

Approved as Amended 3/9/16
OPEN SPACE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes
Meeting Date February 11, 2016

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Shelley Dunbar Frances Hartogh Molly Davis Kevin Bracy Knight Tom Isaacson

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Tracy Winfree Jim Reeder John Potter Chad Brotherton Annie McFarland
Gabe Wilson Don D'Amico Mark Gershman Marianne Giolitto Bethany Collins
Deryn Wagner Phil Yates Kelly Wasserbach Cecil Fenio Greg Seabloom
Brian Anacker Alycia Alexander Juliet Bonnell Steve Armstead Joe Reale
Lynn Riedel Heather Swanson Leah Case

GUESTS

Jeff Moline, Boulder County Parks and Open Space

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Approval of the Minutes

Molly Davis said on page 3, after Return to the Board, it should read, “Molly asked why there was a delay in this ordinance to clarify Transfer vs. Disposal. Tom Carr said the delay was press of work and intentional as he was waiting for there not to be a current issue.”

Tom Isaacson moved the Open Space Board of Trustees to approve the minutes from Jan. 13, 2016 as amended. Frances Hartogh seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Public Participation for Items not on the Agenda

None.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Matters from Staff

Chad Brotherton, Maintenance Person III, Trails, gave an update on the Towhee Trail.

Deryn Wagner, Environmental Planner, gave an update on the New Acquisition Management Integration.

Marianne Giolitto, Wetland and Riparian Ecologist, gave an update on the Boulder Creek Restoration Master Plan.

Mark Gershman, Environmental Planning Supervisor, gave an update on the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Matters from the Board

Tom Isaacson asked about the timeline for updating the Visitor Master Plan (VMP). Tracy Winfree said at the City Council retreat they expressed concern about the process and suggested a breather for the community. It was discussed that at the end of North Trail Study Area (TSA) process, staff will not immediately jump into the VMP. Staff will bring this topic back to the Board to talk about timeline options.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – *Consideration of a motion recommending that City Council approves a resolution to support a grant application by Jefferson County to the Federal Lands Access Program for a section of the Rocky Mountain Greenway, including a financial commitment to provide a portion of local match requirements.

Deryn Wagner, Environmental Planner, presented this item.

Tom suggested having a maximum/not-to-exceed amount included in the grant language. Molly Davis asked if the proposed trail alignment and/or crossing could be adjusted later on. Deryn said yes. Frances Hartogh asked if this would be 10-foot-wide trail and underpass. Deryn said this has not yet been finalized.

Public Comment

Werner Neupert, Boulder, said this is the beginning of a much larger project. There will be quite a bit of traffic in the future and he hopes that Board will think about this potential impact and how the trail will be carried through the rest of Open Space and the City of Boulder.

Return to the Board

Kevin Bracy Knight said he agreed with having an up-to amount. Frances said she is unsure how this fits into the bigger picture. Deryn said staff will make sure the feasibility study aligns with alternatives; alignments in the North TSA area have not been determined. Frances said she is concerned about the location of the underpass. Jeff Moline said the county’s preference is for the crossing to be at the intersection of Coalton and Highway (Hwy) 128. He said if the trail alignment is chosen to be close to the sensitive habitat, the trail would hug the perimeter of the Lindsay property.

Motion

Frances Hartogh moved the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) recommend that, pending support from other local partners, City Council resolve or affirm the city’s intention to approve financial support, and that City Council approve financial support for an application by Jefferson County for grant funding through the Federal Lands Access Program, which, if awarded, would fund planning, design and construction of a grade-separated trail crossing of State Highway 128 and trail segments to connect the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge and City of Boulder and Boulder County trails to the north. OSBT cautions that this should not be considered a commitment to the current proposed crossing location or trail alignment. Kevin Bracy Knight seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – *Request that the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT): Approve the newly refined Scenarios A and B for the North Trail Study Area (TSA) Plan Identify which of the newly refined scenarios should be used as the basis for the North TSA Plan.

Steve Armstead, Environmental Planner, presented this item.

Public Comment

Tim Hogan, Boulder, read a statement from Ruth Wright and Oakleigh Thorne stating the history and purpose of the Open Space program. In particular, its focus on preservation of natural resources and having passive recreation as a secondary objective.

Dale Ball, Boulder, said she believes that species and ecosystems have intrinsic value. She said she is concerned about plant and animal extinctions due to habitat loss caused by human presence, invasive species and climate change. She asked the Board to adopt Scenario A. Scenario B cuts through sensitive habitat. Trails are gateways for invasive species and erosion. She said we are fortunate to already have trails for recreation; save some of the last fragments of native habitat for species who cannot survive without it.

