



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting  
Meeting Minutes - FINAL  
Wednesday, March 1, 2017**

**Members Present:** Jason Alwine, Silas Musick, Becky Wegner, Cathy Grossman, Nancy Hobbs, Jeff Mohrmann, Joe Lavorini, Lee Milner, Sarah Blakeslee

**Members Absent:** Jim Klever

**Alternates Present:**

**Parks Board Liaisons Present:** Charles Castle, Scot Hume, Jason Rupinski

**Parks Board Liaisons Absent:** N/A

**Staff Present:** Sarah Bryarly, Karen Palus, Christi Mehew, Kurt Schroeder, Kim King, David Deitemeyer and Dennis Will

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Jason Alwine brought the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m.

**Executive Session**

- Jason Alwine, TOPS Working Committee Chair, read the following information to the Committee:

*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, b and e), the TOPS Working Committee, in Open Session, is to determine whether it will hold a Closed Executive Session. The issues to be discussed involve receipt of legal advice and 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 If consent to the closed executive session is not given, the item may be discussed in open session or withdrawn from consideration.*

**Motion:** To enter a closed executive session.

1<sup>st</sup> – Nancy Hobbs, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Becky Wegner, Approved, Unanimous

**Motion:** To close a closed executive session at 8:29a.m.

1<sup>st</sup> – Sarah Blakeslee, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Cathy Grossman, Approved, Unanimous

**Agenda Preview** - Sarah Bryarly stated Anna Cordova will not be presenting the 2016 Cultural Services Update today.

## Announcements

### Sarah Bryarly

- The Numismatic property will be closing in approximately two weeks. The Parks Department will be doing some structural testing and evaluating what would be needed to conduct an RFP process for this building.
- Red Rock Canyon trail work is currently underway and will continue until the beginning of May. There is a new trail being constructed near the top end of the landfill. Priscilla Marbaker, TAPIS Associates, has been contracted to look at the trails master plan and assist with laying out the remaining trails. The Parks Department is partnering with Rocky Mountain Field Institute (RMFI), the Friends of Red Rock Canyon and Medicine Wheel to work on the White Acres Trail. May 20<sup>th</sup> is Colorado Trails Day and a joint volunteer trail project will be planned to build this trail.
- The Parks Department is trying to build out the TOPS trail portion in Ute Valley Open Space. RMFI is currently constructing the southern portion of the East Loop Trail and the pedestrian bridge is out to bid. The bridge should be installed in thirty days dependent upon weather. The downhill trail corridor, which Medicine Wheel is very excited about, is also underway.
- The only 2D trail left to be completed is the Homestead Trail which is actively under construction and should be completed in thirty days. The Shooks Run Trail was just completed last week.
- The bids have been received for the design/build work for the Cottonwood Trail underpass at Austin Bluffs and Woodmen. PPRTA is working on this project and it should be under construction soon.
- The Parks Department is still waiting to hear if the Community Development Block Grant has been awarded for phase III of the Manitou Incline.
- City Council approved the additional supplemental appropriation from the PLDO account in the amount of \$800,000 for the Venezia Community Park tennis courts.
- The RFP for the Legacy Loop trailhead is underway and will be out to bid soon.
- Design/Engineering for Rock Island Trail from Templeton Gap to Van Buren is 70 % complete.
- The construction documents for Rock Island Trail from Sand Creek to Constitution are approximately 65% complete.
- The last easement for the Sand Creek Trail from Constitution to Palmer Park is almost closed and it will be out to bid by the beginning of summer for construction.

Bill Koerner ,Trails and Open Space Coalition, inquired about the Cottonwood Creek Trail design build at Academy. Sarah Bryarly stated it is slated for Fall of this year.

Susan Davies ,Trails and Open Space Coalition Executive Director, stated 2D trail work is almost done. Can we have a celebration? Sarah Bryarly stated there will be a big press release once everything is completed.

