



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Civic Center • 500 East Third Street, Suite 200 • Loveland, Colorado 80537

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www.cityofloveland.org

LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION – REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

June 12, 2019 – 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: May 8, 2019

City Council Liaison Report

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

5:45-7:30 pm – Discussion/Action Items:

1. Legal Discussion on Commission Roles & Responsibilities, Executive Sessions, Unauthorized Encampments
2. Sales Tax Initiative
3. Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park Management

7:30-8:00 pm – Reports/Correspondence:

4. Property Acquisition Updates
5. Open Lands Project Report
6. Trail Updates
7. Connect Loveland 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:

Ongoing – [Native Plant Gardening Opportunities](#) at River's Edge Natural Area, flexible times for watering and weeding

June 14 – [Evening of Storytelling](#) at River's Edge Natural Area, 7:00-8:30 pm

June 15 – [Dog Day of Summer](#) at River's Edge Natural Area, 6:00-8:00 pm

June 18 – [Introduction to Wildflowers Hike](#) at Kings Crossing Natural Area, 9:00-10:30 am

June 20 – PEEPs Preschool Programs "[What Does the Fox Say?](#)" at River's Edge Natural Area, 9:30 and 11:00 am

June 21 – [Sketch Hike Nature Journaling](#) at Kings Crossing Natural Area, 9:00-11:00 am

June 29 – [Critter Scene Investigation – Case of the Flattened Frog](#) at Kings Crossing Natural Area, 10:00 am-1:00 pm

September 9 – Boards & Commissions Appreciation Event (*for members*), 5:30-8:00 pm

Commission Member Discussion Topics

Adjournment

Next Regular Meeting: July 10, 2019

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CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes – May 8, 2019

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

Commissioners Present: Gale Bernhardt, Mike Hinterberg, Scott James, Ross Livingston, Jim Roode, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki, Don Overcash (City Council Liaison).

Commissioners Absent: Rick Brent, Darren Pape, Cindy Ticer (alternate).

Staff Present: Bryan Harding, Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg, Dan Willadsen, Debbie Eley.

Guests: Curt Cole, Colorado Native Plant Society; Bob Volk, Foothills Audubon.

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

Approval of April 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes. Bill Zawacki made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ross Livingston seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

City Council Liaison Report: Don Overcash reported on the following items: 1) Groundbreaking for the Police Regional Training Facility took place recently at the Fort Collins-Loveland Airport. The facility is expected to open in 2020 and many northern Colorado agencies have expressed interest in using the facility. 2) The 2020 budget process is underway. 3) Bonds to fund the city's new broadband system were issued recently and raised \$6M. 4) Community Marketing/ Economic Development's tourism annual report is available at www.visitlovelandco.org. 5) The Foundry is nearly complete and 70 events are booked already. 6) A public survey showed support for a citizen-driven sales tax initiative to fund several city-wide projects. 7) Renovation of the Pulliam Community Building has started. 8) Police assistance on open lands and trails is data-driven; issues should be reported for police response and for patrol scheduling and management.

OLAB Liaison Report: Marilyn Hilgenberg 1) distributed a synopsis of Larimer County's Visitor Use Survey of Horsetooth Mountain and Red Mountain Open Space and Horsetooth Reservoir. Findings might translate to Devil's Backbone Open Space and help with visitor use management; 2) toured the River Bluffs restoration project (GOCO-funded) and also noted that the county and 3 other entities were invited to submit a Connect Initiative application for the Poudre River trail from Fort Collins to Greeley; 3) City staff met with the county regarding management of Devil's Backbone and offered assistance such as volunteer trail host patrols, cleaning restrooms, etc; 4) The county sales tax financial report shows Loveland's revenue share down ~\$60K/mo, or \$300K/yr, slightly more than forecasted to change due to the 2015 ballot initiative. City budgets are holding steady with revenues flat as well; 5) applications for OLAB are due in April for terms beginning June 1.

Discussion/Action:

1. Drone Policy. Marilyn presented information about the use of drones, existing regulation by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), possible uses for management and operations, and potential issues with public uses in natural areas. The FAA controls the airspace but the city can regulate where drones may take off and land from. Currently, remote-control motorized vehicles are not allowed in Loveland natural areas. Many cities and counties along the Front Range prohibit the private use of drones in open spaces. **Ross Livingston made a motion recommending that a drone policy be developed to include a permit system that is consistent with the values, needs and goals of**

the open lands program and takes into account the sensitivity of wildlife and resources. Bill Zawacki seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

2. 2019 YTD Financial and Proposed 2020 Open Lands and Trails CORE Budgets. Open Lands and Trails budgets are separate and each has two funding sources. The 2018 actual and 2019 revised budgets were provided, along with the 2019 YTD and proposed 2020 budget, for each of the four funding sources. A small increase in the open lands personnel budget was requested to align with increased maintenance and operations for additional sites, and capital expenditures match the projects identified in the capital plan. Open Lands revenues are expected to decrease slightly in 2019 based on the changes implemented in 2019 due to the county sales tax initiative. In Trails, final payments for Long View and Front Range trails have been made, and a sales tax initiative is being considered to provide funding for underpasses to support public safety and transportation infrastructure.

