



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 14, 2022**

Members Present: Bob Falcone, Nancy Hobbs, Blaze Panariso, Hank Scarangella, Paula Krantz, Wendy Thomas, Jeff Davis

Members Absent: Ingrid Richter, Bob Shafer

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Larry Bogue

Parks Board Liaisons Absent: Greg Thornton, Abby Simpson

Staff Present: Britt Haley, Kim King, Eric Becker, Kim King, Kelly Rajab, Anna White, Melody Horbach, Emily Duncan, David Deitemeyer, Gillian Rossi

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TOPS Working Committee Chair Bob Falcone brought the meeting to order at 7:35 AM.

Agenda Preview

Committee Chair Bob Falcone announced the agenda for the meeting.

Announcements

Britt Haley, Acting Department Director/TOPS Program Manager, provided the following announcements:

- The calendar contest deadline is September 30, 2022.
- There will be a site visit on September 21st and Parks Board members are welcome to join.
- There will be a Leave No Trace Gold Standard event on October 13th.
- TOPS 25th-year celebration will be on October 21st from 5 PM – 730 PM. The mayor will attend, and it will be located at the VIBES stadium in the banquet room.

Eric Becker, Acting Parks Maintenance and Operations Manager/ SIMD Administrator, provided the following announcement:

- There will be a group of Park Rangers who will be moving out to the former PEO Chapter House.

Committee Vice Chair Nancy Hobbs provided the following announcement:

- The Rock Island Trail project has been completed.

Committee Chair Bob Falcone provided the following announcement:

- This will be Vice Chair Nancy Hobbs' official last meeting as she is term limited.

Approval of Minutes

August 3, 2022

Motion: To approve the minutes of the August 3, 2022, TOPS Working Committee meeting with modifications requested.

1st – Nancy Hobbs, 2nd – Paula Krantz, Approved Unanimously

Citizen Discussion

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition Executive Director, announced her annual meeting on October 11th which is open to the public. During the State of the City address, she was delighted to hear Mayor Suthers mention Parks as critical infrastructure. Mayor Suthers discussed the need to extend TOPS next spring as it is imperative to do. The Trails and Open Space Coalition will be taking a vote during their September meeting in favor of supporting PPRTA 3. As a reminder, PPRTA 3 has a strong trails component and it is important to share that it is an extension, not an increase, to the public.

Cory Sutela, Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates Executive Director, announced he has spoken to a few TOPS members and wants to address the board on the volume of questions he has received regarding the progress at Pikeview Quarry. He feels Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates has a role to understand what is going on at the Quarry, so they are doing some investigation and looking around. Mr. Sutela is grateful for the continued support of staff to better understand that and share information to members; Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates welcomes any questions that may need to be answered.

Chairman Bob Falcone inquired if the questions on the status of the Pikeview Quarry have been answered. Mr. Sutela stated it is not a simple question, and several documents cover all of the agreements, transfers, and where the dirt is coming from. He believes there is a general feeling of hesitancy on if the area is stable enough for a bike park. Medicine Wheel believes it is stable enough as the state has its requirements, and the city is keeping an eye on it. Medicine Wheel believes the requirements will be met, and the property eventually will be turned into a bike park. However, there is immense uncertainty for a project of this size. Unless one goes on the site and has a good look at it, it is difficult to comprehend that the reclamation is occurring. He echoed the concern from others that nothing is happening at the quarry.

Britt Haley, Acting Department Director/ TOPS Program Manager, reminded everyone that 100 acres is owned by the private company. They are under a legal obligation to conduct reclamation at the site. Furthermore, they are being monitored by the state for that purpose. There is a plan on the state's website for the reclamation, and upon closure by the state, the City would have the opportunity to consider a donation of the 100 acres. The City can do any review they wish to do.

Cory Sutela, Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates Executive Director, inquired if the offer can be rescinded once the reclamation is finished and the seeding plan has happened. Britt Haley,

Acting Department Director/ TOPS Program Manager, stated there is a signed binding donation agreement with all of those terms included.

