

# MINUTES

CITY OF FORT COLLINS • BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS



## Land Conservation & Stewardship Board

### REGULAR MEETING

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June 13, 2018

1745 Hoffman Mill Road

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#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

5:30 p.m.

#### 2. ROLL CALL

- David Tweedale, Edward Reifsnyder, Vicky McLane, Joseph Piesman, Andrea Elson, Marcia Patton-Mallory, Raymond Watts, Mike Weber
- List of Board Members Absent – Kelly Ohlson, Excused
- List of Staff Members Present – Rachel Steeves, John Stokes, Daylan Figgs, Aaron Meyer, Matt Parker
- List of Guests – Natasha Wing, Kinsten Nelson, Ashley Waddell, Sarah Witherell, Austin Stone, Northern Colorado Prairie Dog Advocates (NCPDA); Dave Meyers, Terry Francl and Cole Kramer

#### 3. AGENDA REVIEW

- Board members requested an update on the Meadow Springs Transmission Line Proposal. Daylan agreed to report at the end of the meeting.
- Daylan requested the Kingfisher Restoration Plan Update be moved to an Action Item, on the agenda.
- Rachel Steeves led the LCSB on a brief walking tour to the Kingfisher Point Natural Area to describe the upcoming restoration project.

#### 4. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

- Natasha Wing, Kinsten Nelson and Sarah Witherall offered public comments and thoughts on prairie dog preservation. They were advocating for relocating prairie dogs as opposed to lethal management and to use Natural Area owned land for relocation purposes. Advocates felt that many developers were willing to work with the city for relocation of the prairie dogs. Sarah Witherall, co-founder of Northern Colorado Prairie Dog Advocates, expressed their efforts to collaborate with NAD in the past, with regards to prairie dog management. The NCPDA participated in meetings in June and July, with NAD staff in hopes of citizen collaboration. The NCPDA then requested the formation of a task force to oversee relocation options in natural areas.

#### 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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**VICKY MCLANE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AMENDED MAY LCSB MEETING MINUTES.**

**EDWARD REIFSNYDER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED 8-0.**

### 6. COMMUNICATION & BOARD MATTERS

Marcia did not have a report from the Bicycle Advisory Committee.

Daylan reported that the Natural Areas Department would be asking for a recommendation from the board on the Kingfisher Restoration Plan Update. The recommendation would be for the appropriation of grant funds received from Great Outdoors Colorado to partially fund the restoration project.

Daylan reported that Jennifer Shanahan had been in communication with the US Army Corps of Engineers and Northern Water Conservancy District to try and get a date for when the Final Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for NISP will be complete. It is anticipated the Final EIS would be available for review in July. Daylan indicated there has been a request to have a Super Board meeting could be requested to discuss NISP, with the LCSB and other relevant boards. There may be additional conversation on the proposed Meadow Springs transmission line as well at that Super Board meeting. He will report on that effort during the July meeting and hopes to host the meeting sometime in August or September.

Ray pointed out in the May meeting that Daylan committed to demonstrating the options for the proposed transmission lines at Meadow Springs. Daylan proposed looking at some of those maps at the end of the meeting.

### 7. NEW BUSINESS

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

##### **Prairie Dog Management Update**

**Aran Meyer, Natural Areas Department Wildlife Biologist** provided an overview of the prairie dog management plan to include management decisions and techniques for 2017 and 2018. He explained the primary objective was to promote ecological integrity and function at a landscape scale, while managing wildlife for overall habitat health rather than management at a single species level. Aran focused on prairie dogs in the urban context, management techniques and various prairie species that the Natural Areas Department wants to protect.

##### **Discussion:**

Vicky asked if native plant communities were always at risk of going to weeds when prairie dogs were present. Aran explained that it's a site by site situation but more than often that will happen. Daylan mentioned that the effects of prairie dogs are much different in a native grassland area like Soapstone than in an urban atmosphere. The

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impact from prairie dogs is much more severe in previously disturbed and fragmented landscapes found in our urban settings versus the large native shortgrass prairie environment.

Prairie dog advocates asked if the intention of the department was to conserve the prairie dog habitat in areas like Soapstone and if so, could the prairie dogs be relocated from some of the smaller urban areas to Soapstone Prairie to eliminate lethal management. Daylan explained that the Wildlife Guidelines do recognize some relocation options under certain conditions. Daylan described the approach at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area as a unique area where we are letting the managed colonies expand towards a goal of 4,000 acres of prairie dogs.

