



**Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, October 8, 2020**

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

**Members Absent:** Abby Simpson

**Alternates Present:** Andrea Perry, Lisa Weiland

**Staff Present:** Karen Palus, Kurt Schroeder, Kim King, Britt Haley, Anna White, Kelly Rajab, Connie Schmeisser, Matt Mayberry, Carly Kobasiar

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

**Citizen Discussion**

Susan Davies, Executive Director for the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), reminded the Board about ballot measures 2B and 2C on the upcoming November ballot. She said TOSC supports the 2C Council Super-majority option. However, she encouraged the Board to either vote "yes" on both of the options or "yes" to only one, but not to vote "no" on the other as it could cause both measures to fail. Susan then informed the Board that the discussion around E-bikes on trails would begin again soon, and that Scott Abbott, Regional Parks Supervisor, would be leading the discussion in an upcoming meeting. Susan asked for an update on the Jacob's Park Infrastructure study. Kurt Schroeder, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager, responded that the study went great and a lot of data was collected. Staff is gathering their comments to send back to complete the final draft, which will hopefully be presented to the Board next month. Finally, Susan asked the question of Nor'Wood Development Group's overall master plan for Banning Lewis Ranch, but said she would stay on the call to find out after the action item.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, thanked staff for their help on multiple successful volunteer work days, with the most recent work day being a repair day at the El Pomar Youth Bike Park. He also commented on the work done in Palmer Park ahead of the Apex Bike Race, and thanked David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, for his help. Finally, Cory thanked everyone who was able to attend Medicine Wheel's meeting with recognition for former TOPS Working Committee member, Lee Milner.

Duke Brunmeir, citizen, informed the Board about an activity he would like to see made legal in City parks known as highlining, with North Cheyenne Cañon being the park he would specifically

like to use for this activity. Highlining is the use of flat webbing attached between trees or rocks, suspended in the air, with the participant harnessed in. He sent examples of highlining and its safety measures to the Board. Duke has been safely practicing highlining himself for over thirty years and would like to see it fall under current climbing permits and guidelines in City parks. Scott Abbott thanked Duke for bringing this forward so staff could do more research into it, and are happy to work through the process of potentially making this a legal activity. Board member Dr. Daniel Bowan asked what currently makes this activity illegal. Kurt Schroeder responded that City Code 9.9.102 prohibits attaching items like hammocks or slacklines to trees. Dr. Bowan then asked how other municipalities have responded to this activity. Duke used Boulder as an example, saying that after multiple studies on tree protection and safety, an agreement was made that highlining is a legal and safe activity. Duke offered to send more information to Board members, as well.

### **Approval of Minutes – September 10, 2020.**

#### **Motion – To approve the September 10, 2020 minutes.**

1<sup>st</sup> – Jason Rupinski, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Carol Beckman, Approved, Unanimously

### **Action Item**

**Banning Lewis Ranch (BLR) North Master Plan** (Presented by Connie Schmeisser, Landscape Architect II; Tim Seibert, Vice President at Nor'wood Development Group; and Andrea Barlow, Principal at N.E.S. Landscape Architects)

Connie Schmeisser, Landscape Architect II, and Andrea Barlow, Principal at N.E.S. Landscape Architects, presented the Board with the Banning Lewis Ranch (BLR) North Master Plan. This presentation included the request of N.E.S. Inc. on behalf of Nor'wood Development Group, for the Parks Advisory Board approval of the Parkland provision identified for this Master Plan upon compliance with the Parkland Dedication Ordinance (PLDO); the annexation site location; a map and pictures of BLR North today; a master plan for the annexation site; the master plan for public parks; the neighborhood park catchment; a map of parks and trails; the parkland dedication requirements; community park potential with pictures of possible amenities; and finally, what a potential utility easement would look like.

