

City of Aurora  
**OPEN SPACE ADVISORY BOARD**  
ACRE Site  
July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Wayne Gallagher, Bob Hunchberger, Bob Gemmill, Brad Stratton, Mark Christopher, Joy DeMots.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Vicky Samuel, Dennis Roy.

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

VISITORS PRESENT: None.

- I. CALL TO ORDER: Brad Stratton called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.
- II. WELCOME: Brad Stratton welcomed everyone to the July OSB meeting.
- III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Mark Christopher moved to approve the agenda. Bob Gemmill seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Wayne Gallagher motioned to approve the June OSB minutes. Bob Hunchberger seconded the motion. The motion carried, with Bob Gemmill abstaining from the vote.
- V. MANAGEMENT REMARKS: Brian Green announced that the Pronghorn Natural Area parking lot would be closed, though the closure date was still TBD. The grading work was done as planned but was washed away due to heavy rains. The project is currently back to the drawing board. Bob G. asked if that is why there's currently a cliff at that spot. Brian answered yes, workers are widening the road and cut into the shoulder but that it didn't work. Brad asked if it will be a turn lane. Brian responded that it will be a turn lane, but we don't yet know when. Bob G. asked who is managing the project. Brian responded that it is a SEAM Facility contractor. Bob G. asked how common it is that a contractor uses a seed mix that doesn't contain invasive seeds. Brian answered that this is always the case for the city of Aurora, which requires tags showing that the seed mix was checked by a lab. Brian added that existing seed banks and the wind can still spread invasive species but that invasive seeds are not in the seed mix. Brian presented an overview of the ACRE site to the OSB, and covered the history of the site, as well as current and future planned uses. The hope is to use the site for solar and other renewable energy research and generation. Box Elder Creek cuts through the middle of the property and has been set aside for open space.
- VI. NEW BUSINESS: Brad shared that the OSB has been invited to present the Outreach Education Presentation at the Ward VI meeting. The meeting will be on September 20<sup>th</sup> and hosted by CM Bergan. The board accepted the invitation to present.
- VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Bob H, Wayne, and Brad will be presenting the Outreach Education Presentation at the Ward II meeting at Central Recreation Center at the invitation of CM Sundberg.
- VIII. REPORTS: Brad reminded the OSB members that the third quarter for conservation easement monitoring has begun. Former OSB member Jason Amaya had to resign from the board due to moving outside of the city boundaries. As a result, Wayne no longer has a monitoring partner for his assigned area. Bob G. asked what site it is. Brad responded that it is the Star K Ranch area, and to let him know if anyone would be willing to switch areas. Brad added that board members shared the Outreach Education Presentation at the Ward IV meeting last week at the invitation of CM Marcano. Brad

invited Bob H. to speak about the meeting. Bob H. shared that the event had great turnout and lots of interest from the public. CM Marcano spoke about preventing urban sprawl and related topics. The presentation was challenging as far as holding the microphone, looking at notes, and looking at the camera. The event was very worthwhile, and the public had good questions. Bob H. asked the attendees who had never been to any open spaces in Aurora and not a single hand was raised. It was encouraging to see that people have been to visit open spaces. Brad shared that Bob H. did a great job with the presentation. Wayne noted that he had a few citizens approach him with issues. He sent most of the issues on to city staff but took a few to check up on personally. The Art on the Prairie event went really smoothly, with the exception of the kestrel box. The box fell briefly but was put back up very quickly. The kestrels returned for a brief time but luckily were close to fledging and all ended well. Bob H. suggested an idea that the board could sponsor some community cleanup events. Brad spoke with Fendi, and she is on board. Staff would supply the needed equipment. The only difference would be that the OSB would be in charge of the events. It is still an idea for now. Bob H. shared that when monitoring Jewell wetlands, there was so much debris present from the recent high waters. It is the same at Coal Senac. The eagles have now fledged, and folks can go out to clean up the space.

IX. CHAIR REMARKS: Brad shared some information on an upcoming event called Reflection Garden on Tap. The event will be held this coming weekend and is an opportunity for the 7/20 Foundation to raise money. The foundation also provides support for other recent shootings. Brad secured a vendor spot for the OSB and Wayne, Joy, and Bob G. have volunteered to help run the table, so Brad is free to draw. City staff will provide items for the table as well as literature. The Morrison Nature Center art event will be held on August 4<sup>th</sup> from 5:30pm-7:30pm. Any art needs to be submitted to Kristin Memmott by July 25<sup>th</sup> and all kinds of art are accepted. Jason Amaya resigned from the OSB. He moved out of city bounds due to the cost of living and is no longer eligible to serve on the board. The opening has been posted and Brad urged the board members to let any potentially interested parties know. Brad also shared that he will not be at the August OSB meeting due to a vacation, and that Wayne will run the meeting as Vice Chair.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS & DISCUSSION:

- Bob G- Was sorry to have missed the June meeting but is glad to be here today and is looking forward to upcoming activities.
- Joy- Also glad to be here and looking forward to the chalk art festival.
- Bob H- Was asked by Fendi to go out to Coal Senac to destroy Russian olive trees. A team of volunteers went out last week and got rid of low trees and trimmed branches up to six feet off the ground. This will allow staff to get closer to the trees to remove them. The project was successful but there is much more land to cover. Brad added that Fendi pointed out scotch thistle as a future volunteer project. Bob H. shared that the recent high waters took out the beaver dams, 20 feet outside of the banks. Hopefully the beavers will rebuild. Bob H. added that Esai Rubio is a great guy, very positive and willing to help. Bob H. wanted to report to Brian that Esai followed up on assigned Access Aurora tickets and was very responsive and helpful.
- Mark- Couldn't make it to the event this weekend, his family is going to Boston to celebrate his son and Mark would be dog sitting. Mark promised to let CM Bergan know that the OSB has accepted the invitation to present at her Ward meeting.

XI. BULLET POINTS:

- Acting Open Space Manager Brian Green discussed the history of and plans for the ACRE site and led a tour of the open space area along Box Elder Creek
- Bob Hunchberger reported on the Open Space Board presentation at the Ward 4 meeting with CM Juan Marcano. The board also discussed the upcoming presentations for Ward 2 with CM Steve Sundberg on July 20 and Ward 6 with CM Françoise Bergan on September 20.
- Brad Stratton reported on the Art on the Prairie Show and the upcoming Art Show at Morrison Nature Center on August 4. He also discussed the Reflections on Tap event on July 22, at which the Open Space Board will have a table for board members to promote Aurora open

space areas and volunteer opportunities.


- The board discussed the possibility of sponsoring "habitat clean-up days" in Aurora's open space areas.
- One of the Open Space Board members has resigned, and the board is looking for candidates to fill the open position.

XII. ADJOURN: Mark Christopher moved to adjourn. Bob Gemmill seconded the motion. Motion carried and the business portion of the meeting adjourned at 6:15pm. The business portion of the meeting was followed by a tour of the ACRE Site.

The next meeting will be on August 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM at the Confluence open space site.



Brad Stratton, Chair



Lauren Morales, Recording Secretary