



**Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 11, 2020**

Members Present: Ron Ilgen, Carol Beckman, Dr. Daniel Bowan, Abby Simpson, Michael Phan, David Siegel, Jason Rupinski, Sarah Bryarly

Members Absent: Greg Thornton

Alternates Present: Larry Bogue, Lisa Wieland, Andrea Perry

Staff Present: Karen Palus, Kurt Schroeder, Kim King, Britt Haley, Anna White, Connie Schmeisser, David Deitemeyer, Kelly Rajab

Called to Order: Board Chair Ron Ilgen brought the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

Citizen Discussion

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, congratulated the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department for their success on getting approval for the Mountain Shadows Open Space acquisition. He also acknowledged Medicine Wheel's involvement with the Austin Bluffs Open Space Master and Management Plan process, and stated they were pleased with the plan. He said he had joined Regional Parks staff for walk-throughs of new trails and said volunteer work days would be resuming soon.

Approval of Minutes – May 14, 2020

Motion – To approve the May 14, 2020 minutes with proposed corrections.

1st – Carol Beckman, 2nd – Jason Rupinski, Approved, 8 to 0.

Presentation Items

Cemetery Fees and Charges Recommendations (Presented by Kim King, Recreation and Administration Manager)

Kim King, Recreation and Administration Manager, presented the proposed 2021 fees and charges for the cemetery enterprise to the Board. This presentation included a brief overview of the history and logistics of both Fairview and Evergreen Cemeteries; a chart representing service levels from 2005 through 2019; revenues and expenditures; cemetery endowment; the fund balance; the fees and charges process; the City User Fee policy detailing cost recovery levels; proposed fees; market data; a look at increasing expenses at both cemeteries; and finally, the timeline of the fees and charges process.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Panorama Park PLDO Supplemental Appropriation (Presented by Connie Schmeisser, Landscape Architect II)

Connie Schmeisser, Landscape Architect II, presented the Panorama Park Construction Supplemental Appropriation to the Board. This presentation included the 2019 Master Plan; the project overview; construction funding; and finally, the fund balance.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Action Items

Wolf Ranch – Valemount Park Master Plan (Presented by Chris Lieber, Principal at NES Landscape Architecture)

Chris Lieber, Principal at NES Landscape Architecture, presented the Board with the final Valemount Park Master Plan for the Wolf Ranch Subdivision.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Board member Carol Beckman thanked Chris for considering her previous comments and adding a bike rack to the plan. She asked what water would be used to irrigate the park. Chris responded that it would be raw water from a lake in the Wolf Ranch development. Her final comment was that thinner strips of grass, such as a right-of-way between the street and the sidewalk could be difficult to irrigate. Chris replied that while they understood those potential difficulties, the neighbors of the park wanted to keep the consistency of the neighborhood landscaping.

Motion: To approve the Valemount Park Master Plan (park design).

1st – Jason Rupinski, 2nd – Sarah Bryarly, Approved, 8 to 0.

2021 Capital Improvement Project Recommendations (Presented by Kelly Rajab, Finance Analyst)

Kelly Rajab, Finance Analyst, presented the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services 2021 proposed capital improvement budget. This presentation included information on the budget process; the Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) proposed 2021 CIP budget; the CTF fund balance; the updated Public Land Dedication Ordinance (PLDO); the existing PLDO Ordinance; the Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA) proposed 2021 CIP budget; information on PPRTA II; the Trails, Open Space and Parks Fund (TOPS) proposed 2021 CIP budget; the TOPS fund summary; TOPS fund future revenue; estimated 2021 TOPS revenue; TOPS administration and

maintenance; the TOPS trails category; proposed 2021 trails; the TOPS parks category; Panorama Park as an example of a TOPS park; the TOPS open space category; the TOPS open space wayfinding program; information about funding for the stewardship program including education, the ranger program, land management, and resource management; stewardship funding history; and finally, stewardship funding as a percentage of open space revenue.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Board member Carol Beckman noted that this budget presentation did not include the Panorama Park supplemental appropriation, and asked if our budget would still work if we subtracted that money. Kelly answered yes. Carol's next question was for a quick PLDO update. Karen Palus responded that the Department was waiting on appraisals from Real Estate Services, and once they arrive, the ordinance can be formed. Carol asked if there would be a new ordinance in 2021. Karen said we were hopeful for that. Carol then noted that we had previously been using money from the TOPS Parks category alternating between playground improvements and irrigation improvements, but in the last few years had gone primarily to Panorama Park. Carol asked if we had a plan to move back to that alternating plan. Kurt Schroeder, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager, answered that the intent is to move back, but money that had gone towards Panorama Park had been used for irrigation and playground improvements. Carol asked if by 2022 we hoped to be back on that alternating schedule. Kurt responded that would depend on the size and scope of irrigation systems we would be replacing. Carol's next question was where the funding for the Manitou Incline reservation system would be coming from. Karen answered that this money would be applied to our FEMA and Cares Act Funds, which are part of the Covid-19 stimulus packages. However, anything that would exceed those available funds have to be funded elsewhere.

