

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

Date: November 29, 2018

Time: 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Location: Larimer County Loveland Campus Building, 200 Peridot Avenue, Loveland, CO 80537, Poudre River Room

Contact: Please contact Emmy at ellisoea@co.larimer.co.us or 970-619-4462 if you are unable to attend

Members		Staff		Guests
Carl Sorrentino	x	Gary Buffington	x	Russell Fruits (PAB member)
David Marvin	x	Meegan Flenniken	x	4 members of Loveland OLAC/staff
Gerry Horak		Ken Brink	x	
Jason Brothers	x	Charlie Johnson	x	
Paul Alaback	x	Todd Blomstrom		
K-Lynn Cameron	x	Chris Fleming		
Marilyn Hilgenberg	x	Steve Gibson	x	
Nancy Wallace	x	*Thomas Donnelly	x	
Peter Kelly	x	Emmy Ellison (minutes)	x	
Sherri Valentine		Jenn Almstead	x	
Suzan Fritchel	x			
Ken Zornes	x			

x = present

*commissioner

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS – 5:02 p.m.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none
3. AGENDA REVIEW
 - a. May move 6.a. and 7.a. up to accommodate late arrivals.
4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING MINUTES

- a. Marilyn moves to approve last meeting's minutes, Suzan seconds, motion passed unanimously.

5. INFORMATION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Natural Resource events for this month: See <http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources>.
- b. To sign up for Open Lands Advisory Board minutes, go to <http://larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm>, enter your email, click 'Subscribe,' and then check the 'Open Lands Advisory Board' box.
- c. Staff has prioritized stabilization of the historic buildings at Soderberg property for the 2019 capital improvement identified historic structure project – Meegan
- d. Conservation easement monitoring for 2018 of the 49 CE's held by Larimer County is nearly complete. Three potential violations were identified and are being addressed – Meegan
- e. The county-wide Noxious Weed Management Plan update has been approved for adoption by the BOCC – Meegan

6. UPDATES & REPORTS

- a. Open Space District Reports – Steve
- b. Horsetooth planning process update – Meegan
 - i. Narrowed trailhead options to 3, Option A has been determined financially unfeasible due to costs associated with paving CR25E. Between both B options: Option B2 has raptor nest, if determined a Golden Eagle nest it will be eliminated as an option. Both sites have 45 car parking maximum, B2 is preferred option because it is farther from the main lot. Next step is to reconvene group December 5th, discuss pros and cons of two options, and get preferred recommendation. Will know by Jan/Feb about nest.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. OLAB venue change – Gary
 - i. Discussion of moving OLAB meetings to AO and HAIC instead of Loveland Campus due to security and IT issues. LC will look into Loveland Campus issues for resolution and will communicate with City of Loveland to queue Municipal Building if necessary.
- b. Fee Study – Staff
 - 1) Summary of process and input from 3 community public meetings – Gary
 - a. List of major milestones regarding Fee Study processes
 - b. Ken Z. asked how the Estes Park Open house was advertised. It was noted that notices/articles were advertised on the LCDNR website, the LC website, an Estes Park newspaper and social media. 31 attendees total for all three Open Houses combined.
 - 2) Review of use levels for DBB/HTMOS – Meegan
 - a. Chart of vehicle counts highlight strong similarities in usage numbers between DBB and HTMOS indicating intensive use. Commissioner

Donnelly asked about parking lot comparisons. It was noted that DBB has 99 parking spots on Loveland end, HTMOS has 88 at Main Lot and Soderberg has 45.

