

City of Aurora  
**OPEN SPACE ADVISORY BOARD**  
Aurora Reservoir  
September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vicky Samuel, Joy DeMots, Bob Gemmill, Wayne Gallagher, Brad Stratton, Mark Christopher

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dennis Roy, Bob Hunchberger

STAFF PRESENT: Joy Thompson, Natural Resources Supervisor

VISITORS PRESENT: CM Sundberg

- I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 5:31 PM.
- II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Bob Gemmill moved to approve the agenda. Mark Christopher seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mark Christopher motioned to approve the August OSB minutes. Vicky Samuel seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- IV. WELCOME: Brad Stratton welcomed everyone to the September OSB meeting. Brad welcomed CM Sundberg and the members of the OSB introduced themselves. Joy Thompson provided a brief history of the Aurora Reservoir, Senac Creek Nature Center, and programming held at the nature center. CM Sundberg mentioned a ceremony at Cherry Creek State Park on Friday, 9/22 to celebrate ARCO grants, of which the city of Aurora has received over a million dollars. Joy T. promised to look into the ceremony to see if staff should have a presence at the event. Bob G. asked if the city could purchase the parcel of land just east of the Pronghorn Natural Area and CM Sundberg said that Joy T. and Brian should look into it.
- V. MANAGEMENT REMARKS: Joy Thompson shared some information on the SEAM sewer connector. The connector is in and serves as a temporary connection from the SEAM facility to a sewer system. A permanent connection will be made soon, and the temporary connector will be removed. Staff wanted to let the OSB know as the temporary connector is close to Pronghorn Natural Area. Brad mentioned the October PFQL meeting, which will feature the 2023 Annual Report from the Open Space Advisory Board. Lauren Morales will share details of the PFQL meeting when it is closer.
- VI. NEW BUSINESS: Brad mentioned the Action Plan, which is to be reviewed biannually. The OSB should review the Action Plan in the coming weeks, discuss revisions in October, and vote to approve it in November in order to be ready for 2024. The first bulletin, which mentions visiting open space sites, has gone very well. Active monitoring is also going very well. Community outreach has gone much better this year, as well as participating in group and community celebrations such as the table at the 7/20 Memorial Event. Brad mentioned there are also opportunities for CMs to join and that they are always welcome at any OSB meeting. Vicky asked if the OSB members could see the notes on changes that were made from the previous Action Plan to evaluate how well the board is doing on its goals compared to before. Brad agreed to send those notes out to OSB members. Bob G. mentioned the Agriculture Festival at PCC over the weekend and said that the OSB could have had a booth at that event. OSB members agreed to look into the opportunity for a table at next year's event. Brad mentioned the Fall Into Fun event as another opportunity and Joy T. promised to ask the Marketing team about getting the OSB a table. Brad shared that the board-sponsored Holiday Habitat Cleanup event has been scheduled for December 16<sup>th</sup>. The site of the cleanup has not yet been determined and suggestions included Piney Creek, Horseshoe Park, Sand Creek Park, and

DeLaney Farm. Brad and Vicky mentioned that the creek bed is steep at DeLaney Farm, which may make the area tough to clean. Brad shared that city staff will provide trash grabbers, bags, gloves, snacks, drinks, etc. The OSB will lead the event and should decide on the official location soon. Brad suggested Red-tailed Hawk Park and Piney Creek. Mark asked if there may be a problem with Parks O&M staff since those sites are their responsibility. Joy T. said that this should not be an issue. Vicky mentioned that DeLaney Farm in Ward II could use some cleanup, Sand Creek Park was brought up but also has a lot of attention already. Joy T. said Horseshoe Park or DeLaney Farm would both be good options. Wayne said he and Dawn cleaned Cherry Creek Spillway a lot and into Horseshoe Park, but don't do it much now because it doesn't feel as safe anymore due to unhoused people camping by the creek. Brad suggested going out to explore different areas and see what they find and then decide on a location. Wayne said the Cherry Creek Spillway trail is not bad but can fill a couple of bags every time. Bob G. said that the OSB should do more cleanups each year. CM Sundberg said that if anyone sees camps, they can reach out to him for abatement. He is already working with the mayor on getting "no trespassing" signage posted in these areas, making for quicker abatement. His hope is to bring that with a visit to the Homeless Services courts system to get unhoused people what they need as well as to add more "teeth" to the camping ban. Mark agreed that OSB should meet at each of the suggested areas to look at them and decide. Brad promised to email everyone to set up a date and time to get out and look at locations.

- VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Two more outreach meetings are currently scheduled: Ward VI directly after the current OSB meeting and Ward V on November 18<sup>th</sup>. The only ward that the OSB had not presented to is Ward I. No response was received when OSB members reached out to CM Murillo. Brad asked what the board would like to do for outreach in 2024. One idea is to promote volunteerism in open space. Bob G. mentioned that retired people can volunteer whenever they want, but people who work can't, so more volunteer opportunities should be provided on weekends. Brad said that this is starting to happen and mentioned the Prairie Restoration sessions Morgana Eckman has been coordinating on Sundays at the PCC.
- VIII. REPORTS: Brad explained the Conservation Easement Monitoring program to CM Sundberg. Vicky added that there is an SOP, put together by Eric Watts. Brad reminded the OSB members that quarter three is almost done, and to get out and do any outstanding monitoring prior to the start of quarter four in October will be quarter four. Bob G. commented that he and Bob H. went out to Coal Senac and it was spectacular.
- IX. CHAIR REMARKS: Brad shared that the Star K Ranch playground final plans will be presented on September 30<sup>th</sup> at Morrison Nature Center from 10am to noon. Brad plans to attend. Joy T. and Kristin M. will give a full report on the Star K Ranch Nature Play Area at the October OSB meeting. The Morrison Nature Center 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be held on October 21<sup>st</sup>, and it would be great to have a board presence. Brad is coordinating speakers for upcoming meetings. Vicky has agreed to present on her trip to Africa, and Bob G. will have a presentation as well. Fendi will come and give an update on the PCC restoration project and Bryon Shipley will come and talk about snakes and research at PCC. Brad reminded the board that they are short one member and asked the OSB members to reach out to anyone who may be interested in filling the remainder of Jason's term. In March 2024, Wayne and Vicky will both be term limited and will also need to be replaced.
- X. BULLET POINTS:
- The OSB met at Aurora Reservoir and Joy Thompson provided a brief history on the reservoir and nature centers.
  - The OSB members discussed Ward VI and V outreach education presentations, the Action Plan, and possible locations for the board-sponsored habitat cleanup.
  - The OSB members discussed the Morrison Nature Center 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary event and Star K Ranch Nature Play Area meeting.

XI. MEMBER COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION:

- Joy DeMots- Suggested a backup cleanup date for the board-sponsored habitat cleanup.
- Vicky- Asked if there will be a December OSB meeting. Brad said if a quorum is missed in either October or November, there will need to be a December meeting.
- Mark- Asked where the Ward V meeting will be held. Wayne and Brad responded that the Ward V meeting will be held at Mission Viejo Library. Mark asked if anyone knows how big the condos will be at Red-Tailed Hawk Park. Wayne responded that the development will be quite big.
- Wayne- Saw raptors, kestrels, hawks, pygmy nuthatches, and white-breasted nuthatches at today's bird count.
- Bob G.- Mentioned that every year is different in open space as there is so much diversity. There were no tiger beetles this year. Bob G. shared some about different beetles in Colorado, such as dung beetles, tiger beetles, etc.
- CM Sundberg- Thanked the OSB for their volunteerism, expertise, time given to the board, and for all the board does. CM Sundberg also thanked the board for having him. Vicky said she appreciated him attending the meeting. Bob G. said he's impressed that Aurora has a higher percentage of open space than many other cities.

XII. ADJOURN: Vicky Samuel moved to adjourn. Bob Gemmill seconded the motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:34pm.

The next meeting will be on October 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM at Morrison Nature Center.

  
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Brad Stratton, Chair

  
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Lauren Morales, Recording Secretary