Board Vice Chair David Siegel asked if there was any feedback from the TOPS Working Committee. Kelly answered that there was not a lot of feedback, just questions about how we predicted funding for 2021. David stated he had no major concerns with the budget and was happy to see an increase in the budget for public art maintenance. He added that public art is underfunded and he would like to see even more of an increase in that budget in the future.

Board member Daniel Bowan made a request to see how much maintenance dollars come from the general fund versus the various capital improvement sources. He said a lot of capital improvement seems to be swallowed by maintenance, which limits our ability to grow our parks system. He said a presentation and approval happening congruently can make approving a budget difficult and would like to see this as a presentation item one month and an action item the next. He added he would like to see a five-year scope of projects, as well as projects in the pipeline. Karen responded that we would provide Daniel that information, as well as the differentiation between operations and maintenance and our funding sources. Daniel asked how regimented CTF spending is. Karen answered that it has more flexibility than TOPS spending but still has some rules on how we can spend that money.

Susan Davies, Executive Director for the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), was very happy to see money allocated to Boulder Park. She asked about the Parks Inventory Assessment, and where we are with that. Kurt said we would report back to the Board next month.

Motion: To approve the 2021 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services CIP Budget as presented.

1st – Sarah Bryarly, 2nd – Jason Rupinski, Approved, 8 to 0.

Downtown Historic Parks Master Plan (Presented by Connie Schmeisser, Landscape Architect II, Amanda Jeter, Lead Park Designer at Design Workshop, and Anna Laybourn, Principal at Design Workshop)

Connie Schmeisser, Landscape Architect II, Amanda Jeter - Lead Park Designer at Design Workshop, and Anna Laybourn - Principal at Design Workshop, presented the Colorado Springs Downtown Historic Parks Master plan for Acacia, Antlers, and Alamo Square Parks. This presentation included the project timeline; what would come after potential approval by the Board; Master Plan engagement numbers; a snapshot of community support and coordination; survey findings; digital open house participation; final preferred alternatives from the digital open house survey; how the project has addressed concerns from the community; Master Plan refinements since the last Parks Advisory Board meeting; specific refinements for each park; the preferred plan for each park; perspective views of Alamo Square and Acacia Park; and finally, the next steps for the project.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Board Vice Chair David Siegel stated he felt fortunate to be a Board representative for this project. He spoke specifically to the band shell in Acacia Park, and felt encouraged by the feasibility study. He added the band shell was a transformative piece of Acacia Park. He did request that a third priority of the feasibility study be usability. He hoped that usability, history, and cost would be included. He felt that there were a few things that could be done to the band shell to make it much more user-friendly. David works with the Levitt Foundation that helps create amphitheaters in urban areas and would like to look into help from them. He also supported the idea of a management plan separate from the master plan.

Board member Carol Beckman stated she was glad to see the addition of the bike share station and bike parking. She noted that the Downtown Partnership letter of support acknowledges the Pike Ride station and having safe access to bike-friendly streets. Some of the diagrams showed the bike parking and bike share stations as being placed off Nevada, which she did not feel was a bike-friendly street. The letter from the Pioneers Museum Board was happy to see the preservation of the historic walkways, which is not part of the plan for Acacia Park. Carol asked what the thought process was regarding removal of the diagonal walkways. Connie Schmeisser answered that the design intent was to maintain the cross access walkability, but not on two parallel lines crossing the park. In final design, this can be refined, but the intent was to bring people to the center of the park. Carol also wanted to confirm that the playground in Antlers

Park would be free, as earlier plans made it seem like there could potentially be a fee for use. Connie responded that the intent was never to charge for the playground, unless it was being used for something like a special event, and that process would be refined with the Special Events division if necessary.

