



## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Civic Center • 500 East Third Street, Suite 200 • Loveland, Colorado 80537  
(970) 962-2727 • FAX (970) 962-2903 • TDD (970) 962-2620  
[www.cityofloveland.org](http://www.cityofloveland.org)

### LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

NOVEMBER 9, 2016 – 5:00 PM

#### SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Horsetooth Area Information Center

**4200 W CR 38 E, Fort Collins, CO 80526**

[www.CityofLoveland.org/OpenLands](http://www.CityofLoveland.org/OpenLands)

#### 5:00 - 7:45 PM – Northern Colorado Regional Boards meeting:

Purpose of Meeting: *Celebrate, Learn and Network*

5:00 Dinner - networking

5:30 Regional Meeting begins

- Welcome and Introductions
- Agency Highlight Reports
- Agricultural Conservation Discussion & Breakouts

7:45 Wrap up and transition to separate board meetings (Loveland, Fort Collins & Larimer Co.)

#### 8:00 pm City of Loveland Open Lands Advisory Commission Meeting:

**Notice of Meeting Posted**

**Call to Order**

**Public Comment**

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** October 12, 2016

**City Council Liaison Report – Hugh McKean**

**Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report – Kerri Rollins/Hugh McKean**

**Discussion/Action:**

1. Discussion of Potential Lease Agreement – Wild Natural Area (*attached*)

**Reports/Correspondence:**

2. Property Acquisition Updates (*verbal*)
3. Open Lands Projects Report (*attached*)
4. Trail Updates (*attached*)

**Executive Session** – Discussion of Open Lands Acquisition Priorities

(24-6-402(4)(a) C.R.S.) *For information or discussion of the purchase or acquisition of real property*

**News/Reminders/Events:**

November 5 – [Guided Bird Walk at River's Edge Natural Area](#) – 9-10:30 am

November 15 – [Community Stewardship Lecture Series](#), Grimm Brothers, 6-7 pm

November 17 – [PEEPs "The Bear Necessities" \(Black Bears\) at River's Edge](#) – 9:30 & 11:00 am

December 3 – [Guided Bird Walk along Big Thompson River](#) – 8 am-9:30am

**Commission Member Discussion Topics Adjournment**

**Next Regular Meeting:** December 14, 2016 – **REGULAR MEETING CANCELLED**



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### CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – October 12, 2016

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

**Commissioners Present:** Gale Bernhardt, Andy Hawbaker, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Nathan Thompson, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki, Hugh McKean (City Council Liaison).

**Commissioners Absent:** Rick Brent, Ross Livingston, Kerri Rollins (Larimer County Liaison).

**Staff Present:** Debbie Eley, Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg.

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

**Approval of September 14, 2016 Meeting Minutes:** Darren Pape made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Andy Hawbaker seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Public Comment:** Kathy Hartman, 945 E. 6<sup>th</sup> St., inquired about the public comments received regarding the Sunset Vista Management Plan. Marilyn Hilgenberg provided an update. Federal funding for the Long View Trail project requires concurrence from the state regarding historic resources, and the state is currently reviewing the historical report. The location of the trail with respect to the red-tailed hawk nest was re-evaluated in response to comments received and will be adjusted and mitigated as much as feasible. Staff is working with Colorado Parks & Wildlife and High Plains Environmental Center to inventory resources, draft the management plan and implement short-term management strategies. Development is dependent on the Long View Trail project, which is in the design stage, with construction scheduled for summer and fall 2017.

**City Council Liaison Report.** Hugh McKean reported on the following items: 1) The City Attorney has accepted a position with the Colorado Municipal League, so a new search will be opened for that position. A new Assistant City Attorney position is also in the process of being hired, to concentrate on real estate and water issues. 2) Council will begin review of the 2017 budget next week. 3) The Pulliam Building is being considered for refurbishment for city/community purposes.

