



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes – FINAL MINUTES
Wednesday, June 5, 2019**

Members Present: Lily Weissgold, Blaze Panariso, Joe Lavorini, Nancy Hobbs, Paula Krantz, Bob Falcone, Jeff Mohrmann

Members Absent: Jason Alwine, Lee Milner

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Carol Beckman, Jason Rupinski

Parks Board Liaisons Absent: Mina Liebert

Youth Ambassadors Present: Emma Hybl, Jack Keenan

Youth Ambassadors Absent: William White

Staff Present: Britt Haley, Kim King, Christi Mehew, Kelly Rajab, Scott Abbott, Dan Allen, TOP Rangers, Emily Duncan, David Deitemeyer, Cody Bear Sutton

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TOPS Working Committee Vice Chair Joe Lavorini brought the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m.

Agenda Preview Committee Chair Joe Lavorini announced the agenda for the meeting.

Announcements

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager

- Introduced Emily Duncan, Trails Development Coordinator for the Design and Development division.
- Introduced Corbyn Berg, Intern for the Design and Development division.
- The next site tour will be on Wednesday, June 19th. Please meet at Park Headquarters at 2:50 p.m. Mitch Martin, Cheyenne Mountain State Park Manager, will join the group for part of the tour.
- There will be a site tour to the top of Cheyenne Mountain to see acquisitions of properties to date. The tour will be from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. The proposed dates are: 6/11, 6/14, 6/25 and 6/26. The Committee discussed their availability. Britt Haley will check with Mitch Martin, Cheyenne Mountain State Park Manager, to see if two tours are possible due to the Committee’s conflicted schedule.
- Corral Bluffs Bioblitz is this weekend for scientists only. The Red Rock Canyon Bioblitz is scheduled for July 19-21st and will be open to the public.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs stated the Rustic Hills project is almost done and it’s a huge transformation. She asked Britt Haley if an update could be provided at the next meeting. Britt Haley will consider this request.

Approval of Minutes – May 1, 2019

Motion: To approve the minutes of the May 1, 2019 TOPS Working Committee meeting.
1st – Bob Falcone, 2nd – Jeff Mohrmann, Approved, Unanimous

Citizen Discussion

Carol Lavoie, citizen, stated she was at the meeting today because there is a need for open space on the east side of the city near Powers Boulevard. A recent article in the Independent newspaper showed a map from the Trust of Public Land that supports this idea. She emailed a letter to the Committee regarding the following concerns.

- The Springs Ranch golf course on the east side of Colorado Springs was intended to be open space. The master plan asked for a certain amount of park land to be dedicated; however, a golf course was established instead with the provision that it remained open to the public.
- Classic Homes wants to rezone this area and build homes there. They are gathering feedback from the community and on July 1st they will be submitting an application to the city to rezone this area to construct homes.
- The neighborhood would like the area to remain as green space. There is a petition of over 500 signatures to support this idea.
- The Sand Creek Trail goes to the golf course and other trails exist in the area. The developer stated they would like to work with the city on providing more trails.
- Classic Homes is the developer of the Indigo development property that has had several stormwater issues.

She would like to receive feedback from the Committee. She brought a map from the developer that she received at a public meeting and provided it to Joe Lavorini, Vice Chair.

Britt Haley stated there are many components to this situation that makes it complex. She stated for the TOPS Working Committee to consider this area for acquisition an application is necessary. Also, there is the determination if this would be considered open space or parks property. She stated the golf course owner and Classic Homes are under contract and does not know at this point if the TOPS program would have an opportunity to purchase the property.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs stated she would like it to remain as green space.

TOPS Working Committee member Bob Falcone stated he doesn't think the TOPS Working Committee can make the golf course owner keep the property which is not profitable.

TOPS Working Committee member Blaze Panariso stated that it was premature to discuss this without a submission of an application.

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) Executive Director stated:

- The Panorama Park public meeting this past weekend was great and involved 200 people from the community. She encouraged the Committee to visit this property and thanked them for their support.

- The Mayor has a list of projects to be completed if the TABOR refund initiative passes in November. This is a one-time refund of \$7 million which equates to \$32.00 dollars per household. She encouraged the Committee to look at the list and help get it approved by the voters in November.
- The Chamberlain Trail ribbon cutting was last week and it's a beautiful trail. This is an example that some land exchanges workout and have a good outcome.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs announced that this past Friday evening was the first event of the Blue Moon Trail series. Two more will be held in June and July. Thank you to Brian Kates, Meadows Community Center Parks Operations Administrator, Deerfield Hills Community Center staff and several volunteers who helped with the event.

