



Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee

*Minutes
March 28, 2019*

Meeting Summary

The OSTAC Committee visited the site of the Proposed Aspen Creek Filing No. 8 (Aspen North) Development and provided comments on the revised development plan. Pete Dunlaevy discussed the status of prairie dog relocation sites, and Kristan Pritz reviewed a tree removal and replacement project and dirt storage plan on Wottge Open Space to allow for the expansion of Dillon Road. OSTAC also received updates on the City Council-approved Broomfield Business Center Letter of Understanding regarding eagle protections, volunteer monitoring of the heron rookery at Metzger Farm Open Space, the Palisade North Filing No. 6 (Hepp Property) Development Plan, Extraction Oil and Gas developments, location for the Broomfield Trail Adventure, and upcoming open space events for April and May.

OSTAC (Open Space and Trails Advisory Committee)

Present:

Ray Churgovich, Vice-Chair (arrived at 7:15 p.m.)

Todd Cohen

Doug Grumann

Michael McLane

Chris Petrizzo

Chris Kassel (alternate)

Councilmember Guyleen Castriotta

Councilmember Stan Jezierski

Absent:

Patrick Tennyson, Chair (prior commitment)

Terra Lenihan (prior commitment)

Interested Citizens:

Roxie Juul, Broomfield resident

Ryan Aweida, Broomfield resident and Aspen Street Land, LLC representative

Susan Wade, Broomfield resident and Redland representative

Other staff, presenters, and consultants in attendance:

Kristan Pritz, Open Space and Trails Director

Pete Dunlaevy, Open Space and Trails Manager

Ellie Lanaghan, Open Space and Trails Technician

Kevin Standbridge, Deputy City and County Manager

Agenda Minutes

1. Site Visit to the Proposed Aspen North Development at Aspen St and Dillon Rd

OSTAC members visited the Proposed Aspen Creek Filing No. 8 (Aspen North) Development located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Aspen Street and Dillon Road. Ryan Aweida with Aspen Street Land LLC, and Susan Wade with Redland, walked the site with OSTAC members and showed them the updated site plans for the development, including a neighborhood park featuring the pond on the southwest end of the property, three parks creating corridors to Community Ditch, three pocket parks in higher density

housing areas, four trail connections to Wottge Open Space, and a trail connection to Aspen Creek Elementary.

2. Call to Order by Ray Churgovich, 7:15 p.m.

3. Introduction of Interested Citizens

Citizens held their comments for items on the agenda.

4. Summary of Comments from Site Visit to Aspen North Development

Ray opened the discussion for OSTAC members to make their final comments on the new plan.

>Doug, I appreciate the flexibility you have shown to the community's suggestions and am impressed by the new plan.

>Chris P, I appreciate the opportunity you gave us to look around at the site and the fact that you are trying to improve the quality of life of these future residents and their access to open space.

>Ray, Although I was not able to visit the site, I did notice the changes to the plan.

>Guyleen, I appreciate you listening to the community and neighbors on this project and am glad to see their comments incorporated.

>Stan, I think there are good changes in the new plan, with more flow into the parks, open space, and Aspen Creek neighborhood.

>Todd, I have a comment about the pocket parks and the choice to have open lawns for these instead of playgrounds. My concern is that there is still a need for more park space in the high density areas. I don't see the need for a commercial space when it could be a larger park that allows for a playground.

>Susan, We decided the pocket parks would be a lawn to serve as an open play area, but they could have a small climbing structure or some sort of other play structure.

>Ryan, The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) seemed to recommend less equipment there and have more playground equipment towards the lake to the south. We could add more natural play features in the parks along Community Ditch.

>Chris K, Will there be any changes to Aspen Street to accommodate this development?

>Susan, We might have to add a left turn lane from Aspen Street to Dillon Road.

>Michael, I am wondering about the height of the buildings in the northwest corner of the property. It can get very windy in this area and I am wondering if that has been considered to help break up the wind.

>Susan, The three-story townhomes with rooftop patios will offer great views, but they will be windy at the top.

>Ryan, Our current development plan has the heights of the buildings transition from tall in the northwest corner to shorter ranch homes to the east.

>Ray, Does this new plan come closer to the open space requirements?

>Susan, Yes, it does get closer to the public land dedication requirement.

