



**Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, January 11, 2024**

**Members Present:** Sarah Bryarly, Abby Simpson, Larry Bogue, Greg Thornton, Steve Harris, Steve Lenzo, Amandla Atilano-Roque, Julia Sands de Melendez, Andrea Perry

**Alternates Present:** Debbie Swanson, Kimberley Sherwood, Mike Sullivan

**Staff Present:** Britt Haley, Eric Becker, Kim King, Lonna Thelen, Anna Bingman, Scott Abbott, Cody Bear-Sutton, Dan Allen, Mark Snow

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**Called to Order:** Board Chair Sarah Bryarly brought the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

**Ceremonial Item – Time Certain 7:30 a.m.**

**Recognition of Andrew VanDerWege**

Britt Haley, Director, recognized and thanked Andrew VanDerWege, owner and Director for Go West Camps, for his generous sponsorship of the annual holiday breakfast for the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board. Due to the delayed start of the last meeting, Mr. VanDerWege was unable to stay for the start of the meeting. Britt wanted to make sure both staff and the Board could thank him. Board Chair Sarah Bryarly echoed Britt's comments. Mr. VanDerWege thanked everyone for their comments, stating that he appreciates any chance he can to thank both staff and the Board for their work.

**Citizen Discussion**

Carol Beckman, citizen, stated she had attended the Blodgett Master Plan public meetings, and wanted to address some of the concerns she had heard about parking from other citizens who had attended the meeting. Ms. Beckman stated that the City realistically has two options for the open space: either develop it or manage it as an open space. While she understands the concerns of the neighborhood on parking, everyone in the City deserves access to Blodgett Open Space. The City's bus network can only get within three miles of the open space, so parking lots are going to be needed to accommodate visitors. The addition of parking lots will help to mitigate the issue of visitors parking in the neighborhoods. Ms. Beckman stated she understood the concerns, but when you consider that the open space could have been developed into a number of homes that would increase visitation to the area, it's better to have it as an open space. Finally, Ms. Beckman stated that she would like to see adequate parking at Fishers Canyon Open Space for the same reasons.

**Approval of Minutes – December 14, 2023 meeting minutes.**

**Motion: To approve December 14, 2023 meeting minutes.**

1<sup>st</sup> – Julia Sands de Melendez, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Greg Thornton, Approved, Unanimously.

**Community/Partner Update**

**Velodrome Update**

Mike Beagley, Associate Director of Operations for the United States Olympic Paralympic Training Center (USOPTC), and Craig Griffin, Senior Track Director for USA Cycling, provided a brief verbal update on Velodrome operations. 2023 was a fairly successful year for athlete and community use of the Velodrome. USOPTC and USA Cycling staff are listening to the community and understand that the community is requesting more access. At a minimum, USA Cycling and the USOPTC have committed to the same amount of community usage in 2024 as there was in 2023. However, knowing the community wants more access, USA Cycling has hired a Community Programs Coordinator to continue balancing community and athlete use, revitalize previous programming, including “Learn to Ride the Velodrome,” and to increase community use overall.

Discussion amongst the Board following the update covered the cost to maintain different elements of the Velodrome, including the cost of medical coverage and EMT services that was required by the USOPTC for the Velodrome to be used by anyone, community members or athletes. However, the consensus of the Board was that they would like to see increased community use and USA Cycling and USOPTC staff to continue to find and encourage ways to make that happen.

**Action Items**

**Bluestem Prairie Open Space Project** (Presented by Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager)

Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager, presented the Committee with the Bluestem Prairie Open Space drainage mitigation project. This presentation included the site location; existing conditions; the project proposal; review of concerns; a letter of support from the Palmer Land Conservancy; and finally, the proposed motion.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

Committee member Steve Harris recused himself from the vote to avoid any appearance of impropriety, as he serves as the Land Stewardship Director for the Palmer Land Conservancy. Steve left the room for the following discussion and the vote.

Board member Amandla Atilano-Roque asked if this project would address the concerns staff has for the drainage. Lonna Thelen responded yes, and that there will be an Executive Agreement that staff is working with the City Attorney's Office to finalize before work begins.

Susan Davies, Executive Director for the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), asked about the timeline for the project. Lonna Thelen responded that the hope is to begin the project in spring but will depend on the Executive Agreement.

**Motion: Move to approve the City of Colorado Springs Airport's request for improvements to the drainage infrastructure on the 646.94-acre Bluestem Prairie Open Space TOPS property. The proposed improvements include re-grading the existing channel downstream of the City of Colorado Springs Airport to a full width low slope constructed channel lined with soil riprap and four full width sculpted concrete drop structures vegetated to reduce future erosion potential.**

1<sup>st</sup> – Julia Sands de Melendez, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Amandla Atilano-Roque, Approved, 8 to 0.

