



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

October 10, 2018 – 5:30 PM

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

www.CityofLoveland.org/OpenLands

Notice of Meeting Posted

Call to Order

Public Comment

Approval of Meeting Minutes: September 12, 2018

City Council Liaison Report

[Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report](#)

5:45-6:30 pm – Discussion/Action Items:

1. Discussion of Potential Devil's Backbone Open Space Fee Structure
2. Open Lands and Trail Projects Financial Update

6:30-7:30 pm – Reports/Correspondence:

3. Property Acquisition Updates
4. Open Lands Project Report
5. Trail Updates

Executive Session (if necessary)

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

Events/Reminders/News:

October 6 – [Guided Bird Walk](#) at Oxbow East Natural Area, 9:00-10:30 am

October 1-November 5 – [Fall Recruitment for Boards & Commissions](#)

October 7 – [Volunteer Trail Host Training](#) at River's Edge, 1:00-4:30 pm

October 7 – [Astronomy Night with NoCo Astronomical Society](#) at Sylvan Dale Ranch, 7:00-9:00 pm

October 18 – [PEEPs Preschool Program "Scare Crows and Crow Crows"](#) at River's Edge, 9:30 and 11:00 am

October 19 – [Art in Nature Sketch Hike](#) at River's Edge Natural Area, 9:00-11:00 am

October 20 – [CSI Critter Scene Investigation – Mystery at Morey Wildlife Reserve](#), 10:30 am-1:30 pm

October 27 – Open Lands Booth at Halloween Festival, Loveland Museum, 10:00 am- 2:00 pm

Commission Member Discussion Topics

Adjournment

Next Regular Meeting: November 14, 2018

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PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – September 12, 2018

Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 500 E. 3rd St., Loveland, CO 80537

Commissioners Present: Gale Bernhardt, Rick Brent, Andy Hawbaker, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki, Kathi Wright (Alternate Council Liaison).

Commissioners Absent: Mike Hinterberg, Don Overcash (Council Liaison).

Staff Present: Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Debbie Eley, Bryan Harding, Jeanie Vetter.

Guests: Scott James and Andy Sheldon from CO Addicted Trailbuilders Society (CATS). Scott and Andy were recognized for their efforts and willingness to help with trail-building and maintenance.

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

Introduction of Jeanie Vetter, Parks & Recreation Planner.

Approval of August 8, 2018 Meeting Minutes. Darren Pape made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Bill Zawacki seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment. None.

City Council Liaison Report: Kathi Wright noted that Don Overcash could not be present due to a death in the family. Kathi reported that: 1) Council began reviewing the 2019 budget and a “dashboard” is being developed to facilitate review of this large document with 10-year comparative data. All departments are affected by the recent reductions in sales tax and there have been some cost increases for the Foundry project. The new parking garage is now open. 2) The missing sidewalk on Wilson Ave will not be constructed at this time, after Council reviewed the map of all missing sidewalk segments, including those with no sidewalk on either side of the street. 3) The COLT bus system is offering a new loop and having an open house to gather public input. 4) A Broadband open house will be held on September 15 for public information and input.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Liaison Report: Marilyn Hilgenberg had the following report from OLACB: 1) Larimer County purchased the Gallegos inholding at Red Mountain Open Space. It was planned as a partnership with Fort Collins, but the city did not approve the funding due to lack of a policy on partnerships. Loveland’s partnership policy is to contribute up to 10% of annual revenues received from the Open Space sales tax. 2) Fees at Devil’s Backbone Open Space are still being considered. Loveland contributed about \$2 million towards the acquisition and development of Devil’s Backbone. The county will present the findings of a fee study conducted by a consultant to OLAC before voting on a fee structure. 3) Gary Buffington, Natural Resources Department Director, will be retiring at year-end.

Discussion/Action:

1. Property Naming. Names for three natural areas were solicited from the public, following the procedure outlined in the Open Lands Naming Policy. More than 75 ideas were submitted by 22 contributors. The following names were selected by the commission:

- Boise Bend Natural Area (East Big Thompson River property on S Boise Ave)
- Boedecker Bluff Natural Area (North Boedecker property on W 1st St)
- Eagle Vista Natural Area (Ryan Gulch property in southwest Loveland)
- Medina's Crossing Natural Area (Namaqua Ave property with historical significance)

2. Initiatives for Innovation. City Council and the Executive Leadership Team are leading an initiative about the city's guiding principles and the goals and strategies used by each department and division to attain those principles. The Open Lands & Trails Division employs a variety of programs, projects, and actions to support the city's guiding principles of Citizen Engagement, Utilities/Transportation, Economic Vitality, Public Safety, Quality of Life, Capacity/Organizational Health, and Efficiency and Improvement.