Action Item

2020 Capital Improvement Project Recommendations (Presented by Kelly Rajab, Parks Financial Analyst)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) Executive Director asked if the TABOR retention money is approved by voters will some go towards the Legacy Loop project. Britt Haley responded yes, the Department has \$16 million of unfunded projects to be completed for the Legacy Loop project. The department has pulled from every fund and resource possible to fund the trail. They would like to connect the trail prior to the 150th birthday of the City of Colorado Springs and that is why part of the TABOR retention money is planned for this project. The 150th celebration of the City would include celebrating our legacy of General Palmer. He dedicated Monument Valley Park to the City and the legacy loop trail goes around this park. City Council needs to approve the proposed TABOR refund allocations before it goes on the ballot in November.

TOPS Working Committee Vice Chair Joe Lavorini inquired about the \$200,000 budgeted for the 2020 wayfinding package and the cost to install a new sign package. Kelly Rajab stated this year they budgeted \$200,000 and last year \$125,000 was budgeted. Kelly Rajab replied the department doesn't know yet. Britt Haley said the contract in place currently is to design the package and implement it at Blodgett Open Space which will give the department a better idea of future costs. The department is asking for another \$200,000 next year which is the same amount as last year.

TOPS Working Committee member Jeff Mohrmann asked what is the life expectancy of wayfinding signs. Dan Allen, Trails Specialist, stated it takes 4-6 weeks for a sign to be produced from the sign shop. Some properties don't have any wayfinding signs and others the wayfinding doesn't make sense. One of the goals is to make sense of the signs on properties and the life expectancy is approximately 10 years.

TOPS Working Committee member Bob Falcone asked if there will be a public process for the wayfinding package. David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect said there will be a

stakeholder meeting with partners and friend's groups. The public process will involve public meetings, online surveys and an open house.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs said she hoped the sign shop could keep up with producing signs and upgrades may need to be evaluated. Britt Haley stated the Committee could do that once the wayfinding process has moved forward.

TOPS Working Committee member Lily Weissgold asked if it was possible to allocate more money to the wayfinding item because there is a lot of reserve money available. Britt Haley replied yes; however, it would take away money from other projects. Kelly Rajab stated the department only budgets the amount the department receives in proposed revenue that year and as a practice the department doesn't dip into the reserve amount. Britt Haley stated she felt the amount budgeted is sufficient for now; however, she is not opposed to asking for a supplemental appropriation if needed. Due to these comments she will consider putting more towards wayfinding next year.

TOPS Working Committee member Joe Lavorini asked Britt Haley if the Committee can have an update in the future on the wayfinding package and implementation. Britt Haley suggested August and David Dietemeyer agreed and stated they should have more information by then.

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) Executive Director stated they hear from visitors all the time that better signage is needed on our trails.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs said one of the key things discussed in the wayfinding meetings is people get lost due to lack of signage or incorrect signage and this is not a good outcome.

TOPS Working Committee Liaison Carol Beckman volunteered to be on the wayfinding team.

TOPS Working Committee member Lily Weissgold asked if the department stewardship budget for open space will stay at this number for the future. Kelly Rajab replied no because the cost of doing business goes up and revenue can change. She stated the department is using 26% of the open space budget for stewardship.

TOPS Working Committee member Jeff Mohrmann said the rangers are the people that are the most on the ground and their impact is very important. This is money very well spent.

TOPS Working Committee Vice Chair Joe Lavorini asked for an explanation of the line item Park Maintenance in the Parks Category. Kelly Rajab replied it is for Kurt Schroeder's maintenance budget and the \$1.2 million budget is for staff increases and cost increases for next year's budget over this year's budget. Joe Lavorini asked what proportion of the total Park Maintenance budget is the \$1.2 million allocation for maintenance from the Parks Category. Kelly Rajab said the percentage is very small and she would calculate these numbers and get back to him.

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) Executive Director stated the focus of the TOPS Maintenance fund is fixing and taking care of what the department has rather than building new parks. Kelly Rajab stated during the Park System Master Plan process taking care of what the department has was the highest priority.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs asked if the TOPS Maintenance Category included irrigation costs. Kelly Rajab said all utilities, including water cost for the Parks department, comes out of the General Fund and is put into one category under Utilities. Britt Haley stated that every year the department has approximately \$400,000 to either work on playground improvements or irrigation systems on a rotating basis each year.

TOPS Working Committee member Bob Falcone asked how much will the Daniel's Pass project cost. Kelly Rajab said they estimate \$500,000 and the department thinks they can match grants and leverage money for the remaining amount. \$75,000 is the amount that is needed to match the \$250,000 grant. Bob Falcone asked if any of the proposed TABOR refund will go towards this project. Britt Haley said not at this time because this was discussed during the North Cheyenne Canon Master Plan process and this project is identified on the implementation project list. If the grant is not awarded she will come back to the TOPS Working Committee for input.