2. City Manager Steve Adams, Boards & Commissions Survey Results. The City Manager is visiting with all boards and commissions to follow up on the voluntary survey that was sent to all members. Four responses were received from OLAC. These commission members were generally satisfied with the commission, their role, and staff assistance. Due to the low response rate, the City Manager's Office will resend the survey to those members who have not responded and Steve Adams will revisit the commission at a future meeting.

3. Land Conservation, Planning, Projects & Programs Work Plan. An update was provided on 2019 current and planned projects, including public access improvements, restoration projects, education and public programming, grant funding, property management/leases, acquisitions, planning, and partnerships with other departments, agencies and organizations.

Reports/Correspondence:

4. Property Acquisition Updates. Brian reported that a preliminary request from the owners of the Walden West Conservation Easement property has been received. The property currently consists of two lots, which the owners would like to split into 3 lots to better separate ownership of individual parcels and a common area. The owners donated a perpetual conservation easement valued at \$80K on the 31-acre property. No public access is granted by the easement. The terms of the easement would remain the same under the amendment. A formal request will be brought to the commission for review and approval at a future meeting.

5. Open Lands Project Report. Staff provided the following project updates.

Properties/Facilities/Projects/Maintenance/Operations

- Heavy construction continues along the Big Thompson River near Namaqua Avenue. ECI has completed significant in-channel improvements from Rossum to Wilson as a result of grant funding through the Big Thompson Watershed Coalition. The county's Namaqua bridge replacement project includes a new underpass for a future trail connection.
- River work also continues in Reach 28 along the Wild Natural Area. The river has been re-channeled back closer to the original alignment and will provide fishing opportunities for the public from Wild Natural Area in the near future.
- A new vault restroom has been ordered for Sunset Vista Natural Area and the trailhead for the regional Long View Trail. The restroom will be delivered and installed later this summer.

Partnerships, Planning and Grants

- Science classes from Front Range Community College are getting in-field environmental experience by removing invasive tree species from Loveland's open lands properties every Friday during the spring semester. Thanks to their efforts, hundreds of trees have been removed and treated at Willow Bend Natural Area.

- Utilizing GOCO grant funding, more than 200 invasive trees have been removed from the Medina's Crossing Natural Area in conjunction with the other restoration projects.

Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteers

- The barn owl camera is live on the City's Web page to allow citizens to watch live the activity of barn owls. Five eggs were laid by this pair and the first egg hatched on May 3. The kestrel nest box web cam is also live, and eggs should be laid soon.
- More than 60 volunteers helped on April 20 building a trail, cleaning up trash & debris, and removing invasive species at Willow Bend Natural Area. It was the first public event on this not yet opened site, and volunteers were very excited to get a sneak preview of this scenic property along the Big Thompson River corridor.
- In association with the Colorado Native Plant Society, volunteers planted shrubs at River's Edge on April 20 funded by a grant from Larimer County Department of Natural Resources. This project will continue in May with watering by community volunteers and planting of native grasses and plants.
- Staff participated in the annual Colorado Parks and Recreation Association Trade Show to share best practices and talk with vendors.
- The annual Fishing Loveland Open Lands event was held at River's Edge on April 27, with more than 50 participants learning about good fishing stewardship, invertebrate identification to see what fish are eating, fishing skills, and where to fish in Loveland.
- We have had a very robust spring for our environmental education program for school groups coming to River's Edge and Seven Lakes Park. Hundreds of volunteer hours have been donated by trained and certified education guides.

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

- The Prairie Ridge trail project will be bid for construction in May. This natural area property in northwest Loveland will provide citizens with a new soft-surface trail system and the north-south trail alignment will connect to Fort Collins' Coyote Ridge Trail.
- Staff continue to work on closing the missing trail gap, known as the Copper Ridge Connector, at 57th Street and the BNSF Railroad. Permitting with the BNSF Railroad is underway and plans will be submitted to BNSF and PUC. The Copper Ridge Development has started rough grading and installed a ditch crossing. This last stretch of missing trail will be constructed by the developer with their subdivision.
- Trail crews continue to implement ADA site improvements with regards to trip hazards on the trail, surfacing around benches and trash cans, and signage.

Commission Member Discussion Topics:

1. Jim Roode is a member of the Connector committee for Connect Loveland, the update of three of the city's transportation plans. Public outreach for the new plan is underway.
2. Jim Roode also noted that the Loveland Fishing Club supports a change in management of the Big Thompson River fishery, with regulations for catch-and-release fishing using flies and lures only, and no fish stocking from Estes Park to I-25. The goal is to keep wild fish in the river, strengthen the fishery, and attract anglers to the area.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

/s/ Gale Bernhardt, Chair



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: **1**

MEETING DATE: June 12, 2019

DESCRIPTION: Legal Discussion on Commission Roles & Responsibilities, Executive Sessions, and Unauthorized Encampments

STAFF PRESENTER: Vincent Junglas, City Attorney's Office

SUMMARY:

Information to be presented by the City Attorney's Office on the roles and responsibilities of Board and Commission members. PowerPoint presentation will include the following:

1. Commission's Role
2. Open Meetings
3. Open Records
4. Email and Social Media
5. Ethics and Conflicts of Interest
6. Executive Sessions
7. Unauthorized Encampments

Commission Action Recommended: Informational.



