



**Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 14, 2022**

Members Present: David Siegel, Carol Beckman, Dr. Daniel Bowan, Larry Bogue, Steve Harris, Abby Simpson, Greg Thornton, Sarah Bryarly, Andrea Perry

Alternates Present: Julia Sands de Melendez, Steve Lenzo

Staff Present: Karen Palus, Kurt Schroeder, Kim King, Britt Haley, Melody Horbach, Vanessa Zink, Cassie Melvin, Anna Cordova, Matt Mayberry, Pat Gentile, Dennis Will, Carly Kobasiar

Called to Order: Board Chair David Siegel brought the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

Citizen Discussion

Sallie Clark, citizen, spoke on the Westside Community Center. Sallie began by thanking the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services staff, Councilmember Stephannie Fortune, and Deputy Chief of Staff Ryan Trujillo for their diligence in finding a solution for the Center. There is a meeting tomorrow at the City Administration Building at noon to discuss the future of the Center. She included that there is a virtual option for those who are unable to attend in-person. She and her husband, Welling, are very supportive of the Center. Sallie offered solutions from the Save Westside Community Center group. A proactive solution is best. She said the main goal is for the facility to continue operating as a community center, offering public programs, rather than letting the area be developed into a commercial use. She encouraged the City to continue ownership of the Center as well as making the necessary improvements to the facility as needed. She hoped that the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) dollars delegated to the Center would remain intact, as well. She felt that this Center could still be made a vibrant community center for citizens of all ages. Sallie's husband, Welling, added that there is a goal to create a coalition of groups to make the Center successful.

Richard Lins, citizen, is a member of the Save Westside Community Center. He referenced the July 2021 Parks Advisory Board meeting in which Board member Dr. Daniel Bowan had made a request for staff to find resources in their budget to keep the Center open. At the meeting prior to the final Request for Proposal (RFP), Kim King, Recreation and Administration Manager, had made a presentation about the status of the Center. Richard had asked Kim at the time, if Dr. Bowan's request had been acted upon. Today, Richard asked the Board to make a motion to request that such budget be considered, reallocated and brought forward to the public during the engagement process, to keep the Center open. He said many people are behind this effort.

Chuck Lucas, citizen, spoke on behalf of the concerns of the Westside Community Center. He appreciated the chance to speak. He explained his trust in the Board and encouraged them to join the public meetings. He said the meeting will be a big deal, however, the current vendor is leaving on May 31, and they need to keep programs running for citizens of all ages.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, informed the Board of a few unusual donations his Board is working through. The first donation is a modular bicycle pump track, and an amenity for the community. He thanked Kurt Schroeder, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager, for his help in this endeavor at Deerfield Hills. The other donation they are confirming is from a group called the Free Radicals, which is a sponsored trail building group. They look for places to donate trail building to existing projects and identified Colorado Springs as a place they would like to do that. Cory is working with staff on coordinating this effort. Cory also noted that Medicine Wheel has had regular meetings with Design and Development staff for the past seven years, and that has been tremendously helpful. He thanked staff for all of their help.

Susan Davies, Executive Director for the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), attended the County Parks Board meeting. The County has opened two open spaces recently, Kane Open Space and Santa Fe Open Space. Both openings were well attended. Rainbow Falls will remain closed indefinitely due to erosion challenges, and hope to have a solution in the next few weeks. The County continues to struggle with graffiti issues, as well. Along with these challenges, staffing continues to be difficult for the County, similar to the City. Finally, Susan said she was happy to see all of the citizen interest in current topics and the desire to come to a solution.

Approval of Minutes – March 10, 2022, meeting minutes with proposed changes.

Motion – To approve the March 10, 2022 minutes with proposed changes.

1st – Carol Beckman , 2nd – Greg Thornton, Approved, Unanimously, with Sarah Bryarly abstaining.

Ceremonial Items – Time Certain 9:00 a.m.

National Volunteer Recognition Month (Presented by Carly Kobasiar, Special Events Supervisor)

Carly Kobasiar, Special Events Supervisor, presented the National Volunteer Recognition Month presentation. This presentation included information about National Volunteer Week; each of the eight different “Volunteer of the Year” nominees and the locations they serve; and finally, the “Volunteer of the Year” award. This year’s nominees and the locations they served included: the Cheyenne Meadows Puppy Park Pals, Cheyenne Meadows Dog Park; Paula Krantz, Garden of the Gods; Rob Lucey, North Cheyenne Cañon; Michele McMurray, Garden of the Gods; David Mink, Palmer Park; the Sharp/Henricks Families, Mount Cutler Trail; Fran

Worthington, the Pioneers Museum; and finally, Warren Wright, Rock Ledge Ranch. Michele McMurray was selected as “Volunteer of the Year.” All nominees were presented with a picture of the park they helped to serve.