[Link to PowerPoint presentation here](#)

Board member Carol Beckman asked Connie's opinion of the three usable acres for the neighborhood park and amenities. Connie responded she was satisfied and thought the three acres would be sufficient. Typical neighborhood parks are three and a half acres, so Connie believes once these are designed, everything that typically goes into a neighborhood park can be incorporated. In regards to the community park, Carol asked if the sixteen undevelopable acres of the community park is the correct number. Andrea answered those acres are not necessarily undevelopable, and they would likely go into that corridor and create a drainage. This corridor would be over nine acres and trails would be on either side of that corridor. Of the

sixteen acres adjacent to Banning Lewis Parkway, there is another area of seven acres that could be used for trailhead parking or a dog park. Andrea would not describe the area as unusable. Carol asked if this was part of the storm water plan. Andrea responded yes, and will ultimately be a way to deliver storm water to detention ponds. Connie added that as of now, this area does not have the typical overlay with an inner and outer buffer, and there are no streamside overlays in this plan. There is one small area for floodplain on the southeast side of the plan. Carol then asked if Connie was satisfied with the nine acres not being used as a trail corridor. Connie responded that she is happy with it, and that the surrounding areas add a lot of character to the overall plan. They can utilize the space well. Carol asked if three sports fields are typical in community parks. Connie answered that three is typical, however they will identify the needs of that part of town and prioritize those amenities in the park. Carol's next question was how many acres of the sixty acres overall for parks would remain undevelopable. Connie responded the swale of nine and a half acres running North and South. The remainder doesn't have any constraints that would prevent parking lots or trailheads from being developed. Carol asked if the neighborhood parks have any other undevelopable areas. Connie responded no, but that the existing drainageway could be looked as an additional amenity. For the trail network, Carol asked who will construct the trails and maintain them. Andrea answered that this will be the responsibility of the metropolitan district that will be formed. This led to Carol's next question of if the metropolitan district will be formed. Andrea said the plan is to have a district. Carol asked if the district would also be responsible for the construction and maintenance of the parks. Tim Siebert, Vice President at Nor'wood Development Group, answered that at this time there is not a metropolitan district, but they do anticipate there being one. However a service plan has not been submitted. As far as trail development, Tim said trails are built in coordination with the development. Essentially, they want a notion that "your garage is your trailhead" so a person can easily get to these amenities. The final development of neighborhood parks do not have anything other than the requirements under PLDO per City Code. Carol asked if a metro district would support the trails. Tim responded that either a metropolitan district or a Homeowner's Association (HOA) can decide to handle the maintenance of the park. Trails would be built as part of the development, but ultimate ownership has not been decided. Connie clarified that at this time, those parks are coming to the City, and even though they are part of a metropolitan district, the City is not proposing to design, build, and maintain these parks, just meeting the PLDO requirements. Carol's next question was about the proposed PLDO calculations under the proposed ordinance. Connie said the calculation would be a lower obligation. Carol asked what feedback the neighborhood meetings yielded. Andrea responded that there were not neighborhood meetings, as of the 275 notifications that went out to surrounding neighbors, only seven letters of concerns came back and they were not in regards to the park. Comments were addressed directly when the plan was resubmitted to City Planning. Carol's final question was in regards to other concerns from Parks Advisory Board members during their meetings concerning this item. Britt Haley, Design and Development Manager, said the main concern from Board members was access to the parks, and this was clarified for members. Other concerns were about park design and how that process would work. Britt said the feedback for the developer was overall good for the park design. Britt added that a lot of changes were requested, and a good working document was received that Britt supports.