>Kristan, We will be working closely with Parks Maintenance, Recreation, and Community Development to keep wildlife and natural areas a priority in the development of this project.

>Roxie, Down by the Neighborhood Park the plan says there will be a small parking area. I know that nannies will want to drive kids down there and not walk, so you will want plenty of spaces for people to park. They will end up parking on the street if there is no room.

>Susan, There will be on-street parking near the park, but PRAC asked for parking in this area as well.

>Ryan, We are trying to work between the parking priority and preserving trees. It will be a challenge.

>Roxie, Angled parking could work well.

>Todd, What type of fencing will be facing the open space?

>Susan, I believe it will be open split rail fencing.

Kristan read comments on Terra Lenihan's behalf since she was unable to attend:

"With the unique perspective that I have (having lived on this property), let's all keep in mind the importance of not only the open space but wildlife traveling and/or living in this area. Wildlife viewed on the property include a great blue heron on the pond near the driveway, snakes, toad, coyote, great horned owl, and fox. I'm sure there are more! Keeping some larger sections of open space on this property to connect Wottge (also part of an important wildlife corridor) and the open space to the west of the property will be in our community's best interest. Thank you!"

>Pete, The trail connection to Aspen Creek Elementary seems to head out into Wottge Open Space rather than directly to the school.

>Ryan, There is also a trail connection that heads south to the Aspen neighborhood cul de sac at Willow Wood Court which leads more directly to the school.

5. Update on Prairie Dog Relocation Sites

Pete explained the polygon boundary for the Great Western prairie dog relocation site. Staff are expecting the relocation site to be full by the end of the breeding season. Smith Environmental (Smith) continues to conduct quarterly reviews of the site and send them to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). Staff are continuing an ongoing review with Jefferson County to receive approval for Broomfield prairie dogs to be relocated to Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Jefferson County is currently conducting an inventory of their own in-county needs for relocations first before giving us permission. We have been given verbal assurances that Jefferson County remains open to taking prairie dogs from Broomfield given our proximity and the small size of our county. Another option that we have been exploring for relocations is to expand the existing relocation boundary at Great Western. We have asked the Water Department about the potential for the reservoir to be expanded, but have not heard back from them yet on the subject.

>Kevin, City Council will also be discussing the relocation boundary expansion. The Public Works Department identified this area and its elevation because that is where we would want to expand reservoir.

Pete added that open space staff have identified other viable relocation sites in Broomfield, specifically in the McWhinney area and other properties in north Broomfield once oil and gas activities have been removed from the area. These sites will require revegetation before they are deemed to have appropriate habitat in order to get approval from CPW, but we do have some money budgeted to do this work. We are aware of several areas with established prairie dog colonies that will be developed soon. If relocating the prairie dogs is not an option, the second option is for the prairie dogs to be donated to wildlife recovery, likely through the Birds of Prey Foundation. However, we are hoping to hear from Jefferson County soon to avoid this issue. We have a verbal go ahead from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to relocate the prairie dogs to Rocky Flats already, and just need Jefferson County's approval and a final signoff from CPW.

>Ray, What type of response are you expecting to get from the public for relocating prairie dogs to Rocky Flats?

>Pete, The area of relocation is way up north from core areas, well out of range of contamination and regularly tested. The USFWS cleared relocations there in their Master Plan for the site, but there certainly could be public concern on this issue.

>Kevin, There is an activist group out of Boulder called the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center is concerned about any impacts to Rocky Flats so there certainly could be concern from citizens about prairie dog relocations.

>Kristan, The USFWS has already allowed prairie dogs to be relocated out there. I am not sure what kind of public comments have been received about it though. This could be a good thing to ask our Jefferson County partners about.

>Chris P, has there been any update about the trail cameras at sites with people potentially illegally relocating prairie dogs?

>Pete, Smith put cameras up at the McWhinny site, but I have not heard anything from them about it so far. The biologists are still seeing the burrowing owl out there. Patrick Tennyson asked at the last meeting about the owl's diet, and Smith has been watching to see what its diet is. This owl seems to have completely adapted to eating small mammals, and the pellets it dops are all fur and bones. It is an interesting adaptation to see, and we will be talking with the biologists about this more.

