



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes - FINAL
Wednesday, February 6, 2019**

Members Present: Jason Alwine, Lily Weissgold, Lee Milner, Blaze Panariso, Joe Lavorini, Nancy Hobbs, Jeff Mohrmann, Bob Falcone, Jim Klever

Alternate Present: Paula Krantz

Members Absent:

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Carol Beckman, Mina Liebert

Parks Board Liaisons Absent: Jason Rupinski

Staff Present: Britt Haley, Kurt Schroeder, Karen Palus, Kim King, Christi Mehew, David Deitemeyer

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Jason Alwine brought the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

Agenda Preview Committee Chair Jason Alwine announced the agenda for the meeting.

Announcements

Jason Alwine, TOPS Working Committee Chair

- Announced that TOPS Working Committee member Jim Klever is moving and therefore leaving the committee. He presented him with a framed picture of Blodgett Open Space and thanked him for his service and dedication.

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager

- Thanked Jim Klever for his contributions all across the city and especially at Blodgett Open Space. She is grateful for his service.

Approval of Minutes – January 9, 2018

Motion: To approve the minutes of the January 9, 2018 TOPS Working Committee meeting.
1st – Lily Weissgold, 2nd – Blaze Panariso, Approved, Unanimous

Citizen Discussion

Shanti Toll, Friends of Red Rock Canyon, thanked Committee members and partners that participated in the site tour to Red Rock Canyon to consider the proposed trail. He stated the discussion has changed from whether the trail can be built to whether a trail should be built. He will not be at the March meeting; however, would like this item to be reviewed during the April or May meeting.

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) Executive Director, stated she attended the Urban Tree Canopy Assessment public meeting last night and it was fascinating and well done. There are 250,000 thousand park and street trees in Colorado Springs. The City of Milwaukee has the same amount of trees and has a Forestry staff of 123 people and Colorado Springs has 13. The Parks Department struggles financially and their needs and challenges need to be heard.

The TOSC Advocacy group invited Mark Tatro, Park Ranger, to their meeting last month to talk about a trail analysis they did on TOPS Open Spaces and to share their data. Many friends groups attended and they should connect with the Parks Department to discuss how to use this data moving forward.

TOSC is planning to meet with City Council candidates and ask them a series of questions. The results will be posted on their website.

Presentations

Blodgett Open Space Interim Use Plan (Presented by David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect)

[Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)

Andrew Bird, President of The Peregrine Master Association, stated the key issue for residents is they would like the parking lot constructed as soon as possible to get cars off the roads. Also, they are concerned if there are locked gates overnight because cars will possibly park on the street. A blind curve exists at the access from east Woodmen. Cars are speeding around this curve and this could be a dangerous area. He commended David Deitemeyer and Scott Abbott for doing an outstanding job at the public meeting.

Bill Koerner, citizen, stated a parking lot will be great for this area. He suggested keeping it open and see what happens.

Mike Scott commended the city on this effort and the Interim Use Plan is fantastic. All Open Spaces have these challenges and they need to be addressed.

Susan Davies, stated she liked the great comments that came from the meeting and good communication exists between the community and the Parks Department. She found it interesting that the community did not want a porta potty. She asked if the Parks Department was communicating with other departments such as Public Works. David Deitemeyer stated not yet. Britt Haley stated Public Works has been concerned about specific traffic issues and they will work with them.

Britt Haley stated in response to Nancy Hobbs question that the Rustic Hills designated trail has not been built yet due to utility challenges. Nancy Hobbs said she would like to know what is happening as they have evacuated this area and it clearly changed the landscape. Britt Haley said she will work with the Public Works Department to provide an update.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 8:26 a.m.

1st – Nancy Hobbs, 2nd – Blaze Panariso, Approved, Unanimous

The TOPS Working Committee went on a property site tour following the meeting.



FORRC FEEDBACK ON THE TOPS PROPOSAL TO AMEND RRC MASTER PLAN

**(TOPS Working Committee 11/7/18 - Tabled
Action Item)**

PREVIOUS COMMUNITY AND PARKS BOARD ACTION:

Twice the public put a connector trail in the Red Rock Canyon Master Plan. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board approved the Master Plan, in 2003 and 2013 and there were no objections from park staff. Eliminating this trail is a major change to the Master Plan opposed by FoRRC.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The FoRRC is willing to contribute funds to build a new “Heart of the Canyon” trail. We also are willing to arrange for volunteer work to clean up the area and plant native trees (maybe 5 days of 16 volunteers = \$10,000 value or more). We ask the city pay for the cost of channeling the storm water away from the trail and covering the broken cement. This is the kind of project that TOPS was created for.

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS:

The past is past. Going forward, the staff, TOPS and the Park Board can work with FoRRC and other volunteer groups to design a trail that meets the needs/wants of the public and the concerns of the city.

ALTERNATIVE TO CLOSING THE AREA:

Construct 1500’ of sustainable beautiful trail. Experts from Tapis Associates, FoRRC and Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates all say that a sustainable trail is possible with existing soil condition and slope. FoRRC would work with the TOPS to design a sustainable blue trail route as described in the Master plan.

THE OBSERVED ISSUES:

The storm water drainage is damaging the land and interfering with the building of the sustainable trail reroute, which is called for in the Master Plan. We can use the soil, rock and cement, which we’d remove as we make a deeper armored water channel, to build up the trail to a 7% to 9% slope. The current connector trail through the land fill is 3,000 feet with a slope of 11% along the uphill part of the trail/road.

The proposed trail does not go on the landfill at all. The trail will not affect the water monitoring wells.

A new trail would mostly not be adjacent to drainage. Many trails in RRC are on similar soil and are sustainable when properly designed. The exact trail alignment will be collaboration with the city and local experts.

A new trail would not be near sensitive wildlife habitat as defined by the Master Plan. All new trails go through undisturbed habitat.

A new trail would be designed to avoid the top of the ridge and discourage rogue trails to the dangerous areas.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND THE MASTER PLAN:

Removing a major trail connection that will negatively impact out-of-condition people, as well as tourists and families with small children, is no minor amendment to the Master Plan. Changing an Open Space Master Plan is a big deal and the public should be consulted. What is the procedure for amending a master plan when the public has significant concerns? We can work together to deal with staff’s concerns, build a wonderful new trail and heal the land and landfill. Let’s explore what it would look like if we were to

actually do what the RRC Master Plans says.

Please view our new Power Point presentation at www.Redrockcanyonopenspace.org

Sincerely

David Schell, President of FoRRC