

MINUTES  
CITY OF ASPEN, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOARD  
MEETING ON DECEMBER 20, 2018  
5:00PM – SISTER CITIES CHAMBERS

**City Board Members Present:** Charlie Eckart, Gyles Thornely, Howie Mallory, Erik Skarvan

**City Staff Members Present:** Austin Weiss, Parks and Open Space Director, Ben Carlsen Open Space and Natural Resource Manager, Brian Long Trails Field Supervisor

**Adoption of the Agenda:** Gyles made a motion to adopt the agenda and Erik Skarvan seconded.

**Approval of the Minutes:** November 1 and 15, 2018 Minutes were reviewed. Correction: on November 1<sup>st</sup>, the cabin at Fox Crossing was brought up by Erik, not Charlie. Correction: Jim's suggestion regarding an alternative for the Lift One project should be worded as a *swap* for an entirely different piece of land that has open space values. Jim made a motion to approve the minutes and Howie seconded.

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

**Staff Comments:** Ben mentioned that the BOCC approved 3:2 Phase One of the Crystal River Valley Trail. While outside of our jurisdiction, this could have an effect on general public perception of trail projects. A discussion followed in which the past building of roads and trails was not done with ecological impacts in mind and that the public process for this project in particular has been driven by emotion more so than by science. It was suggested that environmental restoration (such as restoring the local bighorn sheep herd) should be included as a facet of the Crystal River Valley Trail project.

Austin mentioned that Kevin Dunnett (Parks' Landscape Architect) submitted his resignation earlier this month and that the department is working to fill that role. Erik inquired about whether any affordable housing could be associated with that position; Austin mentioned that the City does have some housing options that could be offered. Howie asked how Kevin's role will be handled with projects that he had been a critical part of, such as Lift One and Cozy Point Ranch. Austin said that Jay Courtney has been involved with these projects and has stepped up lately to cover needs.

Brian Long mentioned that fat bike trails are being groomed, and that the application to the League of American Cyclists resulted in the City of Aspen being designated as a 'Gold Bicycle-Friendly Community.' A discussion of the values of our community's bike-friendliness followed, along with comments and ideas focused on maintaining and improving our bike infrastructure, possibly toward achieving a platinum designation. Austin suggested that aside from physical infrastructure, there could be a 'Bike Czar' member of City Council, and other cultural components to further ingrain bike-friendliness into our community's DNA. Brian said that the

intent is to apply again in four years in order to use the designation as a tool for evolving Aspen's bike-friendliness.

Charlie asked for a Mobility Lab update. Brian reported that Climate Action Manager Ashley Perl brought the Lyft contract before Aspen City Council, and that local cab drivers view Lyft as a business threat. Stripping ride-sharing out of the contract was considered, but without that the contract fell flat. Transportation Programs Manager Lynne Rumbaugh is crafting an ordinance that will go to City Council in January/February outlining parameters for small-trip transportation companies. Brian asked the Board for comments. Community needs and concerns were discussed with regard to small-trip transportation, including additional services WeCycle could provide and the impending need to manage e-scooters on trails.

**Board Comments:** Gyles brought up the need to name the parks at Burlingame and mentioned attending the successful Hallam Street Corridor opening. Gyles mentioned that Eden Vardy is awaiting information about next steps at Cozy Point Ranch. Ben explained that a master plan is needed so that other elements in that portion of the ranch can be planned effectively. A proposal from Rowland & Broughton for developing a master plan is at the Asset Department and will come to the Parks Department next. Ben offered to provide updates to Eden.

Howie asked for a timeline for the Cozy Point Ranch master plan. Austin explained that it will be fast-tracked, and Ben mentioned an RFP process may not be necessary. Howie inquired about life/safety issues with the maintenance building. Ben explained that a report was sent to the OST Board addressing electrical, structural, architectural, and mechanical life/safety issues. The report identified no such significant issues with the maintenance building; however, it identified issues with one smoke detector, an exterior light, and the heating system. Cozy Point Ranch Manager Jake Moe is currently working on these. Charlie questioned why master plan's goal of net zero energy use was not part of this report. Austin explained the goal of the report was to identify immediate life/safety needs; net zero energy will be part of the process when the buildings are replaced, as guided by the master plan.