**Larimer County OLAC Report.** 1) The Help Preserve Open Spaces 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration was held on 9/22. A small but important crowd gathered for food and festivities and the debut of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary video, which has been posted to the LC OL website, YouTube and Facebook (1.5K views on Facebook so far). Commissioners are encouraged to view the video. 2) The final phase of the Roberts Ranch tire cleanup project wrapped up with a final number of 673 tons of tires removed! 3) We hosted a successful COSA conference in Estes Park on Sept. 12-14 with 300 registrations – a record high! Hats off to the many people involved with that! 4) GOCO open space grant for Little Thompson Farm had a site visit for the GOCO board on the morning of Oct. 3. LC OL requested \$800K. 5) Jennifer Almstead, our new Fund Development and Special Projects Coordinator, started on Oct. 3. Jennifer comes from VOC. 6) Fourteen applications for the Small Grants program were received. Site visits are being set up. 7) Chimney Hollow access easement for WAPA line is being worked on. 8) The new Horsetooth Area Information center opened last week at South Bay.

## **Discussion/Action**

- 1. Big Thompson River East Property Reviews.** Property reviews were presented for the Ward Construction and Osborn properties, adjacent to Old St. Louis Natural Area along Boise Ave. Both properties are along the river and provide potential future trail connections for an east Big Thomson trail, connecting Old St. Louis to the Pfeiff property. A trail easement was secured with the Pfeiff acquisition on E. 1<sup>st</sup> St., allowing for a connection from the Pfeiff property to the city's property at the waste water treatment plant (WWTP). The Ward Construction acquisition (13 ac +/-) would connect Old St. Louis Natural Area to Boise Ave., and the Osborn acquisition (1.8 ac +/-) would connect from Boise Ave. to the trail easement at the WWTP. Staff is working with the city's Storm Water Division on planned improvements for the Madison Street storm water outfall, through the eastern portion of Old St. Louis to the river, including possible wetlands/ponds and offering educational opportunities for the public. A potential trail connection from neighborhoods to the north would provide off-street access to trails and the river corridor. Other river properties in the area are still completing augmentation requirements from past gravel mining activities. Neither of the proposed acquisitions have water augmentation requirements. Gale Bernhardt made a motion to recommend that staff continue negotiations to purchase the Ward Construction and Osborn properties as fee simple acquisitions as presented. Andy Hawbaker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- 2. Proposed Lease Agreement – Wild Natural Area.** The Sweetheart City Winery approached the city with a request to lease approximately 7 acres of the Wild Natural Area to plant some grapevines. The winery believes that the vineyard would be an aesthetically pleasing amenity to Loveland and the winery and compatible with the City's Natural Area. The plan would need to be consistent with management of the Wild Natural Area, and maintain a corridor along the river for wildlife habitat and public access trails. The lease would be based on a per-acre cost and the winery would be responsible for management of the leased property including weed control, similar to other agricultural leases on open lands. Fencing would need to be incorporated for wildlife management. There may be a possibility for shared parking. Commission members were generally in favor of considering the lease, and a site visit will be scheduled for the commission.
- 3. Proposed Barnes Ditch Fish Passage Project – Oxbow Natural Area.** The Big Thompson Watershed Coalition has proposed a high flow channel for fish to bypass the Barnes Ditch diversion structure near Rossum Drive for greater movement up and down-stream. The US Fish and Wildlife Service funded the conceptual design and additional grant funding may be available from CPW, Trout Unlimited, or USFWS for implementation. The channel would enhance wildlife habitat and would be naturalized (not rip-rap) and restored with native vegetation. The current design would require a headgate to divert water at times of high flow. The estimated cost based on conceptual design is about \$250K. The cost and practicality of the project need to be analyzed. The commission agreed with continuing to explore this option, as well as obtaining additional fish survey data for this stretch of river and implementing other fish habitat improvements in this area.

## **Reports/Correspondence**

- 1. Property Acquisition Updates.** The Namaqua West property is still under contract to close December 10. The due diligence process is underway, including a Phase I environmental report, survey and appraisal.

## **2. Open Lands Projects Report.**

- Brian Hayes was appointed to the Conservation Easement Oversight Commission (CEOCC) for the State of Colorado. This commission oversees the statewide conservation easement tax credit program.
- The Namaqua Skyline property is being analyzed for trail options including possible connections to adjacent lands including the Dakota Ridge CE and Devil's Backbone Open Space. Staff will meet with representatives from the Hidden Valley HOA to discuss the city's potential plans for public access. Resource surveys are ongoing to study wildlife, vegetation, archeology, soils, etc.
- Loveland and Larimer County are partnering on a project to remove invasive Russian olives, Siberian elm and tamarisk from 3 city natural areas, with funding from a Colorado Water Conservation Board grant.