Each nominee was gifted a photograph of the site that they have served, and great thanks and appreciation from both staff and the Board.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Kurt Schroeder Retirement (Presented by Karen Palus, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director)

Karen Palus, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director, took time to acknowledge the amazing contributions that Kurt Schroeder had made to both the City and County in his collective forty-one years of service. Kurt will be retiring on May 31, 2022 after twenty-three years with the City. There will be a celebration in his honor at Patty Jewett Golf Course on May 17, 2022. Karen shared some thoughtful memories of Kurt and thanked him for everything he has done for our community. We will truly miss having Kurt as part of our team. Kurt thanked everyone for their kind words. He said his time working for both the City and County was so worthwhile and reminded the Board and staff about how valuable their contributions are for everyone in our community. Kurt is looking forward to continuing to support the Board and staff in the future, as a citizen.

Presentations

There were no presentations on this agenda.

Staff Updates

Golf Annual Report (Presented by Pat Gentile, Golf Course Supervisor)

Pat Gentile, Golf Course Supervisor, presented the Board with the Golf Annual Report. This presentation included 2021 golf operations; 2021 financials; 2021 rounds data; 2021 golf revenue by month; days closed; 2022 budget; El Paso County and State golf course statistics; engaging the community through social media; 2021 projects and purchases for Valley Hi; pictures of various projects at Valley Hi; plans for 2022 and beyond for Valley Hi; 2021 recognition for Patty Jewett; 2021 projects and purchases for Patty Jewett; pictures of various projects and events at Patty Jewett; and finally, plans for 2022 and beyond for Patty Jewett.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

TOPS 25th Kick-Off (Presented by Vanessa Zink, Senior Communications Specialist, and Cassie Melvin, Public Communications Specialist)

Vanessa Zink, Senior Communications Specialist, and Cassie Melvin, Public Communications Specialist, presented the Board with the TOPS 25th Kick-Off presentation. This presentation included the objective of “Thank You, Colorado Springs”; communication goals; key topics; key moments; channels; implementation; and finally, faces of TOPS.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Board Vice Chair Carol Beckman asked for an update on where the TOPS renewal plans stand. Karen Palus responded that she was reviewing polling questions from the Trust for Public Land; edits are being made, and moving forward to the Mayor. Karen will update with more information.

Jimmy Camp Creek Park Information (Presented by Britt Haley, Design and Development Manager, Matt Mayberry, Cultural Services Manager, and Anna Cordova, Archaeologist)

Britt Haley, Design and Development Manager, Matt Mayberry, Cultural Services Manager, and Anna Cordova, Archaeologist, presented the Board with the Jimmy Camp Creek Park Information presentation. This presentation included the general context map; unique features and opportunities; property planning overview; park planning practical considerations; the cultural and scientific landscape; the prehistoric timeline; the historic timeline; what is archaeology; archaeological and cultural resources; types of resources; and finally, what does mitigation look like.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Following the presentation, there was a robust discussion about Jimmy Camp Creek Park. Some highlights from the discussion include:

- Matt Mayberry believed the discovery of artifacts is likely what led the original developer, Frank Aries, to donate the property to the City in 1988.
- Norwood Development has been helpful by partnering with the Denver Museum of Nature and Science to evaluate artifacts found on their neighboring, privately owned land. There is a challenge of doing additional research when a property is under development.
- Britt Haley said there are still planning and stormwater conversations happening. In Britt’s opinion, the natural erosion and soils in the area will prevent the site from being like Cottonwood Creek, which incorporates the Creek into the plan with construction elements. Britt wants to remain conscientious of the development process so that adequate stormwater off-property helps slow down the water. This will keep the hydrology from being changed, and allow the area to be the riparian area it is now.
- Paleontological resources are being evaluated. Britt feels confident that we will continue to find many more artifacts during the archaeological studies. \$50,000 from the budget is going to be used for the initial survey. An RFP process will be conducted to find the vendor who can complete this study, and right now staff is defining the scope of work.

We hope to have a draft to put out to bid in the coming weeks. Matt hopes to have this contractor in place by mid-year. Matt thinks the work could take about three months, and described some of the different methods he believed would be used. Another study on the property is currently being done by students at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs to study the previously evaluated sites. While we can't study every site, we have to protect the important ones as we move forward to public opening.