Board member Daniel Bowan commented that he liked and appreciated the revisions to Antlers Park to incorporate the loop-walk and connectivity to America the Beautiful and Monument Valley Parks. Daniel read a statement, which said, "The development of the Acacia Park Master Plan misses the mark on the values and purposes of our City's most valuable and important urban park. As General Palmer pointed out, 'the purpose of our park system is to connect residents to the discoveries, pleasures, and peace nature provides.' He deeded the parks to the City with the expressive desire to prohibit alcohol, building of new roads and streets, and building on parkland. Along these lines, I think the current master plan is overdeveloped and more plaza-like than park-like. Overall, I think there is too much impervious surface (concrete, artificial turf, skating rink) in the Acacia Park master plan. As Colorado Springs struggles with storm water challenges, it seems irresponsible to me as a Parks Board representative. The NRPA has recently emphasized urban parks as serving a key role in green infrastructure, and this plan falls short of that objective. Looking at the public survey data, the concept of a great lawn scored higher than a permanent ice rink, and I agree with this notion. Furthermore, the most preferred character style was naturalistic, and I do not think the new design honors this desire. I think a permanent ice rink is a limited utility and too narrow of a focus. I also think the master plan comes short of honoring the legacy of the band shell and its place in the heritage of Colorado Springs. Overall, in today's world, I believe the need for our city's residents to have access to a more natural-like park in order to connect with nature is greater now than ever." Connie Schmeisser said she appreciated his comments and said she hoped the future refinements would help to find the balance between nature and amenities.

Board Chair Ron Ilgen was very excited to see the gold star on Antlers Park. He asked how these parks would be involved in the upcoming sesquicentennial. Connie answered that Alamo will be used the most for sesquicentennial celebrations.

Len Kendall, Director of Planning and Mobility for the Downtown Partnership, commented that he had been involved in the design process and community input and was very satisfied with their inclusion in the project. He did agree with Carol's comments about the bike share and need to place it near a bike-friendly street. He said he would continue to work with Pike Ride to support this plan and find a better option.

Motion: To approve the Downtown Historic Parks Master Plan for: Acacia, Antlers, and Alamo Square Parks.

1st – David Siegel, 2nd – Jason Rupinski, Approved, 7 to 1.

Austin Bluffs Open Space (Presented by David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect)

David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, presented the final Austin Bluffs Open Space Master and Management Plan to the Board. This presentation included information about the project team; the property overview; project goals; the planning process; various Master Plan recommendations; proposed trail ratings; and finally, funding for the project.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Board member Carol Beckman asked what concerns the Palmer Land Trust had expressed. David answered that the main concern was with e-bikes being allowed on urban trails conflicting with the deed restriction of the property. E-bikes are allowed on tier 2 trails, but not on this property at this time. Carol's next question was the name of the ascent/descent trail, as it is capitalized in some parts of the master plan but not others. David responded this was a descriptive during the planning process, but not the name of the trail and that a naming process would take place in the future if this master plan was approved. Carol asked about the bike-optimized trails and the statement the plan makes that "provides for separation of users by mode of transport." Carol said her interpretation of this statement is that bikers and hikers will be on separate trails, but the consultant said that was not the case. Her concern is that bike optimized trails would be bike only, but there would need to be adequate signage. David said the intent for the bike-optimized trails, would be 1.1 miles of multi-use, multi-direction trails and in the future, bikers would likely prefer to use those trails in one direction only. A hiker could still use this trail if they wanted to. Carol asked how having the bike-optimized trail reduced signage. David said that was the advice from Tony Boone, but David had not had a received a clarification. Carol asked what signage could be reduced if hikers are still allowed. David answered that with the intent that most of the users would be going in one direction; there would be less signage from the other direction. Carol suggested that the motion could be amended to remove the phrase "by mode of transport" from "separation of users by mode of transport" and "less signage needed by bidirectional trails" in the master plan. This would remove the impression that we wanted to keep hikers separate from bikers. David said he would support this, as it does not modify the intent or purpose of the bike-optimized trails. She thanked David for his hard work with the consultants.

Susan Davies, Executive Director of Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), said TOSC was very pleased with this plan.

Amended motion: Recommend to adopt the Austin Bluffs Open Space Master and Management Plan with two changes, both on page 60 of the plan. The two changes would be the removal of the phrase "mode of transport" and "less signage needed than bidirectional trails."

1st – Carol Beckman, 2nd – David Siegel, Approved, 8 to 0.

