



**Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, June 8, 2023**

**Members Present:** David Siegel, Sarah Bryarly, Steve Harris, Larry Bogue, Greg Thornton, Julia Sands de Melendez, Abby Simpson, Andrea Perry

**Members Absent:** Dr. Daniel Bowan

**Alternates Absent:** Steve Lenzo

**Staff Present:** Britt Haley, Eric Becker, Kim King, Anna White, Kelly Rajab, Erik Weitzel, Mark Snow, Stephanie Adams

---

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

**Citizen Discussion**

Susan Davies, Executive Director for the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), invited everyone to attend Bike to Work Day on June 28, and said that TOSC will be hosting a breakfast station. Next, Ms. Davies addressed the Trust for Public Land (TPL) Park Score, which ranked Colorado Springs at 51. While she said this is a move up from the previous ranking of 56, there are still many needs to be met to improve the score. Finally, Ms. Davies encouraged folks to join local Friends Groups, as many are hurting in numbers.

Leah Wood, citizen, informed the Board that members of the neighborhood next to Oak Meadows Park are forming a community group to encourage and help the process of replacing the playground with the City. Britt Haley, Director, stated that this was a budget item from last year's CIP budget, and is in motion to be replaced. Britt thanked Leah and the other community members for their support.

Bill Beagle, President of the Incline Friends, and Steve Jeroslow, another Incline Friends Board member, took time to recognize that the Incline had been legally open for ten years as of May 11. Mr. Beagle and Mr. Jeroslow also recognized Park Ranger Madison Peddy for all of her hard work and dedication as the Ranger for the Incline. Maddy was presented with a plaque to thank her for her tremendous work. Maddy responded with thanks, and that the support of the Incline Friends makes a huge difference in managing the area.

**Approval of Minutes** – May 11, 2023 meeting minutes.

**Motion** – To approve the May 11, 2023 meeting minutes.

1<sup>st</sup> – Greg Thornton, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Abby Simpson, Approved, Unanimously.

## **Action Items**

### **2024 Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Recommendations** (Presented by Kelly Rajab, Analyst II for Finance and Budget)

Kelly Rajab, Analyst II for Finance and Budget, presented the Board with the 2024 Capital Improvement Project (CIP) recommendations. This presentation included the budget development timeline; budget development; informing the budget process; assumptions; 2023 position distribution by fund; Ballfield Fund proposed 2024 CIP budget; Ballfield Fund 2023 fund balance estimate; Ballfield Fund proposed 2024 CIP budget; Skyview Sports Complex turf replacement; Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) proposed 2024 CIP budget; CTF revenue from 2010 to 2022; CTF percent by category; CTF 2023 fund balance estimate; CTF proposed 2024 CIP budget; CTF proposed 2024 budget; Grey Hawk Park implementation; Skyview Sports Complex turf replacement; other CTF projects; Parkland Dedication Ordinance (PLDO) proposed 2024 CIP budget; PLDO fund balance by category; PLDO proposed 2024 CIP budget; Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA) proposed 2024 CIP budget; PPRTA II; TOPS proposed 2024 CIP budget; TOPS ordinance; 2022 End-of-Year revenue report; TOPS Fund future revenue for 2024 through 2028; TOPS Fund summary 2022 estimated fund balance; preliminary 2024 revenue; 2024 TOPS positions by category; TOPS Administration; TOPS Maintenance; TOPS Trails category; Austin Bluffs/University Park implementation; Blodgett/Pikeview implementation; Chamberlain Trail; Fishers Canyon implementation; Palmer Mesa Trail design and planning; Sand Creek Trail – Airport to Palmer Park; TOPS Parks category; TOPS Parks proposed 2024 budget; Grey Hawk Park implementation; Jimmy Camp Creek/Corral Bluffs planning; irrigation renovations for Bricker, Otero and Tomah Parks; TOPS Open Space category; Stewardship program – education; Stewardship program – rangers; Stewardship program – land management; Stewardship program – resource management; stewardship funding history; TOPS Open Space proposed 2024 budget; and finally, other projects by category considered for 2024 funding.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

Board member Greg Thornton asked how it is determined what parks, trails, playgrounds, etc. receive CIP money in a given year. Eric Becker, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager, answered that he relies on staff input from maintenance supervisors, as they are most knowledgeable of their districts. Additionally, Eric stated that safety is the primary factor when making decisions about playgrounds and parks. Staff does their best to routinely replace outdated or unsafe equipment, but due to funding constraints, that is not always able to be done as cyclically as staff would like to. When it comes to making decisions for the budget, Eric usually asks for the top 25 needs of each category. Britt Haley, Director, added that citizen requests and community support also play a large factor in what is selected for the budget. The Department does its best to leverage funding from multiple sources so dollars can be stretched further and thus, more projects can make the final list. Finally, Britt added that keystone

properties usually receive some level of funding for projects, as they are what make the City look good and draw in tourists.