Board member Steve Harris reentered the room following the vote.

### **Presentation Items**

There were no presentations on this agenda.

### **Staff Updates**

**Bear Creek Cañon Trail Improvements** (Presented by Dan Allen, Trail Project Specialist)

Dan Allen, Trail Project Specialist, presented the Board with the Bear Creek Cañon Park trail improvements. This presentation included project objectives; existing trail conditions; regional connectivity; existing trails and connectivity; trail connectivity; trail system concept; trail system rating; increased trail accessibility; and finally, project timeline.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

**Natural Resources Update** (Presented by Cody Bear-Sutton, Natural Resource Specialist)

Cody Bear-Sutton, Natural Resource Specialist, presented the Board with the Natural Resources update. Using a StoryMap, Cody walked the Board through the efforts of his team, which highlights both wildlife and habitat management in 2023. Cody provided a few examples of how his team come to conclusions about both wildlife and habitat management, including how his team conducts avian point count surveys. Cody encouraged the Board to take some time on their own to browse the StoryMaps.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

**Ranger Team Update** (Presented by Scott Abbott, Regional Parks Supervisor)

Scott Abbott, Regional Parks Supervisor, presented the Board with the Ranger Team update. Using a StoryMap, Scott walked the Board through the past structure of the Ranger Team, before addressing the new structure. Scott was happy to announce that both Ranger Maddy Peddy and Ranger Larry Kitt had been promoted to Senior Rangers and will now both help to oversee the overall Ranger jurisdiction, split between North and South District teams.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

**Recreation Assessment Survey Results** (Presented by Mark Snow, Community Recreation Manager)

Mark Snow, Community Recreation Manager, presented the Board with the Recreation Assessment Survey Results presentation. This presentation included the purpose, value and timing; definitions and set up; responses; demographics; responses to various questions on programming and needs; and finally, takeaways and next steps.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

**City Auditorium Update** (Presented by Kim King, Assistant Director)

Kim King, Assistant Director, provided a brief verbal update on the status of the City Auditorium. The City took over operations of the City Auditorium in November of 2023. Following this, a Solutions Team was created, consisting of City leadership, staff, and interested citizenry. The Solutions Team had five meetings to determine next steps. Currently, a draft recommendation is being reviewed, though there might be a need for a more focused group to delve deeper. The consensus of the Solutions Team was that the Auditorium should be preserved.

**Staffing Update**

Kim King, Assistant Director, announced that there are multiple administrative positions that are open, hoping to be filled in the next month or so. Eric Becker, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager, announced that Rangers Larry Kitt and Maddy Peddy had been promoted to Senior Rangers, as previously mentioned in the Ranger Team update. Ranger Mark Tatro was also promoted to a Senior Ranger position in Garden of the Gods. Additionally, Jarod Clayton was promoted into the Urban Parks Manager position. Jarod previously served as the Water Conservation Specialist. Eric Becker also informed the Board that two staff members working in

Memorial Park had been in an accident caused by a drunk driver the week prior. Both staff members are expected to make a full recovery.

### **Board Business**

Steve Harris – Mr. Harris announced that there would be a neighborhood focused meeting to discuss the Blodgett Master Plan on January 22<sup>nd</sup> at Trace Church.

Larry Bogue – Mr. Bogue stated that the draft document of the Blodgett Master Plan should be posted for comments online.

Andrea Perry – Ms. Perry announced that there is a Greyhawk Park Master Plan meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> at Warren Management Group offices. There is a hybrid option as well.

Julia Sands de Melendez – Ms. Sands de Melendez said that there is a LART meeting the following day. She stated she also attended a LART Committee retreat, which was helpful to understand the different funding needs.

Greg Thornton – Mr. Thornton informed the Board that the Westside Community Center leased spaces are almost all full. Additionally, the Committee is working on outreach for more partnerships and programs.

Sarah Bryarly – Ms. Bryarly stated that the portalet at the Incline had been serviced and thanked Eric Becker for his assistance on that. Next, Ms. Bryarly asked if the utility light on the Rock Island Trail at Templeton Gap could be serviced, as it is very hard to see eastbound pedestrian traffic in the evening. Eric said he would look into this.

### **Adjournment**

**Motion: Move to adjourn the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meeting at 10:25 a.m.**

1<sup>st</sup> – Steve Harris, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Andrea Perry, Approved, Unanimously.