



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

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

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

Staff Present: Britt Haley, Lonna Thelen, Eric Becker, Kim King, Anna Bingman, David Deitemeyer

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TOPS Working Committee Chair Bob Falcone brought the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m.

Agenda Preview

Committee Chair Bob Falcone announced the agenda for the meeting.

Announcements

Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager, made the following announcements:

- Lonna introduced Daniel Gould, the new Senior Landscape Architect on the Design and Development team.
- There will be no site tour in December.
- The application portal for alternate members was reopened and will close on December 22nd. Lonna will plan to conduct interviews following the holidays.
- Lonna provided the following updates on grants:
 - We applied for the Land Water Conservation Grant for Fishers Canyon. The application has made it to the next stage in the process, and there will be a presentation on January 19th for the grant.
 - The Colorado Parks and Wildlife Non-motorized Trail Grant for Blodgett Open Space and Blodgett Peak Planning is posted for comment.
 - Conditional approval has been granted for the two-year fire mitigation grant through the Colorado Strategic Wildlife Action Program on the Mile High Youth Corps project on Fishers Canyon and the Pikes Peak Highway.
 - The Wild Horse Ranch grant application through Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) has been approved to the next step of the granting process.

Committee Chair Bob Falcone asked for an update on the Blodgett Open Space master planning process. David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect, stated that due to concerns from the community, the planning team has agreed to pause the process to help mitigate those concerns. The plan will be posted online in the next week or so for review and comment,

but there will be additional neighborhood-focused meetings. David is targeting January 8 for the first neighborhood-focused meeting. The project page online has been updated as well.

Approval of Minutes – November 1, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of the November 1, 2023 TOPS Working Committee meeting.

1st – Blaze Panariso, 2nd – Paula Krantz, Approved, Unanimously.

Citizen Discussion

Susan Davies, Executive Director for the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), stated that her organization had been copied on many of the emails about the Blodgett Open Space master plan from concerned neighbors. Ms. Davies stated she understands that the neighbors of the open space feel that their concerns should carry more weight, but reminded the Committee that TOPS is a sales tax paid by residents across the City, as well as visitors. Next, Ms. Davies took a moment to reflect on the successes of the TOPS program in 2023, including its twenty-year extension! Ms. Davies thanked both the Committee and staff for their efforts in supporting the program.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, stated that his organization is hearing a lot of support for the Blodgett Open Space master plan, and thanked David Deitemeyer for his tremendous work. Mr. Sutela said he had walked the property with the former owner of the middle section of Blodgett and said there had been great conversation about the trail system and the opportunities in the new master plan. Finally, Mr. Sutela said Medicine Wheel had received a major donation, which allowed them to purchase a new excavator for trail construction. Their first project is at the Fountain Valley School to build a racing league certified mountain bike park.

City Councilmember David Leinweber commented that he had spoken with Carl Bauer, Pikes Peak District Ranger for the Forest Service, and that Mr. Bauer has said he would be reprioritizing recreation second to fire mitigation. With this, he stated that Mr. Bauer has the intention to putting a full effort into creating a trail that would reach Blodgett Peak.

Presentations

Bluestem Prairie Open Space Project (Presented by Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager)

Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager, presented the Committee with the Bluestem Prairie Open Space drainage mitigation project. This presentation included the site location; existing conditions; the project proposal; review of concerns; and letter of support from the Palmer Land Conservancy. Jeff Mohr, Senior Project Manager for Enertia Consulting Group, LLC, provided additional information on the project. His presentation

included existing drainage issues; upstream improvements; project improvements; and finally, construction and access.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

TOPS Capital Improvement Projects Update (Presented by Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager)

Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager, presented the Committee with the TOPS Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) update. This presentation included the 2023 CIP projects list for the TOPS Trails Category; Chamberlin Trail; Greenways at Sand Creek bridge; Legacy Loop railroad bridge replacement; 2023 CIP projects list for the TOPS Parks Category; Boulder Park landscape; Greyhawk Park master plan; Memorial Park irrigation; Oak Meadows playground replacement; 2023 CIP projects list from the Open Space category; Black Canyon Open Space; Blodgett Open Space master plan; and finally, the Corral Bluffs Open Space cultural study.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

Citizen Discussion

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, thanked staff for their diligence on the Bluestem Prairie Open Space drainage improvements.

Closed Executive Session

In accord with City Charter art. III, § 3-60(d) and its incorporated Colorado Open Meetings Act, C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(a), (b) and (e), the TOPS Working Committee, in Open Session, is to determine whether it will hold a Closed Executive Session. The issue to be discussed involves consultation with the City Attorney, discussing strategy for negotiations and instructing negotiators regarding a potential Parks real estate acquisition. The Chair shall poll the TOPS Working Committee members, and, upon consent of two-thirds of the members present, may conduct a Closed Executive Session. In the event any Committee member is participating electronically or telephonically in the Closed Executive Session, each Committee member participating in the Closed Executive Session shall affirmatively state for the record that no other member of the public not authorized to participate in the Closed Executive Session is present or able to hear the matters discussed as part of the Closed Executive Session. If consent to the Closed Executive Session is not given, the item may be discussed in Open Session or withdrawn from consideration.

Caitlin Moldenhauer, Associate Attorney of the City Attorney's Office, stated that in accord with City Charter art. III, § 3-60(d) and its incorporated Colorado Open Meetings Act, C.R.S. § 24-6-

402(4)(a)(b) and (e), TOPS Working Committee, in Open Session, is to determine whether it will hold a Closed Executive Session. The issues to be discussed involve a potential Parks Department real estate acquisition.

Chairman Bob Falcone polled the TOPS Working Committee regarding the desire to proceed with a Closed Executive Session. At least two-thirds of the TOPS Working Committee agreed to proceed in a Closed Executive Session.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion to adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 9:56 a.m.

1st – Bob Shafer, 2nd – Wendy Howe, Approved, Unanimously.