



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 1, 2022**

Members Present: Bob Falcone, Blaze Panariso, Nancy Hobbs, Bob Shafer, Stephanie Surch, Wendy Thomas, Hank Scarangella, Paula Krantz, Ingrid Richter

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Carol Beckman, Abby Simpson

Parks Board Liaisons Absent: Greg Thornton

Staff Present: Anna White, Melody Horbach, Britt Haley, David Deitemeyer, Scott Abbott, Cassie Melvin, Erik Weitzel, Kelly Rajab, Emily Duncan, Eric Becker, Stephanie Adams

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TOPS Working Committee Chair Bob Falcone brought the meeting to order at 7:32 A.M.

Agenda Preview

Committee Chair Bob Falcone announced the agenda for the meeting.

Announcements

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager and Design and Development Director made the following announcements:

- Karen Palus has resigned in order to take care of family and Britt Haley has been appointed as Acting Director during the interim.
- Forestry will be transitioning to Public Works, the same work will be implemented. The late season snowstorm damaged multiple trees, so the forestry department is working on cleaning it up. Bancroft Park was on alert for cleaning for Territory Days and Evergreen Cemetery due to all of the old trees.
- There is not a special TOPS site tour on June 15th, but there will be an opportunity to participate in a site tour at Jimmy Camp Creek Park for those who were unable to attend the previous site tour.
- Regarding special events on TOPS property the city attorney’s office has concluded that if the TOPS property will be exclusively used to a specific event, it will need to be voted on a ballot before providing a special events permit. They are still looking at the cascading decisions that would come if it is not exclusively used. Each TOPS property with a conservation easement that protects conservation values and has special provisions in the conservation easement will also need to be analyzed.

Committee Chair Bob Falcone inquired on a brief update regarding the proposed ballot initiative. Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager and Design and Development Director announced because the Mayor and Chief of Staff still need to be presented with the ballot, what she can say at this time is we were able to work with the City Attorney’s office to get a

much more readable question and that question was then sent out for polling to see what the voters sentiment might be either an extension or an increase of 0.05%.

David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, provided a brief update regarding Wayfinding Signage:

- The following open space and trails have been completed regarding the wayfinding markers:
 - Blue Stem Prairie Open Space
 - Rock Island Trail
 - Stratton Open Space
 - Blodgett Open Space
 - High Chaparral
- The wayfinding markers have been implemented on the Incline and at Daniel's Pass
- The following open space properties are the focus on completing wayfinding markers:
 - Ute Valley Park (half is TOPS, half is regional)
 - Friends of Ute Valley has committed up to \$50,000 to complete wayfinding signage and markers on the non-TOPS part of the park, which would not be possible without their help.
 - Red Rock Canyon Open Space
- There have been some challenges with the cost of kiosks and there has been preliminary bidding on kiosk structure itself that would happen at the trailheads. There are about twenty-five kiosks that are needed, so the preliminary estimate anticipated in the contract is over \$25,000 per unit. Because of this, faculty is assisting with the kiosk structure to save on costs, reducing the costs to \$10,000 per unit. Kiosks will be added in Blue Stem Prairie Open Space in the next four to six weeks. After adjustments have been made in the kiosks at Blue Stem Prairie Open Space, more will be added into other locations. The projected completed timeline for kiosks will be at the end of this year.

Eric Becker, Interim of Parks and Operations Manager and SIMD Administrator made the following announcement:

- North Cheyenne Canyon will be closed for a couple of days and will reopen. All hands are on deck with Park Maintenance Staff and Forestry are working proactively.

Emily Duncan, Trails Development Coordinator made the following announcement:

- The Rock Island Trail is planned to be impacted by a Stormwater project that will replace the pipe that is under a segment of the trail, east of the Rustic Hills neighborhood. This project was initially planned for Spring 2022 but is now delayed to a future date due to delay of materials. SWENT will contact Parks, who will put out a social media announcement about the trail impacts prior to the project.