Approval of Minutes – February 1, 2017

Motion: To approve the minutes of the February 1, 2017 TOPS Working Committee meeting.  
1<sup>st</sup> – Nancy Hobbs, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Silas Musick, Approved, Unanimous

### **Citizen Discussion**

#### **Eric Eaton**

- He presented to the TOPS Working Committee last year an application for funding for the Sand Creek area and doesn't know the current status of his presentation or application.
- He presented at this meeting a PowerPoint regarding new developments in the Sand Creek area on the west fork.
- Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) will be conducting a project in this area. The channel needs to be stabilized and the grade brought back up for safety as it has degraded 32 feet due to erosion.
- The presentation included the vast amount of wildlife that exists in this area primarily including insects and birds. Flora, fauna and fossils have also been found. He stated this is a very dense area and has continuous water flow which is helpful for many species to prosper. Various photos were shown to include: other Colorado Springs mitigation sites before and after the work is completed; insects; birds; flora and some rare sightings of dragon flies in this area.
- He is concerned about the project and the impact on the habitat in this area and encouraged TOPS Working Committee members to speak with CSU in regards to this project as construction is supposed to begin soon and commence in the Fall of 2018.

Some TOPS Working Committee members expressed concern about the conservation of this area diminishing due to this project. Staff committed to working with CSU to protect unaffected vegetation and wildlife to help preserve the area.

Sarah Bryarly stated that sometimes opportunities exist to acquire open space without having to make a purchase. TOPS funding never intended to stop construction but preserve resources. This is one of three projects in this area that will be improving storm water. Improvements to the creeks need to be completed due to the Pueblo lawsuit. The Parks Department is not the leader of this project; however, we can work with the various departments, share knowledge and possibly preserve some of the resources. Several conversations have been taken into consideration with the CSU leaders of this project and they see this as infrastructure that's failing and there could be significant damage done if it is not repaired. In addition, Sarah asked the Committee to please ask the Parks staff questions prior to circulating emails as hopefully we can answer the questions and alleviate any concerns.

Bill Koerner – Stated if CSU completes this project the TOPS Working Committee may not consider this property or “application for funding” after all the conservation values are diminished. There needs to be a better solution to protect the ecosystem and he suggested that the Committee communicate with CSU.

Two committee members suggest that CSU give a presentation at the next TOPS Working Committee meeting.

Linda Hodges (Aiken Audubon Society) Stated appreciation for the Parks Department willingness to work with CSU and possibly see if the process can be amended or Eric Eaton be a part of the planning process.

She announced that the first Strawberry Hill Master Plan public meeting will be held on March 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at Cheyenne Mountain high school.

Susan Davies (TOSC) Suggested that City Council members Andy Pico and Jill Gaebler be invited to the TOPS Working Committee meeting if CSU does a presentation.

### **Presentations**

**Stewardship Program: 2016 Forestry Update** (Presented by Dennis Will, Forester)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

The PowerPoint presentation included: acres treated, costs, grant amount funded/ forest restoration definition; restoration standards; Stratton Open Space treatment map; Stratton Open Space treated in 2011; Stratton Open Space untreated; Stratton Open Space treated in 2017; Stratton Springs; Austin Bluffs treatment map; Austin Bluffs untreated; dwarf mistletoe; Austin Bluffs 2013; equipment; project profile ; project costs and contact information.

Linda Hodges inquired if the individuals doing the mitigation work are not doing a good job what happens. Dennis Will stated they are trained extensively and if they are not sure of what they are doing they have been told to stop and wait until he arrives. Dennis said he is out in these areas all day long coaching equipment operators, looking out for wildlife habitat and discussing information with hikers and bikers.

A few committee members suggested to use a lighter touch and to consider hand crews in some areas. Dennis Will stated that Stratton Open Space had developed a large amount of biomass and more than 60% clones, therefore the best approach was mitigating by mechanical means. The plants will sprout and come back.

Susan Davies (TOSC) Asked if there is an opportunity to educate the neighbors of Stratton Open Space on this information and is signage provided. Dennis Will stated a presentation was given on January 11<sup>th</sup>, it was posted on social media sites and signage exists at the trailheads in the area. A suggestion was made to have a sign in the middle of the field in Stratton regarding mitigation work being performed.

Linda Hodges thanked Dennis Will for being sensitive to the birds that are nesting in this area and for his willingness to work around them. She also inquired when would be the best time for input from an ornithologist when planning projects. Dennis Will replied he would happy to

work with them and the best time is during the Fall planning process.

**Citizen Discussion**

Karen Palus stated on Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup> at the City Auditorium the “State of the Outdoors” will be held from 4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Many leaders from various organizations will be speaking at the event. The entrance fee is \$15.00 and is hosted by the Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance and the City of Colorado Springs.

**Adjournment**

Motion: To adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 9:55 a.m.

1<sup>st</sup> – Nancy Hobbs, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Joe Lavorini, Approved, Unanimous