

City of Aurora  
**OPEN SPACE ADVISORY BOARD**  
Plains Conservation Center  
March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Suzy Cress, Vicky Samuel.

STAFF PRESENT: Brian Green, Acting OSNR Division Manager; Lauren Morales, Management Assistant.

VISITORS PRESENT: Dennis Roy, Robert Gemmill.

- I. CALL TO ORDER: Steve Kennedy called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.
- II. WELCOME: Steve Kennedy welcomed everyone to the March OSB meeting.
- III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Brad Stratton moved to approve the agenda. Wayne Gallagher seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Tom Isaacson moved to approve the minutes from the February OSB meeting. Brad Stratton seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- V. MANAGEMENT REMARKS: Brian Green invited the OSB members to Morrison Nature Center on March 16<sup>th</sup> for a public meeting regarding the Nature Play Area at Star K Ranch. The meeting is open to the public and staff are soliciting feedback on the project proposal. Steve remarked that he hoped one or two board members could be present, and asked Kristin Memmott to acknowledge any OSB members in attendance at the meeting. Bob Hunchberger commented that he was planning to attend. Tom asked if this was the same plan that was presented at an OSB meeting in 2022. Brian responded that it was the same project, and that the design is now roughly 70-80% completed. Many meetings with community stakeholders have already been held so the March 16 meeting will be mostly informative. Dennis Roy asked if the information on this project is available online. Brian answered that it is up on the Engage Aurora website. Brian reminded the OSB members that the recommendations for new board members will be sent to the Council Study Session on 3/20, followed by the Council Meeting on 3/27. Tom commented that the City Council is not obligated to follow board recommendations but that it would likely go smoothly. Brian added that he did not anticipate any issues with the board appointments. Brian also reminded everyone that the review of the OSB bylaws is set to take place at the April OSB meeting.
- VI. NEW BUSINESS: Wayne Gallagher moved to end the public portion of the meeting. Tom Isaacson seconded the motion. Motion carried. Bob Hunchberger motioned to enter executive session to conduct board member interviews. Brad Stratton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The OSB members interviewed candidate Robert Gemmill for an upcoming OSB vacancy. Brad Stratton moved to conclude the executive session. Bob Hunchberger seconded the motion. Motion carried. Wayne Gallagher moved to reconvene the regular meeting. Tom Isaacson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Wayne Gallagher moved to recommend candidate Robert Gemmill for appointment to the OSB. Bob Hunchberger seconded the motion. Motion carried.  
New business continued with officer elections for the OSB. Tom Isaacson moved to open the floor to nominations. Bob Hunchberger seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Steve Kennedy nominated Brad Stratton for the position of OSB chair. Wayne Gallagher seconded the motion. Wayne Gallagher nominated himself for the position of OSB vice chair. Tom Isaacson seconded the motion. There were no further nominations.

Tom Isaacson moved to close nominations. Jason Amaya seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Tom Isaacson called for a vote for Brad Stratton for the position of OSB chair. Wayne Gallagher seconded the motion. Brad Stratton was unanimously elected the new chair of the OSB.

Brad Stratton called for a vote for Wayne Gallagher for the position of OSB vice chair. Bob Hunchberger seconded the motion. Wayne Gallagher was unanimously elected the new vice chair of the OSB.

Steve Kennedy announced Brad Stratton as the new OSB chair and asked him to run the remainder of the March OSB meeting.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

The OSB members reviewed the 2023 OSB Action Plan. Brad said Steve did a lot of the legwork for the Action Plan review and asked him to give an overview of the feedback that was received. Steve credited Bob with the idea of asking what goals stuck most with people. Five OSB members provided feedback and four highlighted what they felt were the most important aspects of the Action Plan to them. Steve displayed the feedback for the OSB members to view and discuss. The first five items of the Action Plan were picked as important by everyone who responded. There was support to add accessibility, diversity, and inclusion under point #4. OSB members discussed ideas surrounding these topics and Brian shared that the Open Space Division hopes to purchase a couple of all terrain access vehicles at some point. The vehicles could be charged and stored at Morrison Nature Center. There are also beach wheelchairs that are available to check out for free at the Aurora Reservoir. These beach wheelchairs can go into the water. Mark suggested that the board move forward with prioritizing the Outreach Education Presentation and the OSB members brainstormed ideas to send out more positive information concerning open space through social media platforms. The OSB members agreed to trim down the Action Plan to focus on what should be the board's main priorities for 2023.