Scott Abbott, Regional Parks Manager, made the following announcement:

There is a rock avalanche/ mudslide at section 16. It has wiped out all trees and rocks about 75 feet of the surrounding area. It is currently closed, and specialists are currently looking to see what needs to be done, and then cleanup will be in process once safety is secured.

Committee member Stephanie Surch made an announcement that June is Bike month and encourages everyone to join her on June 22nd for Bike To Work Day.

Approval of Minutes

April 6, 2022

Motion: To approve the minutes of the April 6, 2022, TOPS Working Committee meeting with adding the discussion regarding the sensitive discussion surrounding Jimmy Camp Creek and other discussions that may arise in future meetings.

1st– Stephanie Surch, 2nd – Nancy Hobbs, Approved Unanimously

Citizen Discussion

Cory Sutela, Executive Director of Medicine Wheel of Trail Advocates, requested the help from the TOPS Working Committee to return to providing trail construction and maintenance services on TOPS and other Parks properties on behalf of Medicine Wheel. He stated these services have been provided free of charge for roughly three decades. Furthermore, he discussed for the first time Medicine Wheel is not permitted to perform maintenance planning on Parks properties because the Park Rangers have been instructed not to work with Medicine Wheel as there is not a standard Friends agreement signed. They would like a modified Friends agreement available to sign. On request of Parks staff, Medicine Wheel has submitted an adjunct agreement ten weeks ago, so they are currently at a standstill and unable to work. This has affected their ability to provide volunteer resources on trails. Mr. Sutela mentioned in addition to consistently providing an advocacy voice, Medicine Wheel hosted 19 volunteer work days for a total of 1,200 hours of community service in 2021. Medicine Wheel asks the TOPS Working Committee to work on a resolution to proceed with volunteer services.

Committee member Ingrid Richter inquired what the issue is regarding the agreement that Medicine Wheel has refused to sign. Mr. Sutela stated because Medicine Wheel works differently than a friend's group and work on multiple properties, they do not feel they can sign the agreement. Committee member Blaze Panariso suggested for Medicine Wheel to sign an agreement for every property. Mr. Sutela stated that is a good suggestion and would love to discuss that option further.

Committee member Bob Shafer referred to Cory Sutela's earlier statement about Medicine Wheel and the Friends group agreement. He said he would like the minutes to reflect that the TOPS working committee supports resolving the problem. Committee member Stephanie Surch inquired if there are other groups that work across TOPS properties and what agreement those

groups have. Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager and Design and Development Director, stated this is something Kim King, Recreation and Administration Manager, Kim King has been working on for quite some time with friends' organizations and other groups that do not fall into the same posture. She will have to sit down with Medicine Wheel, and there has been a draft provided to the city attorney's office that would be more descriptive of what Medicine Wheel does. It is currently at the city attorney's office for review, and because they have so much to do, there has been a delay. Britt Haley has not been directly involved but knows that Kim King is working on this to ensure it is moving forward. Until there is an agreement in place, we are in limbo. This does not pertain to just TOPS properties; everyone is doing their best. There has been a special agreement on the Cresta Bike Pump Track which is exciting news.

Committee Chair Bob Falcone reiterated that he understands Mr. Sutela's concern as he mentioned he has seen other groups working on TOPS properties without a signed agreement. Committee Chair Bob Falcone added it would behoove everyone to not discuss other groups at this time because the full details are unknown. He greatly appreciates what Medicine Wheel has done for TOPS and hopes there is a resolution soon.

Susan Davies, Executive Director of Trails, and Open Space Coalition, reiterated she is sad Karen Palus, former Director of Recreation and Cultural Services, is leaving. Furthermore, she stated she is grateful for what the City Communications is doing for TOPS and to celebrate 25 years of TOPS. She is excited for next April when the ballot will be out and hopes to be updated on what projects will be delayed with the changes in staff.

Committee Chair Bob Falcone requested for the budget to include master planning for Fishers Canyon and that upon discussion, the committee concurred.

