by the HPC for its association with the theme of agriculture in Larimer County and for its long association with the Swartz family. The buildings are also architecturally significant as intact representative examples of agricultural-related resources from the late 19th century. The HPC would like to preserve this piece of agricultural heritage for generations to come. This finding is supported in a report by an architectural survey historian commissioned by the City of Loveland that states the farmstead is potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places
2. Future historical and agricultural educational opportunities are envisioned for the Swartz Farmstead.
3. The Historic Preservation Commission wishes to retain the integrity of the natural, peaceful setting of the Swartz Farmstead. The HPC is in agreement with the Open Lands Commission in not having highly-intensive uses on the site and do not wish to have an adverse effect on the Open Space. Rather, the Historic Preservation Commission believes that the interests of both the Loveland Historical Society and the Open Lands Commission can coexist on the site by making the best use of the property's resources.
 - a. The State Historic Preservation Office Eligibility Committee has indicated that the design and placement of a parking lot and bus turnaround will have a significant effect on the overall setting of the farmstead and therefore the farmstead's eligibility for the National Historic Register. An Eligibility Committee has offered to provide input on site plan options to alleviate concerns about compromising the property's eligibility for the National Historic Register.
4. The core buildings surrounding the courtyard, – the Farmhouse, Barn, Chicken Shed, and Tenant House –along with the Silo are the highest priority structures. Those buildings that are not found to have a viable use should be stabilized and/or fenced off and left for interpretive use to maintain the integrity of the farmstead.
 - a. The barn, silo, and privy are exceedingly rare resource types throughout Colorado and should be preserved for future generations.
 - b. The barn is the most suitable structure for educational groups, staging activities, and interpretive uses.
 - c. The Farmhouse is an opportunity as meeting space and for a live-in caretaker to manage activities on the farmstead and to be a permanent presence on the site.

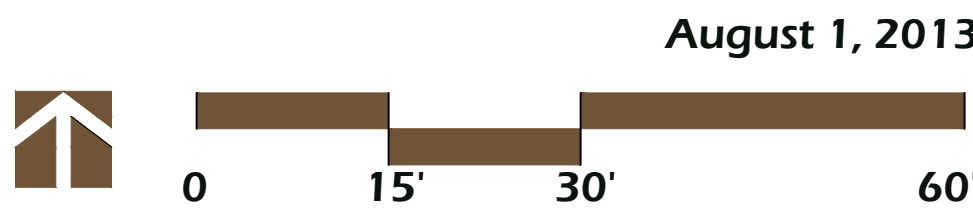
- d. The Agricultural Outbuilding, Machine Shed, and Loafing Shed ruins are the lowest priority structures, though the HPC believes they still have a value and efforts should be made to preserve them to keep the farmstead intact.
- 5. The Historic Preservation Commission, as representatives of Loveland's citizens, is interested in determining the interests of the community with regards to the Swartz Farmstead. The citizen's should be given a voice in this process as it is ultimately their tax dollars that have made it possible for the City to purchase this property.
- 6. Leveraging the City's resources for investment in the Loveland community. After discussing this project with representatives from History Colorado, the Historic Preservation Commission believes that this project can attract investment in the City through outside sources. By raising a small percentage of the overall costs for rehabilitation of the buildings it is likely that the project can receive grant funding from the State Historical Fund and other historic preservation organizations.
 - a. Additional information will be required to make a final determination of the property's eligibility for the National Historic Register and competitiveness for grants based on the farmstead's relationship with a parking area. The HPC would like to proceed with resolving those questions with the State Historic Preservation Office.

Open Lands Advisory Commission Statement of Interest

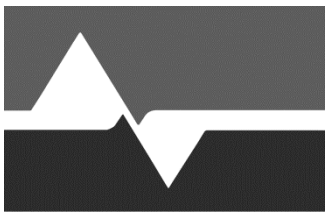
1. The Rivers Edge Natural Area was purchased and designed for development with the protection and enhancement of natural habitat and wildlife as the main theme. All uses, activities and development of the site have been planned to be compatible with both the natural habitat, wildlife use and long term sustainability of the site. Public access is intended to be utilized for mostly passive trail use, environmental education purposes, non-motorized fishing opportunities at the ponds and development of wildlife habitat and wetlands to attract and maintain wildlife species. All non-compatible or disruptive activities or uses are not desired.
2. Future environmental education opportunities and activities are envisioned for the site as the program expands.
3. Access from Railroad Avenue for a secondary access point and a location for group parking for possible tours and educational activities has been planned and is desired.
4. Expenditures for activities, areas or structures not directly associated or intended for enhancement of wildlife, natural habitat sustainability or environmental education is not desired from Open Space funding sources.



