

City of Aurora
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY BOARD
WebEx Meeting
January 25th, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Wayne Gallagher, Steve Kennedy, Suzy Cress, Vicky Samuel, Brad Stratton, Lee Lindholm, Mark Christopher, Tom Isaacson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Hunchberger

STAFF PRESENT: Brooke Bell, PROS Director; Brian Green, OSNR Acting Manager; Joy Thompson, Natural Resources Supervisor; Lauren Morales, Administrative Support.

VISITORS PRESENT: None.

- I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Victoria Samuel at 5:33PM.
- II. WELCOME: Victoria Samuel welcomed everyone to the January meeting.
- III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Suzy Cress motioned to adopt the agenda, with changes. Wayne Gallagher seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Steve Kennedy motioned to approve the minutes from the December meeting. Tom Isaacson seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- V. GUEST SPEAKERS: None.
- VI. MANAGEMENT REMARKS:
 - Brian Green led a discussion about amending the annual plan for 2022 to include the CEM. Board members moved to add CE tracking to the 2022 annual plan. Some projects on the 2022 annual plan are no longer relevant so members agreed to review and bring suggested edits to the February meeting.
 - Council member assignments were reviewed, and all council member assignments were deemed correct. Board members noted that several council members responded to the December bullet points positively.
 - Brian Green led a conversation concerning Art in Public Place. Brian recently met with Roberta Bloom, the manager in charge of the Art in Public Places program with the city of Aurora. The program has already set aside funds for a piece at the Prairie Meander at the Plains Conservation Center (PCC). Currently, a team is being put together for the Art Selection Committee. Roberta suggested an Open Space Board (OSB) member would be a good addition to the committee. Brian shared details of the process and what the time commitment for this committee looks like. Board members expressed support for this program and several members expressed interest in serving on the Art Selection Committee.
 - Brian Green presented information on the Home Ignition Zone information that was released by the Colorado State Forest Service. The recent Marshall fire in Boulder has sparked concerns amongst citizens and officials concerning the city's efforts to mitigate fire risk and impact. In response, the city has increased planning efforts and is improving mapping. The PROS department has also been in communication with the Fire department. There will be a presentation at the council study session on February 7th on this subject. Each year around mid-June, OSNR staff mow to ensure a 5-10 ft fuel break where open space backs up to residences. If mowing is done too early in the season, the area grows back too soon. If done too late, the area is overly dry and can present an additional fire hazard when mowing. The entire process spans about 3 weeks and was begun about 10 years ago in response to severe drought. The timeline corresponds with illegal fireworks season and the city's Fire department is supportive of the current practices. Tom Isaacson asked if this practice includes trails. Brian Green responded that trails are included. Brian also shared some information on the hazard mitigation plan from the fire department, which included topics such as red flag days, staffing, and fire equipment inventory. The meetings between Brian and the fire chief resulted in several ideas as to ways OSNR staff and volunteers can be of assistance. Rangers and other staff can set up proactive patrols on red flag days. Recreation center employees and water employees can all be alerted on red flag days to be on high alert. Staff can pay extra

attention to unauthorized campers during those times, due to the possible ignition source there. On the planning side, staff can pair OSNR teams with wildland fire teams to identify best access points for the fire teams in the event of a fire. The department also wants to focus on education of the public about wildfire and home ignition zones. The first 0-5 feet from a home is very critical, with 5-30 feet also playing an important role. Wayne Gallagher commented that his home backs up to the spillway area and the fire department couldn't get back there. Vicky Samuel asked if the city is coordinating with the Buckley Air Force Base at all, concerning the buffer zones around Buckley. Brian Green shared that there are two Aurora fire stations directly on the air force base. Steve Kennedy commented that he really appreciated the presentation and information. There is a lot of difficulty explaining hazards near homes to the public. Fires are inevitable in Aurora when there are high winds since so much land is open prairie. It is understandable that citizens would want to avoid destructive fires, but they are a force of nature as much as tornadoes and hurricanes. Wayne Gallagher added that the number one contributing factor in the Hayman fire was high winds. Brian Green shared that Joy Thompson got a voicemail at the PCC from a citizen who wanted to know what steps the city is taking. She shared the Home Ignition Zone presentation and the citizen in turn shared that information with their HOA newsletter.