Erik mentioned the video he created for the Aspen Times to promote the Fat Bike Loop. Howie asked about specific uses for the Aspen Golf Course groomed trails. Austin said the Fat Bike Loop is intended for fat bikes only. A discussion followed, touching on managing snow trails maintained and signed for specific types of recreation. Erik brought up the ice on the Hwy. 82 S-curves. Charlie mentioned the need for snow plowing on Hallam Street between the end of the bike path and 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Erik mentioned the clothing drive for the homeless at Health & Human Services. Charlie said Dwayne Romero will put him in touch with John Malloy and Tom Heald in order to collaborate on trails with the School District. Charlie suggested altering the Nordic trail crossing of the road to the high school and AVSC to make it more direct. Easements for the Nordic trail connection between the ARC and AVSC were discussed.

**Old Business:**

Ben reported that the Open Space and Trails Budget was approved with no changes by Aspen City Council. Howie asked if there was a provision for the Brush Creek to AABC Trail. Austin

explained that figures are in the budget for planning and that Pitkin County Open Space and Trails is involved with this budget item: The City's \$125,000 for planning would have matching County funds to go with it. Parks' 10-year, long range budget lists this project for 2024 at \$5 million. Austin said the project could be moved to a different year. Howie would like to suggest that the County make this a priority.

Jim mentioned the re-sodding of Wagner Park, and that he feels it only benefits the Food & Wine event. Austin explained that the Parks Dept. budgets for the entire cost, but that Food & Wine contributes half of the cost. Events that have the greatest impact on Wagner Park are Food & Wine, Mother Lode Volleyball Classic, and Ruggerfest. Every year, the Parks Dept. improves its management of this sod. Re-sodding allows for Wagner Park to be closed for just one week, re-opening by July 4<sup>th</sup>; without re-sodding, it would be closed for 3-4 weeks. Dog urine has the greatest impact on the sod. Gyles mentioned urea-resistant sod varieties. Austin mentioned Parks is experimenting with sod that requires 40% less water. Howie asked for a comparison of Wagner Park's live turf with the synthetic turf at the Aspen School District fields. Austin explained that the football field is managed as a public field. Parks is a partner in that field which is critical to the City's Recreation programs in summer. Parks saves a lot of money without the need for top-dressing, partially off-setting the cost of re-sodding.

Howie asked about the \$2.25 million budgeted for management plan implementation at Cozy Point Ranch, and whether that relates to the creation of a master plan for the area. He also noted that no future capital expenditures are indicated for 2020-2022. Austin explained that master and asset management plans were not available when the budget was created, and that information can now be included in next year's budget. He also explained that \$250,000 for drainage and grading efforts at Cozy Point Ranch have been shifted from 2018 to 2019.

Charlie brought up the \$150,000 listed for trail surface improvements, mentioning the importance of crack-sealing for longevity of asphalt trails. Brian mentioned that plowing has impacts on asphalt trails, and Austin explained that tar-patching and crack-sealing is part of Parks' maintenance plan. Charlie brought up the \$60,000-line item for sealing the concrete Maroon Creek and Tiehack Bridge surfaces. Brian explained that it is a liquid preventive treatment and that it is part of Parks' bridge review process. Howie asked about the Tree Program line item 57220 for \$350,000; Ben clarified that the program total expenditures included permanent staff, seasonal staff, administrative staff time, contractor costs for pruning, planting and removals, noxious vegetation management and general tree planting.

**New Business:**

**Adjourned:** Gyles made a motion to adjourn and Jim seconded.

**Next Meeting Date(s): January 17, 2019**