



Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee

*DRAFT Minutes
December 8, 2022*

Meeting Summary

OSTAC members heard an update on the responses from the initial survey regarding the Markel and Wottge Open Spaces, including an overview of the feedback received on the initial survey, current status and next steps on outreach and planning for the project. They were given the history of prairie dog management and how it pertains to the Buffer management of Lac Amora. Final Wayfinding trail signage specs were presented for approval. Updates were also given on the status of Siena Pump Station, Nissen Channel Floodplain an/Trail and resident concerns regarding Eagle Trace Golf Course.

OSTAC (Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee)

Present:

Renaë Stavros, Vice-Chair
Teng Keng (TK) Vang
Alexis Sweet
Scott Whitmore
Dave Holmstrom
Chris Petrizzo
Patrick Tennyson
Councilmember Todd Cohen
Mayor Pro-tem Stan Jezierski

Absent:

Michael McLane, Chair

Interested Citizens:

Roxie Juul
Mark and Carolyn Stussi
Desiree Van Ineveld
Jean Lim
CC Stucie
Erica Pazol
Others (in the room but did not comment (approximately 10 to 15 people)

Other staff, presenters, and consultants in attendance:

Kristan Pritz, Open Space and Trails Director
Peter Dunlaevy, Open Space and Trails Manager
Lexi Brewer, Open Space and Trails Technician
Jean Hardouin, Open Space and Trails Administrative Analyst
Ed Thompson, Community Development CIP Project Manager

Agenda Minutes

1. Call to Order by Renaë Stavros at 6:05 p.m. for the meeting.

Renaë called the meeting to order and welcomed any members from the public. Meeting started with reading the Land Acknowledgement.

2. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

None.

3. Update and request for Comments on the Markel and Wottge Open Space Plans

Kristan Pritz gave an overview of what the definition of Open Space is to avoid confusion and purpose of tonight's meeting. A Public Engagement Notice was sent out to residents within 1000 ft of the Open Space properties to inform them of the project and request their attendance at the 12.8.22 OSTAC meeting, as well as invite them to visit, participate, and comment on the Broomfield Voice webpage.

Ed Thompson gave an overview of Markel and Wottge Open Spaces. Markel was purchased in 2008 and contains a man-made pond that will remain. Wottge is mainly farmland.

Lexi Brewer gave an overview of the Initial Survey. OSTAC members received a handout of the data results as well as all of the open comments for their further review. The survey was open from October 15 until November 14, 2022. She gave a high level summary of the survey results to better understand responses to the survey. Summary results highlighted the feedback received regarding environment, trails and public parking. All of these results and the OSTAC presentation are also posted on the Broomfield Voice page for the public to view and comment on.

-Dave, what is included in the term wildlife when viewing question 7 (the codification of open ended comments)

-Lexi, the analysis of the comments included an organizational process where the comments that specifically said those specific words were tallied. So "wildlife" was defined as however the respondent that used the word wildlife defined it. This analysis was completed in this way in order to be as objective as possible. So the word "wildlife" appeared in the open-ended responses 14 times.

Ed Thompson gave an overview of the status of the project. Environmental analysis and photographs have been done. Announced that an Open House will be held in early 2023.

The OSTAC vice-chair opened the floor to public comments:

-Mark Stussi, resident at 5706 Brook Hollow Drive, backs up to the Markel Open Space, wanted to know who the notice was sent to about tonight's meeting? He stated that he didn't receive the postcard in the mail that informed about the OSTAC meeting. Concerned with residents getting access to the open spaces safely, especially around 136th and Aspen. Wanted to know if when open space is purchased, is capital improvement required?

-Kristan, no, improvement is not required automatically but the land is purchased for the public to enjoy as public funding is used. It usually depends on the land's character, potential for trails and other improvements that are compatible with the particular site. It is preferred to have at least trail improvements if it makes sense for the trail network of Broomfield. She also stated that staff will investigate why he didn't receive a notice.

-Ed, there is a Capital Improvement Project that will put in a new traffic signal at 136th and Aspen and will include pedestrian improvements.

-Desiree Van Ineveld, Spyglass Drive, clarified that there is a lot of wildlife in Wottge OS. Does not want trailhead parking across the street. Traffic is already bad in that area of Sheridan. Would like to see them use the existing 51 parking spots already at the Broadlands Park, though concerned with crossing Sheridan. Agrees that a stop light could be good to improve crossing Sheridan as well as slow the traffic along Sheridan. A tunnel under the road could also be utilized.

-Jean Lim, Council Member, Wildgrass, said that there was a traffic investigation at Meadow Mountain Dr. and Sheridan Blvd. and that the traffic volume did not reach the threshold to warrant a stoplight. Read part of a letter from Patti Antonio, HOA president-Cottages at the Broadlands regarding tonight's meeting.

Concerned with keeping mountain views if trees are planted and/or shade structures are added. Question: Do you see shade trees/structures as conflicting with mountain views?