- Britt felt the areas of study that will have the most value for the Department and TOPS are the ecological and riparian areas. We want to guide the public to the areas with the best interpretive areas, but away from the more sensitive areas.
- Clarification was requested about the trails depicted on the map. Most of those trails are identified in our Parks System master plan, and all the trails are on the Colorado Springs Bike master plan. Some areas will not allow for trails due to erosion and sensitive resources.
- Norwood's development plans for this area are years out.
- This area is not a TOPS property. This site has all of the characteristics of a TOPS Open Space and would qualify, but we need to treat it appropriately. Opening this to the public, would require general fund dollars or Conservation Trust Fund dollars.
- The renewed interest in this area came from an advocate, which garnered attention from City Council. This had led to presentations to the TOPS Working Committee, Parks Board, and City Council to explain the resources. The Department is receiving a lot of support, and the process of has been very educational. Britt feels Council's philosophy recognizes the balance of a need for open space on the East side of town, that development is nearing and some of these opportunities are evaporating, and wanting to support Britt in these conversations.
- A master plan process will likely not happen next year due to lack of access, and the archaeological work. Britt felt a better opportunity would be to first make the acquisitions to connect the property while we continue working on surveys. If our policy makers tell Britt to open the area, then something else has to be put to the side because this project is a full-time job.
- Britt will return to City Council with a response in a month, mostly to discuss the financial implications. Board member Steve Harris asked if Board members could receive notice when items like this are on the City Council agendas. Staff agreed this could be done.
- There is concern about damage being done by livestock on and near the site, as well as people damaging the property. Britt said we are trying to mitigate these issues by having a full-time ranger on-site. He is able to be a presence out there and is keeping an eye on everything. Board member Dr. Bowan said he felt we weren't stewarding the land appropriately by allowing cattle on the property, when people are not, especially when those caring for the livestock are able to travel around on ATV's and damage the ground. Britt said it is hard to address this, because we can't always catch people in the moment and the boundaries are not defined as well. Britt would like to re-survey the property and mark it appropriately to help mitigate some of these issues. Dr. Bowan would like to see an emphasis on legal enforcement, including patrolling and writing

tickets. Britt responded that the Ranger lives on the connection properties, so he isn't always on Jimmy Camp, but is a much closer management presence than before.

- Dr. Bowan said it would be helpful to see how much land belongs to Norwood, other owners, and the City. A ranking system of priority land to acquire would help, as well. Britt said she could send a map that labels these properties.
- Dr. Bowan asked if eminent domain was appropriate for this land, to seize the land or pay fair market value. Britt responded that the legal parameters would likely only support a focused acquisition instead of one TOPS would make possible. If you could establish that the government had to have the property on a rational basis, it might work, but this is not something we are currently considering. We have a cooperative neighbor willing to discuss, so we will use that opportunity. Dr. Bowan said he is happy these conversations are happening, but disappointed that there is no action.
- Dr. Bowan requested we continue to explore other funding sources, including grant opportunities.
- Dr. Bowan commented that while he understands the sensitivity of the property, he also understands why there is a drive to create more open space for those on the East side of the town. Because the TOPS extension and increase failed, Dr. Bowan felt we should then press City Council to give the support that a challenge like the property identifies. And if this is too large scale of a project, perhaps the City should consider what this property might look like as a State Park so it can be stewarded better. Britt said in the past, TOPS has had money to acquire but not operate, and partnerships with the State have supported us while we still own the land. She isn't ruling this out, but reminded Dr. Bowan that those entities are also often underfunded.
- Board Chair David Siegel commented that this is an extraordinary project that will require so much support, and offered any help the Board can provide to keep these efforts moving.
- The Board, as a whole, supported being conscientious to protect the sensitive natural resource values present at this location.

Forestry Annual Report (Presented by Dennis Will, City Forester)

Dennis Will, City Forester, presented the Board with the Forestry Annual Report. This presentation included City Forestry responsibilities; an overview of staff; urban forest management; items of interest; forest management; Fuels Mitigation Advisory Committee; other programs; and finally, challenges.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Other Staff Announcements

Kurt Schroeder announced that he will be taking vacation leading up to his retirement, to use some "use or lose" time. In Kurt's absence, Karen Palus has named Eric Becker, SIMD Unit Administrator, as Kurt's interim. Eric is a huge value to our department, and Kurt feels confident

he will do a great job. We anticipate the interim period will be about six months while we move towards filling the position.

Kurt's next announcement was about a fire in one of the greenhouses about three weeks prior to the meeting. This greenhouse is where we start seedlings. Speculation is that the warming mats beneath the seedlings short-circuited and caused the fire. Staff rotates on a schedule of checking on the seedlings during planting season, and we are thankful one of the employees had a gut feeling to check on the greenhouse and discovered the fire. Kurt hasn't seen the final report by the Fire Department, or the estimate for the clean-up. Because the greenhouse is older and has lead paint on the walls, the process is going to be a little tricky. We hope some of this will be covered through insurance.