VIII. CHAIR REMARKS:

Brad thanked the outgoing members of the OSB for their years of service. Suzy, who was unable to attend the March meeting, spent 9 years as a member of the board. Brad thanked her for her passion for open space and specifically Sand Creek, where she walks her dog daily. Brad thanked Steve Kennedy for his work on the board for 3 years and mentioned what an asset he has been to the board. Steve will be focusing on other pursuits such as setting up an orchestra to reach populations that don't often get to hear such performances, but still plans to volunteer with open space regularly. Pronghorn Natural Area is a particular focus of his and he continues to coordinate classes with staff member Kristin Memmott. Brad also thanked Steve for his service as the most recent chair of the OSB. Brad thanked Tom for the 9 years he spent as a member of the OSB. Tom invited Brad to apply for the board, and they have known one another for a long time. Both Suzy and Tom were term-limited after three consecutive terms on the OSB. Tom is considering other boards to join and remains very involved with the city. Due to the length of his service, he often provides the history and background of items, and these are valuable contributions that will be very missed. Brad thanked the three members for their years of service and stated that they will all be missed. Brad also remarked on the status of the Outreach Education Presentation. The board has been asked to provide a presentation at the April 5<sup>th</sup> Ward meeting for Ward III by CM Medina. Bob and Wayne have agreed to join in to help present. Brad asked if they felt the need to get together again before the upcoming ward meeting. Bob said it would be good to discuss talking points for Ward III specifically, along with general talking points. Brad, Bob, and Wayne agreed to talk after the meeting and reach out to Vicky, who was unable to attend the March meeting. Mark asked if the board members should ask the other council members if they would like to hear a presentation at their ward meetings or if it would be better to wait. Brad said it would be good to go ahead and offer now. Bob added that some ward meetings set agendas months in advance, so it is better to get on an agenda now when possible.

IX. REPORTS:

Brian and Brad reminded the OSB members to try to get the Quarter 1 conservation easement monitoring done before March wrapped up. At the April board meeting, conservation easement monitoring spaces will be reassigned. Members can ask to retain their current assignments or request new areas to monitor. The hope is that new board members will all be paired with at least one veteran board member to help them learn the process.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS & DISCUSSION:

- Mark- Reminded everyone to ask their council members about the Outreach Education Presentation and asked if there is a rough time limit to provide when pitching the idea. The presentation can be shortened or lengthened as necessary, but 15 minutes is a good basic estimate, plus time for questions or discussion.
- Bob H- Went to CoalSenac over the weekend. The ice is gone and there is lots of water there. The beavers were very busy over the winter. Bob went back to the spot where he previously found shotgun shells and went over the fence there. It might be worth it to consider assigning a work group to the area to help with trash cleanup at the southern portion of the property. Bob noted that he had not seen any mule deer in the area the last couple of times he visited.
- Jason- Suggested that the OSB members identify who the best public speakers are for the Outreach Education Presentation, with consideration given to schedules and availability. Jason said he would be interested in changing his assigned easement area to discover a new space and perhaps observe it through fresh eyes.
- Tom- Commented that his neighbor's dog was recently attacked by a coyote. The city took it very seriously and came out to monitor the dog several times over two weeks. Tom is very happy to have served on the OSB for 9 years. It is bittersweet to move on, but he is feeling very positive about the future of the board.
- Wayne- Got re-certified with the National Association of Interpreters. Wayne is a certified interpretive guide which is how he can lead bird walks and other activities. He participated in a bird count that morning and saw 18 deer at the Ponderosa Preserve. He observed three very active kestrels on the south side of Pronghorn Natural Areas a few days ago. Bob commented that there is a sign in front of the paintball space near there for a public hearing. Brian mentioned that the public hearing has already passed but recent work in the area makes it more prominent.
- Steve- Commented that it has been a wonderful 3 years on the OSB. The time has been a great joy and open space and the prairie are his personal passions. It has been a joy to work with this group and Steve feels very happy about the folks that are being recommended to council to join the board. He joined right at the beginning of COVID which presented many challenges, but the time was rewarding. Steve distributed copies of a booklet that he makes with photographs and poetry to the OSB members.
- Bob G. (Robert Gemmill)- Hopes that the city council approves the recommendation to appoint him to the OSB and asked if anyone needs an extra person to go out to monitor specific areas. Steve mentioned Pronghorn Natural Area as a potential space.
- Dennis- Shared an amusing anecdote with the board. He often goes out looking for elk and deer and always keeps an eye out for foxes. He will go to various sites with recent fox sightings, but they are always nowhere to be found when he gets there. One night he and his wife woke up to the sound of screaming and found that a fox had caught a rabbit right at their fence line. Though he would always go out looking for foxes, one eventually came right to him.

XI. BULLET POINTS:

- The OSB interviewed a candidate for the open board position and voted to put this candidate forward for recommendation.
- The OSB elected Brad Stratton as Chair and Wayne Gallagher as Vice Chair for a one-year term.
- The OSB continued discussion of its Action Plan as required by the board's bylaws.
- The OSB has committed to CM Medina and will present the Education Outreach Presentation at the Ward III meeting on April 5.

XII. ADJOURN: Tom Isaacson moved to adjourn. Steve Kennedy seconded the motion. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 7:38pm.

The next meeting will be on April 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM at Morrison Nature Center. Brian and Brad asked the OSB members to submit site suggestions for future meeting locations.

  
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Brad Stratton, Chair

  
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Lauren Morales, Recording Secretary