Board Vice-Chair David Siegel said one of his main concerns was using a utility easement to fulfill a PLDO obligation. He wondered if Tim could use another example in the City of a utility easement being used to satisfy a PLDO obligation. Tim responded that the intent of the utility easement is to ensure that the sites feel bigger than just the four acres that are with the overhead easement. The power lines are on the southern side of the easement. The one acre that overlaps into this area only has the power line in the southern third part of the site. After speaking with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU), any expansion of the trunk utility infrastructure would be underground. The easement area will feel like just a normal part of the park. University Village Park is a good example of a utility easement with overhead power lines. Connie added that the Banning Lewis Oakwood Community Park also has some overhead power lines and that park land was part of the PLDO dedication from that district. David asked if the trunk infrastructure were expanded, would the responsibility of repairing the land underneath fall to CSU or the owner of the park. Britt Haley said that easements are property rights, and they are governed by what the easement requires. In this case, we would not be permitted to put something inconsistent with the easement in the easement area. We would be obligated to take on the damage to that infrastructure, and in the past, we have co-located with CSU the access to the utilities in the form of a maintenance road that serves as a trail. The trail would be hardened to provide access of the easement to vehicles. David asked for clarification on what something inconsistent with the easement use would be, Britt said a structure would not be permitted, but a multi-use field could be put in by an executive agreement. Tim added that his experience is that turf and irrigation in the past has been acknowledged by CSU and if it is pre-existing, they would make the repairs. David asked if there was a significant cost of construction difference on a utility easement. Britt said not usually, as there are normally roads already constructed and we receive a cost benefit. David said he trusts the developers as well as our Department, and the idea of using a utility easement as a PLDO requirement in this circumstance isn't too concerning for him. However, he is concerned about the precedent this could set for a PLDO obligation in future development plans throughout the City. David asked if there was a way to ensure that this doesn't create a precedent for this in the future. Connie answered that a policy could be put in place to prevent this, and past examples are typically very small. Tim also added that Nor'wood asked for more utility easement to fill the obligation and Park Staff sent back the plan with this exact concern when they first received it. Different park configurations were considered before staff raised concerns and then the plan was modified accordingly to find balance. Additionally, Britt said one benefit of the proposed ordinance is that when we make a parkland recognition of credit, we would document any special circumstances and why, in the context of the property, they make sense and then there would be agreement. Every master plan process could have this unique approach. She also highlighted that we are early in the development process, and estimating in units going on the property. In Britt's experience, oftentimes the density we thought we had in the beginning changes by the end of the process. At the end of the day, a lower density could come in which drives down the actual amount of parkland that is required. As for the end of this development, Britt wouldn't be surprised if the ultimate obligation for PLDO was less than anticipated and these acres may not come into play in the ultimate calculation. Andrea said the assessment of the likely units will also have a density cap for the plan. if at any time in the

future, the developer wanted more residential units, they would have to come back with a major master plan amendment and additional obligations. David said he was unsure he could support this without some formal policy about the utility easement to satisfy PLDO obligations. If that policy were in place, he would feel more comfortable.

Board member Dr. Daniel Bowan asked if the power lines in the example pictures could be clarified. Connie said the center power line was in the current Oakwood development's park. Andrea said the power lines shown were the existing power lines in the area. He liked the possibility of the power lines going underground, and felt like the current ones were very intrusive. Daniel appreciated Britt meeting with Board members individually, but was disappointed that this item wasn't previously presented as a presentation item before having it as an action item today. He felt that though he could express his comments, they would not be incorporated. Daniel's next question was if it was normal for staff to not know if these parks and trails would fall under the Department's maintenance before approving them. Connie said Nor'wood stated these parks would come to the City. Metropolitan districts are governed by the municipality they fall under, and there is not currently a service plan. A metropolitan district cannot be formed until this area is annexed into the City. Right now, they want to meet the City Code, and show the intent and use of the area. The discussion of park development cannot begin until they are annexed into the City. Daniel also commented that if the swale area is vegetated, it would fall under the open space designation rather than a park designation. Connie said with the flat terrain, it's better used as an area for trails. Tim added that the goal was to provide a variety of recreational opportunities, and depending upon how the master plan moves forward, this area could provide other amenities like disc golf, as the area isn't a wetland, just a lower spot. Andrea said she thinks the trail corridor running along the park will help activate the area as well. Finally, Daniel echoed David's concerns about this setting a precedent about the utility easement as a PLDO obligation. While he is happy to see land donated, and that the power lines sit on a small portion of the acreage, he does not like to see parks located under power lines of that size.