- b. Nancy asked about likelihood of users at HT doing the short loop vs. the longer loop. Steve noted that both user groups exist; folks doing the HT Falls Trail (1.2 mi. one-way) tend to stay for a shorter time and folks doing the HT Rock Trail (2.1 mi. one-way) stay for a longer time (3-4 hours).
- 3) Review of financial spreadsheet – Dave M.
- a. Review of Extension of Sales Tax Resolution – 2019 through 2043 pie chart. Summarization: 50% can be used for improvement, management and maintenance, 35% can be used for acquisition and 15% is flex to be used for either category. County’s share increases from 42% to 50%. Resolution language is specific. Open Spaces are being loved to death, requires extra maintenance, personnel, etc., and also affects the visitor experience when turned away. Have CIP for first time in LC history, new piece of expense that is eligible for funds from Sales Tax.
 - b. Created consolidated spreadsheet to include revenue now and after the HE proposed fee increase, expense plus the CIP, surplus or shortage now and after the fee increase, sales tax revenue available for maintenance/development with and without the flex funds, and surplus or shortage with and without fee increases shown using 50% of sales tax revenue and 65% of sales tax revenue. Spreadsheet shows that if LC maintains status quo and spends entire 65% of sales tax revenue available, a deficit will exist as early as next year. With fee increase including DBB, there is a chance to have revenues in excess of expenses in the future. Built-in assumptions exist for projections, difficult to accurately portray beyond 5 years out.
 - c. The spreadsheet shows data for Open Lands only, the revenue is fees and monies from General Fund (Sales Tax revenue is shown in a different spot on the spreadsheet) and the spreadsheet uses the new 2019 Sales Tax Resolution rate of 50% (up from 42%).
 - d. Commissioner Donnelly discussed importance of handling this long term problem based on the discrepancy between increasing operating costs (7-8%) and tax increases (5%).
- 4) Staff proposal – future budget review – Ken
- a. 3-step Proposed Financial Sustainability Process sheet basics: Step 1 – Fee Recommendations for 2019, Step 2 – Sustainable Financial Plan by 2020, Step 3 – First Report to BOCC in 2021. K-Lynn suggested a policy for Fee Increases.
 - b. Dave mentioned the need for discipline in using the 15% flex category, goal is to protect it. 3 buckets (50%, 35% and 15%). Ken noted that the

public's expectation when the County buys land or builds is that it will be maintained in perpetuity; those costs can collide over time.

- c. Nancy mentioned that the proposed process should include the new Director, it was noted that the process is a conceptual idea and there is tremendous flexibility in how it is implemented. Marilyn requested continued transparency without micromanaging LC operations. Paul gave thanks for the analysis and transparency, appreciates the proposal of a process. Dave mentioned that even spaces that have no public access have expenses.

5) Fee Subcommittee recommendation 2019 fee – Dave

- a. Followed the HE proposed fees with these exceptions: DBBOS permit \$6 instead of HE proposed \$9, LC Annual Resident Vehicle permit \$90 instead of HE proposed \$95, and LC Annual Resident Combo permit \$185 instead of \$190. Daily goes to \$9, no increase for Senior and Disabled passes. Fully supported implementing the Bison Pass for low income visitors as assistance for that population was an important focus in public and internal feedback. The Fee Subcommittee exceptions pull about \$190k out of the revenue stream, dropping the surplus by that amount but still maintaining a surplus. Nearly no reaction from the public regarding camping fees.
- b. Nancy questioned why Senior pass was not increased. It was noted that demographic could be looked at in the future for increases, state study found seniors were most wealthy demographic, following same paradigm as other similar entities. Current policy for Senior pass is 50% of Resident Vehicle.
- c. Suzan commented that she prefers as low a fee as possible at DBB and to make up for difference with camping. It was noted that fees raised on BOR properties have to be spent on that property. Also, there is a cost associated with implementing fees (kiosks, staff management, annual maintenance fees from associated vendors, etc.) so if the fee is too low at DBB, LC would lose money. Staff recommendations are based on HE proposal and feedback from citizens.
- d. DBB wasn't heavily used until 2013 or 2014, timing of need at DBB and Sales Tax extension was complicated.
- e. Marilyn commented that Loveland understands that there will be a fee, hoping to minimize it. Loveland has discussed donating funds to manage DBB, could discuss further. Dave noted that his experience doing surveys at HTMOS trailheads was that the visitor experience is very good and folks keep coming back even when turned away when full. Informal feedback Rangers get from the public at DBB is that they support the fees at that location.