Kim King wanted to confirm that everyone had received the press release regarding the press conference happening the following day at noon regarding the kick-off for the Westside Community Center listening sessions. There will be meetings over the next six weeks, and information can be found on our website. We are looking for feedback, and all meetings will be held at the Westside Center. We are working with Kimberley Sherwood, a consultant, on the process. Board Vice Chair asked what the plan will be after May 31, when the current operator leaves. Kim said staff is still working through options and will share with the Board.

Next, Kim gave an update on the City Auditorium. She stated that the first milestone had been extended while the Collective finishes meeting the \$5,000,000 fundraising goal. They are going to be able to host two meetings there a month to continue fundraising. Late summer or early Fall, we believe they'll bring a clear picture of the second phase. As of now, they are refining scope, and construction documents.

Finally, Kim updated the Board on the status of Prospect Lake and motorized and unmotorized operations. The process continues in terms of design, and consultants should be out checking the telemetry of the bottom of the lake, which will inform the design process. There will be alternatives with and without fountains, and pros and cons of each design. We will continue to update the Board with information.

Board Business

Sarah Bryarly – Sarah had a quick question about port-a-lets. She said the one in Memorial Park at the Rose Bowl was pretty bad. Kurt Schroeder responded that we had been working with a local vendor that had recently been bought out by a new company, which has presented challenges in the interim of them understanding the needs of the Department. There was a meeting to discuss this earlier in the week, and we are optimistic they will begin performing up to standards.

Dr. Daniel Bowan – Daniel had asked if the newspaper headline that stated the Westside Center would be closing indefinitely on June 1 is plausible. Kim King said she was doubtful that would happen but didn't have a firm answer on what operations will look like as staff evaluates

options. Kim will use remaining funds originally allocated to the Center for the year to help continue some operations at the Center. Daniel asked if there is money in the CARES Act, or excess sales tax, for funding. Kim said additional money was through the ARPA funding and are designated for capital improvements only. Additional dollars received through sales tax go into the City's general fund, and those dollars are allocated across the City. Additional funding usually goes to a vote at the end of the year for citizens to decide. Kim anticipates we will determine a path forward, then can see if a supplemental appropriation is needed. Daniel asked if she would encourage citizens who use the services from the Center to go to Council to advocate for funding. Kim responded that there are many individuals advocating and Council is very interested and involved. Councilmember Stephannie Fortune is helping to lead this initiative. Daniel asked if it is appropriate for the Board to make a statement in support of finding funding, or what is best operations. Carol Beckman responded that the budget process will be coming up soon. Kim said it would be best to hold off until recommendations come out of the public process and staff has a chance to report back to the administration. While Parks Board can always make a statement and share thoughts, this is an administrative decision. Daniel requested that there be an item in the May meeting to hear some of the public comments that have been at Council, and the Board make a stance. Kim said the final public engagement process meeting is May 21, and there will be a chance to have the wrap-up of the results in the June meeting. Next, Daniel asked if there could be an update on the Midland Corridor study at a future meeting. Lastly, Daniel said he had read an article in the Independent about the City Auditorium that made it seem like a finished deal. Daniel asked if there was a process that the Board would see or be able to comment on to transfer the property. Kim answered that the interview had been done with Linda Weise and there was not any City input on the article. Kim can say any transfer of property will have to go through City Council, and it is not a done deal by any means. It would likely come to the Board before City Council; however, it is not a PK zoned property. Daniel asked why the \$2,500,000 from ARPA funding would then go to the Collective, even though they are not a City entity. Kim said that yes, the money can be used for the design, but because it is federal money there is an agreement that has to be signed off on by our Grants Office. The money is managed and has to be supported and an approved use through the City. It is on a reimbursement basis, and we will own the design should the entire process not move forward. Daniel found this troubling since it is being designed on their accord, and not the City's.

Carol Beckman – Carol reviewed what had been discussed at the TOPS Working Committee, which was the TOPS 25th presentation and the Jimmy Camp Creek presentation. There had been a citizen comment on competitive events on TOPS properties. Carol asked how these decisions are made. Britt Haley responded that it is partially the ordinance itself and an administrative decision. Carol's next question was if she could get a copy of the 1974 Resolution for Prospect Lake. She also asked if she could see the most recent plan for the City Auditorium. She asked how long Phase I had been extended, which is six months.

Abby Simpson – Abby asked if the Collective could give a presentation to the Board about the City Auditorium status. Kim said we could work on that.

Adjournment

Motion: Move to adjourn the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meeting at 11:50 a.m.

1st – Stephen Harris, 2nd – Abby Simpson, Approved, Unanimously.