Board member Sarah Bryarly said she thought N.E.S. did a great job with the plan, and working with the existing PLDO requirements and the service radius. She said as far as the utility easement goes, that the Board should not hold off this master plan thinking about future master plans. She added parks are dealt with on a case by case basis, and the precedent of using utility easements has already been set in other places. In the past, parks have been approved with a portion of the park in a utility easement. While it is not always ideal, it is something that does happen here and there. Sarah asked Tim about the long term sustainability and the funding issues for building parks and maintenance. She asked if Tim is okay with the parks being dedicated to the City, but not constructed right away. Tim said he understands the timeline of the master plan and the time it takes, and as they continue to move forward on development projects, the timeline can become more clear. Board member Dr. Daniel Bowan said he thought Sarah made good points, and reiterated he wished there had been a time for comment with the normal Parks Advisory Board process.

Board Vice-Chair David Siegel asked if there would be any issues with pushing this action item to November. Tim responded that with annexation, there are additional public notification requirements and they have to present this to City Council, so sooner would be preferred. There could be conditions, but they are usually stated at the Planning Commission. Tim said suggestions today could be discussed, and obligations can change. Board member Dr. Daniel Bowan said he would like to see a recommendation to the motion to move the neighborhood park away from the power lines. Board Chair Ron Ilgen said this is always something that can be done.

Board Chair Ron Ilgen asked if the utilities easement would be handled by CSU. Tim clarified this is a CSU easement. Ron asked what is the preference of Nor'wood, assuming the land will be annexed, pending the formation of a metropolitan district. Tim responded that they will be forming a metropolitan district, but Parks are only one obligation. There is other major infrastructure that needs to be done, but today there needs to be a decision on what the development can support and fund.

Board member Carol Beckman said she appreciated Board member Dr. Bowan and Board Vice-Chair David Siegel's comments, and does appreciate the normal presentation and action item process. She added she appreciated Britt's efforts on keeping Board members updated. She also thanked Nor'wood for all of their work. She is concerned about the general tendency to assume undevelopable land, like a utility easement, as a park. She appreciated that the PLDO requirement is all land for parks, and that Nor'wood is not asking for credit for other areas.

Susan Davies, Executive Director for TOSC, thanked Tim for this plan. She said she would love to hear a commitment from Nor'wood to maintain these parks and trails. She added that if these parks rely on the City to develop and maintaining them, it could take very a long time to make these parks a reality. She also asked if there is a change to the PLDO, would there be an adjustment or if this plan is binding. Tim responded that he understands her concern about the development and maintenance of the parks, but can't make a full commitment. The current PLDO requirements will apply to this plan with approval, and cannot be adjusted without a master plan amendment.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, said his organization would like to see items like this adhere to the regular Parks Advisory Board timeline of a presentation one month with the action item following, so comments can be considered.

Board Vice-Chair David Siegel said he appreciated Board member Sarah Bryarly's comments. He asked from a legal standpoint, what is the best way to move forward with a PLDO policy statement regarding using utility easements as PLDO obligations. Britt Haley responded that based on the timeline of this process, she needed more time to voice her concerns about the easement with Nor'wood, and that affected the timeline before the Parks Advisory Board. She said these concerns about the easement should be discussed separately from this vote, and that Nor'wood worked very hard with Britt to mitigate these concerns. She said if members are

generally supportive of this master plan, don't hold it up and an agreement could be discussed separately.

**Motion: To approve the 59 acre parkland obligation as set forth in this Banning Lewis Ranch North Master Plan.**

1st - Sarah Bryarly, 2nd - Carol Beckman, Approved, 6 to 1

**Presentation Items**

**Public Art Master Plan/Draft Letter of Support** (Presented by Matt Mayberry, Cultural Services Manager)

Matt Mayberry, Cultural Services Manager, presented the Board with the Public Art Master Plan. This presentation included the plan link to view the plan on the internet; the scope of work; the project timeline; a summary of key findings; recommended goals and a list of steps to achieve these goals; and finally, strategies to maintain a public art collection.