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 5

MEETING DATE: June 12, 2019

DESCRIPTION: Open Lands Project Report

SUMMARY:

Properties/Facilities/Projects/Maintenance/Operations

- ❖ The bid to construct the trail connection from Madison Avenue into Old St. Louis Natural Area using the new Farmer's Ditch Bridge closed on June 6. Several competitive bids were received and the trail construction is expected to occur this summer.
- ❖ The Namaqua Bridge Project is wrapping up with a June 13 opening planned for the road. Flood gates and signage will be added to the new trail underpass to let the public know that Medina's Crossing Natural Area is not yet open for public access.
- ❖ The Big T Reach 30-31 and Rist Goss diversion construction projects are nearly complete. The restoration of the floodplain benches and other plantings will continue into the fall and next spring. The over-flow channel at Oxbow Natural Area has been re-vegetated and the trail replaced.
- ❖ Installation of a new wet well for the water right at Medina's Crossing has been completed. The new wet well is located upstream and will improve function, reliability and convenience.



- ❖ River restoration work along Wild Natural Area is nearly complete. The river is running high and the new channel and floodplain benches are operating as designed for high flows. The site has been re-vegetated and additional plantings will occur this summer and fall. The City is working through planning procedures for the Hwy 34 entrance, small parking lot and a trail on this site.
- ❖ With the abundance of spring wet weather, it has been a challenge to keep up with mowing on open lands and trail sites, and to be ahead of weed control.
- ❖ Loveland has contracted with the Larimer County Weed District to help with weed management on large open land sites, and with the re-vegetation of the south side of Sunset Vista Natural Area with native grasses.

Partnerships, Planning and Grants

- ❖ Students from biology and invasive species classes at Front Range Community College removed hundreds of Russian olives from Willow Bend Natural Area this spring as part of their hands-on learning experience, providing a value of more than \$7K in service.
- ❖ The public meeting on May 6 for the Skyline Natural Area Management Plan was well attended and staff was able to get valuable citizen feedback from both the meeting and an online public input process. Nearly 40 emailed responses were submitted during the public comment period through May 31. An intern from University of Colorado was able to help with the presentation boards and summary of data. Staff will continue to research questions and work with OLAC to discuss and determine best development and management practices for this site.
- ❖ Staff has been working with the Colorado Native Plant Society on the re-vegetation of two areas at River's Edge Natural Area with native species. Community volunteers will continue to monitor, water and weed these areas throughout the summer.
- ❖ The historical stone structure at Sunset Vista Natural Area has been re-roofed and the stone will be re-pointed in June. An interpretive sign will be added to the site this summer to highlight the historical and agricultural features of the site.



Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteers

- ❖ The nest cams on the City's website show three young barn owls being raised, and kestrel eggs should hatch in mid-June. Volunteers from the Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute will band the young to track them as part of their annual research.



- ❖ More than 20 volunteers worked on June 1 building a trail and cleaning up trash at Willow Bend Natural Area as part of National Trails Day. Volunteers were excited to get a sneak preview of this scenic property along the Big Thompson River corridor.

- ❖ Volunteers recently certified as Interpretive Guides through training provided by Open Lands staff are offering guided hikes and programs at various natural areas this spring and summer.



- ❖ Numerous trained volunteer trail hosts are providing a city presence at natural areas, offering information to visitors, encouraging compliance with regulations based on the Authority of the Resource Technique (ART), and providing reports on public use and maintenance issues to staff.
- ❖ The Fishing in Loveland pamphlet has been updated and is popular among area anglers.
- ❖ Environmental education programs have wrapped up for the spring season, providing programs for grades K-5 on wildlife, local plants, habitats, watersheds, geology and more, with the assistance of trained volunteer education guides.

Commission Action Recommended: Informational.



LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: 6

MEETING DATE: June 12, 2019

DESCRIPTION: Trail Updates

SUMMARY:

- The Prairie Ridge trail project is out to bid with an anticipated July start. This project will provide citizens with access to a new foothills trail opportunity and will connect with Fort Collins' Coyote Ridge Natural Area trails.
- CATS volunteers are constructing a segment of trail at Round Mountain trailhead up the Big Thompson Canyon to better connect Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park with the Round Mountain Trail parking lot and trail system.
- At the May 28 City Council meeting, the Council gave the initial direction to the Sales Tax Initiative Task Force to proceed with putting a ballot measure on the November election to fund eight identified City capital construction projects including recreation trail underpasses that would improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- The paved Recreation Trail between Wilson and Taft Ave. has reopened with the completion of the Wilson Ave. road construction project. A new parking area/trailhead is available on the west side of Wilson Ave. north of the river.
- The Loveland Bikeways and Trails map has been updated with current trails, bike lanes, bike routes, and other helpful information for trail users. The new foldable map brochure will be available in standard and pocket-size formats in June.

Commission Action Recommended: Informational.