



**Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 10, 2021**

Members Present: Ron Ilgen, Carol Beckman, Dr. Daniel Bowan, Larry Bogue, David Siegel, Sarah Bryarly, Greg Thornton, Abby Simpson, Jason Rupinski

Alternates Present: Andrea Perry, Lisa Weiland

Staff Present: Karen Palus, Kurt Schroeder, Kim King, Britt Haley, Anna White, Scott Abbott, Kelly Rajab, Lisa O'Boyle

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

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)(b) and (e), the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, in Open Session, is to determine whether it will hold an electronic Closed Executive Session. The issue to be discussed involves consultation with the City Attorney and City staff for the purpose of the lease, transfer or sale of property and determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations, and instructing negotiators regarding a public facilities project.

The Chairperson of the Board shall poll the Board members, and, upon consent of two-thirds of the members present, may conduct an electronic Closed Executive Session. Each Board member participating in the electronic Closed Executive Session shall affirmatively state for the record that no other member of the public not authorized to participate in the electronic Closed Executive Session is present or able to hear the matters discussed as part of the electronic Closed Executive Session. If consent to the electronic Closed Executive Session is not given, the item may be discussed in Open Session or withdrawn from consideration.

The Board agreed to move into executive session at 7:38 a.m.

The Board agreed to move out of executive session at 8:45 a.m.

Citizen Discussion

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, noted that the boulder that had slid on to Gold Camp Road had been a nice deterrent for traffic in North Cheyenne Cañon. He said he hoped staff would look into potential road closures in this area anyway to help with the capacity of the park.

Bill Beagle, President of the Incline Friends, submitted comments via email before the meeting. His comments read as follows: "I wish to address, once again, the Incline reservation system. As you all know this policy was predicated on the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the fact that many people are now vaccinated. Given the fact that Manitou Springs has lifted its mask mandate and given the widely acknowledged fact that we are all generally safer being outside in the fresh air, we see no reason to continue this reservation system. This time of year people are coming here with the express purpose of doing the Incline, having planned their vacation around it. We consistently get messages from people with questions and concerns. Some are having trouble finding the reservation site on the Internet. Many of them, unaware that they need a reservation, travel a long way only to find they may not be able to climb the Incline. The attendants who are very well trained and generally very courteous do their best to slot them in to any openings but in some cases we are reading that people wait up to two hours, in this heat, for an opportunity. The reason there are openings is that no-shows (those reservations that go unclaimed) are still running at 30-40%. That means when people do find the reservation system online it appears that all available slots are booked and they get discouraged or worry about whether they'll be able to check the Incline off their bucket list. As you may be aware, early morning reservations were increased by 40 an hour, nevertheless overall reservations remain the same, equating to 1,025 per day. On any given summer Saturday or Sunday this is at least a 50 percent reduction in traditional usage which we feel is wholly unfair and unwarranted. Lastly I will remind you that the reservation system is a significant financial burden to the city of Colorado Springs, which, I believe, shoulders the entire cost of the process. For all of these reasons, Incline Friends remains opposed to the reservation system and we would like to see it eliminated."

Approval of Minutes – May 13, 2021 meeting minutes.

Motion – To approve the May 13, 2021 minutes.

1st – Carol Beckman, 2nd – Ron Ilgen, Approved, Unanimously.

Action Items

2022 Capital Improvement Project Recommendations (Presented by Kelly Rajab, Analyst II)

Kelly Rajab, Analyst II, presented the Board with the 2022 Capital Improvement Recommendations. This presentation included informing the budget process; the Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) Proposed 2022 CIP Budget; CTF 2021 Fund Balance estimate; PLDO (Parkland Dedication Ordinance); PLDO 2021 Fund Balance estimate; Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA) Proposed 2022 CIP Budget; PPRTA II; Trails, Open Space and Parks Fund (TOPS) Proposed 2022 CIP Budget; January 2021 Revenue Report; April 2021 Revenue Report; TOPS Fund Summary 2020 Estimated Fund Balance;

TOPS Fund Future Revenue from 2022 to 2025; Preliminary 2022 Revenue; TOPS Administration and Maintenance; the TOPS Trails Category; upcoming trail projects; TOPS Parks Category; upcoming parks projects; TOPS Open Space Category; upcoming open space projects; Stewardship Program education; Stewardship Program rangers; Stewardship Program land management; Stewardship Program resource management; Stewardship funding history; and finally, Stewardship Funding percent of Open Space revenue.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation here](#)