SWARTZ FARMSTEAD - RIVER'S EDGE NATURAL AREA



MASTER PLAN
1.0



City of Loveland

Swartz Farmstead Working Committee

July 23, 2013

5:30-6:30pm

MEETING NOTES

Facilitator:

Bethany Clark, Community & Strategic Planning

Attendees:
City Staff
Rod Wensing, *Assistant City Manager*Greg George, *Director of Development Services*Gary Havener, *Director of Parks & Recreation*Rob Burdine, *Natural Areas Manager*Bethany Clark, *Comm. & Strategic Planning*
**Historic Preservation
Commission**

Matt Newman

Mike Perry

**Open Lands Advisory
Commission**

Gale Bernhardt

Lori Bell

Committee Purpose:

Develop a shared vision for the future of the Swartz Farmstead site that is consistent with the interests of the City, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Open Lands Advisory Commission.

Our Goal:

Review and evaluate the proposed conceptual site plans in relation to the respective Commission's Statements of Interest and identify steps that should be taken to achieve a common proposal.

Staff:

- Proposal is for Loveland Historical Society (LHS) to have a long-term lease from City for the core buildings around the courtyard. The lease would have maintenance standards and performance measures to make sure the farmstead does not sit idle and deteriorate even more over the years. Performance measures would likely include things such as achieving National Register designation, applying for and receiving grants, etc. The lease area would be fenced in to control farmstead site access and deter free movement between farmstead site and natural habitat area. An unpaved parking lot would benefit both Open Lands and farmstead visitors. Structures within the lease area would remain and LHS would be given the opportunity to rehabilitate and re-use them. Structures outside the lease area, except for the silo, would be removed.

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Comments:

- Key focus is maintaining the integrity of the Farmstead to ensure National Register designation is still possible.
- Agrees that a fence should be used to control access between farmstead and natural areas.
- On-site presence by LHS would also help visitor access and that presence would help deter vandals.
- Thinks a shared-use plan between Open Lands and Loveland Historical Society is a benefit.
- Believes rehabilitation work can occur without National Register designation – there is a difference between occupation (which requires National designation) and rehabilitation work. Similar to the Milner-Schwarz project

– house received local designation and rehabilitated using State grants and is now in the process of application for National Register designation.

- Matt – believes the design of the site plan should be driven by trail connections.
- Can live with either Site Plan ‘A’ or Site Plan ‘B’, main difference is location of parking. State needs to weigh in on location and its impact on farmstead setting.
- Understands there has to be give and take to make a project like this work, and believes the farmstead would still be eligible if the agricultural outbuildings are removed. State eligibility committee should make the final determination, though.

Open Lands Advisory Commission (OLAC) Comments:

- OLAC is concerned with the ongoing and long-term maintenance of the buildings. Do not want them to become an eyesore and spend Open Lands money on them.
- OLAC believes a fence and on-site presence by LHS addresses their concerns about access and the potential for vandalism.
- Believes the proposal for City to maintain ownership and create a long-term lease agreement with LHS around core buildings with performance standards is appropriate.
- Uses seem compatible as proposed, especially with shared educational opportunities.
- Either site plan seems to accomplish the HPC’s goals and as long as there is a fence, a maintenance plan, and ideas for funding that don’t involve Open Lands fund they are supportive.

Consensus:

- Both Commissions agree that either concept plan would be acceptable, but Site Plan ‘A’ might be better suited for property to retain its ‘setting’ for National Register eligibility.
- The parking lot in Site Plan ‘A’ might need to be reconfigured as it is somewhat awkward and may need to be designed more like the parking lot in Site Plan ‘B’ to allow for bus turnaround.

Next Steps:

- The City Manager will be meeting with representatives of the Loveland Historical Society to discuss potential deal points for the lease.
- Staff will schedule a joint meeting between both the Open Lands Advisory Commission and Historic Preservation Commission during the week of August 5th. The purpose of the meeting will be to develop a shared proposal that can be presented to the Loveland City Council for the local designation of remaining structures, the leasing of the property to LHS, the construction of an unpaved parking lot, and plans to proceed with obtaining National Register designation.
- The joint meeting must be held before the August 19th public hearing with the Historic Preservation Commission when they will consider the nomination application of the entire Swartz Farmstead.
- Staff will contact the State Historic Preservation Office to get feedback on the site plans and eligibility potential.