-Kristan, planting extra trees requires irrigation so this requirement needs to be weighed for each location. Planting of numerous trees is not typically done on Open Spaces due to water requirements. We may be able to plant at Markel pond or by the ditch as an enhancement to an already wet area that has existing vegetation with drip irrigation. We are evaluating options for these sites. Views would also be evaluated. (Note: Shade has been requested in this project's survey and the larger OSPRT Refresh survey).

Roxie Juul, requested the possibility of adding rock outcropping for wildlife, particularly coyotes at Wottge and at Markel.

CC Stucie, Aspen Creek, concerned regarding parking at trailhead on Sheridan. What is the objective of placing a parking lot there? Noted that Wottge would be more of a pass-through type trail.

-Kristan, no decision has been made whether trailhead parking is even part of the plans. The idea of adding a parking lot is to make the Open Spaces more accessible.

-Ed, parking will always be open to discussion. We do not have a preference for or against a parking lot, so that is why we are requesting feedback on this topic.

-Chris, How long would the trails be?

-Ed, two kinds of trails are possible, longer connecting trails and more internal trails. We are not at the phase where that detail is determined.

-Pete, we really don't know yet, but it is possible that the Lake Link Trail and the Broomfield Trail could go through these properties.

-Chris, parking might be good to have for access to both areas?

-Pete, These spaces could be an access point to those trails, but we will have to evaluate if perhaps that access is already being met elsewhere.

-Patrick, thanked people for answering survey questions and attending the meeting. Agrees that planting trees with irrigation is hard.

-Todd, are trails internal to the properties or will they connect to other surrounding trails?

-Kristan, The trails within these properties will connect to existing trails.

-Todd, seems like most people don't want property changed much. Was there a question on the survey regarding access?

-Kristan, there was not a specific question on the survey asking people if they wanted to have access to these properties.

-Todd, do most people travel to open space?

-Kristan, she asked OSTAC and people at the meeting to express their views and asked for comments. A few examples were given that people do travel and drive to open space properties, including Lac Amora and McKay Lake/Lambertson Farms Nature Play area.

-Rena, keeping a site natural does not necessarily mean that a trail(s) are not allowed. She thanked everyone for their comments and attendance at the meeting.

4. Review of the History of the Establishment and Current Lac Amora Prairie Dog Buffer Management and Proposed Prairie Dog Broomfield Code Amendments, and Prairie Dog Census

Pete Dunlaevy gave an overview of the policies and goals of prairie dog management. Broke down process for determining how/when relocation is done. Realizes the importance to the ecosystem of prairie dogs.

-Dave, what is considered Anthem Ranch Western Greenbelt? Concerned why areas around that area were being controlled.

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-Pete, that may be Broomfield where you are seeing the control. We have a fence there where they are contained within Broomfield open space on the west edge of Anthem Ranch, but containment is difficult. We use lethal control when they go outside of the fenced area.

Pete continued with a review of the different areas and policies. January 2007 OSTAC considered maintenance and management options. Any changes will go out to residents. Pete continued by showing a slide with current colonies in Lac Amora. Management is trying to strike a balance.

-Erica Pazol, Rock Creek Drive - referenced a fencing system in Louisville at Heritage Park that looks more effective. Wanted to know if the Broomfield staff knew about it. Noted that the change in the landscape over 15 years is devastating and not attractive. However, she realizes there are other views.

-Pete, we work with Louisville and will look at it as an option but would approach residents first for input if fencing might be implemented. We do pay attention to other new technologies that may be effective, including high pitch noise makers, and other types of fences, but so far the data does not suggest that these are very effective.

-Kristan, are you thinking that the fence would be placed along the fence running along the northern boundary of CCOB open space abutting the Boulder open space?

-Erica, yes. Ideally I would put a fence all along the Boulder/Broomfield county line.

-Roxie, said that prairie dogs were crossing Rock Creek Drive street near the Lac Amora Open Space and getting killed. Need to look at the area in the Spring for possible overpopulation. With the destruction of the vegetation, adjacent residents get dirt. The condition of the vegetation needs to be looked at.

-Jean Lim, Wildgrass resident and Councilmember, can understand the challenges of fencing. How would you survey a neighborhood to get views on fencing? Has concerns about the fence on the property line at Sunridge as far as height, etc. not sure how the fence would look and what adjacent residents would think.

-Pete, we are looking at different types of fencing.

-Chris, understands that people have different views on prairie dogs. Lives in Lac Amora and moved there for the prairie dogs and other wildlife. Appreciates talks with Pete to understand the pros and cons. Tries to listen to comments about the impacts on the property and hopes we consider is there a place for them. Appreciates that Pete tries to keep a balance.

-Dave, what kind of fencing do we use?

-Pete, mostly chicken wire with several feet of the fence above ground and some fencing below ground to address burrowing beneath the fence. We have tried many things, it is a constant struggle. No fence is 100% effective.