Ray asked how robust the landscape scale metric was. He asked if the management goal is to have landscape scale functioning ecosystem then we should have metrics to tell us how we're functioning or at least trends. Aran responded by explain how we're trying to build on that data and metrics. Ten years ago, we didn't know much about the species we were hosting. He explained that we're just now building on our survey methods and how can we promote species that benefit us. Ray asked if our strategy was to build metrics in-house. Aran suggested we would take that on where we have the capacity but we're always open to partnering with others.

John encouraged board members to read the prairie dog section of our Conservation Management Plan.

There was some discussion about City Council's inquiry about the Stanton Creek prairie dog colony. Joe asked Aran to provide an update on that issue. Aran reviewed the area near Trilby and Carpenter Road. He pointed out the two HOA's near that area and demonstrated an area where NAD allows prairie dogs and areas identified for control.

### ACTION ITEMS

#### **Kingfisher Restoration Plan Update**

**Rachel Steeves, NAD Environmental Planner**, offered a couple of maps and pictures of the restoration at Kingfisher Natural Area. Rachel explained the primary purpose of the restoration is to improve the hydrologic function and aquatic connectivity of the Poudre River. Secondly, a wetland creation and restoration of habitat in and around the open water of Gadwall Pond. The project includes preparation for future visitor amenities such as a parking lot, a loop trail off Mulberry and possible pedestrian bridge connection to the Poudre Trail.

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#### **Discussion:**

Joe asked where the funding for the restoration project was coming from. Rachel reported funding from the Natural Areas Capital restoration, and \$100,000 to come from a GOCO Habitat Restoration grant.

Rachel provided a timeline for the restoration project. In mid-July we will work on Gadwall Pond to increase of wetland acreage 2.4 acres. The river restoration work will start in later in the fall. Revegetation will begin in the winter and spring of 2019. Joe suggested the LCSB do a walking tour of the McMurry Natural Area and N. Shields Street Access to get a better idea of progress of those restored areas. Rachel offered a future tour.

**DAVID TWEEDALE MADE A MOTION THAT THE LCSB RECOMMENDS THAT CITY COUNCIL APPROVE AN ORDINANCE TO APPROPRIATE THE RECENTLY AWARDED GOCO GRANT FUNDS OF \$100,000 INTO THE NATURAL AREAS BUDGET FOR USE TOWARDS THE RIPARIAN RESTORATION PROJECT AT KINGFISHER POINT NATURAL AREA.**

**MARCIA PATTON-MALLORY SECONDED THE MOTION**

**THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED 8-0**

#### **Land Conservation and Stewardship Board Periodic Review**

Every four years boards are scheduled for a Council Periodic Review, scheduled by outcome area. The Environmental Health and High Performing Government outcome areas have been scheduled for 2018. The LCSB has been chosen under Environmental Health for a review this year. A questionnaire is required to be completed by board members and submitted to the Boards and Commissions Coordinator. The Board agreed to potentially have their review in August, given the availability of Councilmember Horak, LCSB Council Liaison. Topics for discussion will be the board's function and how it aligns with City Council's priorities and strategic plans and future work plans. Councilman Horak will then report those results to City Council.

Board members reviewed the questionnaire and came to a consensus on the questions and comments that Joe had previously inserted. Joe agreed to send the questionnaire on the Christine Macrina, City Clerk's Office, to then be submitted to City Council.

#### **Meadow Springs Transmission Line Update**

**Daylan Figgs, Environmental Program Manager**, provided an update on the proposed Meadow Springs Transmission Line. He demonstrated on a map the location of several proposed alignments. He explained that the options were being evaluated based on data that has been collected at Meadow Springs over the last few years.

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Daylan assured the board that this will be a long, well thought-out process. We are going to provide information on the best professional mitigation that makes sense. There will be open houses, board discussion, Council discussions and many discussions with all the involved parties.

Board members questioned who had the say on the selected path for the alignment. Daylan reported that ultimately the decision will be made by City Council but with input provided by advisory board including the Water Board, Natural Resources Advisory Board and Land Conservation and Stewardship Board. There will be an Open House in September or October.


### 8. OTHER BUSINESS

John reported on a potential land purchase, by NAD. More information on that will come over the next couple of months.

### 9. ADJOURNMENT

8:10 p.m.

Approved:

 \_\_\_\_\_, Chair 7/11/18 Date

 \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary  
**Michelle Vattano**

