

**MINUTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE, December 14, 2006**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Barbara Hawke in the Hearing Room of the Board of Commissioners, Third Floor, Boulder County Courthouse, Boulder, Colorado.

POSAC Members in Attendance

Present: Barbara Hawke, Mary McQuiston, Chris Meyer, Janice Moore, Melanie Muckle, Eric Vogelsberg, and Dave Robertson

Excused: David Batts, Lisa Dilling, Sean McCoy and Christine Quinlan

Staff in Attendance

Melissa Arnold, Tina Nielsen, Ron Stewart and Larissa Read.

Minutes of November 16, 2006 Meeting

Mary McQuiston moved to accept the November 16, 2006 minutes. *Dave Robertson* seconded the motion. ***Motion carried unanimously.***

Public Participation for Items not on the Agenda – None

2007-2012 Capital Improvement Projects Budget

** Action Requested- Recommendation to BOCC*

Staff Presenter: Tina Nielsen

See staff memo for detail. Boulder County annually approves a 5-year Capital Improvement Project budget for the Parks and Open Space Department. The plan allows the department to prioritize improvements on open space and to commence planning and public involvement activities that are necessary prior to implementation of new facilities and improvements. Staff requested approval of the draft CIP and recommendation to BOCC with any and all input that POSAC would like to provide.

Questions/Discussion/Comments

Dave Robertson suggested that interpretative signs precede restoration work of historical structures. *Eric Vogelsberg* asked if before draining an area on an agricultural property, staff looks into wetland restoration possibilities. *Tina Nielsen* responded that the agricultural staff works with the plant ecologist and resource staff to verify that draining is the right thing to do. *Chris Meyer* commented that he appreciates the long-term planning happening with Lohr. He asked about the status of the Forest Service (FS) and Caribou Phase II. *Ron Stewart* said *Christine Walsh* reported that the FS has not completed the process that is addressing the possibility of a trail from the Caribou property to the Sourdough Trailhead. The Caribou Phase II project would consider a northern loop trail even if the FS does not create the Sourdough Trail connection. *Ron Stewart and Chris Meyer* discussed the planning and timeframe around this northern loop trail. Answering questions, *Tina Nielsen* said the Feeder Canal was not mentioned on the CIP because it is under Transportation Department's Regional Trail budget.

Public Comment

- Suzanne Webel, 5735 Prospect Road, Longmont, CO 80503, spoke on behalf of BCHA, BMA and BATCO. She commented on The Wall reroute at Walker Ranch and said the interest groups have been waiting for 15 years and feel that moving the reroute back from 2007 to 2010 does not solve any of the objectives outlined in the agenda packet. She reviewed the safety issues and history of The Wall. She believes the suggested alignment is safe, will reduce impacts, will improve trail user experience, will reopen the Walker Ranch trail as a loop trail and will increase its suitability as a regional trail as it is listed under the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan. Using money from its map sales, BATCO offered Boulder County a grant (approx \$12,500) plus volunteers and support to implement this project next year. They offered to adopt this portion of the trail. She requested that POSAC reassign The Wall its highest priority, move it to 2007 in the CIP and accept the offer of matching funds and support. She added that this is the way to create a partnership.

Questions/Discussion/Comments

Eric Vogelsberg commented that he is the president of BATCO and on the board of BMA. He encouraged discussion about Suzanne Webel's suggestion to reschedule a reroute of The Wall at Walker Ranch. He feels this reroute can be separated out from the rest of the work at Walker Ranch. He suggested hiring a contractor if necessary, as \$12,000 may pay for the whole reroute this way. Additionally, he suggested getting the construction for the Heil Valley Ranch to Lyons connection trail underway this year. *Ron Stewart* responded the County does intend to begin construction of the Heil to Lyons trail connection and open the trail in 2008. He commented on the staff field trip to The Wall with Suzanne Webel, and does not believe the alternative slope is an easy solution. He questioned whether the trail should be located in that vicinity or if a more sustainable location exists. He feels that if the solution were easy, it would have been done already. *Eric Vogelsberg* believes that a trail is viable on the proposed slope and would like to explore the alternatives sooner than 2010. He commented that even strong mountain bikers are uncomfortable carrying their bikes over The Wall. He believes that if an opportunity exists for the Department to receive outside funding, it would be a mistake to turn it down and not explore the possibilities. *Dave Robertson* noted that he has carried his bike over The Wall and feels it is doable. He suggested that the Department separate The Wall out from the larger Walker Ranch planning process and move it up in priority, as it is narrow in scope. *Mary McQuiston* commented that because the Department has a safety obligation to the public and The Wall currently presents a safety issue, they should accept the funds and put lots of time into planning this section of the trail. She suggested this be done within the larger Walker Ranch planning process and not be separated out. *Chris Meyer* mentioned that the kind of work that was done on the Heil Loop was directly related to community support and believes the County should accept the funding. He is okay separating out The Wall from the entire plan because it can always be added back in based on planning results.