3. Exemption from Open Lands Memorial Policy. This summer, Gavin Meyer, a 13-year old and 7th grade student at Irwin Middle School, was struck and killed by a vehicle when walking home from a fishing adventure at River's Edge Natural Area. Friends of the family asked the Department if they could donate a bench and tree in Gavin's honor to be placed at River's Edge Natural Area, Gavin's favorite place to fish. The commission discussed allowing a one-time exemption from this policy at its August meeting, based on the community impact losing this young life has had. The bench and a cottonwood tree would be placed near North Jayhawker Pond with a small memorial plaque. The bench and tree will be utilized by the community as a whole and be valued assets on-site. Darren Pape made a motion to allow this exemption; Andy Hawbaker seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Reports/Correspondence:

3. Property Updates. Staff is continuing to work on acquisitions in the south Skyline area for parking, access and trails. Due diligence for the east Big Thompson properties is underway, with surveys, mineral ownership, easements and other issues being researched.

4. Open Lands Projects Report. Staff provided the following project updates.

Properties/Facilities/Projects/Maintenance/Operations

Staff is working with Larimer County on an IGA to add a pedestrian trail underpass with the County's bridge replacement project on Namaqua Avenue at the Big Thompson River.

Staff works with Larimer County, Fort Collins and Colorado Open Lands to complete annual monitoring of conservation easements, to confirm that the conservation values are continuing to be protected. Seven of the 14 required monitoring visits have been completed and all sites will be visited by early fall.

Wildlife has been abundant this summer. Staff reports seeing elk, deer, raccoon, owls, mink, badger, fox, eagles, bear, bobcat, coyote and moose.

Partnerships, Planning and Grants

A private donation of \$100,000 will assist with purchases of open lands and development of soft-surface trails in Loveland.

Two significant capital/grant projects will be completed in cooperation with the Big Thompson River Coalition to improve and restore two reaches of the Big Thompson River upstream from Namaqua Avenue that run through City open lands and private properties. The projects are being funded by grant funding and address several implementation projects identified in the Big Thompson River Master Plan.

This year's Valley 5000 race course was modified and included utilizing Meadowbrook Natural Area and the Recreation Trail. Runners enjoyed the new course and variety of terrain it provided.

In preparation for the re-opening of Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park, volunteers helped clean out the old turbines. The historical turbine display was in the path of the 2013 flood and has been restored for historical interpretation.

Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program

Fall volunteer recruiting is underway for environmental education, trail hosting and stewardship projects. A volunteer information open house is scheduled for September 13. Training opportunities are listed in Offero.

Fall field trips for Pre-K through 5th grade classes are available to public schools, charter schools, private schools and homeschool groups.

3. Trail Updates. Staff provided the following trail updates.

The new Long View Regional Trail and Sunset Vista Natural Area were opened for public access on August 18. Hundreds of citizens came out for the grand opening event, to enjoy this new 4.4-mile off-street paved trail connecting Loveland and Fort Collins.

The recreation trail signage program continues to be refined, with research on implementation costs, sign graphics, and numbers/ locations of signs needed for identification and wayfinding. Input from staff and commissions has been incorporated into the plans, including simplifying new signs and graphics, identifying trail sections by name, and re-using existing kiosk arches with new signs and graphics. Implementation is expected to begin by the end of 2018.

CATS volunteers and BioLife employees have completed about 90% of the new trail along the north side of Boedecker Reservoir. Staff is working with consultants to design the bridge crossing, which will need to be approved by Buckingham Ditch Company.

Parks & Recreation and Public Works staff meet quarterly to discuss and work on issues related to safe pedestrian and bicycle connectivity throughout the community.

Youth volunteers from Group Publishing's "Week of Hope" program helped with trailbuilding and other stewardship projects this summer at the Ward Boise property, in anticipation of opening this site to the public. A small parking area is being developed to provide access to this river corridor site.

Improvements to the Recreation Trail between Namaqua and Wilson Ave are being planned, to remove ruts, smooth the surface, replace gravel, and provide a better trail experience.

Commission Member Discussion Topics:

1. Rick Brent inquired about the future east trail connection to Centerra. One additional easement is being pursued to make this possible. The underpass at Boyd Lake Ave is scheduled to be built in 2019 with the bridge replacement, for a connection to the Centerra trail system.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm.