Board member Carol Beckman asked what effects the budget reduction for the CTF funds had been having on maintenance. Kurt Schroeder, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager commented that the reduction has resulted in less regular maintenance. Kurt further explained how the reduction affects some renovation projects that would otherwise be done. Carol then asked if there were any salary cuts in 2020 for staff. Kelly responded that there were not cuts, but instead a hiring delay and freeze. The hiring freeze has been lifted, though. Carol noted that there had been a mention in the presentation about revenue projections continuing to increase, and how this money comes back to the Department. Kelly responded that it depends on how much the increase is, and if it is significant, some capital improvement projects could be added and would be presented again to the Board. If it is not significant, some adjustments could be made to the operating accounts as we get more information from the budget office. However these adjustments are unknown at this time. Carol commented that she was disappointed to see no money allocated to fire mitigation. She added it would be nice to have TOPS money for parks go to capital needs identified in the Jacob's study rather than have most of the parks \$1,300,000 go to operations expenses.

Board Chair Ron Ilgen clarified that there are no PLDO projects funded in 2022, and asked why. Kelly responded that PLDO is only to be used for acquisition of park property or development of community parks, and there are no plans for that in 2022.

Board member Dr. Daniel Bowan asked if the list of parks we need to build are not getting the PLDO dollars. Kelly reiterated it is for acquisition of park property. Kurt also added that this money can go to neighborhood parks and renovation of existing parks. With the changes to PLDO made in 2020, staff did not feel comfortable purchasing or developing anything in 2022. Daniel asked if we need more land to develop the parks that are on the list to be built. Kurt said we are typically fortunate to be given acreage rather than having to acquire land. Daniel said he was frustrated to seeing 72% of the Parks Category budget going to maintenance instead of new construction, though he did understand where the deficiencies are in funding. He said in the future, he would like to see park improvements, playgrounds, and irrigation included. In regards to the Open Space category, he was hoping to see funds for the master planning process for the Mountain Shadows open space. Kelly answered that Britt won't have the staff to work on that master plan process in 2022, but is hopeful for 2023. Daniel's final comment was that he would also like to see some master planning money go to Corral Bluffs in the near future as well.

Motion: To recommend to City Council this 2022 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services CIP budget as presented.

1st – Jason Rupinski, 2nd – Abby Simpson, Approved, Unanimously.

Staff Updates

E-Bike Pilot Program

Kurt Schroeder informed the Board that the e-Bike pilot program is currently on hold while the City Attorney's Office reviews the language in Chapter 10 and how it applied to Chapter 4 of the City Code. Staff is working with the City Attorney's Office to come to a definition before the program is rolled out again. Staff is still accepting comments from citizens on the issue, though. Additional data is also being collected right now.

Board member Carol Beckman asked if the City Attorney's Office has come out with an opinion yet or if they are working on it still. Kurt answered that it is still in process. Carol asked about a presentation, and Kurt said there will be a presentation for the Board on the City Attorney's opinion once it's done. Carol asked if along with speed control, if the different type of electronic transportation devices will be counted. Kurt did say yes, though it can sometimes be hard to tell the classes between the bikes.

Board Chair Ron Ilgen asked if the delay was due to the language in the TOPS ordinance prohibiting motor vehicles from being on TOPS properties. Kurt answered that this is one component.

Board member Dr. Daniel Bowan commented that the Board should be able to advise and consult with staff on programs like this one rather than this just be an administrative decision, and raised concerns similar to what the public has voiced. He thought the process could have been handled better, which he felt could erode some trust in the public process. He felt a little more planning could have eliminated a lot of errors that have been made.

Sesquicentennial Update

Kim King, Recreation and Administration Manager, updated the Board on the latest happenings with the Sesquicentennial celebration. Beards, Bonnets, and Brews will be hosted at Rockledge Ranch on June 12. Volunteers are still needed for most of the sessions. There will be a gala hosted by the Chamber, as well as a downtown celebration on July 31. Additionally, several breweries and distilleries are working on commemorative items. The "Then and Now" Exhibit is opening at the 21C Library at the end of the month, as well.

Board Business

November Ballot Recommendation

Anna White, Staff Assistant, reiterated the motions that had been made at the June 2 Parks Advisory Board Workshop considering the potential November Ballot Recommendation for

TOPS. The approved motions read as follows:

Motion #1: To support a 0.15% tax increase for a total amount of 0.25% and a twenty year extension of the Trails, Open Space, and Parks tax.

1st – Carol Beckman, 2nd – David Siegel, Approved, Unanimously.

