



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – June 11, 2014

Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 500 E. Third Street, Loveland, CO 80537

Commissioners Present: Gale Bernhardt, Lori Bell, Rick Brent, Andy Hawbaker, Ross Livingston, Ted Mioduski, Jim Roode, Bill Zawacki, Hugh McKean (City Council Liaison), Kerri Rollins (Larimer County Liaison).

Commissioners Absent: Darren Pape.

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

Guest: Jessica Maher, Reporter-Herald newspaper.

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

Approval of May 14, 2014 Meeting Minutes: Bill Zawacki made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ted Mioduski seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Liaison Report: Kerri Rollins reported on the following:

- 1) An Open House for the county Open Lands Master Plan will be held on July 9 at the Loveland Library.
- 2) The county expects to close on a property in the Devil's Backbone-to-Horsetooth area in July.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS *(note change in agenda order):*

3. Larimer County Open Space Sales Tax. Larimer County is proposing a new split between the county and cities for a renewal of the open space sales tax set to expire in 2018. Staff presented the results of running financial models for Scenarios 1 and 2. Loveland would receive approximately \$10 million less in tax revenue over the 25-year duration of the tax with the proposed 50/50 split in Scenario 2, compared to the existing split of 42% to the county and 58% to cities. According to recent surveys, citizens prefer local control of how open space funding is spent, as well as more neighborhood natural areas. Kerri Rollins explained the county's position, noting that the current ballot language requires 70% of the county's revenue to be spent on acquisitions, and they are obligated to manage these lands in the future. Open spaces near urban areas, such as Devil's Backbone, greatly benefit citizens of the municipalities and the county is able to provide these popular properties and trails. All proposed scenarios include a change to the county's internal splits, reducing the county's required spending on acquisitions to 35%. Commission members expressed concern that Scenario 2 represents a setback to Loveland's program. It was suggested that the splits could remain the same and the county and cities could work together on more partnerships, such as acquisitions, trails, patrols, etc.

Loveland Open Lands will have a study session with City Council on July 8, to discuss open lands priorities and the sales tax renewal.

2. River's Edge Natural Area Interim Opening. River's Edge will open to the public on July 4, with walk-in access for fishing, belly boats, and trails. A special "sneak preview" opening ceremony for OLAC, City Council, and CO Parks & Wildlife officials will be held on July 3 at 5:30 pm.

REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE:

4. Open Lands Projects Report:

Environmental Education. The Spring EE Program summary was presented, with attendance by more than 800 students in 14 program days led by 20 enthusiastic volunteers; impressive results for the first year of the Urban Wildlife Program at Namaqua Park. EE staff and volunteers will also participate in Northern Colorado's *Get Outdoors Day* on June 14, with interactive EE activities and information about Loveland Open Lands. About 1,200 attendees are expected.

Long View Farm – CDOT. The City of Loveland will receive approximately \$3,000 for the transfer of a small portion of Long View Farm to CDOT for intersection improvements. Larimer County will reimburse GOCO approximately \$1,000 for grant funding provided for the original acquisition.

Honeybee Hive Project. The City is working with a local honeybee hive company to locate hives on two Open Lands sites in a pilot program. The city's lease would also be available for other interested parties.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS *(continued from above):*

3. Property Acquisition Updates.

57th Street & Taft Ave. Property. The City and landowner have signed a contract to purchase the 86-acre property and associated water rights for \$1.5 million. Larimer County was mentioned as a possible partner. Rick Brent made a motion to accept the contract terms as presented. Ross Livingston seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Commission members were in favor of continuing the agricultural use of the property, in line with the results of *Our Lands-Our Future*.

Staff updated the commission on the status of several other properties under consideration, primarily in the river corridor. Site visits will be arranged for the commission when appropriate. Some sites will depend on future planning and design for flood mitigation and management.

COMMISSION MEMBER DISCUSSION TOPICS:

1. OLAC Special Session. Gale Bernhardt reviewed the following concerns identified during a special session held in May:

- a. OLAC would like to provide input on hiring decisions for the positions of Natural Areas Manager and Parks & Recreation Director.

- b. OLAC would like to consider changing the process for due diligence, including contracts and appraisals, to ensure continuation of the acquisition process if OLAC votes to pursue a property.
- c. OLAC would like to provide Open Lands updates to City Council on a quarterly basis.
- d. OLAC requested that potential complications on property acquisitions be identified on the property spreadsheet, so OLAC is aware of issues that may delay closings.
- e. With regard to integration of maintenance staff with the Parks Division, OLAC would prefer a dedicated Open Lands crew, with encouragement of sharing resources with Parks crews. Natural areas maintenance needs are different from parks.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.