/s/ Ross Livingston, Chair



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 1

MEETING DATE: October 10, 2018

DESCRIPTION: Discussion of Potential Devil's Backbone Open Space Fee Structure

SUMMARY:

In 2018, Larimer County Department of Natural Resources hired Harvey Economics to conduct a Financial Analysis Fee Study to evaluate the current schedule of user fees. The Financial Analysis Fee Study was presented to the Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board (OLAB) on September 27, 2018 including consideration to charge a permit fee for the first time at the Devil's Backbone Open Space.

Several members of Loveland's Open Lands Advisory Commission (OLAC) attended the OLAB meeting to hear the discussion and request additional financial information and justification be provided to the public and OLAC regarding this significant change in fee philosophy affecting Loveland residents and other visitors. Larimer County Natural Resource Department staff agreed to attend the October OLAC meeting to further discuss the issue.

Since 2002, the City of Loveland and Larimer County have successfully collaborated on the Devil's Backbone Open Space and trail system. Larimer County is the managing entity but Loveland, as a financial partner, views this open land site as a shared asset and very important to the vision and goals of Loveland's Open Lands Program. Devil's Backbone not only provides a regional trail system, but also is the front door to Loveland's open lands and our local commitment to engage the community in the outdoors. Among the top priorities for citizens in both of our master plans is connectivity and access to open spaces.

Loveland residents are very proud of the Devil's Backbone and consider it a valued local site in our open lands inventory. It is a gateway to Loveland and part of its geographic identity. We will discuss the reasoning behind the consultant's recommendation to implement a fee structure at Devil's Backbone and be part of the discussion to determine what works best for both Loveland and Larimer County in managing this loved local natural resource.

Larimer County staff will provide information on use, costs, operations and rationale for the proposed fee, as well as answers to questions that were raised by OLAC members and forwarded to Larimer County to guide the discussions.

Commission Action Recommended: Discussion of Devil's Backbone Open Space Fee Structure



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LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 2

MEETING DATE: October 10, 2018

DESCRIPTION: Open Lands and Trails Project Financial Update

SUMMARY:

As we begin the 4th quarter of the fiscal year, staff would like to update the Commission on the Capital Projects completed or in progress in the 2018 budget cycle. In addition, we will discuss 2019 planned projects, acquisitions, and cash flow projections by funding source.

Fund 202 - Open Space Sales Tax	2018 Amended	2019 Budgeted
Cash Balance (1/1) - After Reserves	\$ 6,074,262	\$ 6,017,024
Revenues	\$ 2,805,441	\$ 3,058,780
Expenditures:		
Operations	\$ 922,714	\$ 1,108,653
Capital Projects		
Equipment	\$ 13,666	\$ 45,000
PKOLSV- Sunset Vista	\$ 370,644	
PKOLPR- Prairie Ridge	\$ 700,000	\$ 200,000
PKOL1ST- Willow Bend	\$ 185,000	\$ 400,000
PKOLBR- Old St Louis Trail	\$ 105,000	\$ 300,000
PKOLSK- Skyline Trail		\$ 375,000
PKOLSK- - Add-On Skyline Properties	\$ 200,000	
PKOLOX- Oxbow	\$ 79,687	\$ 125,000
PKOLNBOED- Boedecker Bend	\$ 75,000	\$ 100,000
PKOLME- Meadowbrook		\$ 100,000
PKOLFLYW -Big Thompson East	\$ 150,000	\$ 1,050,000
PKOLWW- Ward West Demo/Ditch Repair		\$ 10,000
PKOLRE - RENA (Swisher & Sink Hole)	\$ 30,149	
PKOLNW- Medina's Crossing Demo & Projects	\$ 21,120	\$ 75,000
Other	\$ 9,699	\$ 212,080
Anticipated Year-End Balance	\$ 6,017,024	\$ 4,975,071

Fund 263 - Open Lands CEF	2018 Amended	2019 Budgeted
Cash Balance (1/1)	\$ 2,357,835	\$ 2,882,148
Revenues	\$ 524,313	\$ 467,100
Expenditures:		
<u>Capital Projects</u>		
PKOLFLYW -Big Thompson East		\$ 2,545,000
Anticipated Year-End Balance	\$ 2,882,148	\$ 804,248

