

## Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board

*The mission of Larimer County Department of Natural Resources is to establish, protect and manage significant regional parks and open lands providing quality outdoor recreational opportunities and stewardship of natural resource values. We are committed to fostering a sense of community and appreciation for the natural and agricultural heritage of Larimer County for present and future generations.*

### MINUTES

Scheduled times are subject to change.

**Date:** February 22, 2018

**Time:** 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**Location:** City Council Chambers, Civic Center Municipal Building, 500 E. 3rd St., Loveland, CO.

**Contact:** Please contact Emmy at [ellisoea@co.larimer.co.us](mailto:ellisoea@co.larimer.co.us) or 970-619-4462 if you are unable to attend.

Members		Staff		Guests
Carl Sorrentino	x	Alex Castino	x	
David Marvin		Charlie Johnson	x	
Gerry Horak	x	Gary Buffington	x	
Jason Brothers	x	Ken Brink		
Jeff Hindman	x	Lori Smith	x	
K-Lynn Cameron	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	
Marilyn Hilgenberg	x	Steve Gibson		
Nancy Wallace	x	Chris Fleming	x	
Peter Kelly	x	Timothy Meyer		
Sherri Valentine	x	Emmy Ellison (minutes)	x	
Suzan Fritchel	x	Todd Blomstrom	x	
Ward Nelson		*Thomas Donnelly		

x = present

\*commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 5:07 p.m.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT - none
3. AGENDA REVIEW – will add to Information items
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES

- a. Board member mentioned correction needed regarding the record of the response to her question about attending the Advisory Board Leadership Group meeting. Carl Sorrentino moves to approve minutes with note to make requested change, K-Lynn seconds. Motion passed.

## 5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Recruitment Process for Program Manager in Natural Resources Department:
  - i. Charlie introduced as interim Program Manager – Gary
    - 1. Wearing three hats – Engineering, Acquisition, and interim position
    - 2. Acknowledgement of Kerri Rollins’ contribution to Open Lands program
  - ii. Description of recruitment schedule for Program Manager – Charlie
    - 1. Post in March, interviews in April, selection by end of April, filled by May 14<sup>th</sup>. Timeline could be extended if necessary.
    - 2. Job description may have minor alterations but will be primarily the same, interview panel will be Todd, Gary, Charlie, Team Leaders, 2 OLAB members and one PAB member. May split group and run candidates through both groups. Will be advertised broadly.
    - 3. Volunteers for that panel: K-Lynn, Marilyn, TBD
- b. Review updated Organizational Chart for Natural Resources, copies provided at the meeting – Gary
  - i. 4 program areas: 1) Financial Services & Admin 2) Land Acquisition, Education and Volunteer 3) Visitor Services 4) Planning, Development & Stewardship
  - ii. Member question about why “Open Lands” Program name was changed to Land Acquisition, Education and Volunteer Program. It was noted that the titles are intended to reflect exactly what each program does. Further questions about naming, particularly related to Open Lands and the related tax. It was noted that Open Lands is still named as such under the Real Estate Acquisition heading which also includes Parks and Trails. Members expressed unease with the name change as they felt it could de-emphasize a well-known public program. It was noted that the proposed title more comprehensively describes the program and that no changes were being proposed for the sales tax, law or the history of the program. Working broadly within the county to create an organizational structure that can be understood universally, increasing efficiency and public awareness. Programs will be named based on operational function/delivery of service. Within DNR (as in other county Departments), employees from all 4 branches are involved with each of the programs. The one change to be noted is that the Community Relations Specialist position has been pulled out from the Land Acquisition, Education and Volunteer Program and re-organized under a new Communication branch and will be reporting to the Director for better utilization of Public Informational Officer (PIO) position duties throughout entire department. Member suggestion to perhaps rename the Department of Natural Resources itself to better fit both program and public needs. It was noted that

Larimer County welcomes and considers that specific type of comment as it moves toward the new nomenclature and understands need for clear public communication. Members voiced desire for clear recognition of Open Space Sales Tax use. Member comment that the Organizational Chart is being provided for a general understanding and that being overly critical of it may not be helpful. It was noted that the Organizational Chart will be re-examined with board suggestions in mind and will bring back to board for further feedback.