[Link to PowerPoint presentation here](#)

Matt also said he would be drafting a letter of support for Board approval to send on to City Council. Board Vice-Chair David Siegel said he would be happy to review the letter before Board Chair Ron Ilgen signed it, as David was a Parks Advisory Board representative on the committee for the Public Art Master Plan. There was a group consensus on the approval of a letter of support from the Board.

**Special Events Update** (Presented by Carly Kobasiar, Special Events Supervisor)

Carly Kobasiar, Special Events Supervisor, presented the Board with the Special Events update. This presentation included an introduction to the special events team; the purpose of the special events division, as well as their permit types and the other organizations that the division partners with; the effects of COVID-19 on the 2020 Special Event year; how events in 2020 have been reimaged; information about the upcoming Sesquicentennial events in 2021; and finally, a look at the social media logistics for the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department.

[Link to PowerPoint presentation here](#)

Board member Dr. Daniel Bowan requested to see logistics about the fees implemented in Garden of the Gods next time Carly brings this update before the Board.

**Staff Reports**

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

- Pikes Peak - America's Mountain is picking up in visitation numbers.
- Community centers are continuing to work with school districts on programming.
- Board Chair Ron Ilgen asked Karen what the overall impact of COVID-19 was to the budget. She responded that the City is still at a 20% budget reduction through 2021. Our department is down \$700,000. Conservation Trust Fund dollars are coming in a little bit stronger; however overall, they are down \$10,000,000 as it relates to per capita portion. Our department is receiving an extra \$400,000 in 2021 from the General Fund to make up for a portion of this reduced funding stream.
- Board Chair Ron Ilgen also asked if there have been closures of restrooms due to decreased funding. Karen responded that Kurt did have some restrooms closed in parks that are not as heavily used to save some contractual dollars. Kurt added that a lot of port-o-johns were removed as well. There were two instances where people have stepped up to fund the continued use a port-o-john in parks, one being the Peregrine HOA and the other being TOPS Working Committee Chair Bob Falcone. Some mowing contracts have also been reduced recently, as well as forestry street tree management contract money. One playground was vandalized with damage to the slide, and that repair will have to wait until next year. As of now, it is removed and boarded off.
- Board member Dr. Daniel Bowan noted a change from last month's meeting minutes for a formal request to establish a threshold, indicator, or metric to indicate when COVID-19 numbers hit an acceptable number to remove the emergency declaration and remove the reservation system from the Incline. This metric, threshold, or indicator could be derived from transmission rates or public health ordinances related to risk levels. He asked if there was an update on this, and if there is a threshold we can establish. Kurt responded that it is up to Manitou to remove. On a weekly basis, Kurt and his staff meet with two representatives from Manitou about the Incline, the Manitou Springs Assistant City Administrator and Manitou Springs City Engineer. They do not have an assessment of when they can remove this. Kurt added the reservation system is a high priority for the City of Manitou Springs administration. Kurt is pleased with the data we are collecting from the reservation system, and shared some of the data which can change perceptions of use on the Incline. Daniel thanked Kurt for the update, and asked if regardless of the metric, in the off-season, does it make sense to have people out there, and if there could be an amendment to the reservation system. Kurt said they are looking into this issue, and thankfully have some historic data to help base those decisions on.

