



MINUTES

City of Aspen, Open Space and Trails Board Meeting
Held on July 22, 2021
5:00pm

City OST Board Members Present: Julie Hardman, Ted Mahon, Howie Mallory

City Staff Members Present: John Spiess, Matt Kuhn, Michael Tunte, Austin Weiss, Brian Long, Micah Davis

Adoption of the Agenda: Ted made a motion to adopt the agenda; Julie seconded and the vote was unanimous.

Public Comments, for topics not on the agenda: None.

Approval of the Minutes: Howie asked for clarification of the Friends of Marolt Open Space group and their attorney's comments at the previous OSTB meeting. A discussion followed on this topic and formalizing maintenance of the paraglider landing area in the management plan. Ted moved to approve the minutes; Julie seconded and the vote was unanimous.

Staff Comments:

Austin: informed the Board of the passing of former open space program manager Ben Carlsen. Howie asked for Katie Carlsen's address. Austin also reported that the City closed on the Bar X Ranch Manager's Lot on June 30th.

John: reported on progress of fence installation on the Post Office Trail, and that a cut-through between Stage Trail and Harmony Road has been closed due to safety concerns.

Matt: reported that the Pride of Aspen easements will go to P&Z on August 2nd and to City Council for a review of ballot language on August 10th and 24th. Staff will seek a Board recommendation on this at the August OSTB meeting. Matt also mentioned Parks is receiving an increasing number of comments about electric scooters and bikes on trails. Staff would like Board direction on whether to revisit current code and enforcement strategies to address this. A discussion followed concerning speed limits, multi-use vs. single track trails, and commuter vs. recreational riders. Howie asked for data on numbers of e-bikes in the community, numbers of accidents, etc. Ted commented on the importance of clear rules and signage.

New Business:

Half-Cent Parks and Open Space Tax Reauthorization: Austin and Matt presented to begin preparations for a joint work session with Open Space and Trails and City Council on September



13th; this will be the first public dialogue about the City's intent to go to voters in fall 2022 toward reauthorization. Partner entities, history, and example ballot language were shared. Board and staff work now is to understand the needs and specific asks, financial impacts, use of funds, and debt implications. Ballot language will be set in summer of 2022. The campaign will focus on maintenance of big-ticket amenities funded by the previous authorization, such as expansions of the Rec Center, renovation of the downtown walking mall, Lift One Park and the associated ski corridor, Cozy Point Ranch infrastructure, the proposed Maroon Creek multi-use trail, and Nordic snowmaking. Projects that appeal to a broad sector of the community need to be identified to serve as the public face of this campaign. An updated timeline for this effort was provided, and estimates were presented to show half-cent and higher tax rates in consideration of whether to ask for a higher tax rate. A discussion followed concerning anticipated higher operations costs and possibilities for sourcing funding for recreation, stormwater, and the like from general funds vs. Parks funds.

Ted commented that reauthorization will be an easy sell, and that while asking for a higher rate would be more difficult, it seems important to ask for more funding now rather than next cycle.

Julie commented that more funding seems important as well as informing the public of the costs of maintaining facilities and infrastructure such as trails. She also asked whether it should be referred to as a tax for open space or whether a different name is more appropriate. Austin said that Jim True would be consulted to help determine whether it is indeed a reauthorization or a new type of ask.

Howie commented that wildlife habitat protection carries a great deal of importance as well as public appeal. Howie asked about current debt; Matt explained that current debts are planned to sunset in 2025. Matt provided budget information to help the Board grasp bonding limits and debt history toward guiding the next phase of long-range budgeting associated with the upcoming reauthorization effort.

This topic will remain on the agenda for next month's meeting. Howie added that Board members will be the spokespeople for the reauthorization and will need to be able to speak confidently and fluently about it. Matt listed specific topics for further discussion: more details on costs, rough numbers, order of magnitude for capital projects and existing operations, and debt issuance history. Howie added that potential funding partners such as Pitkin County and GOCO could help cover costs of certain projects.

Old Business:

Cozy Point Ranch: Mike updated the Board on current grading and drainage work that is resulting in improved functionality of paddocks and stormwater management. Improvements



to the irrigation system are underway. John reported on installation of a new electrical transformer to help power the Farm Collaborative's leased area, the first seasonal housing unit which has arrived on site, and the robust hay season. The Farm Collaborative is preparing their building permit submission for the farm education center.

Howie asked whether manure-laden stormwater could be used on fields. Mike explained that stormwater is not being collected for use on fields, rather bioswales and small check dams are handling stormwater effectively. Howie commented that the story of the bioswales and check dams that prevent nutrient loading into Brush Creek could be a talking point for the Half-Cent campaign. Howie asked about safety concerns related to the mechanical shop building and attached residential quarters. John explained that the fire wall appropriately separates the two spaces, but that general living quarters on the ranch need to be evaluated. Asset management has analyzed these units and brought them up to code for health and safety for the time being. Scheduling a board site visit was discussed.

Rio Grande Trail User Data Baseline: Brian presented on the winter trail surface trial and provided user data requested at the previous meeting (for hikers/runners, dogs, cross-country skiers, and bikes). Cross-country skier use was steady throughout the season. Daily totals topped 200 at times. Weekly totals going back to 2015 were provided for comparison. A qualitative study was also conducted, providing additional evidence that people were generally happy with the full-width groomed trail surface.

Ted made a motion that Parks continue with the full-width groomed winter surface; Julie seconded and the vote was unanimous.

Board Comments:

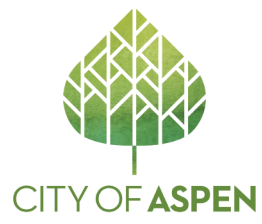
Julie: None.

Ted: The informal connector trail coming off Butterline Trail seems unsafe. Staff will explore options to address this.

Howie: Howie asked for clarification of "sharrows" and potential trail user confusion on the Music School Trail along Castle Creek Road where sharrows are painted on the road side of the bollards and not on the shoulder side. Howie also asked about center striping on the newly re-paved trail between Marolt housing and the Marolt Mining Museum; Micah explained the striping rationale based on sight lines. Howie commented on the proposed multi-use trail along Maroon Creek Road, suggesting that the County could be a partner in this project.

Next Meeting Date(s): Regular meeting August 26, 2021.

Executive Session: N/A



Adjourned: Julie made a motion to adjourn; Ted seconded and the vote was unanimous.