Presentation Items

2023 Proposed TOPS Capital Improvement Project Presentation (Presented by Kelly Rajab)

Kelley Rajab, Finance & Budget Analyst II, presented the 2023 Proposed TOPS Capital Improvement Project Presentation to the TOPS Working Committee. This presentation includes: TOPS Proposed 2023 CIP Budget; January 2022 Revenue Report; TOPS Fund Future Revenue 2023-2025; Informing the Budget Process; TOPS Fund Summary 2021 Estimated Fund Balance; Preliminary 2023 Revenue; TOPS Administration and Maintenance; TOPS Trail Category; Chamberlain Trail; Bridge at Greenways at Sand Creek Park; Legacy Loop-South Railroad Bridge Connection; TOPS Parks Category; Boulder Park Landscaping; Grey Hawk Park Master Plan; Memorial Park Irrigation – West Prospect Lake; Oak Meadow Park-Playground replacement; TOPS Open Space Category; Stewardship Funding History; Stewardship Program Education; Stewardship Program Rangers; Stewardship Program Land Management; Stewardship Program Resource Management; TOPS Open Space Category; Black Canyon Open Space Snyder Quarry Reclamation; Blodgett/Pikeview Open Space Master and Management Plan Implementation; Corral Bluffs Cultural Study; and lastly a slide for any questions from the Committee.

Link to PowerPoint

Committee member Hank Scarangella inquired why stewardship costs are taken out of the open space parks category. Kelly Rajab clarified that the stewardship program to properly care for TOPS Open Spaces was established in 2016 by the TOPS Working Committee. There was an increase of inventory on open space but not enough resources to properly care for the property. Therefore, the TOPS Working Committee agreed to allocate funds to go towards education, park rangers, land management and resource management. This continued for three years and due to the success of this program, it was decided to increase the number of rangers and staff which is budgeted out of the Open Space category. This category is appropriate for it because the language in the TOPS Ordinance specifics stewardship is allowed out of the open space category. Committee member Scarangella reiterated it is more of a philosophical question, and feels this conversation is backing into the TOPS Tax discussion from other meetings. He stated he is just trying to understand the rationale behind funding categories. Furthermore, he said if some of the stewardship costs were absorbed by Parks or Trails, then that would leave more money for acquisition in open space. Committee member Blaze Panariso stated that the ordinance does not allow that. The ordinance only allows the stewardship to come out of the open space category of the budget. Because trails and parks are a maximum of 20%, and open spaces are a minimum of 60%, the stewardship money must come out the open space parks category.

Board members suggested before next month, they would like to amend the budget to add funding for Fisher's Canyon Master Plan. In addition, Committee member Stephanie Surch inquired where contract management on TOPS property comes out of the budget. Kelly Rajab replied it is taken out partially in land management and resource management depending on what exactly is being done.

Citizen Discussion

Susan Davies, Executive Director of Trails, and Open Space Coalition, reiterated there may just have to be a new number to pay for Open Space. She stated former Parks and Operations Manager Kurt Schroeder said to maintain an acre of park where there is a playground, irrigation, mowing, etc., it costs around \$12,000 per acre per year. She stated she believes those are valuable numbers going forward as citizens speak to voters. Furthermore, she mentioned one vital feedback received from the previous ballot in November is that the current open space and parks need to be taken cared of first, otherwise citizens do not want to give more money. They also did not understand the ballot language. When asked to increase the sales tax to 3%, there was feedback that the language was too complicated. Therefore, it is

essential to communicate efficiently and properly for next April for the new ballot in hopes it passes.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director of Medicine Wheel, requested a better understanding on why stewardship funds are used on trails and parks. Kelly Rajab, Finance & Budget Analyst II, stated Open Space Stewardship funds are only used for work in TOPS open spaces. This includes trails on TOPS open space properties. Parks, Recreation, and Cultural services are audited every two years to make sure they are compliant with the TOPS ordinance and have been found to be in compliance by the auditors.

Committee Chair Bob Falcone stated he reflects and appreciates all the efforts Karen Palus and Kurt Schroeder for their service, and he appreciate the staff as well.

Motion to adjourn

1st –Nancy Hobbs , 2nd– Blaze Panariso, Approved, Unanimously at 9:25 A.M.