Kelly Rajab, Analyst II, gave the following Budget Calendar 2021 update:

- The budget can be downloaded from [Coloradosprings.gov](https://coloradosprings.gov).
- Kelly also provided the dates that City Council will be reviewing the budget.
- She recommended looking at the Mayor's letter regarding the budget.
- Board member Dr. Daniel Bowan said he knows there was a reduction in budgets, but looking at the Mayor's letter, there was an increase in the general fund from \$332,000,000 to \$349,000,000. He was happy to see Parks get the extra \$400,000 for



maintenance, but wondered out of the \$332,000,000, what percentage the Department receives. Kelly responded that slightly less than 50% of our budget is funded from the general fund. As for the 2021 budget, she has not done the analysis yet and typically does it later for the annual report, but said she could pull this number for Dr. Bowan. For 2020, we received about \$15,000,000 from the general fund. Dr. Bowan stated that while the additional \$17,000,000 from the Cares Act helped the City, the Park's overall general fund dollar percentage has decreased. Kelly said she didn't have that number, and reminded the Board that the Cares Act is a grant and can only be used on things the Cares Act will allow and doesn't relate to the usual general fund budget. Kelly told Dr. Bowan she will do more research into this.

### **Board Business**

**TOPS Working Committee Members Appointments** (Presented by Britt Haley, Design and Development Manager, and Bob Falcone, TOPS Working Committee Chair)

Britt Haley, Design and Development Manager, asked the Board for approval on the appointments of the following TOPS Working Committee members and alternates:

- Paula Krantz, TOPS Working Committee member, had been filling a vacancy and needs reappointment.
- There are two full vacancies that need to be filled for completed terms. Interviews were conducted with Board Chair Ron Ilgen, Britt, and Bob Falcone amongst highly qualified candidates. One recommendation for appointment to the TOPS Working Committee was Hank Scarangella. The other recommendation for appointment was for Stephanie Surch.
- For the remainder of a vacancy term, there is a recommendation for appointment for Michael Merrifield.
- There is one alternate opening, and there is a recommendation for appointment for Wendy Thomas.

Board Vice-Chair said the slate of candidates was wonderful. He reiterated a previous statement that he would like to see more Board diversity, specifically racial diversity. He asked Britt if she had thoughts on how to increase the applicant pool in order to create more diversity. Britt said during this process, they tried to address this concern with a special outreach to the southeast portion of Colorado Springs, not only for racial diversity, but for geographic diversity. Councilwoman Yolanda Avila and County Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez, Jr. both reached out in their districts to find candidates. All applications were received and not a single one was received from the Southeast. Britt said there were applicants who would provide diversity, but they were not as interested in the TOPS application, but the Diversity Board. There is representation from two females, which provides gender diversity. However, we will continue to strive for other types of backgrounds, as applicants provide interest. Britt said if David has ideas for outreach for a broader pool of applicants, they can

always use suggestions. David said he would be happy to help with this in the future, and it begins with establishing long-term relationships and trust, and Board recruitment is just the tip of the iceberg. Britt added that with work on Panorama Park, we can follow-up on relationships that we have built and use that opportunity.

Board Chair Ron Ilgen said David's comments were discussed in great depth. Ron was impressed by all of the applicants, and their interest in volunteering for the City. He feels very confident with the selections.

Board member Carol Beckman asked if Wendy, who is on the call, wanted to introduce herself. Wendy introduced herself and expressed her excitement to work with both the TOPS Working Committee and Parks Advisory Board.

**Motion: To approve the following appointments to the TOPS Working Committee.**

There was a unanimous consensus from the Board to approve these appointments.

Carol Beckman – Carol informed the Board that at the TOPS Working Committee meeting, both Chair Bob Falcone and Vice-Chair Nancy Hobbs were both nominated and voted into the current positions respectively. She added that Britt gave an update about the Mountain Shadows Open Space and Jimmy Camp Creek acquisitions.

David Siegel – David said the Public Art Master Plan had been approved. He said there would be a LART meeting this afternoon to discuss the 2021 budget.

Dr. Daniel Bowan – Dr. Daniel Bowan was looking forward to the upcoming E-Bike conversation at the Legacy Loop Trailhead next week.

Sarah Bryarly - There was an Incline Friends meeting last week discussing the reservation system.

**Adjournment**

**Motion: Move to adjourn the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meeting at 11:19 a.m.**

1<sup>st</sup> – David Siegel, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Carol Beckman, Approved, Unanimously