



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes – FINAL
Wednesday, May 2, 2018**

Members Present: Jason Alwine, Cathy Grossman, Nancy Hobbs, Lily Weissgold, Becky Wegner, Lee Milner, Jim Klever

Members Absent: Joe Lavorini, Jeff Mohrmann

Alternates Present: N/A

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Jason Rupinski, Carol Beckman

Parks Board Liaisons Absent: Mina Liebert

Staff Present: Karen Palus, Kim King, Christi Mehew, David Deitemeyer, Kelly Rajab

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Jason Alwine brought the meeting to order at 7:34 a.m.

Agenda Preview Committee Chair Jason Alwine announced the agenda for the meeting.

Announcements

Kim King – Recreation and Administration Manager

- Announced the new Health and Environmental Specialist, Eric Rodriguez.

Karen Palus - Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director

- The Rock Creek property acquisitions were presented to City Council for approval on Monday, April 23rd. They are on consent for approval by City Council on Tuesday, May 8th.
- The Banning Lewis Ranch Amended and Restated Annexation Agreement was presented at a City Council Work Session on Monday April 9th and was voted on by Council on Tuesday, April 24th. This item passed with a vote of 7 yays (Council Members Richard Skorman, Jill Gaebler, Merv Bennett, Andy Pico, Tom Strand, Don Knight and David Geislinger) and 2 nays (Council Members Bill Murray and Yolanda Avila).
- The resolution recognizing Corral Bluffs area and Jimmy Camp Creek Regional Park as having unique natural features went before Council as a presentation on Monday, April 23rd and for approval on Tuesday, April 24th. This item passed with 9 yays and 0 nays.
- The TOPS Working Committee will not be having a site tour in May.

Lee Milner – TOPS Working Committee member

- The Parkland Dedication Ordinance revision discussion has started. The first meeting was April 27th and the next meeting will be held on May 31st.

Approval of Minutes – April 4, 2018

Motion: To approve the minutes of the April 4, 2018 TOPS Working Committee meeting.

1st – Nancy Hobbs, 2nd – Cathy Grossman, Approved, Unanimous

Citizen Discussion

- No citizens spoke at this time.

Presentations

2019 Capital Improvement Project Recommendations (Presented by Kelly Rajab, Parks Financial Analyst, and David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

Committee discussion included:

- The estimated 2019 revenue for Trails, Open Space and Parks is \$9,168,000.
- The estimated 2019 revenue will be adjusted throughout the year by the Budget Office based on financial trends.
- The Parks Department received a grant from the Colorado Springs Health Foundation with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) to redevelop an existing park. This grant will go towards playground renovations at Panorama Park in the southeast area.
- The Parks Department should see if they can receive funding from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (UCCS) for the Pulpit Rock Master Plan implementation budget since the University is so close to Pulpit Rock. This can be considered in the future.
- The department requested a grant from the Lodgers and Automobile Rental Tax (LART) to help with implementation of the North Cheyenne Canon Master Plan specifically around the Helen Hunt Falls area. This area has been identified as a high priority during the master plan process.
- A request was made to email this PowerPoint to the TOPS Working Committee members.
- The department plans to increase citizen's awareness regarding the difficulty of trails through social media and the Google Trekker.
- Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) Executive Director, suggested that applying for LART money is another option with its connection to the Colorado Visitors Bureau (CVB). The CVB advertises parks as an amenity to visitors.
- The department is proposing to add four Park Ranger positions for 2019.
- A concern was expressed about park rangers working mainly Monday through Friday with the highest usage of open spaces being on holidays and weekends.
- Rangers have several tasks which include: trail assessments; support to friends groups; and bringing materials to sites for repair. Park ranger hours will also include coverage on the weekends.
- The Parks Department has many projects and more staff is needed to get them started and moving forward. The 2019 budget includes hiring a Trail Development Coordinator, Trail Project Specialist and two Seasonal Trail Techs.
- The department needs more Rangers to care for TOPS properties and they are needed immediately. Acquisitions can then occur if more staff are hired and maintaining the properties. This creates a real impact to show more staff is out there and now more land can be acquired.
- Some City Council members are against acquiring new property if the Parks Department

cannot take care of the property it already owns.

- Will there be enough funding to acquire properties if more money is spent on maintenance and management?
- Three years ago TOPS money was not spent on maintenance and management of properties and now stewardship is defined to help with this aspect and is this the intent of the TOPS Sales Tax?
- Susan Davies, TOSC Executive Director, stated the Parks Department is no longer making payments for Red Rock Canyon and therefore this helps justify increasing the stewardship budget. Some properties do not receive any stewardship assistance. Citizens need to trust the Park Staff to leverage funds and move forward. She feels this is a step in the right direction and hopes this will help with reapproving the TOPS sales tax in the future.
- The 6% proposed for maintenance is only for TOPS properties.
- Can the department handle the increase in stewardship staff? Scott Abbott, Regional Parks and Trails Administrator, replied yes they could. John Stark, Park Ranger Supervisor, has a master's degree in Natural Resource Policy and is very experienced and can manage the additional staff. He stated that the annual stewardship presentations have shown the staff's abilities and all the work they have accomplished.
- Susan Davies, TOSC Executive Director, stated the TOPS Working Committee has a big impact. She is currently a part of the master plan process with the Colorado Springs Visitors Bureau and wonders what they think about the trails, parks, and open space. Three common priorities mentioned during this process is signage, bathrooms and safe parking lots. She said that friends groups would probably help with funding better looking restroom facilities. Kelly Rajab responded that restroom cleaning and more restroom units are addressed in the land management section of the budget under the stewardship program.
- Please send your comments regarding this presentation within two weeks to Kelly Rajab and Karen Palus.
- Kelly Rajab will email the TOPS Working Committee a breakdown of the stewardship category funding for 2018 and the 2019 proposed budget.
- Karen Palus asked the TOPS Working Committee if they would be willing to move \$495,000 that is budgeted for the South Shooks Run area from Fountain to Las Vegas into the Legacy Loop area. The South Shooks Run section is not moving forward due to not having success with the railroad as well as the railroad having issues with other communities. The Parks Department has received a grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and this project needs to move forward to satisfy the grant requirements. The money will still go towards the Legacy Loop but to the northern portion of Shooks Run where the department can take action.
- The TOPS Working Committee gave their consent to Karen Palus to move \$495,000 from the South Shooks Run area to the North Shooks Run area.
- Karen Palus asked the TOPS Working Committee if \$322,000 that has been sitting in a fund since 2012 can be used further north on the Sand Creek Trail to go towards a trail bench under the bridge. These funds will be leveraged with PPRTA funds. The TOPS Working Committee gave their consent to Karen Palus.

Citizen Discussion

- No citizens spoke at this time

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 9:19 a.m.

1st – Nancy Hobbs, 2nd – Lily Weissgold, Approved, Unanimous