Staff Reports

Karen Palus, Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Director, gave the following Covid-19 Update:

- Sports activities and day camps have been moving forward.
- El Paso County Commissioners and El Paso County Health put together a variance request to open larger facilities, which would include visitor centers.
- We are working to open up spray grounds and pools.
- Karen and Kurt Schroeder will be joining a work session with the Manitou Springs City Council related to the closure of the Manitou Incline in relation to Covid-19. They will be offering a modified opening solution, which will seek to remove the Incline from the current emergency order. This solution will address health and safety issues, as well as continue to encourage social distancing measures. Karen and Kurt have also offered an interim reservation system that will be free to help manage the amount of participants heading up the Incline at one time. This would limit forty-five people to head up at a time in thirty-minute increments. Manitou has also been asked to address the parking issues with the Incline and the Ruxton corridor. Karen asked for a Board consensus on the recommendations moving forward. Board Vice Chair David Siegel asked about thoughts around ending the reservation system when the Covid-19 pandemic passes, or if it does not pass. Karen answered that Manitou would like to see a permanent reservation system; however the City would like to only address this issue in relation to Covid-19. If the reservation system works well, it could be added in the updates to the Master and Management Plan for the Incline. Karen hoped the dialogue could continue between the City of Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs regarding the future of the Incline. David said his hesitation with this proposal was not having a strategy to step away from a reservation system. Karen clarified that this was only an interim system during the pandemic, but could be reevaluated for long term use. Carol agreed with David, that an Incline reservation system needs to be interim. Daniel also agreed with this, adding that a reservation system would not change the existing management plan. David's final question was if there was a plan for staff managing the Incline to have sensitivity and de-escalation training. Karen answered that we practice soft enforcement, but we will look into that training with Scott Abbott, Regional Parks Supervisor, for our rangers. Board member Sarah Bryarly asked if there are people bypassing staff once a reservation system is in place, if Manitou would help with ticketing enforcement. Karen responded that Manitou stated they had no funding for enforcement so El Paso County Sheriff's office would be used for enforcement.

Board Business

Carol Beckman – Carol gave a brief overview of the TOPS Working Committee's review of the 2021 CIP Budget Recommendations. She mentioned that the TOPS Chair, Lily Weissgold, had to depart from the TOPS Committee and Bob Falcone moved to Committee Chair and Nancy Hobbs was nominated for and accepted the Vice Chair position. She added that Britt had given

an update on the Reserve at Corral Bluffs filings. Finally, Carol updated the Board that construction on the Camp Creek detention pond is almost complete.

David Siegel – David said that LART had met since the last Parks Advisory Board meeting, and their focus is support toward contracted entities. He said there is a subgroup of the Public Art Commission working on a plan to activate neighborhoods during the pandemic through a chalk art competition. David wanted to speak briefly on the racial equity work happening across the country currently. He felt the Board could do more and that parks are a place of equity, but that society as a whole should figure out how to make parks more inclusive. He felt now would be a good time to think about how to make parks more inclusive, such as giving park staff implicit bias and de-escalation training. He also wanted the Board to reexamine how it could be a Board with more representation for people of all races. Board Chair Ron Ilgen asked staff if there had been a position stated. Karen Palus answered that there was not a position statement, but that we continue to try to provide equal opportunities in our parks for people of all backgrounds, and she would get in touch with City Communications.

Board Chair Ron Ilgen asked if there had been a motion at City Council to defund some organizations that had already received LART funding. David answered that any event that was funded that would not be happening would have to return the money to the LART fund. Refunds that LART may receive will be redirected to contract entities.

Ron Ilgen – Ron asked if there had been any vandalism during the recent marches. Kurt Schroeder confirmed that there was some vandalism to windows at the Pioneers Museum and the base of the General Palmer statue, but overall very little vandalism. All of this was taken care of very quickly. Ron's next update was about the Protect Our Parks Initiative discussion at the City Council work session. Karen added that the discussion was mostly pertaining to what was on the property list. Finally, Ron congratulated the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department on the successful approval for the acquisition of the Mountain Shadows Open Space through City Council.

Michael Phan – Had to leave the meeting before the Downtown Historic Parks Master Plan, but gave approval for both the Downtown Historic Parks Master Plan and the Austin Bluffs Master and Management Plan.

Abby Simpson - Abby echoed David's comments about racial equity. She said she would like to see a statement from Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services and would support it. Karen said anything formal would have to go through City Communications. David Siegel offered to be part of this process, but encouraged more action instead of just a statement.

Adjournment

Motion: Move to adjourn the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meeting at 1:31 p.m.

1st – Carol Beckman, 2nd – Jason Rupinski, Approved, 7-0.