- c. Do you want to inspire curiosity for nature in people of all ages? Or know someone who does? Natural Resources is recruiting Volunteer Naturalists to teach school groups, talk with visitors and lead hikes on ecology, geology, local history and more. An in-depth training will be held on Wednesdays and Thursdays during the day for three consecutive weeks starting March 21, 2018. Application deadline is Feb. 28. To apply or learn more, contact Heather Young at [hyoung@larimer.org](mailto:hyoung@larimer.org) or (970) 619-4489.
  - d. City of Loveland Annual Reports – Marilyn
    - i. Brief update and handout of City of Loveland Annual Report
    - ii. Recognition of the Columbine Award for Innovation: Quick Wins for the Community Award received by the City of Loveland for the incorporation of small, soft surface trails in neighborhoods for public access. Example of Mariana Butte natural areas trail from clubhouse through hogback to river.
6. UPDATES & REPORTS
- a. The AO restoration work was completed and staff moved back into offices. We are re-designing the entry area lobby for better customer service and function – Gary
    - i. Water issue from winter, done with repairs, moved back into offices, now re-designing lobby area to better serve the public, expected completion March.
  - b. Update on Horsetooth Area Working Panel meeting – Meegan
    - i. Meeting with Redstone Canyon neighbors and some public on Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>, dealt with understanding differing perspectives. Groups discussed comments, expectations, concerns, potential impacts. CSU student facilitators did great job of keeping people focused. Next step is sending summarized information to participants, then doing site inventories this year, conceptual designs, reconvene group in late fall to discuss again. Goal is to come out of that second meeting with recommended preferred alternative. Use of third party led to issues with communication, next time will be improved. Those properties will be included in the full update of Horsetooth Management Plan which includes the general public process after fall meeting. Work to be done in 2020.
  - c. Open Space District Reports – Chris
    - i. Hired 2 new, full-time Rangers, will hire 3<sup>rd</sup>. One of the 2 is in checkouts of Field Training Officer Program (FTO), should be solo in Carter Lake within 2 weeks, second of the 2 is just starting FTO (3.5 month process) and should finish in May or June. Hiring process underway for 3<sup>rd</sup> Ranger, preparing for seasonal hiring (approx. 80 positions). Open Lands stay busy during shoulder seasons. Ranger Excellence School (RES) registration is underway, board is invited to attend

sessions, location is the Ranch in May. Bear cubs released on neighboring conservation easements, lightly monitored, still sleeping. Vehicle counters have been installed at all properties and data is now being collected. Expect new format for District Reports that will increase report uniformity between districts and will include visitor data information. Hermit Park opens March 1<sup>st</sup>, weather permitting, Estes Park locals excited, camping is walk-in basis until spring due to unpredictable weather. Expecting to hear about GOCO grant by mid-March (trail heads, Hermit's Cabin area, education area, parking area, bear box funding). Still waiting to hear about FEMA grant. Ranger recognized with Lifesaving Award. Steve and his crew finishing Ag Leases (River Bluffs finished, others in progress). Red Mountain Hunting popularity increasing, over 350 applicants now, closes at end of month, approx. 15 tags available, last year had over 700 applicants, increases every year.

- ii. Question regarding whether or not the new Rangers have Naturalist training in reference to advertisement for volunteer Naturalists. It was noted that all Rangers have degrees in Natural Resources and work closely with Education Program to provide programming, may be doing campground programs, public outreach. Some seasonal Rangers in the past have completed Naturalist training but the full-time Rangers do not.
- iii. Member question regarding number of female Rangers. It was noted that there were currently two full-time female rangers out of ten, seasonals fluctuate every year depending on number and quality of applicants, retain both sexes but is male dominated field. Brief member comment about reflecting upon racial diversity within Ranger population.
- d. GOCO board will take a tour of Hermit Park while in Estes for their annual retreat in March – Chris
  - i. GOCO Board Retreat at Hermit Park in March, hoping for nice weather, estimating about 30 people. Planning brief walk and talk tour, Q & A, overview of Hermit Park and how GOCO has contributed to its operations, allow time for them to explore Hermit on their own. Looking forward to the visit.
- e. Bear Box project at Hermit Park update – Chris
  - i. Part of larger GOCO Grant project to supply bear boxes throughout Hermit Park, only one campground currently has them (Kruger). Public safety risks high due to improper food storage, last year problems peaked (bear euthanized, bear conflicts from July through end of year). Timing is the problem: in October, board approved \$100,000 for bear boxes which is being used as match for potential GOCO Grant and can't be spent before it is awarded which could be March, the boxes take 2 months to manufacture and deliver which if ordered tomorrow would arrive when bears start coming out. Public safety issue, Hermit's Hollow area needs them most. Looking at pulling funding from several operating budgets to cover boxes ASAP (10k from Ken's, 10k from Samson Law violation ticket that was written by CPW in Estes near Hermit Park, and 15K from budget savings from Devil's Backbone Management Plan projects) for at

least Hermit's Hollow Campground. That \$35,000 is not related to GOCO Grant or funds used in matching GOCO Grant. Colorado Correctional Institutes build the boxes for \$790 each, we can buy direct from them through GSA account, no bids necessary, saves time and money. Referring to them as 'bear boxes' but are actually bear proof boxes.

