



Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee

*Minutes
September 26, 2011*

Meeting Summary

The committee reviewed the Boulder County Rock Creek Grasslands Open Space Management Plan and the Broomfield Open Space Web Site Interactive Mapping Application. The committee also received updates on the Anthem Highlands Coyote Situation, the Sheridan Crosswalks, and reviewed current development proposals for the Mountainview Estates, Harvest, and Wasatch Apartment Projects. There were also brief updates on the installation of Quick Response Tags "QR Tags" at The Field Open Space and a proposed pedestrian bridge near Snowberry Lane that was requested by a resident.

Roll Call

Present:

William Olney
Walt Spader
Dennis Thompson
George Zack
Annette Cislo
Rob Bodine
Patrick Tennyson
James Haedrich

Absent:

Kevin Jacobs

Others in attendance:

Kristan Pritz, Director of Open Space and Trails
Pete Dunlaevy, Open Space and Trails Planner
Kevin Standbridge, Assistant City and County Manager
Adrian Kropp, GIS Manager
Jesse Rounds, Boulder County Open Space

Agenda Minutes

1. Call to Order,
2. Introduction of Interested Citizens:

David Jurcak, running for City Council Ward 4, introduced himself and greeted the committee. Expressed interest in the recent coyote conflicts in the

Anthem Highlands neighborhood. Stated that coyote hazing is counter intuitive for many residents, and thinning the pack is a reactive policy. Felt that Anthem residents needed to be provided with more public education about coyotes and safety.

Judy Enderle, former OSTAC member, reiterated her comments that were presented to City Council last week in opposition to the lethal control of coyotes in the Anthem neighborhood. She noted that “thinning” coyotes does not work. Judy said that she has spoken with Council members, citizens and city employees who are concerned about the decisions in Anthem on coyote removal and that they also want to find a more positive way of dealing with the issue. She recommended that a Council Study Session be scheduled to review coyote management and the response to human-coyote conflicts to develop an offensive plan as opposed to a defensive plan. She provided a written statement of her comments.

>Kristan-we have a multi-faceted strategy which includes a variety of options to learn more about coyotes for the Anthem neighborhood as well as the larger community. Anthem residents will be forming a coyote crew. Staff will also be participating in a meeting for the two Anthem Highlands and Anthem Ranch Homeowners’ Associations. (Note—since the meeting, a nature program for children was also hosted in the Anthem Highlands neighborhood).

>Kevin-our staff will also be contracting with some renowned coyote experts to review the situation in Anthem and provide feedback and management recommendations.

Joel Hollis and Jaan Raamot also present.

3. Boulder County Rock Creek Grasslands Open Space Management Plan

Kristan introduced Jesse Rounds from Boulder County Open Space to present the Management Plan to the committee.

Jesse provided the basic history, background and framework for the Rock Creek Grasslands Management Plan. The management area is made up of 15 properties that were acquired between 1992 and 2004 with the help of Broomfield and a variety of Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs). The plan began in 2005 with a coordinated resource management process which included site visits, public meetings, and presentations to advisory boards. The plan should go before the Boulder County Commissioners next month for adoption (update: October 27).

Jesse described the western and eastern trail connections across the property. The western trail connects the Lake Link Trail in Broomfield to the Rock Creek Trail along the eastern side of Highway 287. The eastern trail will connect from the Wildgrass neighborhood under the Northwest Parkway and

connect to the Rock Creek/Coal Creek Trail system. These trails are presently slated for construction in 2012.

>Rob-these will be soft surface trails?

>Jesse-yes, the crusher fines surface;

>George-there is a driveway/pullout area along Highway 287 – will that be a trailhead?

>Jesse-no, we are not proposing any trailheads in this area, and this driveway will likely be seeded over;

>Annette-thank you for coming here to present this; is there a cost amount for the revegetation? Is Boulder County fronting the costs for the trail construction?

>Jesse-do not have the totals costs at this time but it is a long process—often 10 years long and depends on rainfall; Boulder County may also look at acquiring grants to build these trails;

>Dennis-what are the concerns or strategies for noxious weeds, like thistle and others?

>Jesse-there will be weed management on this property and a possibility of allowing fire management in the future, but we are unsure of that now;

>Kristan-we had an unintentional fire on the Ridgeview Open Space to the south of this land and it improved the vegetation;

>Jessie-IGAs would need to be reviewed and amended to allow for the use of fire;

>Annette-if there was a fire in this area, whose responsibility would it be to fight the fire are there concerns from citizens about the fire?

>Jessie,-es, sometimes citizens do have concerns about using fire;

>Kevin-suspect that it is North Metro as they have some of these areas within their territories;

>George-as this will be a Habitat Conservation Area (HCA) property in the future, I assume that the trails will be multi-use trails?

>Jesse-yes, these trails will all be multi-use.

>Rob-where will horses be allowed?