Kirk Cunningham, Sierra Club, said he is in favor of Scenario A. It is assumed with a Habitat Conservation Area (HCA) that there is some biological integrity. Building a trail on the west side of Hwy 36 would lead to a situation where nothing will be seen but weeds. He said bikers are interested in a single track trail; others may have a hard time with that style.

Cindy Carlisle, Boulder, said she is against a trail on the west side of Hwy 36. Council appointed Trustees to be stewards of this land. She said the Charter emphasizes preservation and the community trusts that the Board will follow Charter purposes. Building a trail across this habitat when another option is available on the other side goes against the Charter.

Sue Cass, Boulder County Nature Association (BCNA), said the Board should respect the analysis and uphold the city Charter. The community wants to maintain trust in the Board and in the Charter. She asked if off trail permits will be granted in unlimited numbers and if they will they be monitored.

Adam Sher, Boulder, said he loves nature and understands it is tough to strike a balance. He said mountain bikers are stewards of nature and they too want to experience the natural habitat. He said he supports Scenario B for both a trail connection and a way to experience nature. He noted his surprise to the proposed changes to scenarios. It was unclear that the Board had requested changes including temporal use and the rerouting of the Interim Joder Trail.

Ann Tagawa, Boulder, said preserving Open Space means keeping the natural habitat as intact as possible; Scenario B would damage the habitat. Scenario A would be a win-win as trail construction can still happen on the east side and would not disrupt habitat.

Nancy Neupert, Boulder, said she is concerned about Scenario B and would prefer the connection be kept to the east side of Hwy 36. She said if Scenario B does get chosen, please make every attempt to limit impacts to the habitat. In an HCA there should be no dogs at all, or, only allowed on trail and on leash during the nonbreeding season. Staff should implement a monitoring plan before either of these areas are opened.

Mark McIntyre, Boulder, said this whole debate has focused on either an east or west alignment; access does not always equal destruction. He said he supports Scenario B because of the ecological values and diversity of habitat. The current and existing trail is already in place and he disagrees that the western alignment would harm conservation values. Scenario B would strengthen the connection citizens of Boulder have to the land.

Karen Hollweg, Boulder, said the number one criteria for defining a successful scenario is consistency with the North TSA sideboards. Until this evening the sideboards have not been used. These are the grounding for the TSA plan, and these are documents that have been used for decades to guide the use and management decisions on our land. It would be a disservice for the Board to recommend a plan that does not align with these. She additionally asked the Board to reconsider dog regulations on Left Hand Trail; it would be inappropriate to have dogs off leash.

Sandra Larson, Boulder, said she agreed with the statement about the Charter and its emphasis on preservation. Cutting a trail on the west side of 36 would go against the concept of preservation; once you have fragmentation you cannot go back. It can always be decided later to build this trail, but once built it cannot be undone. She said she is in favor of Scenario A.

Susan Douglass, Boulder, said the Board promised the people of Boulder that the sideboards would be used as solid ground for this process. Any changes recommended to these sideboards would require a

separate public meeting. These plans require that you give priority to preservation; a regional connector trail on the west side of Hwy 36 would be a major bike trail with considerable user traffic.

Raymond Bridge, Boulder County Audubon Society, said they are in favor of Scenario A. The principle criterion needs to be the sideboards. He asked the Board to step back and look at their responsibility as a Trustee. It would be better to take longer with this process and do it correctly, rather than rushing a plan through.

Jackie Ramaley, Boulder, said she came to a Board meeting in 1968 when the discussion was on the greenbelt height limitation. These laws preserve public lands and limit access. She has since trusted that the Board will consider best interests all of citizens as well as public lands. The Board is above politics and special interest group pressure to make right decisions. There is a viable alternative with Scenario A. Placement of a bike trail on the east side of Hwy 36 would fragment the riparian area as well as add significant impact.

Andy Schultheiss, Open Boulder, said he hopes that Board members will not change their mind since their decision in January, and continue to support Scenario B. He said he is pleased with this process overall, but would ask the Board to continue from where they left off in January as there was no public process to discuss the newly proposed changes.

Suzanne Webel, Boulder County Horse Association (BCHA), said she protests the surprising changes with both scenarios between the last Board meeting and now. These are fundamental changes and there was no explanation. She said staff should have provided a single refined scenario after the meeting in January. She said BCHA has a stake in this process and was displeased at the lack of communication. She asked the Board to go back to Scenario B as it was agreed upon during the January Study Session.