## 7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Sales and Use Tax Audit Process – Todd
  - i. County is conducting audits on Sales and Use Tax programs as terms end, two programs ending currently: the Ranch (expires in 2019) and Open Space (expires in 2018). Audits are for transparency, public confidence.
  - ii. Process is to request proposal from RubinBrown (independent audit firm). They verify/examine general revenues, disbursements, deposits and fund management (formula: not less than 70% for acquisitions and improvements, not less than 15% up to 30% set aside solely for paying long term costs for operation maintenance and administrative improvements, not more than 15% solely for paying costs of improving existing regional parks), use of funds.
  - iii. Timeline is estimated to be completed towards the end of the year. Results will be posted on website for transparency.
  - iv. Unilateral authority over money is not given to one individual within the county, expecting the audit to turn out well.
- b. The general plan for updating the Capital Improvement Program over the next three months, including the involvement of Open Lands and Parks Advisory Boards – Todd
  - i. Last year was first year of formal Larimer County 5-year CIP, will be smoother moving forward. Handout is more than a list of projects, it is the result of a process. Year two, will be refined.
    1. Strategic Alignment and Investments: Projects are not randomly picked. Start with Master Plan, utilize strategic alignment, long term vision and goals.
    2. Project Programming: Involves project scope, schedule, and budget (must think beyond initial costs, include operation and maintenance).
    3. Community Priorities
    4. Fiscally Constrained: Needs vs. Money, decisions based on priorities, fiscal constraints. 5-year CIP has fiscal constraints.
    5. Funding Sources and Allocations, funding eligibility, becomes cash flow exercise.
  - ii. Seeking board's assistance with input. In March meeting, reserve time to review Strategic Alignment and Master Plans, funding sources and eligibility. In April, time for potential projects and costs, criteria for setting priorities. In May, review draft and provide comments. Have it in front of the board for recommendation in June. Board supports schedule with request for necessary documents to be provided prior to meetings for consideration.

- iii. Member question regarding how decisions will be made regarding what funds will be allocated out of Open Spaces for Parks. It was noted that a policy should be set. Focus is fund balance.
- iv. Page 1 of CIP is 2018, page 2 is 2019 and so on. Can be revised, projects can be shifted around, some flexibility is required, gets easier every year. Planning for 5 years out, not 6 months. Calculating acquisitions can be complicated due to unpredictable nature of market. Best to guess and be mostly right than to not include a particular project on the plan at all. If there is a possibility of something being on 5 year plan, include it and then allow for revisions in spring. Avoid fixating and try to include boundaries otherwise resources can be problematic. Can have reserve for unforeseen opportunities but that money cannot be used for anything else. Less rigid than operational budget, but a plan is necessary. Will be made public, numbers and projects on current CIP will be changing and it is best not to focus on them too much at this early stage.
- c. Discussion of appreciation for Kerri Rollins – Gary
  - i. Kerri chose Malchow Farm open space photo by Charlie for her gift, can be signed at back table, will be presented to her next month.

8. ACTION ITEMS

- a. None

9. OTHER BUSINESS

10. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: March 22, 2018 at City Council Chambers, Civic Center Municipal Building, 500 E. 3rd St., Loveland, CO.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Pursuant to C.R.S. (24-6-402(4)(a)) for discussion pertaining to purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer, or sale of any real or person property interest. Board moved into executive session at 7:05 p.m.

12. ADJOURN – meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

*Included in PDF:*

- Agenda
- Sales Tax Revenue Distribution Report
- Open Space Operations District Reports
- Acquisition & Development sheet
- Open Lands Program Manager hiring timeline

*Attached Separately:*

1. Minutes of last meeting
2. News articles
3. Executive Session materials

This meeting will be recorded and archived according to law. Votes require a quorum.

Public can view agenda and minutes at:

[http://legacy.larimer.org/boards/minutes/openlands\\_advisory\\_board.cfm](http://legacy.larimer.org/boards/minutes/openlands_advisory_board.cfm)

