

SUMMIT COUNTY
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COUNCIL
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

July 1, 2020

OSAC MEMBERS PRESENT: Turk Montepare, Diane Hunt, Laura Rossetter, Art Hardin, Jeff Leigh, Todd Rankin, Bruce Fitch, John Taylor, Terry Craig, John Uban

OSAC MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Gregory

STAFF PRESENT: Brian Lorch, Christine Zenel

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC PRESENT: Pete Swenson - Town of Frisco, Anne Murphy - Town of Breckenridge, Peter Grosshuesch - Town of Breckenridge, Danelle Cooke - Town of Silverthorne, Paul Semmer - Town of Blue River

Call to Order: Bruce Fitch called the meeting of the Summit County Open Space Advisory Council to order at 5:39 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved with one minor edit. GOCO processed a \$866,049 grant reimbursement, not a \$8666,049 grant reimbursement.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes were approved as submitted.

Summary Report: OST staff continues to work remotely, and projects are running smoothly. County offices will start reopening by July 15; OST is making a recommendation that our office be minimally staffed because it does not see much foot traffic from the public, and staff continues to be able to work remotely and in the field. If OSAC members would like to meet with OST, call or email to set up an outside or physically distanced meeting. Jason Lederer is moving out of his communications role related to COVID-19 but could be called back onto COVID-19 efforts if something major changes.

Public Comments not included on the Agenda: None.

REGULAR AGENDA:

Discussion of Open Space Management Activities:

Swan River Restoration: The second BOCC meeting regarding the Swan River Restoration project was successful and there was no opposition from the public. Gravel continues to be removed from the site and the master gravel removal plan was updated so that gravel removal levels can enable river restoration. OST put out an RFP this week (July 1) for the final design build contract; the goal is to have the final design complete by this fall/winter 2020 and building to start next spring 2021. Crushing needs to be complete by May 2021, and the contractor will then have another year to move all material off site. OST has been working with Environmental Resource Consultants on phase one of the project, and they successfully bid for the 30% design. It is possible that the contractor will change during this next phase if Environmental Resource Consultants is no longer able to work on the project due to cost/funding.

Forest Management Planning: An RFP went out regarding the Wellington neighborhood project; the bid opening happened today (July 1) with 10 interested contractors. RMYC is out conducting thinning of young lodgepole pines on some of OST's properties. They will cut and leave the slash on the ground (i.e., not using chippers), helping to create healthy forests while the stands have not yet become too large and dense. A few questions were asked by the OSAC regarding the USFS Miners Creek Fuels Reduction Project. The NEPA process for this project was conducted a number of years ago but is only just starting this summer. The

public can expect similar projects to occur into the future across the County, as the USFS works to create buffers around all developed areas to protect communities from wildfire.

Quandary Trailhead: An RFP is being finalized with key stakeholders and will be issued within the next couple of weeks. The scope of work for the RFP includes determining specific management and implementation strategies for mitigating traffic congestion and high use at the Quandary/McCullough Gulch/Blue Lakes trailheads.

Open Space Protection Strategy: The Open Space Protection Plan was created in 1996 and is primarily acquisition-focused, as this was the first planning document for the department. Staff is working on direction for updating this plan, starting with establishing a clear mission and vision (although it is expected that the mission and vision will be refined throughout the planning process). While staff has begun discussing the mission and vision, input from the OSAC will be extremely valuable. A clear mission and vision will help OST create a framework for the plan, which is intended to be action-oriented, usable, and adaptive. The following are notes from the OSAC's discussion regarding a mission and vision for OST:

- Overall, there is consensus around the fact that the paradigm of open space and trails management is shifting. OST has successfully “procured” the assets (e.g., land) and now experiences significantly increasing recreational use and increasing demand for recreational amenities (e.g., trails). Furthermore, the concept of “rural mountain character” in OST’s mission needs to be revisited and redefined. While Summit County is still rural, the demographic composition and level of development in the county has changed significantly since 1996. The “feel” is more urban-rural, with many more residents and visitors. The challenges that the Front Range face regarding recreation and use are not that far off from becoming the challenges of Summit County. (Furthermore, we already experience some capacity challenges.) OST may need to adopt a new mindset of “managing more, providing less.” We need to provide the public with information and education on why more trails or access may not always be the best idea for our County’s diverse ecosystems.
- Key concepts/themes that the new planning strategy should focus on:
 - Stewardship/Education
 - How can OST start educating the public on the ethics of caring about outdoor spaces?
 - Recreation is only the first step to stewardship
 - Are there new educational or interpretive opportunities for the department? E.g., history, ecology, climate warming
 - FDRD = good example of education
 - Can education start happening “on trail?” (E.g., kiosks, staff)
 - Visitors are already reading signs asking questions - the curiosity for information is out there
 - Partnerships
 - OST can start giving more “credit/shout-outs” to our amazing partners and volunteers
 - How can OST get more people personally involved with the department, understanding that volunteerism leads to a stewardship ethic?
 - Balance
 - We might be tipping towards an “imbalance” of recreation
 - We can’t always provide for every need - the health of the land should always come first
 - Recreation is the “icing on the cake” that acquiring and protecting land allows
 - We are not opposed to continued development, and we should always frame the County as continually evolving
 - Tying into education: getting the community, visitors, businesses, etc. on the same page about the concept of and need for “balance” is key
 - Clean water, air, rivers

- Resiliency
 - Investment in technology or management strategies that help the whole community thrive, including businesses (e.g., Lotspot, COTrex)
 - Strategies for thoughtfully building new trails
- Key takeaways:
 - Lead the plan update with the concepts of “balance” and “stewardship ethic”
 - This is a chance for OST to “rebrand” a little bit to focus on management/operations in addition to acquisition/preservation, even though this is a hard transition for OST!
 - Jeffco Open Space could serve as a good model/we might think about leveraging their advice and experiences
 - Parking, in some capacity, needs to be addressed in the plan
 - A public partnership for this plan update is necessary
- Vision idea:
 - Responsible public access
 - Promoting opportunities for public stewardship of open space and resources

Discussion of Recpath Management: The Fremont Pass Recpath construction is underway, with two different crews working from both ends. A different contractor will build the bridges, and the deadline for having pavement in place is the end of October 2020. Work will start on County Road 450/French Gulch by mid-July 2020, including repaving and construction of the road so that the Recpath will have a connection through the “narrow section” of 450 behind the 7-11.

Executive Session to Discuss Acquisition of Real Property Interests: A motion was made to enter into Executive Session, and it was seconded. OSAC entered into Executive Session at 7:12 p.m. A motion was made to exit Executive Session and seconded. OSAC leaves Executive Session at 7:34 p.m.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS: The Maid of Orleans parcel/cabin was purchased by the County after the cabin was severely damaged by an avalanche. A contractor recently finished cleaning up the site and removed the driveways so that the area can be revegetated and naturalized. The contract came in at only \$5,000.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Lorch

Brian Lorch, Open Space and Trails Director