TOPS Working Committee member Bob Falcone asked what will be completed with the \$500,000 budgeted for the Cottonwood Creek Trail. Britt Haley stated the 2019 budget did not fund as much as they wanted to complete of the red line shown on the map. These are 12 foot wide paved trails that cost approximately \$1,000,000 per mile to construct. The department has been working with the Water Resources and Engineering departments due to a big water detention project called Scarborough Pond in the area. The department is coordinating with them and this year the trail will go far but not be completed. Another segment was added to finish this portion because once its completed the trail will go from Wolfe Ranch down to the Greenway Trail. This area is getting a lot of user impact. Kelly Rajab said this money will get the trail past the underpass.

TOPS Working Committee member Bob Falcone stated his concern is getting the most bang for the buck. He said he understands this is a growing part of town; however, he has concerns about paying \$1,000,000 a mile for paved trail when North Cheyenne Canon Park has a master plan requirement to develop projects there and \$500,000 can go a long way. He questioned if they should build a lot of paved trail in an area with far fewer users than North Cheyenne Canon Park. He questioned if this is a smart allocation of money.

TOPS Working Committee member Blaze Panariso said he disagreed that the Cottonwood Creek Trail area has less users than the North Cheyenne Canon area. He also stated this is a new community and a newer connectivity.

TOPS Working Committee member Jeff Mohrmann stated Daniel's Pass is high up in North Cheyenne Canon Park and used by people willing to put more work into getting to this area.

TOPS Working Committee member Bob Falcone inquired if paved trail is necessary. Britt Haley said if there is a big rain storm soft trail gets ruined and then that money is put back into making it a paved trail. This is why the department does reinforced concrete trails.

Britt Haley said in the north eastern sector of the city in terms of open space acquisition there is none and it's not proportionate to other parts of the city in regards to expenditures. The TOPS Sales Tax will be up for renewal and people will look at what has been done for the community in the north eastern side of the City and one council member asks this question regularly.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs asked why some areas are paved and others are not in regards to the Sand Creek Trail going north to Woodmen. Britt Haley said it's a Tier 2 trail which means there will be a concrete portion and soft trail portion for running on the side. The department has not had enough money to complete it and that's why there is concrete in only some areas. Nancy Hobbs said she would like the connectivity in place and then pave it later.

TOPS Working Committee member Lily Weissgold said the Committee needs to keep in mind this will not be cheaper to construct in the future and trails need to be accessible for all users.

TOPS Working Committee member Nancy Hobbs stated she would like to propose if there was any money left from the Cottonwood Creek Trail project that it go towards Daniel's Pass Trail.

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) Executive Director stated the TOSC board would support this proposal.

TOPS Working Committee member Blaze Panariso stated he was not arguing that Daniel's Pass Trail should not be completed; however, to have a quarter mile of no trail because money was pulled from the budget is pointless. The trail should just be finished and taken off the budget.

Britt Haley suggested for the 2020 budget, if the full amount of the \$500,000 is not used for the Cottonwood Creek Trail the rest can be identified for Daniel's Pass Trail.

TOPS Working Committee member Bob Falcone suggested keeping the motion more general so that if there is extra money it can be funded for any project. Britt Haley stated if the Committee does this, she would need to come back to them.

Motion: To support the Capital Improvement Project budget as presented with the caveat that any extra or unspent funds remaining from the TOPS Trails Category projects be directed to the Daniel's Pass trail improvements.

1st – Nancy Hobbs, 2nd – Lily Weissgold, Unanimous.

Staff Reports

Budget Update (Presented by Kelly Rajab, Parks Financial Analyst)

- The city-wide budget process was kicked off in May.

- The budget will be entered into the software program by July 10th.
- The budget office takes information from departments and presents it to the Mayor for prioritization.
- City Council will receive the budget at the end of September and will implement the public process in October.
- City Council will vote on the 2020 budget in late November or early December.

Presentations

Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space Update – TOPS Properties (Presented by Scott Abbott, Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space Manager)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 10:02 a.m.

1st – Nancy Hobbs, 2nd – Blaze Panariso, Approved, Unanimous.

Motion: To enter a closed executive session.

1st – Bob Falcone, 2nd - Blaze Panariso, Approved, Unanimous.

Executive Session (Presented by Britt Haley, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager)

In accord with the City Charter Art. III, §3-60(d) and the Colorado Open Meetings Act, C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(a), the TOPS Working Committee, in Open Session, is to determine whether it will hold a Closed Executive Session. The issues to be discussed involve determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations and instructing negotiators regarding a land acquisition matter. The Chair shall poll the TOPS Working Committee members, and, upon consent of two-thirds of the members present, may hold a closed executive session. If consent to the closed executive session is not given, the item may be discussed in open session or withdrawn from consideration.