**3. Trails Update.** Bids have been received on the Taft to Wilson Ave trail and pedestrian bridge reconstruction project, and the contract will go to City Council for approval on Oct. 18. The project will be funded by a GOCO Flood grant, FEMA funding and insurance, and is expected to be completed by May 2017. Easements for the trail from Wilson to Namaqua Rd. are also moving forward. Bids were also received for Trail Segment 10b from Namaqua Rd. to the US 34 underpass and the contract is routing for signatures and award.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.



## OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

**AGENDA ITEM:** **1**

**MEETING DATE:** November 9, 2016

**DESCRIPTION:** Proposed Lease Agreement – Wild Natural Area

**STAFF PRESENTER:** Marilyn Hilgenberg

### **SUMMARY:**

In October, the commission considered a request from Sweetheart City Winery for a lease agreement on approximately 7 acres of the Wild Natural Area for a small vineyard area. The winery proposed that the vineyard would be an aesthetically pleasing amenity and compatible with the City's Natural Area.

A site tour for commission members to visit the properties was held on November 2. The 7-acre potential lease area was flagged and walked to consider the proposed use. A representative from the winery, David Burks, explained the plans for the property and how the winery's conceptual layout incorporates additional vineyards on the Wild Natural Area. They have designed their plan to incorporate good traffic patterns for wildlife. The alignment of the grape plots would be laid out to provide the best sun exposure. The Winery does not anticipate planting any vines for 2-3 years until they test the grape varietals in conjunction with Colorado State University. Until that time, the land would be well maintained with natural grasses.

Items for consideration as part of the lease include:

1. Maintaining a corridor through the southern portion of the property and along the river for future public access, trails and wildlife habitat.
2. Shared use parking on the winery property for public access to Wild Natural Area.
3. Maintenance of the leased area, including weed control, vegetation management, herbicide/pesticide use.
4. Fencing of vineyards for wildlife management.

**COMMISSION ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Discussion of compatibility of a vineyard lease with management of Wild Natural Area for wildlife habitat and passive recreation.



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### LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

**AGENDA ITEM:** 3

**MEETING DATE:** November 9, 2016

**DESCRIPTION:** Open Lands Project Report

#### **SUMMARY:**

**River's Edge Natural Area** – Construction has begun on the small parking lot area and additional trail access off 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The project is scheduled for completion in early December and staff will complete connections to other River's Edge trails. This project enhances accessible parking and trail access.

**"A Bigger Vision for the Big T"** – The Big Thompson Conservation and Recreation Plan was recently recognized with the Resiliency Award by the Colorado Chapter of the American Planning Association. Following the 2013 flood, Loveland and Larimer County worked together with other stakeholders to develop this plan to evaluate and prioritize opportunities for conservation and recreation from Estes Park to west Loveland in the Big Thompson corridor.

**High Plains Environmental Center** – Construction on the new High Plains Environmental Center has begun, with a projected completion date of first quarter of 2017. The City contributed \$400,000 toward the construction of the new center and is working collaboratively with the High Plains staff on programming and planning of Loveland's new open land sites.

**Annual Waterway Cleanup** – More than 40 volunteers helped removed debris and trash from the Big Thompson River at Oxbow Natural Area during the Annual Waterway Cleanup on October 8. At least 60 cubic yards of debris were taken out of the river corridor, including a trailer that had been wedged under a bridge abutment since the 2013 flood. The hard working volunteers included kids, adults, members of the Big Thompson 4-Wheelers Club and OLAC.

**Make a Difference Day** – Employees from HP Enterprise volunteered to help remove old wire fence and repair trails on the southwest side of River's Edge on October 28<sup>th</sup>, as part of the United Way Make a Difference Day campaign.

**GOCO Inspire Grant** – The Larimer County Project Outdoors Coalition is working in cooperation with the Boys & Girls Clubs in Loveland and Fort Collins, as well as the Thompson and Poudre school districts, to involve youth in the planning process to identify places, programs, and pathways to connect more youth and families to the outdoors. In Loveland, 12 members have been recruited for the Youth Advisory Committee for the project starting up this month, modeled after the work underway in Fort Collins.

