

City of Aurora
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY BOARD
Plains Conservation Center (PCC)
November 16th, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Kennedy, Vicky Samuel, Wayne Gallagher, Bob Hunchberger, Brad Stratton, Tom Isaacson, Mark Christopher, Jason Amaya.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Suzy Cress.

STAFF PRESENT: Brian Green, Acting OSNR Division Manager; Joy Thompson, Natural Resources Supervisor; Lauren Morales, Management Assistant.

VISITORS PRESENT: None.

- I. CALL TO ORDER: Steve Kennedy called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.
- II. WELCOME: Steve Kennedy welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Joy Thompson for setting everything up at PCC, including technology.
- III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Tom Isaacson moved to approve the agenda. Brad Stratton seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Wayne Gallagher moved to approve the minutes from the October OSB meeting. Bob Hunchberger seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- V. MANAGEMENT REMARKS: Brian Green thanked everyone for attending the meeting and asked Joy Thompson to provide an overview of the PCC. Joy introduced the history of the PCC, which has been here since the 1970s, though the land itself has a rich history extending far prior to that. The site functioned as a nonprofit until 2005, when it was turned over to the city to run. It is 1,100 acres, most of which is open space. The site offers wagon rides and other activities and provides a home to wildlife such as nesting bald eagles, pronghorn, and coyotes. Year-to-date in 2022 the PCC has seen over 5,000 visitors, and over 2,500 visitors through city programming. Annual highlights for 2022 included the prairie restoration work/noxious weed removal completed through the volunteer steward program, the first agriculture festival, and the upcoming wagon rides with Santa Claus. Joy noted that the city of Aurora collaborates with the Denver Botanic Gardens on programming for the PCC. The 2022 annual volunteer appreciation dinner is being held on December 2nd, and PROS Director Brooke Bell will be in attendance. Brad Stratton commented that funds are being raised for a gift for Natural Resource Specialist Fendi Despres in case anyone would like to contribute.
- VI. REPORTS: Steve Kennedy asked if any of the board members have gone out yet for conservation easement monitoring for Q4. Jason Amaya, Brad Stratton, and Tom Isaacson had already gone out. Brad noticed less trash to pick up these days and had no dumping reports at this time. Tom mentioned that the Buckley buffer zone was very pleasant. Bob Hunchberger went to Senac a second time to take photos and noticed some dumping he reported through Accela had been cleaned up & recycled. Steve reminded everyone that Q1 monitoring will begin in January. The monitoring at Pronghorn Natural Area has been switched to just once per month in the colder months but will still be done twice per month during warmer months. Targets for next year will be set this winter. Bob noted that he thought a drilling pad had gone in east of Pronghorn, near the big satellite dish. A lot of excavation is going on in the area, which

may be causing some pressure on the local pronghorn in the area. Bob mentioned he has not been seeing pronghorn in that area since the excavation began. Brian said he will have staff investigate the matter. The area is privately owned. The city tried to acquire the land in 2014, but the owners were asking for a price above market value. By the time the price came down, the city no longer had spare funds available to purchase the land. Bob suggested that a wildlife count of mule deer and pronghorn could be a good idea to track the project's impact on wildlife. (Brian confirmed for the minutes that the excavation is being done by the business on the site named "American Paintball Coliseum" www.americanpaintballcoliseum.com .)

- VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Mark, Vicky, Bob, Wayne, and Steve have all been working together on the outreach presentation project. It is still in the draft phase, but a lot of great work has been done so far. The hope is to have a core presentation that can be taken to any target audience. It should be a good "sales pitch" to get people excited about open space and provide an overview of the big elements of open space in Aurora. Vicky shared the outreach presentation with the OSB for feedback. OSB members discussed the presentation and gave suggestions for potential edits and improvements. Steve thanked everyone for their hard work on this. Wayne also thanked everyone and noted that the outreach presentation project has been a goal since he was the OSB chair. It took a while to get done but was worth it. Brian asked if Steve wanted to include some information about this in the annual presentation to the PFQL (Parks, Foundations, and Quality of Life) Committee, which will be held on 12/22 at 8:30am via WebEx. Steve replied that it should be included.
- VIII. NEW BUSINESS: The board discussed recruitment for the upcoming openings on the OSB in April 2023. Lauren Morales shared some information on the process and timeline. Interested parties should reach out to Lauren via email to apply.
- IX. BULLET POINTS:
- PCC (Plains Conservation Center) overview & visitation presentation by Joy Thompson
 - OSB members reviewed the draft outreach education presentation and provided feedback
 - Beginning recruitment for 2023 OSB position openings
- X. CHAIR REMARKS: Steve commented that 2022 has been a great year, with lots of board involvement and activities. The face-to-face meetings and the energy that comes with them has been awesome. There are a lot of good upcoming public engagement opportunities, and he is looking forward to getting into that work more. Steve wished everyone happy holidays and encouraged the board members to try to get out into open space in December.
- XI. MEMBER COMMENTS & DISCUSSION:
- Jason- Asked if the mid-term elections that happened last week would have an impact on anything locally. Brian responded that the state income tax was reduced so that could lead to budget cuts in some areas, but that it would likely not affect anything until 2024 or later. Staff don't know yet if any city-related impacts will be felt. Bob asked how much interaction the city of Aurora has with Arapahoe open space. Brian replied it is quite a lot, especially regarding funding and grants. Arapahoe county also holds many city conservation easements. Jason enjoyed the outreach presentation and would love to see a flyer version that could be posted in public spaces or placed in mailboxes.
 - Bob- Mentioned that the outreach presentation subcommittee should use the OSB's best photographers to help curate the best images for the presentation.
 - Wayne- Complimented the progress on the outreach presentation and thanked Vicky for her work on it. Recently had to purchase a new camera and had 3/4s of a million shots on the old camera, taken over 13 years.

- Vicky- Asked if anyone would want to walk out to Eddie's bench one day and potentially pick up trash nearby. Wayne said he would like to join Vicky, and several other board members expressed interest.
- Mark- The doggy bag situation continues to be an issue. There has also been a post floating around on Nextdoor recently about saving the Aurora Reservoir and relating to directional drilling. Brian explained that there is some property out near E-470 and Gun Club Road, north of Jewell. A private company will be using directional drilling to access oil and gas under Buckley Buffer. The city of Aurora only owned partial mineral rights to the area and cannot deny them access but did deny surface access. The company will bore nearly 1 mile down and 3 miles over to access the oil and gas. The city agreed to lease the partial mineral rights because the alternative was to get force pooled. Coming to a lease agreement allowed the city to negotiate better terms. Vicky asked if that is fracking, and Brian confirmed that it is.
- Tom- Shared an amusing anecdote involving an attempted coyote attack on his dog in his backyard. Tom successfully scared the coyote away and thankfully his dog is fine.
- Brad- Gave a quick update on the prairie restoration work he has been doing. Last week the volunteers and staff planted native seeds. In total, there are 4 plots of land that have been planted with a wide variety of seeds. Everyone is very interested to see what happens. Brad moved not to have a December meeting. Vicky seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mark asked if the outreach presentation subcommittee could meet again prior to the January meeting and present again at that time. Steve agreed and said that is a good idea. Brad asked where the January meeting should be held. Bob motioned to hold the January meeting at PCC. Tom seconded the motion. Motion carried.

XII. ADJOURN: Tom Isaacson moved to adjourn. Vicky Samuel seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.

The next meeting will be on January 18th at 5:30PM at Plains Conservation Center.

Steven L. Kennedy

Steve Kennedy, Chair

Lauren R. Morales

Lauren Morales, Recording Secretary