Steven Watts, Boulder Mountainbike Alliance (BMA), said mountain biking was his reason he began studying the environment. He has learned that process is important and compromise is essential. Without a great trail experience, you fail to get people out of their cars and into nature. Without scientific analysis, you fail to create a process devoid of politics. Without access to open space, you fail to connect humans to nature. All of these are necessary to ensure future commitment to stewardship of the environment.

Nickie Kelly, Boulder, said the Trustees favoring Scenario B feels like a betrayal of the Charter. She asked the Board to support Scenario A. Decisions on visitor use should be based on science; Colorado State University (CSU) research shows that fragmenting property is detrimental to wildlife. She asked the Board to continue to listen to those who came before us and to respect the values that built Boulder today.

Joanne Karpinski, Boulder, said the trail should be located on the east side of Hwy 36. Impacts are significantly more harmful on the west side. She added that putting the trailhead on the most sensitive land is not a good idea as it may lead to unintended consequences. She said she agrees with all comments regarding the Charter as well as minimizing off-trail use. She asked the Board to choose the scenario that is less likely to be disruptive to the land.

Terry Stuart, Boulder, said he supports Scenario A. A trail on the west side is not worth ruining the environment to do it.

Pat Billig, Boulder, said the Board's role is to look at the entire system. The mission of OSMP precedes the Charter; the adherence to this mission through the whole system is about leadership from the Board and from staff. OSMP is well known for adhering to this mission with both use and resource. If you do not use something you will not want to protect it. She said a trail should not be built on the west side, and use that as an opportunity to educate people about HCAs.

BethAnne Bane, Longmont, said she chose to live in Boulder because of the respect citizens have for nature. She said she supports Scenario A. This is an amazing opportunity to protect nature. Putting a trail on the west side will cause lots of harm. Use an area that is already inhabited.

Cathy Comstock, Boulder, said it is likely that a trail on the west side would be wet so often during the year it would be closed frequently. It would be a shame to do that kind of harm and then not be able to use that trail. In the North TSA there has already been lots of wildlife loss. Do not love an area to death; be as protective as possible. She said even with scenario A staff should take extreme care.

Mike Barrow, BMA, thanked the Board for the amount of time put into this process. He said BMA agrees with Scenario B as this trail is already in existence. He said that the proposed Interim Trail is not sustainable and has potential to create user conflict as it is currently suggested in the plan.

Mary Eberle, Boulder, said she is grateful that Joder was added to the Open Space inventory. She asked the Board to review all information received and reconsider the initial recommendation. She said she loves the idea about educating people about HCAs by not putting a trail on the west. She would prefer Scenario A; the cost of underpass is a small price to pay for protection.

Tony Gannaway, Friends Interested in Dogs on Open Space (FIDOS), said the HCA label is seemingly being used as way to keep dogs out of an area, or on leash. The Joder property was previously a horse ranch with many trails, so if the trail can be considered an HCA now, then a trail on the west side with the HCA label will have no impact. He noted that the proposed Voice and Sight opportunity does not really provide for an off-leash experience when it is such a small section of a trail. He suggested making the first part leashed and then make the loop Voice and Sight. He added that these plans are missing an opportunity for people who want shorter trails to destinations; if children cannot get to nature to appreciate then they will not be invested.

Dan Brillon, Boulder Trail Runners, said there is an inherent conflict between recreation and preservation. He said he supports Scenario B. The recreational experience on the west side is far superior and there is already a trail in existence. He suggested adding the proposed Interim Trail from Scenario A into Scenario B. He added that there should be more designated trail access near where people live, specifically at Wonderland Lake.

Eddie Stevens, Boulder, said the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan identified North TSA as an area that has critical wildlife habitat. At the last meeting the Board said they will support Scenario B, a trail that cuts through critical wildlife habitat. If Scenario B is chosen, the Board is weighing recreational gains as greater than ecological loss. Humans would not be negatively affected if this trail was not built, compared to the negative effects on wildlife if it was. She asked the Board to preserve the land and weigh that over "fun."

Eileen Monyok, FIDOS, said studies show that various user groups all have equal impacts on wildlife. She noted her surprise that the Board is having this meeting despite already having made a decision in January. She said she would agree that having just a small section of a trail Voice and Sight does not allow for an off-leash experience. She suggested having Voice and Sight on-corridor on both Joder Interim Trail Loop and the Wonderland Lake Loop.

Amy Strombotne, Longmont, in 25 years never walked on the northern properties. These are special lands that should not be encroached on. She said she is concerned that increased use will take away ownership from animals by human impact. These trails also lead to sensitive areas that should remain closed.

Return to the Board

The Board created the following list of amendments to Scenario A and B:

*Items with an asterisk were a part of the Board conversation, but were not projected up on the screen at the time of the meeting.

