

City of Aurora
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY BOARD
Field Meeting at Star K Ranch Open Space
May 25, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice Chair Suzy Cress, Brad Stratton, Wayne Gallagher, Lee Lindholm, Tom Isaacson, Steve Kennedy, Bob Hunchburger, Mark Christopher

MEMBERS ABSENT: Victoria Samuel

STAFF PRESENT: Dale Dishmon, Open Space Maintenance Supervisor; Will Schell, Open Space Crew Leader; Joy Thompson, Natural Resources Supervisor; Pat Schuler, OSNR Manager.

VISITORS PRESENT: None.

CALLED TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Suzy Cress at 5:33 P.M.

- I. WELCOME: Suzy Cress welcomed everyone to the May meeting.

- II. GUEST SPEAKERS: Pat Schuler introduced Will Scherr and Dale Dishmon to lead the discussion on Site Restoration at Star K Ranch. Dale gave a description of what the Open Space Maintenance workgroup does. He and Will also discussed the need for vegetation restoration at Star K Ranch due to the limited amount of native grasses and the proliferation of less desirable grass species. These grasses were intentionally planted but have taken over the site. They discussed the reasons for true native plants and how they can provide full coverage but work with each other and not crowd out other natives. They use less water and are more sustainable for our open space areas.

Dale and Will the described how they had removed approximately 1,000 sf of tall grass and prepped the area for planting of true native plants in their place. The Naturalist group will water them in regularly after they are planted. Will led the Board members in planting these native plants in the entire area and spreading straw mulch to retain the soil moisture. The Board planted approximately 30 plants. Joy Thompson then led the group on a walking tour of the Star K Ranch, calling out the mating call of native toads near the pond, and a variety of birds.

- III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Tom Isaacson motioned to adopt the agenda. Wayne Gallagher seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Tom Isaacson motioned to approve the minutes from the April meetings. Brad Stratton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- V. PROS MANAGEMENT REMARKS: Pat reminded Board members about the field trips for upcoming meetings. For the June Board meeting - Brian Green, Open Space Superintendent will join the Board members at Parcel 14, Buckley Buffer project to speak about this site and provide a tour.

The board members were supportive of this idea for the upcoming meeting.

- VI. REPORTS: None.

- VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

- VIII. NEW BUSINESS: None

- IX. OLD BUSINESS: None.

- X. ISSUES TO CITY COUNCIL:

- Open Space Maintenance staff made a presentation about some of the typical activities that they perform, including weed control, trail maintenance, trash pickup, graffiti removal, volunteer projects, signage, fencing, utility locates, citizen complaints, dumping and debris cleanup, homelessness camp abatement.
- Staff also made a brief presentation about ecological restoration and conservation.
- The board then spent time with staff planting native plant species in and area previously planted with non-native plants.
- The Board took a walking tour of Star K Ranch in Ward II, one of Aurora’s most impressive open space parks covering Sand Creek and 230 acres and saw this location at it’s greenest point in 20 years. We also listened to the mating call of Woodhouse Toads.

XI. CHAIR REMARKS: None.

XII. GUEST COMMENTS: None.

XIII. MEMBER COMMENTS & DISCUSSION: None

XIV. ADJOURN: Suzy Cress motioned to adjourn. Lee Lindholm seconded the motion. Motion carried; meeting adjourned at 6:54 P.M.

The next meeting will be on June 22 at 5:30 P.M. at Buckley Buffer Site 14.

Suzy Cress, Vice Chair

Lauren Morales, Recording Secretary

Suzanna Cress _____

Lauren R. Morales _____