

City of Aurora
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY BOARD
Confluence Open Space Site
August 16th, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Wayne Gallagher, Bob Hunchberger, Bob Gemmill, Vicky Samuel, Dennis Roy, Mark Christopher, Joy DeMots.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brad Stratton, Mark Christopher.

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

VISITORS PRESENT: None.

- I. CALL TO ORDER: Wayne Gallagher called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.
- II. WELCOME: Wayne Gallagher welcomed everyone to the August OSB meeting.
- III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Bob Hunchberger moved to approve the agenda. Bob Gemmill seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Bob Hunchberger motioned to approve the July OSB minutes. Joy DeMots seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- V. MANAGEMENT REMARKS: Brian Green shared the outcome of a year-long organizational assessment for the PROS department, which Director Brooke Bell had recently released. Brian showed the OSB the old and new org charts for the department. The PROS department will gain two deputy directors and a second recreation manager. The Open Space division will move to be under one of the deputy director positions. The hope is that this change will allow urgent and important matters to move more quickly. Brooke will focus on the overall vision of the department and will still directly oversee three divisions. Vacant positions will be used to fund the new positions. Wayne commented that he does not believe the Open Space division should be lumped in under the Parks division and would like Open Space to be more independent and well-recognized. Bob G. asked if trees in Open Space fall under the responsibility of the Forestry division. Brian responded that they do not, and the Open Space division maintains the trees in open space areas. All trees in parks, medians, and trees growing between public sidewalks and residence boundaries make up the urban forest that the Forestry division maintains. Trees in open space are still independent. Brian also shared that there is still no update on the Pronghorn Natural Area parking lot project at this point, though it was closed the last four days and is scheduled to be closed on 8/21 and 8/22.
- VI. NEW BUSINESS: Wayne reminded the OSB of two upcoming Ward meetings. The OSB will share the Outreach Education Presentation on Wednesday, 9/20 at 7:30pm at the Ward VI meeting at the invitation of CM Bergan and on Saturday, November 18th at 10:30am at the Ward V meeting at the invitation of CM Coombs.
- VII. REPORTS: Bob H. reported on the Outreach Education Presentation that was recently given at the Ward II meeting at the invitation of CM Sundberg. CM Sundberg was not present, but CM Jurinsky attended in his absence. The event had a stand-up microphone which was better than the hand mics, but you have to talk very loudly and lean in close, while also being mindful of the camera and audience. Wayne added that the presentations require the use of a microphone due to the online streaming aspect. Bob H. shared that using a stand to hold the speaking notes worked well. Attendance was good and the audience asked some questions. Fire and Safety had a presentation after and seem to be invited to all of the same Ward meetings. Wayne reminded the OSB about the Q3 monitoring for

conservation easement monitoring. The Morrison Nature Center evening of the arts event was held Friday night and an emergency prevented Wayne from attending. Brian shared that the event was very well-attended with at least 60 people in attendance. Booths were set up and the event was a positive experience.

VIII. CHAIR REMARKS: Wayne shared some information on the upcoming Agricultural Festival. The open space division is looking for volunteers for the event and an email was sent out with instructions on how to sign up. Interested parties should talk to Fendi Despres. The Reflection Garden on Tap event went very well but was hot and had no shade. Several council members stopped by the Open Space board booth to chat, and volunteers handed out a lot of trail maps and open space information. Wayne shared that he has been on the OSB for a long time and thinks the board is doing a really good job getting the word out about open space and making a name for themselves. The OSB members discussed the idea of a board-sponsored cleanup event. The board needs to decide what the cleanup will be, and when and where to hold. Vicky commented that having a cleanup event be sponsored by the board can help put the name out there, and Brian added that it also takes something off of Fendi's plate. Bob G. asked if there is already an existing list of areas to prioritize. Brian responded that it is up to the board to determine prioritization of projects based on what they see. Wayne shared that Star K Ranch needs some help but might be an overwhelming first project. Vicky shared that Delaney Farm might be a good first choice. Wayne agreed, saying that the central location of Delaney Farm is another positive. Vicky responded that the OSB members could reply to the request email with this suggestion. Brian asked if anyone on the board would like to spearhead the coordination of the cleanup. Bob G. asked what is involved in coordinating. Brian answered that it would entail being available, picking up tools for the cleanup, and small things like that. Vicky asked when the cleanup should be held and suggested October. The OSB members agreed that October would be good. Vicky said she might be able to coordinate if the event is in October. Bob G. offered to help coordinate but might not be able to lead in October. Dennis passed along Brad's thoughts that the OSB should keep the cleanup board-specific but maybe get one family member involved each. Vicky added that it didn't necessarily need to be a family member, but a helper. Wayne shared that with the summer season coming to an end, the OSB meetings would be moving indoors soon. OSB members should send suggestions for speakers they would like to hear from via email. Wayne also added that a lot of folks will be leaving the OSB next year due to term limits. There is also a current vacancy on the board as Jason Amaya had to move outside of city limits. OSB members should start thinking of who may be interested in applying for the board in 2024. Brian clarified that there is one current vacancy as well as two upcoming vacancies, as Wayne and Vicky will both be term limited. They can always reapply after one year off the board and can continue to volunteer and attend meetings if they would like. Wayne added that as the city continues to grow, OSB members should think about where to grab more open space and where to put a fourth nature center.

IX. MEMBER COMMENTS & DISCUSSION:

- Bob H- Visited Coal Senac yesterday and would defer going out there now due to grasses and weeds. The area could really use a cleanup, but it would be difficult to do at this time. Bob H. reported some trash that he thought was on city property but turned out to be on private property. The trash has since been cleaned up. The weeds and plants are so tall but otherwise the property looks good and is still green. The water is not flowing much, and the beavers have not really repaired the dam that was destroyed by high waters yet.
- Bob G- The view flying into Colorado is still very green, even in mid-August. Bob has been out of town a lot and missed being out in open space. Boston was very humid, and he saw a crane at a protected area by the ocean. The protected area is a beautiful space. Japanese knotweed is unfortunately overrunning the state and has a huge root and is very pernicious.
- Vicky- Has also been out of town but was happy to visit open space again. Vicky asked what is happening with the development across the road and noted it seems to have halted. Brian responded that the development will be mostly commercial, and apartments will be going in by Hogan Parkway and Piccadilly. The apartments will be affordable housing and are called Eagle

Ridge. Vicky asked if this is in Ward II and Brian confirmed it is. Vicky commented that she wonders how the development will impact visitation and Brian said it always leads to more visitation when areas are developed.

- Dennis- Went out with Brad recently for conservation easement monitoring. They flagged some Mullen Rosettes for eventual removal. Dennis thanked city staff for their help with the invasive thistle that was growing behind his house and noted that the area was mowed very quickly.
- Joy- Was at the reflection garden event and met CM Gardner. They chatted a bit so she is hopeful he may remember the encounter and attend a future OSB meeting.

X. BULLET POINTS:

- The OSB members received an update on the Confluence Restoration Area and toured the site.
- The OSB members agreed to determine when and where to hold the first board-sponsored cleanup event.
- Staff briefed the OSB members on the outcome of the PROS Reorganization Assessment.

XI. ADJOURN: Dennis Roy moved to adjourn. Vicky Samuel seconded the motion. Motion carried and the business portion of the meeting adjourned at 6:10pm. The business portion of the meeting was followed by a tour of the Confluence Open Space Site.

The next meeting will be on September 20th at 5:30 PM at the Aurora Reservoir.



Wayne Gallagher, Acting Chair



Lauren Morales, Recording Secretary