



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 6, 2024**

Members Present: Bob Falcone, Paula Krantz, Wendy Howe, Jeff Davis, Bob Shafer, Chelsea Gondeck, Hank Scarangella, Blaze Panariso, Emily Danti

Alternates Present: Randy Courduff, David Bundrick

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Larry Bogue, Abby Simpson, Greg Thornton

Staff Present: Britt Haley, Lonna Thelen, Eric Becker, Kim King, Anna Bingman, David Deitemeyer

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TOPS Working Committee Chair Bob Falcone brought the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Agenda Preview

Committee Chair Bob Falcone announced the agenda for the meeting.

Announcements

Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager, made the following announcements:

- Lonna welcomed new regular Committee member Emily Danti, as well as the two new alternate members, Randy Courduff and David Bundrick, to the meeting.
- Lonna was still unsure if there would be a site visit in March. If there is a need for one, she will coordinate with Committee members.

Committee Chair Bob Falcone announced that citizen discussion would only be for items not on the agenda. While he understood the various citizen concerns about the Blodgett Open Space Master Plan item, he encouraged both the audience to take this meeting to listen to the presentation, and encouraged Committee members to ask questions as they have them. Bob also thanked Department staff, consultants, stakeholders and the community for their hard work on this process. There has been a lot of input received, all of which was reviewed by the Committee, and all of it is very valuable to the formation of the final master plan. Bob noted that the property was purchased with TOPS funding, and when land is purchased through such funding, it is always intended to be master planned in some way rather than left untouched. While he recognized that not every individual will be happy with every single aspect of the plan, staff and the Committee have a responsibility to provide a plan in the best interest of the overall community.

Approval of Minutes – February 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of the February 7, 2024 TOPS Working Committee meeting.

1st – Blaze Panariso, 2nd – Paula Krantz, Approved, Unanimously.

Citizen Discussion

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, stated that he will be joining Eric Becker, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager, at the Cresta Pump Track following the meeting to do a warranty recap. His organization will be putting high clay content dirt on the track, which should help maintain the track better.

Action Items

There were no action items on this agenda.

Presentations

Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan (Presented by David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, and Priscilla Marbaker, Principal at Tapis Associates, Inc.)

David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, and Priscilla Marbaker, Principal at Tapis Associates, Inc., presented the Committee with the Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan. This presentation included background information on how master plans are informed; the purpose of the Master Plan; where we are in the process; Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan gives; USDA USFS Pikes Peak Ranger district gives highlights; presentation goals; site inventory; existing conditions; elevation, slope, aspect and vegetation; Bighorn Sheep habitat; habitat fragmentation; site assessment – key habitat areas; public engagement responses; public engagement framework; public engagement – by the numbers; summary of community input from the May 20, 2023 onsite event, PopUp events, and August 22, 2023 community work session; community input continued; Alternative Concepts I and II presented at the August 22, 2023 work session; summary of community input on alternatives from the August 22, 2023 work session and 30-day online review; summary of input on the draft Master Plan from the October 12, 2023 community work session; community input continued; draft Master Plan – wildlife corridors, trailheads, special use areas, and trail system; draft connectivity plan; summary of community input on draft plan from the October 17, 2023 community work session, 30-day online review, and email responses; summary of input on the public review plan; community input continued; public review of the draft Master and Management Plan; summary of input on the public review draft from the January 30-day online review, neighborhood focused meeting, and emails; the recommended Master and Management Plan; Master Plan Table of Contents and Appendix Table of Contents; plan overview; wildlife corridors and trailheads; wildlife corridors and existing social route network; trailheads; Chamberlain Trail, Park to Peak Trail and North/South Trail; neighborhood connections, trail hubs and special use areas; multi-use, single-use and directional trails; single-

use hiking trails; multi-use, and mountain bike single-use and directional trails; trail loop options and connections from the North Trailhead; trail loop options and connections from the Quarry Trailhead; trail loop options and connections from the Orchard Valley Trailhead; recommended connectivity plan; integrating an adaptive management approach; adaptive management diagram; examples of potential adaptive management changes and process for changes; high priority projects; medium and low priority projects; and finally, next steps and upcoming public engagement.

[Link to Agenda Packet](#)

Following the presentation, the Committee had a robust discussion, as well as a few questions for presenters. Some of the questions and comments included:

- Committee members asked for clarification on the special use area for paragliding, including how the special use area was determined. David answered that during the process, he and Priscilla worked closely with stakeholders from the paragliding community to determine how their needs could be addressed while also providing overall safety to both paragliders and the surrounding community.
- Committee members asked what the basis for the size of the quarry lot was. David explained that the original intent was to use the already disturbed area.
- In a conversation about potential parking lots, Britt Haley, Director, made it clear that the Department would intend to implement smaller lots. If time and data were to prove a need for expanded parking, that could be addressed through the adaptive management aspect of the plan. Britt reiterated that once a natural area is developed for parking, to undo that development is a lot of work so the Department would rather start on a smaller scale and keep an eye on needs.
- There was a request from the Committee that security of parking areas be as definitive as possible in the final plan, as safety concerns were a reoccurring theme in much of the input received from citizens. Eric Becker provided a brief update on the current security contract in place for the company that is in charge of securing gates at night. He has asked their team to adjust their locking schedules so Blodgett will be addressed earlier in the evening, which will hopefully help deter some of the after-hours activity.
- A request was made from a Committee member to remove divisive language, including the phrase “rogue trails.”
- A request was made from a Committee member to aggregate public comment in future master plans so the Committee can better understand how data was gathered, and to see mechanisms of collection.

Citizen Discussion

Ray Reilly, citizen, asked for information on how to send public comments to the Committee. Anna Bingman, Staff Assistant, provided the information on how to reach the Committee, as well as staff.

Closed Executive Session

In accord with City Charter art. III, § 3-60(d) and its incorporated Colorado Open Meetings Act, C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(a), (b) and (e), the TOPS Working Committee, in Open Session, is to determine whether it will hold a Closed Executive Session. The issue to be discussed involves consultation with the City Attorney, discussing strategy for negotiations and instructing negotiators regarding a potential Parks real estate acquisition. The Chair shall poll the TOPS Working Committee members, and, upon consent of two-thirds of the members present, may conduct a Closed Executive Session. In the event any Committee member is participating electronically or telephonically in the Closed Executive Session, each Committee member participating in the Closed Executive Session shall affirmatively state for the record that no other member of the public not authorized to participate in the Closed Executive Session is present or able to hear the matters discussed as part of the Closed Executive Session. If consent to the Closed Executive Session is not given, the item may be discussed in Open Session or withdrawn from consideration.

Caitlin Moldenhauer, Associate Attorney of the City Attorney's Office, stated that in accord with City Charter art. III, § 3-60(d) and its incorporated Colorado Open Meetings Act, C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(a)(b) and (e), TOPS Working Committee, in Open Session, is to determine whether it will hold a Closed Executive Session. The issues to be discussed involve a potential Parks Department real estate acquisition.

Chairman Bob Falcone polled the TOPS Working Committee regarding the desire to proceed with a Closed Executive Session. At least two-thirds of the TOPS Working Committee agreed to proceed in a Closed Executive Session.

The Committee moved into a Closed Executive Session at 10:18 a.m.

The Committee move out of a Closed Executive Session at 11:26 a.m.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion to adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 11:27 a.m.

1st – Bob Shafer, 2nd – Paula Krantz, Approved, Unanimously.