-Roxie, prairie dogs do have a place in the ecosystem but have to watch where they overpopulate. Is concerned when they run into the road.

-Scott, would prairie dogs naturally migrate if they were left alone? Population in the city interrupts that possible natural process. Heard that prairie dogs won't go through fencing they can't see through.

-Pete, not sure if that works. Doesn't have examples of where solid fences have been put.

-Chris, why do we use proforma in buffer zones? Pueblo has a relocation area. Could we relocate them there? Do we use proforma because there is no space for relocation?

-Pete, knows of the Pueblo area but currently we have relocation available in Great Western. Also could possibly use Rocky Flats, if and when that option is available.

-Kristan, Broomfield's prairie dog policy calls for using proforma permits when there are public health and safety issues, in the buffer zones that were reviewed by OSTAC, proforma permits are used to address concerns from residents about prairie dogs getting into backyards, the Policy's proforma approach was designed to balance response time and budget impacts, another example of where the proforma permit is used is for athletic fields where having the burrows can be dangerous.

-Chris, wants staff to talk to Deb regarding the option of bringing prairie dogs from the buffer areas to Pueblo.

-Pete, we can have that discussion.

-Roxie, prairie dogs are burrowing under railroad tracks.

-Pete, we are not aware of this happening.

5. Review of Final Wayfinding Open Space and Trails Signage (Request for Motion and Vote)

Pete Dunlaevy gave an update on the status of the signage. Showed examples of what the signs will look like; these designs were created with previous OSTAC input. Also showed examples of signage for concrete pathways. Showed top priorities for deployment/phasing. Hope to have final approval in the next few months, then will go out to bid. Tonight, we are requesting final approval of the signage program design and the general deployment/phasing.

-Dave, should signs have some kind of address, so if someone is hurt, they can tell someone where they are?

-Pete, some signs do, particularly those that are located at most access points as the sign's address is actually the access point so emergency knows how to access the trail,

-Rena, there are apps that can help show locations.

-Scott, can we number the signs?

-Pete, the emergency responders know where the person on the trail is using the cellphone GPS, they just don't know how to get to them on the trail with larger emergency vehicles. The issue is really pinning down the access points.

Scott, Seems like someone who reads the address may be confused by it if it is not actually where they are.

-Pete, right now the address is for access points only. It is typically very close to the actual address of the sign.

-Patrick, What comes up with QR code?

-Pete, QR codes right now are not going to be used. Might be used in future. The QR code on the sign program is a concept and location if the QR code is added in the future so we can see what it could possibly look like.

-Lexi, it would not be hard to direct the QR code to a website, but the code goes to a website. So there is some maintenance required in that you need to know where all the codes are all directed to and to make sure to not break the online link.

-Pete, this is conceptual right now.

Patrick motioned to approve the sign program, Chris seconds; Motion was approved unanimously.

6. Review and Approval of October 27, 2022 OSTAC Meeting Minutes

TK motioned to approve the OSTAC and PRSSAC October 27, 2022 minutes and the OSTAC October 27, 2022 minutes at the same time; Rena, seconds; Both minutes were approved unanimously.

7. OSTAC Updates

Siena Reservoir Pump Station

Pete Dunlaevy let the committee know that we received updated plans. We already mentioned we want the trail to be a little wider.

Nissen Channel Floodplain and Trail Project

Pete provided an overview of the drainageway. An Open House was held for this, unfortunately at the same time as this meeting. Open Space was not involved in selecting the date/location of the open house.

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-Pete, we are waiting to hear feedback from tonight's open house to know next steps.

-Pete, there will also be a couple of crossings of the drainageway by the proposed trail. More information will be provided at the next OSTAC meeting.

Eagle Trace Golf Course (Kristan)

Kristan Prtiz, per a citizen request, the resident wanted to know if the City would step in and buy the Eagle Trace golf course. At this time, the City's response is to offer to help the current owner connect with other golf course operators if so desired.

-TK, Why? Cost of changing it over to a park or open space?

-Kristan, there are a variety of implications but at this time the situation is considered to be a private issue and it is up to the owner to determine what the next steps should be.

-Jean Lim, Councilmember, commented that she has heard rumbling also about lack of upkeep of the golf course. She has also heard that the golf course owners are not happy with the amount of property taxes required and they can no longer make a profit, but are limited on options due to the existing zoning.

-Scott, another issue is that per his understanding they have junior water rights, so they may not be getting water until later in the season and that may be contributing to drier grass.

Other topics as requested by Citizens

None.

8. Additional Comments from the Public

None.

9. Other Topics as Desired by OSTAC

None.

Kristan brought to the attention that Jack had moved on to another job and mentioned that we will miss him but wish him well.

Members opened their gifts and Kristan mentioned how great it was working with InventHQ to create the engraved water bottles. She suggested that people should look into the opportunities at InventHQ for projects with families and friends. She wished everyone a very happy and healthy holiday season.

Motion to adjourn by TK and seconded by Renae.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. Minutes were prepared by Jean Hardouin.