



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 6, 2023**

Members Present: Bob Falcone, Ingrid Richter, Bob Shafer, Paula Krantz, Wendy Howe, Hank Scarangella, Blaze Panariso, Jeff Davis

Alternates Present: Chelsea Gondeck, Ellen Senf

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Larry Bogue, Abby Simpson, Greg Thornton

Staff Present: Britt Haley, Lonna Thelen, Kim King, Eric Becker, Anna White, David Deitemeyer, Stephanie Surch, Young Shin

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TOPS Working Committee Chair Bob Falcone brought the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

Agenda Preview

Committee Chair Bob Falcone announced the agenda for the meeting.

Announcements

Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager, announced that there would be an option site visit to Wild Horse Ranch to see the property now that there is no longer livestock on it, and the revegetation that has taken place. Additionally, Lonna provided the Committee with the July sales tax report.

Eric Becker, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager, announced that two of the Urban Ranger positions have been filled, and the new rangers will hopefully start in the next week.

Committee Chair Bob Falcone informed the Committee that Vice Chair Wendy Thomas unfortunately had to resign, as she is moving out of the state. However, Bob announced that alternate Chelsea Gondeck had accepted the offer to move on to the Committee as a regular member. Chelsea will be confirmed at the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meeting next Thursday. Next, Bob announced that he had recorded a podcast with Mayor Yemi, where one top they discussed is funding for the Department.

Committee member Wendy Howe provided a few brief updates about the Blodgett master planning process. First, she stated that there is a multi-prong approach in the planning process, which will allow for greater public input. A survey is currently active on the project page on the City website. There is also a stakeholder action committee that meets once a month. Next, she said that a big facet to collecting feedback is at on-site events. Wendy said there had been a great turnout for the public meeting at Flying W Ranch, and that there will be another public meeting at Flying W Ranch on October 17th.

Approval of Minutes – July 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of the July 12, 2023 TOPS Working Committee meeting.

1st – Blaze Panariso, 2nd – Ingrid Richter, Approved, Unanimously.

Citizen Discussion

Susan Davies, Executive Director for the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), added to Committee member Wendy Howe's update on the Blodgett master planning process, stating that she had heard a few topics of interest from the public, including preserving wildlife corridors and an opportunity for hiking-only trails. Next, Ms. Davies stated that she had attended a forum discussing water conservation at El Pomar the previous week, which was an opportunity for great discussion about conservation efforts in the region.

Carol Woody, Program Director for the Rocky Mountain Field Institute (RMFI), informed the Committee that RMFI has a new office, and invited everyone to attend an open house there on September 28th from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, stated that his organization is hosting a trail love workday on September 23rd.

Matthew Hadley, citizen, introduced himself to the Committee, stating that he is a representative of the parkour community. Mr. Hadley said he is looking forward to attending meetings in the future and helping to spread information about the parkour community in Colorado Springs.

Presentations

Cheyenne Mountain State Park Update (Presented by Jason Hagan, Cheyenne Mountain State Park Manager)

Jason Hagan, Cheyenne Mountain State Park Manager, presented the Committee with the Cheyenne Mountain State Park update. This presentation included the park map; staffing; visitation and revenue; fire mitigation; the group tent camping area; future campground loop; and finally, the terrain hopper program.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

Wild Horse Ranch GOCO Grant (Presented by David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, and Stephanie Surch, Analyst II – Grants)

David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, and Stephanie Surch, Analyst II – Grants, presented the Committee with the Wild Horse Ranch Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Grant.

This presentation included the 2023 acquisition map; open space values; flora; fauna; images of the property and some of the revegetation that has occurred; and finally, the GOCO grant timeline.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

Committee member Bob Shafer asked if it would be possible to see the impact of GOCO funds historically, over the last five years or so. Stephanie responded that she would work on this request.

Red Rock Canyon Open Space Project Update (Presented by David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect)

David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, presented the Committee with the Red Rock Canyon Open Space project update. This presentation included trail system project goals; a map detailing project area; the Sand Canyon Trail; Chamberlain Trail south; Chamberlain Trail north; Overlook Trail project; the Palmer Trail/Parallel Trail/Waterfall Trail project; the Palmer Trail closure section; Roundup Trail reclamation; the Mesa Trail; and finally, the reopening of the Palmer Trail.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

Ethics Training (Presented by Young Shin, Associate Attorney)

Young Shin, Associate Attorney, presented the Committee with the Ethics Training presentation. This presentation included the City Code of Ethics; covered persons; advisory opinion; gifts; gift exceptions; and finally, the various types of conflicts of interest and best practices to avoid conflicts of interest.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

Citizen Discussion

Committee member Paula Krantz informed the Committee that the Pikes Peak Marathon and Ascent is scheduled for September 16th and 17th, and they are still looking for volunteers.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion to adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 9:20 a.m.
1st – Blaze Panariso, 2nd – Jeff Davis, Approved, Unanimously.