6. Proposed Dillon Tree Restoration Plan for Wottge Open Space

Kristan explained that the cottonwoods at Wottge Open Space near the intersection of Dillon Road and Sheridan Boulevard will need to be removed in order to allow for the Dillon Road expansion. The trees will be replaced with 18 plantings of hackberry, cottonwoods, and ponderosa pines. The project will also need to temporarily store extra soil along the corner of this property.

>Michael, Will the soil stockpile area be fenced? I am concerned about wind kicking up the dirt.

>Kristan, I will bring it up with the project engineer to find out what protective measures will be required.

>Ray, How long will this be going on?

>Kevin, The contract is in place and they are currently finalizing the design and land acquisition permissions from Boulder County on the north side. I am guessing the project will start early next year and finish by the end of 2020.

>Doug, Can you show us where the new trail and trees will go in?

>Kristan, There will be a 10-foot trail along the north end of the property with connections across the open space. The ditch along this area will be piped to accommodate the road expansion.

>Ray, Will the new trees be irrigated?

>Kristan, Yes, they will be irrigated to allow them to establish.

>Chris P, Will this property continue to be farmed during this project?

>Kristan, Yes, we will get into the property's long term plan as we develop a site plan with community input.

7. Review and Approval of the February 28, 2019 OSTAC Meeting Minutes

Doug motions to approve the minutes; Michael seconds; Minutes are passed unanimously.

8. OSTAC Updates

- **Broomfield Business Center Letter of Understanding**

Kristan explained that City Council approved the Letter of Understanding with Garrett. She added that we are very thankful to have this issue resolved. There are two eaglets confirmed by our biologists to have hatched.

Kristan added that someone went onto the conservation easement property and went directly under nest to take photos. This disturbance flushed the eagles from the nest for a few minutes, but it was fortunately 70 degrees that day. Staff will be working closely with the new owner's name and we will be requesting to put up signs around the 660-foot buffer. He has already introduced himself to his neighbors and USFWS to help prevent trespassing. He came to the lobby today to speak with all of us but he did not know we were going on a site visit.

>Doug, Did anyone make contact with trespasser?

>Kristan, We unfortunately missed the person. It happened too quickly and we are working on getting the biologists to be able to call the police directly in case this happens again.

- Volunteer Heron Monitoring at Metzger Farm with City of Westminster

Ellie explained that Broomfield is collaborating with Westminster to train volunteers to monitor the heron rookery at Metzger Farm Open Space. The monitoring will help supplement some of the monitoring already performed by ERO in this area. There will be about 20 volunteers trained on Saturday, March 30, and volunteers will sign up to monitor the site at least once per month.

>Chris P, What is the purpose of the monitoring?

>Ellie, The monitoring will help inform future management to ensure that the herons continue to nest in this rookery. In 2018, no nests were successful, likely due to the harsh windstorm in April, but continued monitoring could help identify other human-caused sources of disturbance.

>Kristan, There are no plans for development in this area, but Joe Reale, Open Space Manager with Westminster is leading the project and has a background in urban raptor research. We are very excited to get this going and it is nice to collaborate with Westminster on this.

>Michael, I have been out there a couple of times this week. I have seen three herons standing up in nests and a great horned owl. Will the pond there still be stocked? A lot of people fish there and they could be competing with the birds.

>Kristan, It would be up to Westminster's District Wildlife Manager to stock the pond, but I will ask them about it.

- Palisade North Filing No. 6 (Hepp Property)

>Kristan, This is one of the projects that we discussed at the last meeting, and it did go to City Council. The plan was approved, but not with any specific provisions on how to allow for attainable housing.

>Kevin, The developer will provide attainable housing and the City will work with the developer to help them achieve that in the future.

>Kristan, It is something that will be worked on and brought back to Council.

>Guyleen, They had to reconfigure the entire entryway because Weld County would not let them use their roads to the northwest of the project.

>Ray, What was presented to Council?

>Kristan, The development plan for the site, but the housing issue came up at Council and the developer must include affordable housing.

>Chris P, What is OSTAC's formal role in reviewing these development plans?

>Kevin, We take plans to many advisory committees including OSTAC, Housing, PRAC, and sometimes Public Art may look as well. The planners then gather the input from all of the committees, the public, City Council and feasibility from the developer. After staff discussion and consensus building, the planners summarize the comments for the final development plan.