**Environmental Education/Volunteer Program** – Environmental education field trips for school groups enjoyed great weather this fall and will be wrapping up the season next week. The CSI Critter Scene Investigation event on October 22 at Morey Wildlife Reserve was very successful, with 56 participants, including many families, scout groups, and adults. The Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on October 19 was a wonderful opportunity to honor and thank volunteers for their service and recognize those individuals earning 5- and 10-years of service awards. A new “Bucks for Buses” fundraising program has raised funds through community donations to offer scholarships to help cover transportation costs for school field trips to River’s Edge. Schools with a high percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch are eligible to apply. More than \$800 has been raised so far in just a few months, providing transportation funding for schools to attend programs that otherwise would not be able. The Environmental Education program applied for a grant from the Colorado Health Foundation to promote health and wellness in Loveland through the City’s trail system and environmental education programs. The grant request has passed the first round of review so far, and awards will be announced this winter.



## LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

**AGENDA ITEM: 4**

**MEETING DATE:** November 9, 2016

**DESCRIPTION:** Trails Update

### **SUMMARY:**

#### **Recreation Trail Project Update:**

- ❖ Trail Segment 10b – Namaqua to West US 34 underpass – The contract for the work has been approved for JAGS construction and a pre-construction meeting was held on October 19<sup>th</sup>. Notice to proceed will be issued on November 7<sup>th</sup>. All easements are now complete. The bridge from Viestenz-Smith Park will be moved in late November to the construction site and used for the GLIC ditch crossing. The schedule is still tracking for the trail to open in the spring of 2017.
- ❖ Front Range Trail – Staff completed final construction plans and sent them to Larimer County on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Clearances for environmental are in progress. Larimer County engineering has now determined that this project won't move forward for construction until next spring. The project is at least 6 months behind schedule due to issues with storm water at the trail crossing at Trilby in Fort Collins. CDOT will complete their reviews and approve the project over the winter. Advertising for bids is now postponed until March 2017. Construction should start in May and be completed in late August 2017.
- ❖ Long View Corridor Trail – Staff completed review of 30% plans and sent responses to the consultant. The trail alignment was field located in late October and staff will be making some minor changes to the alignment on the ditch road and the north end of the trail as it ties into the Larimer County trail. CDOT review of the 30% plans may be delayed due to additional changes proposed by Fort Collins. We will know more in mid-November. Staff completed details for the trail head and parking alignment and passed those onto the consultant. Loveland traffic staff asked for a wider shoulder adjacent to the proposed left turn lane on 57<sup>th</sup> Street. The consultant is preparing an updated cost estimate and will include this additional request. The updated schedule now puts the project bidding in June 2017 for a construction start in the fall of 2017. Further delays from Fort Collins may affect the overall schedule. Again we will know more in 30 days.

- ❖ Trail 10a – Wilson to Namaqua Avenue – Surveying and CAD files were completed in October and conceptual alignment is scheduled for November. Once staff reviews the conceptual alignment we will be meeting with the landowner to discuss the final easements and needs for this trail section. Funding has been appropriated in the 2017 budget for design and construction in 2017.
- ❖ Grant awards – Staff received notice that both of our trail grant applications have been approved! The largest for \$600,000 was approved by CDOT for Transportation Alternative Program funds on November 1<sup>st</sup>. The City will receive \$60,000 for design and engineering in 2019 and \$540,000 in 2020 for the construction of the Namaqua Trail Underpass at the crossing of Namaqua Avenue where trail segments 10a and 10b join. The last grant award is for the remaining funding needed for design/ engineering for the same project. GOCO staff recommended the project for approval and the final announcement will be made in December, post the GOCO Board review. We will announce this one officially when the GOCO Board approves the grant!

#### **Flood Recovery Projects:**

- ❖ Wilson Bridge and Taft/Wilson Trail – The project was bid in September and RMC Consultants was awarded the contract by Council on October 18<sup>th</sup>. Notice to proceed with construction is anticipated for the end of November, pending the approval of the FEMA scope changes and clearance for environmental work. Final appropriations for the project were approved by City Council in October. The trail will be closed from Wilson to Taft for the entire duration of construction starting in late November until late April 2017, including the Wilson Avenue parking area. Stormwater staff will manage this project for the restoration of the bridge, trail and Stormwater improvements.

# WILSON TO TAFT AVENUE FLOOD RECOVERY PROJECT