Board member Julia Sands de Melendez asked where Grey Hawk Park is located. Britt Haley responded that it is located off of Voyager Parkway, on Spectrum Loop.

Board Vice Chair Sarah Bryarly stated she supported the work being done to move staff salaries out of the special fund categories and back to general fund support.

Board member Abby Simpson asked what the ideal number of salaries being paid from TOPS would be for the Department. Britt Haley responded that she is comfortable with the salaries paid out of TOPS Administration.

Board member Greg Thornton stated that the TOPS Working Committee had expressed some concerns about only \$900,000 of the \$6,000,000 in the TOPS Trails category being allocated for projects in 2023 but explained that was due to staff capacity.

Board member Steve Harris asked what would happen if Mayor Yemi's priorities are different than the Department's. Britt Haley answered that Mayor Yemi is meeting with all directors one-on-one, but Britt felt the overall framework is good. If there were any substantial changes to what is proposed, they would come back before the Board to review. Councilmember David Leinweber, who was in attendance, reminded the Board that Britt, as a Director, reports to Mayor Yemi, and thus will have to work with his priorities. With that being said, Councilmember Leinweber reminded the Board that if they want to see other priorities, then they have the option to speak to City Council about their priorities or concerns.

Board Chair David Siegel asked how the pie chart of positions had changed since salaries were moved into TOPS and other funds during the recession, and if it's possible to see a comparison between then and now. Britt Haley responded that the pie chart is not quite "apples to apples," as it was before, due to factors such as hourly staff being converted into benefited staff due to a new state law, and Forestry moving to Public Works. Kim King, Assistant Director, said the overall number of staff is similar to pre-recession numbers, though. Next, Mr. Siegel commented that the amount of funds in the PLDO account correlates to developers paying fees in lieu instead of donating park land, which makes the level of service go down. Britt responded that the new PLDO is in its first year of implementation, which requires appraisal updates. While this can be a challenge in neighborhood areas, the main goal is always for park land to be donated instead of fees. In response to this, Mr. Siegel reiterated the need for a park development fee.

Susan Davies, Executive Director for TOSC, reiterated what she had commented at the TOPS Working Committee the day prior, and that there be a record of this process and results to find where tweaks need to be made. Ms. Davies expressed some concern about the new flexibility in the TOPS Ordinance. While there was a shift out of necessity, there will be citizens who will be unhappy with money allocated for projects, as the dollars won't go super far. Ms. Davies

said the \$900,000 from the Trails category is a concern, especially since staff could be hired out of that fund and that choice is not being made. Ms. Davies thought it would be better to be more aggressive and add dollars now, rather than go back for supplemental appropriations. Next, Ms. Davies said signage, trail safety, and bathrooms are needs that citizens express, and she wished there had been more money allocated for those. Finally, Ms. Davies reiterated what Councilmember Leinweber had stated earlier, and that the Board and Council relationship is so high functioning, she would love to see it be used to advocate for some of her concerns.

Board member Steve Harris questioned the Board on whether they should amend the motion to encourage City leadership to move salaries out of the TOPS fund and back to the general fund, so more dollars could be used for projects. Britt Haley suggested that a letter signed by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board and TOPS Working Committee Chairs encouraging that idea would be the most helpful and would go directly to City Council. The Board agreed that this was a good idea. Britt offered to draft the letter.

**Motion: To recommend to City Council this 2024 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services CIP budget as presented.**

1<sup>st</sup> – Sarah Bryarly, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Larry Bogue, Approved, Unanimously.

### **Presentation Items**

**2024 Fees and Charges** (Presented by Kim King, Assistant Director, Erik Weitzel, Senior Analyst for Finance, and Mark Snow, Community Recreation Manager)

Kim King, Assistant Director, Erik Weitzel, Senior Analyst for Finance, and Mark Snow, Community Recreation Manager, presented the Board with the 2024 Fees and Charges. This presentation included fees and charges matrix revisions; fees and charges – Special Events park rental fee reduction request; and finally, fees and charges – alternatives.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

### **Staff Updates**

**Park and Recreation Month** (Presented by Stephanie Adams, Senior Analyst – Community Engagement)

Stephanie Adams, Senior Analyst - Community Engagement, presented the Board with information about Park and Recreation month, and all of the fun events being hosted by the Department in celebration. Anna White, Staff Assistant, said she would forward all of the information to the Board.