>Stan, We receive comments from planning and zoning, but it would be helpful to receive comments from the committees as well.

>Kristan, We want OSTAC to be more involved in the concept review. The development review schedule has been very busy. We still bring projects with significant open space and trails to you for comments. Council really listens to their boards, so we will do a better job at hitting those bigger projects and getting your comments to Council.

>Kevin, I don't want to give the impression that plans race through. We include comments for outstanding issues and many iterations of the plan are created before each development is finalized.

- Extraction Oil and Gas and Wildlife Issues

>Kevin, A 'B in the Loop' group for oil and gas updates is now available, and the public can subscribe to receive descriptions of everything that occurs. The first phase of drilling has begun at the Interchange site southwest of the intersection of I-25 and Northwest Parkway.

>Chris, What is happening currently with the construction at Nordstrom Open Space?

>Kevin, It is at its worst now. They are putting in an access road and pipeline through the site.

>Kristan, A well was also removed off of the Davis Open Space.

>Guyleen, I have been getting many complaints regarding trucks taking illegal turns and leaving mud on roads in this area. We are not sure what the impacts of the drilling over several years will look like, but will enforce every letter of the operating agreement with Extraction.

>Kevin, We expect a new bill on allowing local oil and gas restrictions to be signed by the Governor in a couple weeks, which would give us more tools to further restrict these processes in the future.

>Kristan, Work has started near the great horned owl nest near Sheridan Boulevard and Community Ditch. Monitoring is occurring there, and the biologist has been doing a good job of monitoring the nest. No nestlings have been observed yet, but we have been receiving very thorough reports from the biologist and the monitors are being very careful with work going through here. A red-tailed hawk nest (north of 160th and west of Huron) and a great horned owl nest (north of 160th on the east side of Huron Street) were also noted by the Extraction biologist. There also may be a red-tailed hawk nest east of the North Metro Fire Station. (Note that it has now been determined that these red-tailed hawks are incubating in the nest)

- Broomfield Trail Adventure and Broomfield 100

Pete explained that progress has been made on securing a site for the Broomfield Trail Adventure. Open space staff met with the property manager at Flatirons Marketplace and the Audi Dealership who stores vehicles in this area while their parking garage is being constructed. The property owners gave permission to use area for Broomfield Trail Adventure and the Audi dealers confirmed that they will move their vehicles further back for the event to open up parking opportunities.

- 10th Ave Culvert Repair at Ellie's Pond

Kristan explained that a culvert near Ellie's Pond at The Field Open Space has collapsed near the sidewalk across 10th Avenue. Public Works feels that pipe needs to be replaced. Rebecca Baker has been able to get Urban Drainage to do this work for us to save some money, and they will be managing it with their contractor and biologist. They will be removing some cattails along about 80 feet of the drainage to improve the drainage. The wet soil will be stored on site so that it can dry out and then will be removed.

>Ray, When will this start?

>Kristan, In about three to four weeks.

>Ray, Will there be any issues with coyotes with this occurring during pupping season?

>Kristan, I do not think the coyotes would be in this project area. However, an 20-Day environmental letter will be part of the process.

- Upcoming Events

Ellie presented the upcoming Open Space events for April and early May:

- Open Space Speaker Series: What's the Buzz? Rattlesnakes with Mary Ann Bonnell, Visitor Services Manager at Jefferson County Open Space
 - Wednesday, April 3 from 7-8 p.m. at Broomfield Library
 - Frank Shorter Race4Kids' Health
 - Sunday, April 7 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at 1STBANK Center
 - Sustainability Lifestyle Expo with CSU Extension
 - Sunday, April 14 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 1STBANK Center
 - Kids' Fishing Derby
 - Saturday, May 4 from 8-11 a.m. at Tom Frost Reservoir
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- Broomfield Listed as 5th Healthiest County in the United States

Kristan read the press release and noted that, "These counties rank high in environmental status including natural areas, air and water quality." This is outstanding for Broomfield, and all of your efforts have helped contribute to this.

9. Other Topics as Desired by OSTAC

No other topics were desired by OSTAC.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Minutes were prepared by Ellie Lanaghan.