Fund 201 - Conservation Trust- Trails	2018 Amended	2019 Budgeted
Cash Balance (1/1) - After Reserves	\$ 3,378,994	\$ 2,935,348
Revenues	\$ 1,212,016	\$ 1,475,760
Expenditures:		
Operations	\$ 327,640	\$ 315,083
<u>Capital Projects</u>		
PKTRWILSON- Wilson to Namaqua Trail	\$ 460,000	
PKTRROS Trail Connection to Rossum	\$ 7,040	
PKTRNAMBRIDG- Namaqua Bridge	\$ 175,000	
PKTR37WIL- 29th St Imprv/43rd & Wilson		\$ 270,000
PKTRCOPRDG-Copper Ridge		\$ 1,255,751
PKTRLV - Long View Trail	\$ 325,982	
PKTRNAMUP- Namaqua Avenue Underpass	\$ 160,000	\$ 2,085,000
PKTRSIGN- Trail Signage Program	\$ 200,000	
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,655,662	\$ 3,925,834
Anticipated Year-End Balance	\$ 2,935,348	\$ 485,274

Fund 262 - Trails CEF	2018 Amended	2019 Budgeted
Cash Balance (1/1) - After Reserves	\$ 1,220,661	\$ 980,848
Revenues	\$ 303,984	\$ 278,440
Expenditures:		
Operations		\$ 6,136
<u>Capital Projects</u>		
PKTRWILSON- Wilson to Namaqua Trail	\$ 158,687	
PKTRROS Oxbow Trail & Parking	\$ 170,886	
PKTRFRT Front Range Trail System	\$ 8,824	
PKTRDENVER- Denver to Boyd Lake	\$ 50,000	\$ 463,610
PKTRNAMBRIDG- Namaqua Ave Bridge	\$ 50,000	\$ 150,000
PKOLBR- Madison Avenue-Trail Connector	\$ 100,000	
PKTRLV - Long View Trail	\$ 5,400	
Total Expenditures		
Anticipated Year-End Balance	\$ 980,848	\$ 639,542

The Commission will review and discuss planned projects and priorities. 2019 projects have been requested in the 2019 City Budget but have not yet been approved through the City Council.



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 4

MEETING DATE: October 10, 2018

DESCRIPTION: Open Lands Project Report

SUMMARY:

Properties/Facilities/Projects/Maintenance/Operations

- ❖ Open Lands and Trails staff will be participating in the Highway 402 Corridor Master Plan process to assure that planned trails and open land areas are included in the long-term visions in this area of town.
- ❖ A game camera helps staff understand wildlife movement patterns and effectiveness of conservation areas.



Partnerships, Planning and Grants

- ❖ The Division participated in High Plain Environmental Center's fall habitat fair and supported their recent designation by the National Wildlife Federation on September 20.
- ❖ The grand opening of Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park was held on September 28. About 50 attendees were present, including commission and council members, consultants, contractors, partners, and staff, to celebrate the restoration project. Visitors appreciate the new design and amenities the park offers.
- ❖ The October Astronomy Night event is planned in partnership with Sylvan Dale Ranch, to take advantage of dark skies west of town. Volunteers from Northern Colorado Astronomical Society bring telescopes and enthusiastically provide information about galaxies, nebulae, clusters and planets visible in the night sky.



Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program

- ❖ Programs for school groups and the public continue to take advantage of good fall weather.
- ❖ Volunteers stay busy helping with trail-building, trail maintenance, clean-ups, bird walks, educational programs, and administrative work.
- ❖ Training for volunteer environmental educators and trail hosts has resulted in recruitment of several new active volunteers, helping to be the hearts and hands, and eyes and ears of the Open Lands program.

Commission Action Recommended: Informational.



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 5

MEETING DATE: October 10, 2018

DESCRIPTION: Trail Updates

SUMMARY:

- ❖ The IGA with Larimer County has been signed to include a pedestrian trail underpass with the County's bridge replacement project on Namaqua Avenue and the Big Thompson River. The City of Loveland will pay for the extra cost of the underpass utilizing 2019 trail funding.
- ❖ The new Long View Regional Trail at Sunset Vista Natural Area is getting a great amount of use by the public. A trail counter has been installed to allow the City to have a good understanding of the volume of use the trail is receiving. Trail users continue to voice frustration that there is a missing trail link from Sunset Vista east to the existing recreation trail and that there are no bike lanes on 57th Street. Parks and Recreation is working with Public Works to find solutions to the missing trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes in this area of town. This missing trail linkage is the number one priority for Loveland's trail program.
- ❖ The City's Recreation Trail and all connections on Wilson Avenue are closed to accommodate the construction of the Wilson Avenue Flood Mitigation Project. At the completion of the project, citizens will have better trail connections at this location, as well as additional parking.
- ❖ Public Works and Parks & Recreation are working together on connectivity issues throughout town and a "Safe Routes" grant to address missing sidewalks that will improve safety for the community.



Commission Action Recommended: Informational.