Ron Stewart said that trails staff disagrees that the suggested reroute presents a simple solution. He said that looking at this reroute in the context of a management plan (rather than separating it out) could shed light on other reroute options. He commented that if POSAC wants to move The Wall up on the priority list, other items will need to be removed. He asked POSAC to review this list and make their suggestions. He said that some of the items cannot be moved because they are a part of agreements with other entities, etc. He reviewed items that should not be

removed as well as items that may be more discretionary. *Melanie Muckle* would like to see the Steamboat Mountain plan move up sooner, but *Ron Stewart* said it was moved to a later date because of access issues. If access is resolved soon, the CIP could be revised in the future. *Tina Nielsen* added that the Lyons area is getting lots of attention right now and staff is trying to spread out efforts. *Janice Moore* suggested that staff put planning at Walker Ranch before the Grasslands Management Policy, as the latter does not appear to have as much public support from what she has observed. She suggested that staff make a good faith effort at The Wall reroute even if it ends in a conclusion that it will not work. *Larissa Read, POS Planner*, commented that the Grasslands Management Policy is currently higher on the priority list because it will serve as the basis for most other plans. This is a new County-wide approach that needs to remain as scheduled. She added that it is also a part of a collaborative effort with the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks' grasslands management policy that is happening this year. *Janice Moore* agreed that this made sense. *Eric Vogelsberg* said he doesn't feel that the grasslands management piece has a strong public drive behind it, although that doesn't mean it isn't important. He has never been a proponent of the North Rim Trail, which does not have much local support. He does believe that the South County trail connection is important and should not be moved, as it ties into the City of Boulder's efforts. He thinks consultants are a good solution to The Wall and it should be addressed before 2010. *Ron Stewart* said that POS staff person Al Hardy mentioned other alternatives during the field trip to The Wall that could be considered in a broader management planning process. *Ron Stewart* and *Tina Nielsen* clarified that this reroute was not in last year's CIP for 2007, although it was on the previous years' CIP's. *Ron Stewart* said he does not have any problem working with the funding offer to view options. *Chris Meyer* commented that it is helpful to see what management plans are scheduled for 2008 and beyond, as it is difficult to move around the items scheduled for 2007. He said that having the list to work with while moving forward is very useful.

Janice Moore suggested going ahead with the Harney-Lastoka trail due to public support. *Melanie Muckle* requested that the Blue Bird Mine interpretative signage precede restoration. Although she understands that historic preservation projects take time, she would like the Historic Preservation Master Planning Process to move faster than 3 years, as people are anxiously awaiting Harney-Lastoka. She is in favor of prioritizing the Grasslands Management Policy, as she has been a proponent of this for a long time. She commented that historic preservation projects are expensive and she is in favor of putting more money in that budget. She appreciates the thinking across disciplinary lines such as encouraging wildlife on agricultural land and using alternative energy with regard to livestock watering. *Ron Stewart* commented that Larissa Read was hired to do more landscape level plans with broader vision rather than plans for individual properties. This was in part a response to past requests from POSAC members. *Barbara Hawke* favors broader management plans such as the grassland policy, as these systems operate on larger scales. She would like interpretation of hardrock mining to incorporate history as well as the modern day, such as demonstrating how hardrock mining led to the development of Boulder County.

Motion

Chris Meyer moved to approve the CIP with the addition that staff considers using the funding offer from BATCO to explore solutions for The Wall. *Dave Robertson* seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Director's Update

Ron Stewart said the Department received a \$250,000 from GOCO for the Olson property, although they did not get one for the community gardens at Harney-Lastoka. Staff will apply on the next cycle in March. The recently created Pinnacle Awards were presented by the Commissioners. There were forty-one nominations and eighteen finalists. Five of the finalists were in the Parks and Open Space Department: The Fairgrounds Zero Waste Project at the County Fair (won in its category for sustainability); Biomass Facility (won in its category for innovation); Conservation Stewardship Program; Grasslands Restoration Program; and the Goodhue House Construction and Restoration. New POSAC appointments will happen in March, not January. Members whose terms are up will serve until that time.

Members bid Barbara Hawke farewell from POSAC and she expressed appreciation for the experience.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.