>Kristan-this is something we will be looking at on the very western side of Wildgrass, as there are horses in the Pony Estates area but I believe the remainder of the trails are open to equestrians; horses would not be allowed in the main area of Wildgrass;

>Jesse-described trailhead issue at Pony Estates, we do not want parking in this area for horse users, and trailers;

>Kristan-what are the buffer zones for prairie dogs adjacent to residential areas for Boulder County in this area?;

>Jesse-believes that it is approx. 125 feet; we will remove prairie dogs within that area; we try to respond to those situations as quickly as possible, although it is usually not immediate;

>Kristan-thank you to Jesse for all of his efforts to work with our community and many others on this project;

4. Broomfield Open Space Website Interactive Mapping Application Demonstration

Kristan introduced Adrian Kropp, Broomfield GIS Manager, to present the interactive open space mapping application.

Adrian demonstrated the basic functions of the mapping application for the committee and answered questions

>Rob-asked about the symbols; where did they come from?

>Adrian-we used standard mapping symbols to show things like parking, overlooks, fishing spots, etc.

>Annette-have you checked the presentation on smart phones yet?

>Adrian-currently this application is geared towards desktop/home computers, but this will be a possibility for future adaptation; the data will easily lend itself to those applications in the future, although it currently runs on 'flash' which is not supported by Apple products like the iPhone.

>Annette-will this information be accessible for emergency response?

>Adrian-yes, our emergency dispatch can tie into this data;

>Annette-can we have panning video instead of static photos within this application?

>Adrian-yes, this is something we can incorporate;

>Annette-does this show elevation at all?

>Adrian-not yet, but we can have access to those services;

>Rob-can we show trail connections to regional trails?

>Adrian-yes, we show many of the connections now that are adjacent to Broomfield;

>Rob-does Parks and Recreation have a similar application?

>Adrian-yes, they have an amenity driven application, too, where you can search for things like athletic fields, shelters, etc.

5. Update on the Anthem Highlands Coyote Situation

Kristan described the conflicts with coyotes in the Anthem Highlands neighborhood and outlined Broomfield's response immediate and ongoing response.

Actions Completed:

-Showings of the film, "American Coyote: Still Wild at Heart," increased on Channel 8.

-Recommendations on how to avoid conflicts with coyotes also being aired on Channel 8.

-Additional 22 coyote information signs placed at key locations in Anthem Highlands neighborhood.

-Mowing practices adjacent to trails adjusted to minimize areas where coyotes could hide in vegetation.

-Broomfield staff provided information tables on coexistence with coyotes on August 10th and 13th at Anthem Highlands community events.

A "question and answer" meeting was held in Anthem Highlands on September 20th to give residents an opportunity to ask about the coyote bite

that occurred on September 19 and further steps that would be taken to protect public safety.

-The trail and playground where two bites and one incident occurred has been closed to allow Colorado Parks and Wildlife to complete its work and to avoid unnecessary risks to residents.

-Staff will go door-to-door to homes in Anthem Highlands that abut the two open lands areas where the bites occurred.

-A meeting is planned with Pulte Homes to discuss vegetation types and landscaping plans. Staff will be discussing landscape material changes for future landscaping plans.

-Staff plans to attend a meeting in November with both Anthem homeowners associations as requested by the HOAs.

-Professor Stewart Breck from CSU has agreed to include Broomfield in his research study about coyotes in urban areas.

-Staff will periodically canvas Anthem Highlands and do high-intensity hazing as needed.

-A public meeting on coyotes and coexistence is planned for October 24 at the Audi, and is cosponsored by the CPW and WildEarth Guardians.

-The Broomfield Nature Program is hosting several coyote education classes for youngsters this fall.

-Nationally-recognized wildlife biologists and coyote experts will advise Broomfield on how best to minimize coyote conflicts in the community.

-Coyote Crews will be established.

>Patrick-believes that it is commendable to have outside experts to come in and review this; what if we find something from a development standpoint that we could change or re-configure our subdivisions?

>Kristan-that is certainly something we will be interested in; the Anthem neighborhood is a peninsula around a more prairie/undeveloped landscape on at least three sides so we are looking at vegetation, location of improvements, etc. to minimize conflicts.

>Rob-with Erie across Highway 7 there, how do we know that coyotes aren't coming from Erie; are they doing any of this work to deter attacks and educate their citizens;

>Kristan-they could be coming from Erie—it is not certain. The CSU study will shed some more light on coyote movement and the extent of their ranges;

>Walt, it will be interesting to understand the parameters of different developments, why coyote conflicts are more prevalent in Anthem than other neighborhoods; it does not appear that we have coyotes in other neighborhoods like there are in Anthem;

>Kristan-we have had a few hot spots in different neighborhoods with coyote conflicts but not to the degree we have had in Anthem; we will be working to try to determine if there are specific causes for some of these conflict areas;

>Annette-we should provide information to residents about how to detect signs of coyote activity such as scat so they can be made aware of coyote activity;

>Rob-what has been the reaction of Anthem residents?

