



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 4, 2023**

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

**Members Absent:** Jeff Davis

**Alternates Present:** Ellen Senf, Chelsea Gondeck

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

**Staff Present:** Britt Haley, Kim King, Eric Becker, Anna White

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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**

Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Director, announced the following to the TOPS Working Committee:

- There will be no new site location for the regularly scheduled site tour on January 18. The tour will be of the Wild Horse Ranch property. Britt reminded the Committee that to vote on acquisitions, members must visit the properties being discussed.
- Eric Becker has accepted the position of Park Maintenance and Operations Manager. Eric has been serving in this capacity since May, and Britt was very pleased at his acceptance. In his previous role, Eric served as the Special Improvement Maintenance District (SIMD) Unit Administrator, and the Water Conservation Specialist before that.

**Approval of Minutes – December 7, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion: To approve the minutes of the December 7, 2022, TOPS Working Committee meeting.**

1<sup>st</sup> – Wendy Thomas, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Paula Krantz, Approved, Unanimously.

**Citizen Discussion**

There was no citizen discussion at this time.

**Action Items**

**TOPS Ballot Measure** (Presented by Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director)

Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director, presented the Committee with the Trails, Open Space and Parks Program (TOPS) Ballot Question. This presentation included

background on the TOPS program; pictures of parks, trails and open spaces that had been funded through TOPS; ballot components; revised ballot question, which Britt clarified that the parentheses in the language presented would not be in the final language; the decision timeline; and finally, next steps.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

Committee Chair Bob Falcone asked if money for planning once we acquire land, comes from the acquisition account or another category. Britt Haley responded that the dollars for planning come from other categories. She added that the 75% dedicated to acquisition should not have any affect on future master planning for properties.

Kent Obee, citizen, spoke in support of the ballot measure. Mr. Obee thanked Britt for all of her efforts to meet with citizens who had concerns about the amounts dedicated to acquisition. He applauded her collaboration with those citizens, Mayor John Suthers, and Chief of Staff Jeff Greene, to come to this conclusion and safeguard. Mr. Obee said he is happy to support this initiative.

After no further citizen comment, Committee Chair Bob Falcone took a moment to thank everyone involved in the collaborative efforts to get to this final language. Mr. Falcone added that he believes this initiative will be successful.

**Motion: Move to recommend that City Council refer the revised TOPS ballot question as proposed to the City of Colorado Springs' Municipal General Election scheduled for April 2023.**

1<sup>st</sup> – Paula Krantz, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Wendy Thomas, Approved, Unanimously.

**Acquisition in Corral Bluffs** (Presented by Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director)

Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director, presented the Committee with the 5.74 acre acquisition in Corral Bluffs. This presentation included the candidate open space map; a map of the property; information about the fossil discoveries made in Corral Bluffs; and finally, details of the acquisition. Britt reminded the Committee that any voting member must attend the site visit for the property to be able to vote on the item. Two members of the Committee were unable to attend, and therefore cannot vote on this item.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

Committee Vice Chair Wendy Thomas asked Britt to clarify the roads from which they had entered the property. Britt answered that they had accessed the property from the Davis Road side. In response, Ms. Thomas stated this is why site visits are so important, so members can be oriented with the property and all of its features. Committee Chair Bob Falcone added that the site visit was fabulous, and that the views were gorgeous and wildlife was abundant, including seeing an elk.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board liaison Larry Bogue asked if the option to renew the lease for the cell tower on the property is something that would come before the Committee, or be a staff decision. Britt responded that the decision would be administrative.

Bill Koerner, a member of the Corral Bluffs Alliance (CoBA), spoke in favor of this acquisition, stating that this was a missing piece and a great achievement.

Kurt Schroeder, citizen, also spoke in favor of this acquisition. He thanked staff who recognized the need to get the right of first refusal for the property years ago in order to have the opportunity to protect the land at a later time through this acquisition.

**Motion: Move to recommend approval of acquisition of approximately five point seven four (5.74) acres of property identified by tax schedule number 4505 000 007 and approval to expend up to \$200,000 for the property acquisition and transaction costs from the TOPS Open Space Category revenues.**

1<sup>st</sup> – Wendy Thomas, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Paula Krantz, Approved, Unanimously with Committee members Blaze Panariso and Wendy Howe abstaining.

## **Presentations**

**Wild Horse Ranch Acquisition** (Presented by Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director)

Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director, presented the Committee with the Wild Horse Ranch acquisition. This presentation included the candidate open space map; the overview map; transaction information; photos of the property; and finally, considerations.

[Link to Agenda Packet Here](#)

Comments from Committee members and citizens were very positive on pursuing this acquisition.

**Citizen Discussion**

There were no further comments at this time.

**Motion to Adjourn: Motion to adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 8:29 a.m.**

1<sup>st</sup> – Wendy Howe, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Paula Krantz, Approved, Unanimously.