8. ACTION ITEMS

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



- a. Open Lands Advisory Board fee recommendation
 - i. Nancy moves to recommend to the BOCC approval of the Advisory Board Fee Study Committee recommendations including the \$6 DBB fee, Carl seconds.
 - ii. Comments on the motion:
 - 1. Pete noted that hard decisions are important, particularly within partnerships, and asked Marilyn if Loveland was satisfied with the process. Marilyn said that she would have preferred to get the handouts prior to this meeting but that overall the process has been good and the partnership is healthy. It was noted that there will be another opportunity for public feedback at the BOCC hearing.
 - 2. Ken Z. asked if the BOCC can make modifications once they receive the recommendation. Commissioner Donnelly noted that BOCC can approve, deny, adjust, etc. as they deem prudent. He also suggested that the board be very clear about the action they take in their recommendation to BOCC.
 - 3. Suzan supports recommendation without the DBB fee. K-Lynn agreed and added that there could be an attachment regarding fees on Open Lands.
 - 4. Commissioner Donnelly noted that the motion could be severed and re-stated as two separate votes.
 - 5. Jason asked if Loveland could respond to the \$6 proposal. Marilyn said that because they are just getting the information tonight, they would need to discuss options. Suggested that a motion should include long term goals and the funding buckets.
 - 6. K-Lynn asked if splitting the motion would be a hardship for LC staff. Nancy suggested removing Open Lands from Parks in a recommendation due to inconsistency of fees charged. Marilyn commented that it is a policy issue. Gary noted that Hermit Park and HT Mountain generate \$1M per year.
 - 7. Commissioner Donnelly suggested that broad-based support is taken into consideration by BOCC.
 - 8. Nancy suggested that the December meeting allow clarification for the dollar amount of fees charged at DBB and the board can vote yes or no, then come up with something else the other fees.
 - 9. Nancy motions to table motion, Suzan seconds, Dave adds condition that a meeting happen December 13th to accommodate Dec. 18th BOCC hearing. Discussion:
 - a. Nancy stated that because important information was not given in advance of this meeting, time to digest the information will be appropriate.
 - b. Implementation discussion regarding changing passes in the accounting system partway through the fiscal year. LC

Accounting department advised that a decision before January 1st would allow the products to be set up for the year.

Motion passed unanimously.

- b. Final review of partnership with Loveland on land acquisition of Big Thompson East River Corridor – Meegan/Charlie
 - i. Marilyn – ask is 10% of value of 159 acres along Big Thompson River east towards I-25. Regional connectivity opportunities. Intent is partnership on Kauffman conservation easement that has a trail/trailhead reservation. Discussed transferring easement to Loveland after which Loveland will develop and manage trail access that ties into remainder of Loveland Trail System. Loveland owns Koppes, LC holds Kauffman CE, Colorado Open Lands holds Wagner CE piece that Loveland is buying - hoping to combine all into one entity. Requesting \$385.7k from LC, partnership on how Kauffman conservation easement trail connects to properties. Meegan noted dollars are shown in Cash Flow January 2019.
 - ii. Suzan moves to recommend to BOCC to partner with City of Loveland in the amount of \$385.7k for land purchase and will work with them to change conservation easements, seconded by Nancy, motion passed unanimously.
9. OTHER BUSINESS
- a. OLAB composition – Commissioner Donnelly hopes to allow the terms to run out for Municipality Representatives. Don't foresee disagreement but can't say how other Commissioners will feel. Will give update next month.
 - b. Commissioner Donnelly offered a discussion of and gratitude for Gary's accomplishments and lasting impact on the Department of Natural Resources as he plans to retire at the end of 2018.
10. NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: December 13th, 2018, Larimer County Loveland Campus Building, 200 Peridot Avenue, Loveland, CO 80537, Poudre River Room
11. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Pursuant to C.R.S. (24-6-402(4)(a)) for discussion pertaining to the purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real, personal or other property interest. Nancy moves to enter Executive Session at 8:31 p.m., K-Lynn seconds, motion passed unanimously.
12. ADJOURN – 8:36 p.m.