- VII. **REPORTS:** No current reports. CEM and Art in Public Places will be listed under the reports section going forward.
- VIII. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Lauren Morales shared information on term end dates. Mark Christopher and Brad Stratton have terms expiring at the end of March but are eligible to reapply. Lee Lindholm also has a term expiring at the end of March but will be term limited as he is finishing his third term. The board also discussed how to proceed with interviews and the timeline for filling the upcoming vacancies. Interviews will be held at the February meeting and next steps discussed at that time.
- IX. **NEW BUSINESS:** Art in Public Places project for PCC – appoint OSB representative to Art Selection Committee. Brad Stratton moved to approve Tom Isaacson. Seconded by Wayne Gallagher. Motion carried.
- X. **ISSUES TO CITY COUNCIL:** Determine bullet points for January.
- Tom Isaacson appointed to represent the Open Space Board on the Art Selection Committee for Art in Public Places Project at PCC
 - In the process of reviewing and updating the 2022 Open Space Board Action Plan
 - Discussed Wildland/Urban Interface and Home Ignition Zone
- XI. **CHAIR REMARKS:** Vicky Samuel was driving down Picadilly and signs advertising public hearing for zoning of triple creek trail corridor on a city council meeting scheduled for January 10th. She asked if anyone had more information on how that went. Brian Green shared that those signs were posted because initial zoning for parcels went to council. The properties were outside city limits at the time of purchase but were annexed last year. Council approved the zoning requests on the 10th and the parcels are now zoned for open space and cannot be used for anything else. Vicky appreciated the update and added that the parcels total 128.97 acres. Vicky also saw the nesting pair of eagles at Confluence engaging in nest building and asked when the bald eagle watch program starts up again. Tom Isaacson shared that Fendhi Depres will be leading an orientation for the program on Saturday January 29th but was not sure if there was still room to sign up.
- XII. **MEMBER COMMENTS & DISCUSSION:**
- Tom Isaacson- Thanked the board for electing him to the Art Selection Committee and mentioned how much he is looking forward to it.
 - Wayne Gallagher- Has been doing lots of photography and saw some eagles at Morrison Nature Center.
 - Lee Lindholm- Was happy to hear the discussion about fires since he studied that in school. The Rome Way gate has been taken down due to new development.
 - Steve Kennedy- Thought the January 15th MLK weekend cleanup of Tollgate Creek was extremely well-organized. Steve attended with his wife and thought it was an amazing event. A total of 56 giant trash bags were filled and removed that day, in addition to larger items such as shopping carts. City naturalist Fendhi Depres organized the cleanup event.
 - Brad Stratton- Spent a few days in Copper Mountain last week. There is a good base of snow there, about 5ft since Christmas. Brad is hopeful that means there may be some good water this year.
 - Suzy Cress- Everything quiet at Sand Creek. There was a shopping cart abandoned in the water about a week back.

- Mark Christopher- Appreciated the reminder to reapply for the OSB. Asked if there is any way to inform HOAs of fire regulations. Brian answered that they aren't coded regulations, just recommendations, but that the Fire department is looking into the possibility of writing something into code, as a few other states have already done that.
- Joy Thompson- Steve Sundberg is interested in holding a council meeting at Morrison Nature Center. After seeing some photos, he is interested in that possibility more for the summer. Thanked all board members for their hard work.
- Brooke Bell- Thanked everyone for the meeting invitation and was happy to attend this evening. Shared that PROS is embarking on a system-wide comprehensive master plan process in 2022. The process will encompass the parks system, open space system, recreation & programming, golf, and more. Generally master plans should be updated every five years or so, but this one has not been updated in several decades. The company conducting the process will be announced soon as the contract is still under negotiation. This process will include a robust public engagement effort & equity engagement process and will guide the future of the department and establish priorities. Once hired, the consultant will be getting in touch with various boards, commissions, and committees. The intention is that there will be lots of points of connection. The next step after the master plan will be to develop a strategic plan. This involves looking at financing and the budget, opportunities for public or private partnerships, etc. In addition to the master plan, PROS will also conduct a comprehensive asset management plan. This plan involves inventorying all PROS assets including open space and parks. The plan also establishes the conditions of assets and reflects current and future maintenance needs. Finally, a third study known as an organizational assessment will also be conducted this year. PROS has lots of priorities and currently staff are all stretched very thin. This study will closely examine the current setup of PROS staff organization and how the department should be structured, what national standards are, if there is an adequate number of staff, etc. The organizational assessment will look at the leadership structure as well. The hope is that these three studies will help provide direction and guidance for the future of PROS and set the tone for the future of the department.

XIII. ADJOURN: Tom Isaacson motioned to adjourn the January meeting. Brad Stratton seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:18PM.

The next meeting will be on February 22nd at 5:30 P.M. via WebEx.

Victoria Samuel

Victoria Samuel, Chair

Lauren R. Morales

Lauren Morales, Recording Secretary