

SUMMIT COUNTY
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COUNCIL
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

January 9, 2013

OSAC MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Redner, Art Girten, Dan Pins, Lynn Amstutz, Jeff Leigh, Turk Montepare, Bruce Fitch, Mike Clary, Tim Scanlan, Russ Camp

OSAC MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Craig, Charlotte Clarke

STAFF PRESENT: Brian Lorch, Katherine King, Jim Curnutte

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC PRESENT: Scott Reid - Town of Breckenridge, Paul Semmer – USFS, MJ Wurster - CDLT

Call to Order: Chairman Turk Montepare called the meeting of the Summit County Open Space Advisory Council to order at 5:40 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was amended to discuss open space management activities before OSAC appointments, but otherwise approved as submitted.

Approval of Minutes: The December 5, 2012 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

Summary Report: The summary report was approved as submitted.

REGULAR AGENDA:

Public Comments on Items Not Included in the Agenda: Art Girten congratulated Town and County staff on the completion of the Last Chance Claims acquisition.

Update on Open Space Management Activities:

Highway 9 widening and realignment: CDOT is moving forward with plans for an alternate alignment of Highway 9 between Frisco and Farmers Corner that includes an option through the Iron Springs Open Space. Current discussion amongst County, CDOT and CDLT staff proposes exchanging nine acres of land within the Iron Springs Open Space planned for the highway realignment, for twelve acres of the existing Highway 9 right of way along the reservoir. This would hopefully result in a net increase in conserved acres, and allow for a recreation area along the reservoir that would include a new Recpath alignment (to replace the one being lost in highway construction). However, options for maintaining access to the Dickey Day Use Area are still being discussed. Two options under consideration are 1) a new, separate interchange off of Highway 9 and 2) access via the light at the hospital and Town of Frisco lands.

Generally staff indicated that the negotiations are moving forward in a positive manner, with both CDLT and GOCO giving their preliminary approval on the alternate alignment. CDOT is also reviewing potential for a wildlife overpass on the highway, and anticipates conducting a public scoping process relatively soon. The pending NEPA analysis will evaluate both alternatives – the existing plan for four-lanes along the reservoir and the new alignment through Iron Springs. CDOT is hoping to have the NEPA decision by the end of the summer, and would like to complete this project within 5 years.

CDLT is anticipating that the new alignment will result in an amended and restated conservation easement, rather than a condemnation proceeding. Paul Semmer pointed out that CDOT would be abandoning their

existing Highway 9 easement on National Forest lands, and would technically be responsible for restoring the highway corridor. The County would also then need to apply to the USFS for an easement to build a new Recpath along the lake. Art Girten commented that staff should take advantage of this opportunity to create the best possible Recpath outcome, including widened shoulders on the new highway alignment, well-designed underpasses, and a Nordic trail connection from the high school to the Frisco Nordic Center.

Grazing on Cow Camp Open Space (Lower Blue): Clay Culbreath has approached open space staff about the possibility of grazing cattle on the Cow Camp and Cow Camp extension properties. He has proposed fixing fences and the water tank, and irrigating the lower meadow. He has pledged to protect wildlife habitat and assist in managing the property. Mr. Culbreath seems to have a good understanding of land stewardship principles, and grazing (particularly by the Culbreath family) would align well with the open space acquisition goal of protecting the agricultural heritage of the Lower Blue.

Mr. Culbreath is proposing a one-year trial for grazing. Advantages of this arrangement would be helping to maintain the water rights on the property, repairing fences on the property (which would allow the property to also be used for emergency grazing), potentially improving sage grouse habitat by clearing out some of the underbrush, and maintaining the agricultural heritage of the Lower Blue. Potential concerns would be overgrazing and needing to draft a grazing management plan. NRCS staff has a favorable view of Clay, and has offered to help in the drafting of a grazing management plan. Overall OSAC felt that the trial arrangement was a “win-win” situation, and unanimously recommended that staff move forward with the necessary administrative processes to allow grazing on the property, subject to a determination by the County whether this use would need to go through a public bidding process.

French Gulch Gate: As discussed previously, the County is pursuing moving the gate on French Gulch Road further down valley (near the Lincoln TH). The County Attorney recommended that this be addressed officially via a Resolution by the BOCC, and the BOCC has asked staff to solicit additional public input on the project. Staff will be seeking public comment in the coming weeks.

Trail projects/NEPA review: The USFS has indicated they are comfortable with initiating a public process to determine whether additional motorized trails should be developed on Tenderfoot Mountain. Staff also recently learned that both the motorized and non-motorized trails in the Golden Horseshoe will be evaluated together in the NEPA process, rather than the motorized trails being expedited through a categorical exclusion. Staff views this as positive news.

Discussion of OSAC Appointments: Seven OSAC member’s terms are expiring in January 2013. Staff has received twelve applications for the vacancies, including those from six of the seven members whose terms are expiring. Mike Clary has elected not to pursue reappointment beyond his term limit. OSAC members applauded Mike for his long-time service to the Council, and asked that he still be available to provide expertise on matters in the Snake River Basin.

OSAC felt there were a number of qualified applicants, but recommended reappointment of all existing members because the Council is functioning well. Mike Clary made a strong recommendation for Terry Craig to fill his open seat in the Snake River Basin, and OSAC agreed that she would be an excellent addition to the Council. Should the BOCC desire to appoint additional new members to the Council, OSAC considered Laura Rossetter, Rich Holcroft, and Howard Brown to be the strongest candidates.

Executive Session to Discuss Acquisition of Real Property Interests: Lynn Amstutz moved to go into Executive Session to discuss property acquisitions. Mike Clary seconded the motion. OSAC entered into Executive Session at 6:55 pm. Russ Camp moved to come out of Executive Session and Ms. Amstutz seconded the motion. OSAC came out of Executive Session at 7:10 pm.

Other Business/Announcements: None.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Lorch

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Open Space and Trails Director