Motion #2: The TOPS Tax be allocated with the 3% for administration and 6% for maintenance and stewardship off the top, 30% for parks, 30% for trails, 40% for open space, with no more than 30% of any category to be spent on maintenance for all parks, trails, and open spaces, along with City Council continuing a maintenance of effort for general funding Parks support if the increase passes.

1st – David Siegel, 2nd – Dr. Daniel Bowan, Approved, Unanimously.

Board member Jason Rupinski asked for clarification on what the maintenance of effort comment meant. Board Vice Chair David Siegel answered that the maintenance of effort comment came up in one of the Presidential Parks Sustainability Commission (PPSC) meetings, and that if the TOPS increase was passed, there not be a decrease in the general fund support for the Department. According to the Trust for Public Land, many cities write this kind of language into motions when a tax increase is considered. The maintenance of effort would put a floor on general fund support for the Department. Essentially, increasing the TOPS tax does not increase general fund support.

Board member Dr. Daniel Bowan added that the maintenance of effort can't be mandated, but rather is linguistics added to the motion to continue the conversation. Daniel added that at the last PPSC meeting, Commission members were given options to choose from levels of funding given different increases and how the Commission viewed those options. The facilitator had provided the feedback from the options. Kurt Schroeder let Daniel know that staff had not been presented with these options or the feedback from Commission members. Not knowing what the figures are, Kurt said it may not be the best time to share the preferred options with the Board. Daniel stated he was frustrated that the communication from the Commission meeting had been lacking, and that staff had not been notified of the options given at the Commission until they were discussed in the June 2 workshop. Daniel said he would share this feedback with the Commission. David Siegel shared this frustration. Kurt Schroeder said he could share the information with the rest of the Board.

Meetings Moving Forward

The City has now authorized that in-person meetings can begin to take place again beginning in July. Hybrid and online meetings, however, are still an option for those wishing to continue virtually. Anna White, Staff Assistant, asked Board members to email her their meeting preference ahead of the July Parks Advisory Board Meeting.

Carol Beckman – Carol reviewed the TOPS Working Committee meeting, and at that meeting, Kurt had mentioned the Department hires extra police help to enforce parking in North

Cheyenne Cañon. Carol asked why the Department would have to pay extra for this when it is a City road and parking lot. Kurt responded that the Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) does not have the capacity to make it a priority issue. While it is a priority for us, it is not for CSPD. The extra patrolling ensures that the lots get the attention they need when necessary. Carol then asked what the status of the Incline Reservation System is, as capacity restrictions state-wide have been lifted. Kurt said that while Manitou has lifted restrictions, the reservation system will stay in place. Other concerns from Manitou are traffic congestion on the Ruxton Corridor, along with the Cog Railway beginning operations again. However, Carol noted that a traffic study done by Manitou Springs indicated that the biggest contributor to traffic on Ruxton is residential traffic, and the Cog Railway and Incline bring in about an even number of visitors, less than the residential traffic. This study was done before the free shuttle was so popular with Incline users. Carol said typically Incline users walk or take the shuttle. Kurt responded that regardless of where the traffic is coming from, it still is an issue that Manitou has brought up in the discussions about the Incline and keeping the reservation system. Kurt also said the number of calls for emergency services on the Incline have greatly decreased since the implementation of the reservation system. Kurt said there is still a 20% no-show rate, the reservation system can now bank no-shows and allow slots for people later in the day, who may be walk-ups. Kurt said we are remaining sensitive to the concerns of our partners in Manitou. Board Chair Ron Ilgen asked Kurt if Manitou Springs City Council had any specific feelings about the Incline. Kurt responded that they want to see the reservation system continue. Board member Sarah Bryarly said the Incline Friends are not opposed to the reservation system, as long as citizens are not being turned away. The Incline Friends would like to see a public process moving forward so numbers aren't as restrictive. Board Vice Chair David Siegel said he was disappointed that there is no public process with this as it continues. David said this goes against the master plan and having no public process could create distrust in the Department. With restrictions lifted, he thought a master plan amendment process would be better. Kurt stated that the master plan was mute on any issue regarding a reservation system.

David Siegel – David asked for an update on the Westside Community Center. Kim King responded that the RFP is still continuing, and there is a meeting coming up with the organization that was second in line as they continue the negotiation process. She hopes after the meeting, an announcement can be made. David asked Kim if she knew any other projects on the Mayor's ARPA list and if the Board would have to approve anything. Kim said she was unable to speak on the projects on that list, but believed approval would lie between the Mayor and City Council.

Adjournment

Motion: Move to adjourn the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meeting at 10:51 a.m.

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