David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, added the reclamation work began in March 2022, and roughly 1.5 million cubic yards of material out of the 3.2-3.4 million have been moved, showing significant progress. As Cory Sutela has alluded to, David Deitemeyer relayed to him it is anticipated the halfway point of material moved will be around the end of October. They would like to celebrate at that time to do a better job of educating the community regarding how much reclamation has been completed and what the plan is moving forward. The company itself and the contractors are working on identifying a plan on how they can best relay that from a PR perspective. Otherwise, David Deitemeyer is involved, and at the site about once a month. Additionally, he participates in some of the state inspections with the Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety. It is really not a parks or city project, it is the company's responsibility, so he is very grateful for the opportunity to still be involved; this includes having a discussion on how best to mold the site in an appropriate manner in order to help set the foundation for the bike park if and when it comes to fruition. David Deitemeyer is certainly passionate about trying to see this through, and hopeful that as time allows, the community will be able to participate in conversation on the bike park.

Chairman Bob Falcone inquired if there are issues with trespassing on the property. David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, replied there are no issues at the actual mining site as there is a good amount of existing and new signs about trespassing. However, there have been a couple of spectators near the north ridge where they can look down on the site, but otherwise it has been quiet. It has been a very successful project to date, very efficient, and very safe. When one goes up to the location, one can see a change in a matter of a week on how much material has been moved. Chairman Bob Falcone asked if the quarry workers have the location pretty secured, to which David Deitemeyer confirmed that it is quite secure. Britt Haley, Acting Department Director/ TOPS Program Manager, added she would call it an active construction site.

Britt Haley, Acting Department Director/ TOPS Program Manager, announced once the revegetation stage is in effect, one may be able to engage in some early planning and other duties. However, she would not want to be in a position with the new Mayor and plan something that they have not yet had the opportunity to even consider taking or not taking the donation. The process will be fairly linear, but one may be able to get a head start as this project moves along.

Chairman Bob Falcone commented to those who ask questions, to have patience and faith. It is being worked on, it is out of our hands, and there were rockslides in the quarry before, so it is important to prevent any future incidents. This might take a while and it may not be everything as it sounds like work is being done that is not visible to the public. Just because they do not see it happening does not mean it is not being worked on.

Cory Sutela, Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates Executive Director, added that is the message Medicine Wheel is trying to get out. However, as an advocacy group, having faith is not really

one of their strategies so they will continue to ask questions. They are grateful for the chance to dig in a little bit so to communicate and answer more than saying keep having faith because things change over time.

Presentation Items

Cheyenne Mountain State Park (Presented by Jason Hagan)

Jason Hagan, Cheyenne Mountain State Park Manager, presented the Cheyenne Mountain State Park to the TOPS Working Committee. This presentation included: Park map; Staffing; Fire mitigation; New additions at Memorial Pavilion and Camper Cabins; Dixon Trail Maintenance; Group Tent Camping Area; Future Campground loop; and lastly a slide on the Keep Colorado Wild Pass.

Committee member Jeff Davis inquired on how exactly the Keep Colorado Wild Pass will work. Basically, one's vehicle registration will have a Colorado Parks and Wildlife on it, similar to a fishing license. One does not have to show anything when entering a state park but should have it available if a ranger inquires. Chairman Bob Falcone inquired if people can still buy a regular pass to which Jason Hagan confirmed it will be available.

Chairman Bob Falcone stated TOPS has made some purchases in the last couple of years on the south side of Cheyenne Mountain State Park. He would like to know the plan for getting that area open or developing into parkland. Jason Hagan, Cheyenne Mountain State Park Manager, commented that he met with Britt Haley, Acting Department Director/TOPS Program Manager, about a month ago and the next step is to work with the legal team and update the management agreement plan. Britt Haley added, when the acquisition was made, there was a slide in David Deitemeyer's, Senior Landscape Architect, presentation for the Cheyenne Mountain Heritage Loop. She and others believe it would be a wonderful addition to the park as well. Chairman Bob Falcone inquired on how many acres will be added to the park, which is roughly 400 acres, totaling around 3,100 acres.

Vice Chair Nancy Hobbs announced the Cheyenne Mountain Run will be on October 8th.