>Kristan-it has been mixed as you might expect; but our efforts to provide education and information appears to have been well received and appreciated;

>Kevin-the parents of victims that were bitten were very understanding;

>Kristan-we will be practicing some interactive training and education for children to teach them how to react to coyote encounters; the Nature Program is helping with this education.

>Patrick-hat is interesting, as it may be counterintuitive with children, for example: Don't throw rocks at dogs, but okay to throw them at/near coyotes.

>Kristan-we will continue to keep OSTAC updated on this issue.

6. Sheridan Boulevard Pedestrian Crossings adjacent to Broomfield County Commons: Results of Council Meeting Discussion on September 20th

Kevin described the plan for the Sheridan Blvd. crosswalks near the Broomfield County Commons, and the plan to remove crosswalks due to safety concerns, add a light at 10th Avenue and reconfigure several crossings. Some of the landscaping will also be adjusted to allow for better visibility.

>Annette-why were the designated crosswalks with user-activated push buttons not installed to begin with;

>Kevin-it was mainly a traffic flow issue, where this is a major thoroughfare across the community and community surveys have reflected a desire to move across the community more quickly; there are also some concerns about having those types of crosswalks in higher speed limit areas;

>Annette-is this reaction about protection from liability?

>Kevin-no, it really isn't as we have protections in that area; we are trying to develop a practical solution to this and it is a good problem to have (pedestrians high use of the County Commons); people like the Commons, people feel safe along Sheridan, but there is a downside and we are trying to address that;

>Patrick-flashing lights on stop signs can be tricky because they are not standard like the red, yellow, green lights, and may confuse people;

>Walt-the crosswalks will only be removed after the light at 10th is operational;

>Joel H.-the refuge within the median is a good idea; a crosswalk and a flashing yellow light does not necessarily make it safe to cross;

>Rob-do we have the same problem on the other side, along Lowell?

>Kevin-we have not had this problem on the other side; we have designated crosswalks and just a two-lane road. It has a lower speed limit than Sheridan as well.

7. Development Review Projects

-Mountainview Estates

Kristan introduced the Mountainview Estates development and the proposed trails plan. Kristan also pointed out the 2.1 acre park and other amenities. Jim Haedrich is the OSTAC representative.

-Harvest Project

The Harvest Project is located adjacent to the transit-oriented development on the east side of US-36, across from the 1stBank Center. The developer is providing 10% of land dedication on the site. Cash in lieu will make up the balance of the public land dedication requirement. Rob Bodine is the OSTAC representative.

-Wasatch Apartments

Kristan reviewed the layout of the Wasatch Apartments project and the proposed layout of the Southeast Community Loop Trail on this parcel. The trail will be a potential connection to the Walmart, the new Tennyson Trail, and the Metzger Property on the east side of Lowell Boulevard. An open lands corridor with the Southeast Community Loop Trail is planned along the drainage as described in the 120th Avenue Master Plan. Rob Bodine is the OSTAC representative.

8. QR (Quick Response) Tags at The Field Open Space

Kristan and Pete informed the committee of the "QR" tags that are being installed on existing trail signs at The Field. These tags can be scanned with a smart phone and will pull up a web page with information and maps of The Field Open Space.

9. Snowberry Lane Pedestrian Bridge over Community Ditch to the Broomfield Trail (between 10th Avenue and Miramonte Blvd.)

Kristan and Pete described a request to construct a pedestrian bridge over community ditch in this area. There is a segment of trail that already connects the street to the ditch, but there is no trail on the east side of the ditch. The request is for a trail in this area to connect the neighborhood to the trail on the west side. The proposal was brought to the CIP Advisory Committee previously and they asked that OSTAC review the request and determine if it is needed as a CIP project.

- >George-given other CIP projects this would not seem to be a priority;
- >Joel-this is a connection that helps get through neighborhood; and some of these areas are difficult to get through;
- >Rob-what is the projected cost?
- >Kristan-we have not priced this with our CIP staff yet, but we can put together a cost estimate for the committee;

An OSTAC majority was in favor of further review and consideration of this request. The Committee asked that staff provide more specific information on the costs of the bridge at a future meeting.

10. Review and Approve Minutes of the June 23, 2011 OSTAC Meeting

George motions for approval; Dennis seconds. Minutes approved.

11. Updates and Reminders

-Staff will be reviewing the Department of Justice requirements for access on trails and formulating a draft policy for review by the committee. The legal department is heading up this project as there are other public areas and facilities that need to be addressed.

-Proposed Joint Meeting with Westminster – October 27, 2011.

-Metzger Pond Aquatic Research:

Patrick reported on the shocking of Metzger Pond to catch fish with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife. The pond lacks significant predation, and has lots of little fish, sunfish, bluegills, small bass, carp, etc.

-Select Date for November-December Meeting. November 17 or December 1.

-Birds of Prey Presentation on September 24, 2011 – 150 attendees.

-Open Space Acquisition, Missionary Alliance Property – 3.85 acres of open space to be considered by Council on October 11th.

Other as Desired by OSTAC

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.



Minutes Prepared by Pete Dunlaevy

Approved by the Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee on October 26, 2011.