

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT COLLINS  
LAND CONSERVATION & STEWARDSHIP BOARD**

**Regular Meeting  
December 13, 2017  
1745 Hoffman Mill Road  
5:30 p.m.**

**Council Liaison:**  
Gerry Horak 420-7398

**For Reference:**  
Edward Reifsnyder, Chair 817-821-4644  
David Tweedale, Vice Chair 970-219-2422  
Raymond Watts, Communications 970-690-4250  
Daylan Figgs, Staff Liaison 970-416-2814

**Board Members Present:** David Tweedale, Vicky McLane, Joseph Piesman, Andrea Elson, Kelly Ohlson, Marcia Patton-Mallory, Raymond Watts, Mike Weber

**Excused:** Edward Reifsnyder  
**NAD Staff:** Daylan Figgs, Mark Sears, John Stokes

**Public Attendees:** Cole Kramer, Althea Winslow  
**Call meeting to order:** 5:30 p.m.

**Agenda Review:**

**Introductions:**

**Public Comments:** Cole Kramer reported he had interviewed for the LCSB board position with City Council.

**Approval of Minutes:**

*Andrea Elson made a motion to approve the November LCSB meeting minutes.*

*Vicky McLane seconded the motion*

*The motion was unanimously approved*

**Communication and Board Matters:**

Ray wanted to follow up on last month's meeting about the terms for the Running Deer Land lease agreement to Hageman Earth Cycle. Mark reported that the lease is still in the negotiation phase and will likely go before City Council on January 16<sup>th</sup>. Hageman Earth Cycle has a few minor edits to the lease, but nothing major. Kelly requested the lease be reviewed by the Board

again, but Mark said he wouldn't bring it before the Board again unless the changes were significant. From NAD's perspective, there isn't anything negotiable about the terms. The terms, other than the 20-year lease, are no different than the sale agreement.

Vicky wanted an update on NAD's contacts with companies responding to the RFP, from Platte River Power Authority (PRPA), and she would like to learn more about what changes are being anticipated with the Energy by Design plan.

Daylan explained that since October there isn't any additional information about contacts for the RFP. He understood that PRPA would announce who they will be working with as early as tomorrow. He thought that a transmission line will be requested along Meadow Springs, but would know more in the upcoming weeks. Daylan is confident that there will be no transmission lines installed across Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. Vicky wanted to know if the Board should make any comments at the upcoming PRPA meeting. Daylan is prepared to make a statement, should he be asked to do so, emphasizing the importance of the land and the tremendous ecological value. Joe asked if there would be a windfarm north of Meadow Springs. Daylan reported that there would be one somewhere in that area but wasn't sure exactly where.

John suggested we wait to go into details about the issue as we don't know for sure there is a proposal yet. John suggested we consider discussing the Meadow Springs property conservation in an executive session. David suggested we continue to pay attention to the issue and be prepared to discuss as needed. Kelly suggested that the Board continue to monitor the situation and seek out alternative routes.

Kelly reported accepting the Proclamation for the 25 Anniversary of the Natural Resources Department. He passed the Proclamation around and asked that NAD keep it and frame it.

Mark reported that City Council approved the second reading for the appropriation of NAD's shop expansion. Construction will commence in late February of 2018.

### **Action Item**

#### **2018 Work Plan**

**Daylan Figgs, Environmental Program Manager, presented an updated 2018 Work Plan for the Board to review, modify and approve.**

Daylan reported he reviewed last month's board meeting minutes to capture Gerry Horak's comments on the Work Plan. He provided back to the Board changes in 'track mode' so members could see the changes he made based on the comments. Marcia reported that according to the Boards and Commission Manual, the Land Conservation and Stewardship Board will be up for a periodic review in 2018. This review will take place with the Board's appointed Council Liaison and City Council. Marcia suggested that the review be included in the 2018 LCSB Work Plan. Daylan will add the item.

Andrea suggested looking at item 16 and making the statement a little more positive, according to Gerry Horak's comments. Daylan suggested 'Review all Natural Areas and Parks new trail placement and provide input to protect wildlife habitat.'

*Joe Piesman made a motion to approve the LCSB 2018 Work Plan and work items as amended.*

*Marcia Mallory-Patton seconded the motion.*

*The motion was unanimously approved.*

Daylan will make the agreed upon changes and send out to the City Clerk's office as well as to the Board members.

### Discussion Items

#### **Coyote Ridge/Prairie Ridge Trail Alignment**

**Mark Sears, Natural Areas Program Manager presented a proposed trail alignment and connection between Loveland's Prairie Ridge Natural Area and Coyote Ridge Natural Area**

Mark reported that with the help of NAD, the the City of Loveland is considering options for the new trail alignment on Prairie Ridge Natural Area. Mark demonstrated to the Board, the options currently being considered. Loveland appreciates the help that the City of Fort Collins NAD staff has provided including trail alignment and design design assistance. Loveland has started a management plan on the site and hopes to construct the trail in 2019. They've applied for two grants already to assist with funding.

