

City of Aurora  
**OPEN SPACE ADVISORY BOARD**  
Morrison Nature Center  
January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Hunchberger

STAFF PRESENT: Brian Green, Deputy Director of Operations, Parks, Open Space, and Forestry; Lauren Morales, Management Assistant

VISITORS PRESENT: None

- I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 5:37 PM.
- II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Bob Gemmill moved to approve the agenda, with changes. Vicky Samuel seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Joy DeMots motioned to approve the November 2023 OSB minutes, with changes. David Bourne seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- IV. WELCOME: Brad Stratton welcomed everyone to the January 2024 OSB meeting.
- V. MANAGEMENT REMARKS: Brian Green accepted the position of Deputy Director of Operations, Parks, Open Space and Forestry. There were 56 applicants for the position. Brian will be posting the positions of the managers that will report to him very soon. Brad asked if one of the new managers will run the OSB, once the position is filled. Brian said that they will. Brian shared a bit about the new PROS org chart with the OSB members.
- VI. NEW BUSINESS: Joy shared a positive update concerning Bob H, who was recently hospitalized due to a health matter. Lauren shared some information regarding the upcoming board openings. She was recently informed by the Clerk's office that Bob G's current term is classified as a "stub" term. A "stub" term is when someone fills the remainder of an existing term for less than half of the total term. A "stub" term does not count towards the three consecutive terms a member is allowed to serve. Because of this, Bob G will need to reapply to the OSB this year. Brad brought up the bylaw revisions and updates, which were last discussed in spring 2023. Some parts of the bylaws are dated and should be updated. Other parts may no longer apply to the board, and some wording may need to be adjusted. Brad pointed out some specific issues he had noticed. Brad offered to send a highlighted version with his suggested corrections via email for the other members to review. He asked the OSB members to jot down notes on suggested changes and revisit at the February OSB meeting. Mark suggested the mission statement be changed immediately, as the bylaws had the wrong mission statement listed. The OSB members agreed to Mark's suggestion and to Brad's review plan. Brad talked to the OSB members about choosing priorities to focus on from the 2024 Action Plan. Choosing priorities would not require a formal vote but could help the board focus on what they want to achieve in 2024. Brad suggested focusing on site visits, conservation easement inspections, and promoting inclusivity and diversity. Brad mentioned PROS staff member Morgana Eckman, who is in the process of obtaining a certification related to inclusivity. Morgana has agreed to be a guest speaker at a future OSB meeting. The OSB members agreed to revisit the 2024 Action Plan priorities at the February OSB meeting. The board members also discussed the assigned council members for bullet points. Mark offered to send bullet points to CM Coombs while Bob H is out. David Bourne agreed to send bullet points to CM Hancock, as he did not have an assigned CM. Bob G mentioned being on a bird walk at Red-Tailed

Hawk Park and asked what the city is planning for expanding the scope of the park. Wayne asked how staff decided who to send information regarding the expansion to, and if it was by Ward. The OSB should have been informed since the project concerns open space. Brian responded that the area that would be developed is not open space and was never classified as such. The space was undeveloped but was never considered open space. He added that information regarding projects like this is usually distributed by proximity to the area as determined by a set radius. Wayne commented that the project could have a lot of negative impacts. David mentioned that the prairie dogs living in that space could certainly be impacted. Wayne added that any effect on prairie dogs would also have an impact on the nesting birds that feed on them.

- VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Brad mentioned the outreach presentation subcommittee, which will meet to discuss what direction to take the outreach education presentation. Brad asked who would like to lead the subcommittee. Bob G volunteered to do so. The outreach presentation subcommittee will consist of Bob G (chair), Joy, Mark, and Vicky.
- VIII. REPORTS: Brad reminded the board that conservation easement monitoring is now in the first quarter of 2024. Easement monitoring for quarter one should be completed by the end of March. Vicky commented that one of the five locations her pairing monitors is hard to access during the winter. The only access points are through the river or a closed area at Aurora Sports Park. This presents a difficulty when going out to complete the monitoring. Brad commented that when he and Dennis went out to do their most recent monitoring, they noticed one of the photo posts was missing due to a new sidewalk. He asked Eric Watts about it and Eric said not to worry about it. Vicky shared that they have a missing post as well. Brad said that as long as folks are getting the other spots, it's ok to skip missing posts or areas that are temporarily inaccessible. The OSB members discussed how the board-organized holiday cleanup project went. The turnout was very good, and the cleanup was a success. Vicky asked how many bags of trash were collected. Brad said he wasn't sure. At first it was hard to see much trash, but after going off the trail a lot more was discovered. Mark commented that Wayne outdid himself by bringing back abandoned Lowe's and Albertson's carts. Wayne mentioned that four carts were from abandoned encampments. The Lowe's cart was a big flatbed cart that had been abandoned in the middle of a field. He stuffed the flatbed full of trash, two bags high. Vicky added that she thought the cleanup was a success and that many people from outside the board had also come to help. The OSB members agreed to continue organizing cleanup projects in the future. Brad shared that Fendi planned to have one cleanup event every month. There was one cleanup planned for the following Wednesday at Triple Creek Trailhead. If any board members were interested in volunteering, they could sign up on the city website. Bob G asked what time the cleanup would be held. Brad answered that it was scheduled for noon-2pm. Future cleanups included Piney Creek Trail on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, Jewell Wetlands on March 12<sup>th</sup>, the Earth Day cleanup at Centre Hills on April 20<sup>th</sup>, and Delaney Farm on May 8<sup>th</sup>. Vicky asked where this info could be found. Brad answered that it is all posted on the city website, under naturalist cleanups. Brad shared that Bob G and Dennis both received Eagle awards at the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Brad commented that Fendi did a great job organizing the dinner and the OSB members agreed. Vicky shared a slideshow presentation about her trip to Botswana in July 2023, featuring her photography. Vicky is now officially published, having had her work featured in the Colorado Outdoors magazine (2023 Photography Issue). Brad added that Vicky's photography is also currently being featured at the Aurora History Museum.
- IX. CHAIR REMARKS: Brad reminded the board to recruit for the two upcoming OSB openings. Brad also announced that the board chair and vice chair elections will be held in March. Brad is happy to continue on in his role as chair if the OSB supports that, but with Wayne being term-limited the OSB will need a new vice chair.
- X. BULLET POINTS:
- OSAB member Vicky Samuel shared some of her amazing photos and stories from her photo safari in Botswana last July.

- The Board began discussing its Action Plan Priorities for 2024 and revising/updating the OSAB Bylaws.
- OSAB member Bob Gemmill was selected to lead a committee to plan the Board's outreach presentations for 2024.
- Reports were given concerning Conservation Easement Monitoring, December's Holiday Cleanup at Horseshoe Park and future Natural Area Cleanups, and the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.

XI. MEMBER COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION:

- David- No comment.
- Mark- Commented on the recent cold weather and asked Wayne if he had noticed any difference in bird behaviors. Wayne commented that there has certainly been a difference but that many birds are still appearing at the feeders, especially red wingers.
- Vicky- No comment.
- Bob G- Commented that he is glad to be back and was sorry to miss the November OSB meeting. He will be giving a guest presentation at a future board meeting and feels a lot of pressure to be following Vicky's great presentation.
- Dennis- Was surprised that his son wanted to go out with cameras on Saturday when it was so painfully cold. They visited the Aurora Reservoir and still saw some open water there, along with geese and ducks. The staff member at the entrance booth to the reservoir was still very attentive, despite the cold. Brian commented that before last weekend, there was no ice at the reservoir. The reservoir had largely frozen over in the last few days.
- Wayne- no comment.
- Joy- Joy and her husband recently went by Coal Senac. There was not a lot of trash, and they didn't see any signs of beavers but there was lots of ice and snow. Joy also went to see the eagles and noticed a white truck on the way back near some kind of construction. Brian commented that they were likely installing a pressure release valve. Joy said that a road that is usually blocked off was open. Brian asked which road. Joy said it was a county road on the west side of the creek, and that there is usually a fence there. People were there so they may have been inspecting something.
- David- Went to visit Jewell Wetlands and wasn't sure where to park. Brian said that street parking or the hospital parking lot are usually the best option for parking at Jewell. David said that the trees at Jewell looked rather desolate but that it was still a good spot.

XII. ADJOURN: Mark Christopher moved to adjourn. Wayne Gallagher seconded the motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:36pm.

The next meeting will be on February 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 PM at Plains Conservation Center.

Brad Stratton  
Brad Stratton (Feb 22, 2024 13:28 MST)

Brad Stratton, Chair

Lauren R Morales

Lauren Morales, Board Liaison







# 1-17-24 OSB Minutes (APPROVED)

Final Audit Report

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