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition Executive Director, echoed the interest on the Heritage Loop, and would really love to start those conversations about what is required to complete the Heritage Loop. She would love to work with Jason Hagan on this project. Susan Davies also inquired if there ever has been an accident during the wildfire mitigation training. Jason Hagan, Cheyenne Mountain State Park Manager, stated there was one very close accident, where a fairly new employee was working on top of the mountain and fell down, grazing his arm. Susan Davies added allowing Friends groups to go through the training might be something to reconsider as she has asked previously for the same request. Britt Haley, Acting Department Director/ TOPS Program Manager, stated she believes it would be a collaboration with Public Works because Forestry is a division of Public Works. Furthermore, she added that she would love to continue this conversation offline. Lastly, she asked if

Colorado is one of the few states that cover its own costs, to which Jason Hagan confirmed that they make more money than they spend.

Cory Sutela, Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates Executive Director, asked if he has to register each car because he has five cars. Jason Hagan, Cheyenne Mountain State Park Manager, stated one can purchase a hang pass that can be transferred from one vehicle to another.

Eric Becker, Acting Parks and Operations Manager/SIMD Administrator, inquired on how their capital budget works. Jason Hagan, Cheyenne Mountain State Park Manager, added all of the capital projects are a statewide project, and they choose which projects to fund.

Britt Haley, Acting Department Director/ TOPS Program Manager, stated Jason Hagan comes and presents because Cheyenne Mountain State Park is one of the crown jewels of the TOPS program. It really shows what the TOPS program can do and what a great partnership can do.

[Link to PowerPoint](#)

NE Colorado Springs Donation (Presented by Britt Haley)

Britt Haley, Acting Department Director/TOPS Program Manager, presented the NE Colorado Springs Donation to the TOPS Working Committee. This presentation included: Overview Map; Land Exchange Transaction Elements; Kettle Creek Habitat Project; Kettle Creek Habitat Project; Donation Property 186.60 acres; Donation Property 165.72 acres; Fire Station Site Purchase; Larry Ochs Sports Complex; Area to be retained by Parks; Next Actions; and lastly a discussion slide for any questions the TOPS Working Committee may have.

Committee member Hank Scarangella inquired if these properties would become TOPS property, and that is the hope, so they are able to follow the TOPS ordinance requirements. He inquired if the developer would be responsible for creating the park for the community on the south end of Larry Oaks or if it would become a city park. Britt Haley, Acting Department Director/TOPS Program Manager, responded right now the 13-acre property can potentially be a park. If La Plata moves to develop the 44 acres of property, they will have obligations under Park Land Dedication Ordinance to dedicate land, and then one would evaluate the next steps and whether alternative compliance in terms of helping to build this park or building another park in addition to this space would be the right thing to do in that area.

Committee member Wendy Thomas inquired what zone the Larry Oaks property is right now, and it is zoned PK. The remainder of the properties are currently in “ag” status and would eventually be a zoned **PK**.

Chairman Bob Falcone inquired if the 13 acres would remain a PLDO property or TOPS property, to which she responded it would be PLDO as PLDO funds will be utilized. The property is too small for a community park as the minimum requirement is 25 acres. There have been several discussions that this location is not a good sports complex location, and a lot of the concern is due to potential traffic congestion. A resolution from City Council authorizing the donation transaction and moving forward are the next steps necessary for action.

Committee member Wendy Thomas added while she has been on the committee, a lot of property has been acquired for trails.

Link to PowerPoint

Citizen Discussion

Vice Chair Nancy Hobbs requested an update regarding events on TOPS properties. Britt Haley, Acting Department Director/TOPS Program Manager, stated there is work in process at the City Attorney's office. If it is exclusive use of the property, it will need to be voted on by the people. If they are stepping into a corner of a TOPS property, it is an entirely different question. Nancy Hobbs wanted a clarification if the NE Colorado Springs donation property would have events. Britt Haley responded this property will be held for habitat conservation alone.

Motion to adjourn

1st - Wendy Thomas, 2nd – Nancy Hobbs, Approved, Unanimously at 9:12 AM.