Joder Trail Connection/North Foothills HCA

Scenario A

- Improve family resources by increasing amenities at Beech Pavilion (increase amount of seating, increase ability to have a picnic, tables, grills). Explore possibility of adding an ADA parking space in.
- Pursue external funds for the underpass.

Scenario B

- No off-trail permits east or west of connector trail
- Do not allow dogs on Joder connector during seasonal nesting from May 1 – July 31.
- Use best efforts to locate connector trail through the Conservation Easement (CE)
- Do not include temporal restriction on connector trail (*or on the Interim Trail, to provide for this connection).
- Include this trail in the muddy closure program.
- Explore putting environmental monitoring program in place.

Joder Loop Trail

Scenario A

- Add *public* before planning processes in the proviso clarifying that the North TSA Plan does not preclude future *public* planning processes to assess and recommend a regional connector trail connection to Heil Ranch on the Buckingham property.

Scenario B

- Add *public* before planning processes in the proviso clarifying that the North TSA Plan does not preclude future *public* planning processes to assess and recommend a regional connector trail connection to Heil Ranch on the Buckingham property.
- Alternate directional regulations every two weeks.
- Explore feasibility of turning road portion of Interim Trail into a single track.

Joder Interim Trail

Scenario A

- Reduce trailhead leash extent area proposed out of the Schooley trailhead and the Interim Joder trailhead.

Scenario B

- Reduce trailhead leash extent area proposed out of the Dagle trailhead and the Interim Joder trailhead.

BVR Trail Redevelopment

Scenario A

- Condition closure of the BVR arena/ring to finding a suitable alternative with horse trailer parking.
- Make Voice and Sight (V&S) on-corridor on entire Papini Trail.

- Provide horse trailer parking at Eagle and Degge trailheads.

Scenario B

- * Condition closure of the BVR arena/ring to finding a suitable alternative with horse trailer parking.
- Make V&S on-corridor on entire Papini Trail.
- * Provide horse trailer parking at Eagle and Degge Trailheads (TH).

Wonderland Hill Loops and Old Kiln Trail

Scenario A

- No changes

Scenario B

- * V&S on-corridor on Wonderland Lake loops.

Northern Properties

Scenario A

- * Open both Johnson and Schooley properties. Staff will request public input on Northern Property access and provide additional information to the Board in March.

Scenario B

- * Open both Johnson and Schooley properties. Staff will request public input on Northern Property access and provide additional information to the Board in March.

Frances Hartogh said she is voting for Scenario A and against Scenario B because of the importance of not carving a trail through the West Beech HCA. It is vital that we leave this delicate grasslands area intact because:

- A West Beech trail will introduce invasive species, many of which staff says they have no viable methods of combatting;
- Invasive species would severely compromise the habitat now provided for numerous imperiled and threatened species;
- A West Beech trail would cross 11 riparian drainages, requiring bridge construction and resulting in destruction of habitat and disturbance of wildlife, including shrub-nesting birds and ungulates;
- An alternate trail—with better mountain views and far less damage to the environment—is available on the east side of the highway;
- While Scenario A would require crossing the highway, staff has provided little if any information about this crossing, other than a price tag that assumes OSMP would bear 100% of the costs. We have built crossings before, with significant cost sharing;
- Staff has stated on the record that the West Beech trail required by Scenario B is “ecologically unsustainable.” Given the emphasis of the Charter on preservation, and multiple statements in the other sideboards about the need to protect grasslands, the West Beech trail would violate the Charter and numerous other plans that the Board agreed would govern and provide critical guidance for the NTSA planning process.

Molly said she cannot support a connector trail through West Beech to Joder Ranch as proposed in Scenario B. She asked the supporters of this to reconsider their thinking. This trail bisects rare and sensitive natural resources. It is a permanent scar to the landscape. To build a trail in 11 drainages that is unsustainable and in the heart of an HCA is not prudent after the massive flooding we saw in this exact type of landscape in 2013. Perhaps the most important fact is that it sets aside our own OSMP mission statement of “fostering appreciation and use that sustains the natural values of the land for current and future generations.”

Motion

Kevin Bracy Knight moved that the Open Space Board of Trustees are approving Scenarios A and B as amended. Tom Isaacson seconded. This motion passed three to two; Frances Hartogh and Molly Davis dissented.

Kevin Bracy Knight moved that the Open Space Board of Trustees identify Scenario B should be used for drafting the North Trail Study Area Plan. Tom Isaacson seconded. This motion passed three to two; Frances Hartogh and Molly Davis dissented.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 12:45 a.m.

These minutes were prepared by Leah Case.

APPROVED BY:

Frances Hartogh
Board Chair

DATE