The more likely trail would provide for a north-south trail which can be connected to Coyote Ridge to the north and to the Loveland Recreation Trail Loop to the south. Natural Areas staff support the trail connection to Coyote Ridge; it will provide both the Coyote Ridge visitors and the Prairie Ridge visitors more trail route options. This would be a soft trail connection from Fort Collins to Loveland. The proposed Longview Trail would be a paved, regional trail, running parallel 2 miles to the east.

#### **Discussion:**

Kelly encouraged Board members that were interested in providing input to the Prairie Ridge Management plan to send an e-mail or attend one of the Open Houses the City of Loveland will host.

Ray commended staff on the construction alignment of the trail. Placing the trail on the edge of the natural area and leaving an internal space for wildlife also reduce fragmentation to the area. Joe pointed out that Coyote Ridge hosts a lot of mixed users including a diverse age group.

Providing this additional trail will support a more family-like experience away from the mountain bikers.

David asked who was writing the management plan and what the cost for our three quarters of a mile would be. Mark indicated that the City of Loveland would be responsible for writing the management plan and he was unsure what the cost of the  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile trail would cost.

### **2018 Natural Areas Department Staffing Update and Budgeting for Outcomes 2019-2020 Offers**

**John Stokes, Natural Areas Director** discussed current staffing levels, future staffing needs and 2019-2020 Budgeting for Outcome Offers.

John explained that NAD has been doing some organizational and design reviews of our department. The reviews include current staffing levels, future staffing needs and budget for staff. One of the major issues that surfaces all the time is our level of staffing. NAD has added 1.12 staff since 2008. We currently have 30.25 permanent, full time staff and we manage about 44,000 acres and that includes our fee ownership and conservation easements. John explained that NAD developed a staffing plan many years ago but we haven't been able to execute the plan for one reason or another. Historically we present staffing needs to the Board, we take that through the BFO process but it has never been approved. He explained how being short staffed over the last few years has created tension on the department and its resources. The City of Fort Collins has been conservative about adding staff overall, across the board. John was however optimistic that the City Manager understands NAD's staffing needs.

John shared a chart that compares our department to other agencies in the state that demonstrates acreage per employee. For example, Boulder has 18.5 armed rangers, we have 7 and two are assigned to sites. Boulder doesn't patrol Boulder Creek and the trail system. That's all done by Police Services. We patrol the trail system, the river corridor and the natural areas. Long story short we are struggling.

John explained that he requested and received approval from the City Manager to add two staff mid-budget cycle. Those two positions are Land Conservation Manager, that would ultimately transition Mark out of the main Conservation Manager position. And the other position would be to support a desperately needed additional ranger.

John also addressed some staffing positions that could potentially be converted to full time and additional positions that might added over the next few years. John explained that NAD currently has 8 positions that it would like to convert to full time positions. The positions are included in NAD's financial model. If positions were added NAD would have 44 permanent staff and about 1,000 acres per staff, which is still double the acres per staff when compared to other agencies.

### **Discussion:**

Ray, as well as other board members felt the funding for the ranger position should be paid out of the general fund. Rangers have a great deal of transient, drug addiction and homeless contacts. John agreed that the homeless population has increased over the past few year and that Ranger activities have increased to more of a community policing type of patrol. Some feel rangers are performing police like activities for the natural areas and that if a majority of those contacts are homeless and transient like contacts, then perhaps Police Services or the general fund should assist with salaries.

**Land Conservation Update**

**Mark Sears, Natural Areas Manager** reported that Land Conservation staff was working hard to close on properties before the end of the year. The last acquisition on the Horsetooth Foothills, adjacent to Blue Sky Trail is scheduled to close on January 11, 2018. It's a fee acquisition of almost 300 acres.

The closing on the Humane Society property should be scheduled as soon as the building has been torn down. Mark will keep the board posted on that acquisition. A nine-acre conservation easement just south of Pineridge Natural Area will close on December 21<sup>st</sup>.

Mark is close to having a signed purchase agreement for the almost 7 acres just north of Willox, north of the Hatley property that we purchased earlier in the year.

A sixty-acre conservation easement on N. Shields is almost finalized. The transaction will be a bargain sale with most of the financing coming from tax credits.

Meeting adjourned: 7:45 p.m.

**Approved:**

Edward Reifsnnyder, Chair 1/10/18 Date

Michelle Vattano, Secretary

**Michelle Vattano**