[Link to PowerPoint Presentation Here](#)

## **Staffing Update** (Presented by Britt Haley, Director)

Britt Haley, Director, made the following staffing updates:

- Lonna Thelen was selected as the Design and Development Manager. Lonna has been with the City for seventeen years, working for Planning under the Development Review Enterprise. Lonna brings a lot of experience and expertise to the Department, and her start date will be June 27. Britt added that David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, was the other finalist for the position, and the decision was difficult. However, Britt is going to work with Lonna and David on potentially elevating David's current role to more encompass everything he does.
- Julie Lafitte has joined the Department as a Program Administrator working on strategic initiatives, such as accreditation, workshops and orientations, and the Park System master Plan. Julie came from the Mayor's Office most recently, but previously worked for the Department in 2014, when the last Park System Master Plan was completed.
- Gillian Rossi, Senior Park Ranger, and Joshua Joyner, Park Ranger, have both accepted new positions outside of the Department. Gillian accepted the position of Parks Director for the City of Manitou Springs, while Joshua accepted a position as the Assistant Executive Director for the BEAR League in Homewood, California. As sad as it is to lose these two great staff members, Britt commented on how their acceptance of Director and Executive Director positions is a true testament to how the TOPS Ranger program prepares and elevates staff to be able to move into such esteemed roles. Britt wished both Gillian and Joshua well in their departure.
- There was significant interest in the Senior Ranger position that will lead the Urban Ranger team of law enforcement rangers. Currently, there is an offer on the table for the Senior Ranger.
- Justin Kohl has joined the Department in a scheduling role, mostly focused on scheduling for the various community centers. Justin will be working with Vector Solutions, a new scheduling software.

## **Other Updates**

Britt Haley, Director, provided the following updates:

- Wild Horse Ranch has closed and is now owned by the Department.
- Vegetation management took place the day prior at Sondermann Park through the usage of goats. Goats were released into the park to feed on the weeds. Additionally, the manure from the goats will be used to fertilize the park. There will be another session of this management on July 13 at 10 a.m., and the public is welcome to visit the park and observe the goats.

Eric Becker, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager, made the following announcements:

- The Monument Valley pickleball courts will be resurfaced, beginning on June 19.
- Staff has received the green light to reopen the Palmer Mesa Trail and install signage.

## **Board Business**

### **Board Transition**

Board Chair David Siegel reminded the Board that he and Board member Dr. Daniel Bowan will be terming off after the July meeting. With this information, Mr. Siegel encouraged Board members to begin to think about serving in leadership roles on the Board, which will be selected in July.

### **Selection of LART Committee Representative**

With Board Chair David Siegel terming off in July, a new representative for the LART Committee will need to replace him. Board member Julia Sands de Melendez volunteered to be the representative.

### **Selection of Fishers Canyon Master Plan Representatives**

As the Fishers Canyon master plan will soon begin, one or two representatives from the Board are needed to be a part of the master planning process. Board members Larry Bogue and Greg Thornton volunteered to be representatives.

### **Selection of Grey Hawk Park Master Plan Representatives**

As the Grey Hawk Park master plan will soon begin, one or two representatives from the Board are needed to be a part of the master planning process. Board Vice Chair Sarah Bryarly and Board member Andrea Perry volunteered to be representatives.

### **Other Business**

Steve Harris – Mr. Harris stated that the Blodgett master plan is underway and proceeding well. There are three surveys open through June 15. The master planning group is developing alternatives, and the Stakeholder Action Committee will meet again in August. There is a community meeting on August 24. This will come to the Board in October.

Sarah Bryarly – Ms. Bryarly took a moment to recognize Bill Beagle and Steve Jeroslow from the Incline Friends. Both Mr. Beagle and Mr. Jeroslow are original Incline Friends members and have put their heart and soul into both the Incline Friends, and the overall support of the Incline. While there can be negative press around the Incline, both Mr. Beagle and Mr. Jeroslow have never faulted in their roles on the Incline Friends Board. Ms. Bryarly hoped that unnecessary rhetoric around the Incline Friends doesn't overshadow how hard that Board works, and the amazing legacy they have created. Ms. Bryarly added that the event celebrating the Incline in May was fabulous, as well.

Julia Sands de Melendez – Ms. Sands de Melendez informed the Board that the Public Art Commission just celebrated 25 years of art on the street, along with some new installations, which are fantastic. She then stated that the Commission is now looking at how to implement art at the airport.

Greg Thornton – Mr. Thornton asked if any progress had been made with the Velodrome since the previous meeting. Britt Haley answered that there will be a follow-up presentation later in the year to cover what has been done. Next, Mr. Thornton asked when there will be an update on the City Auditorium. Kim King responded that the business plan has been submitted, and there is now a Request for Proposals to review it, which is pending.

David Siegel – Mr. Siegel asked if the City Auditorium business plan could be shared. Britt Haley said she would check into this. Finally, Mr. Siegel expressed that the new considerations for art in the airport are so important and reiterated the need for a Public Art Coordinator.

### **Adjournment**

**Motion: Move to adjourn the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meeting at 11:30 a.m.**

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