

SUMMIT COUNTY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes of July 12, 2023 Regular Meeting

OSAC MEMBERS PRESENT: Turk Montepare, Jeff Zimmerman, Paul Semmer, Laura Rossiter, Dave Bittner, John Uban, Arthur Hardin, Terry Craig, Peter Grosshuesch, John Taylor

OSAC MEMBERS ABSENT: Meagan Graham, Robert Gregory

STAFF PRESENT: Katherine King, Allison Morton, Jordan Mead, Jessica Forsyth

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC PRESENT: Tony Overlock – Town of Breckenridge, Kristi D’Agati -Town of Silverthorne, Pete Swenson – Town of Frisco, Cindy Ebbert – USFS Dillon Ranger District

Call to Order: Terry Craig called the meeting of the Summit County Open Space Advisory Council to order at 5:34 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Council members approved the agenda as submitted.

Approval of Minutes: Council members unanimously approved the May 2023 OSAC minutes.

Motion by: Laura Rossiter

Second by: Jeff Zimmerman

Motion Approved.

Approval of Summary Report: Council members approved the summary report as submitted.

Public Comments: No public comments.

REGULAR AGENDA:

Open Space Management:

Keystone Driller

The B&B Trailhead location was approved via email by OSAC. There will be a separate trail in the northeast corner of the trailhead with potential handicap access to the driller.

Tenderfoot Management Plan Updates

Jordan Mead gave an overview of the public engagement process for the Tenderfoot Meadows Open Space Management plan amendment. Staff collected 54 user intercept surveys between May 31 – June 10, 2023. Twelve community members attended the Open House on June 14 at the County Commons and submitted 8 surveys and 7 comment cards. Staff also received 10 comments via email.

Staff is compiling the survey data and comments, updating the draft plan with a public engagement section, and revising the plan to incorporate public feedback in the management direction and guidelines. A final draft should be available for review and recommendation at the August OSAC meeting.

The Chair asked if there were any “red flags” in the comments or survey results. Staff responded that the data showed that user conflict and crowding were not an issue at the property, but that “more trails” was the most common theme of comments. Results also indicated that 75% of survey respondents supported the wildlife closure to some degree.

Quandary Peak and McCullough Gulch Parking and Shuttle

The new contractor, SP+, is a regional parking provider who provided the low bid for this contract. SP+ has been very responsive to suggestions and works well with staff to resolve issues with codes for free shuttle and parking vouchers at the South Gondola Lot. The new website, hikequandary.com, is now owned by the Town and County, so that won't change in the future even if a new vendor is selected.

Staff has been working with Search and Rescue to develop hiking tips and suggestions for hiking Quandary that can be placed on the website and in shuttles. For operations, 2 shuttles were in service during the early part of the season (June 17-30), which led to some long wait times for users at Quandary waiting to return to Breckenridge. 3 shuttles are now in service from 5am to 5pm which has resolved this issue to some degree. Staff is meeting with SP+ next week to compare user numbers to past years and discuss any outstanding issues.

Trail counters have been deployed on Blue Lakes Road and Lower McCullough Gulch, USFS has a counter on McCullough Gulch, and CFI has a counter on the East Ridge. User surveys are available in the shuttles and on site in the parking lot.

Council members mentioned that nearly 100 cars were parked at Blue Lakes Road at the gate the weekend before 4th of July. Staff responded that there is also a vehicle counter on Blue Lakes Road just past the neighborhood which will allow us to understand the magnitude of this issue. It may be wise to expand parking or extend shuttle services to Blue Lakes, as well. Users walk up to the upper lake, go to the waterfall, and use the lower lake which creates a lot of demand. It will be interesting to see how many users take the West Ridge trail compared to the number of vehicles that drive to Blue Lakes.

Council members also brought up the CFI article that was published the week of July 2. There seems to be a disconnect between the advocacy group CFI, and the land managers, Summit County and the Town of Breckenridge, with respect to access and number of users. Parking and access need to be considered when contemplating how 14er destinations are marketed and managed. Council members and staff need to think about this issue and how to best move forward communicating with CFI.

Forest Service staff added that issues with parking along County roads and access to 14ers has prompted the Forest Service to explore permitting 14ers in the past. This was dismissed previously by the regional office, but this may be up for discussion again in the future.

Discussion of a possible Royal Placer Management Plan

A fuels reduction project is planned for the East Blue River area, including the Royal Placer. This fuel reduction project would be a good impetus for looking at this area more holistically when it comes to ecosystem and recreation management. The Town of Blue River finished an OSTMP last July and the Royal Placer was identified as property that needs a management plan. Overflow parking along Coronet Drive and a barrier to passenger cars along Pennsylvania Creek Road can both cause traffic issues. There are also social trails along Pennsylvania Creek on the Royal Placer used for skiing in winter and MTB in summer. The south side of Pennsylvania Creek has a social trail that eventually ties into the Blue River System trail.

How do we want to do to manage this parcel from a recreation and resource management perspective? An inventory of social trails and a plan for future trail connections was discussed and generally supported. There are several social trails and bridges on the interface with the developed parcels in the Town of Blue River. Summit County staff would need to work with the Town of Breckenridge (who co-owns the Royal Placer) and Town of Blue River to develop a scope for this plan, if OSAC/BOSAC gives that direction.

Director Katherine King is hesitant to start another forward-facing planning document until the Tenderfoot Meadows plan is completed, especially with the potential for a lot of public input. The chair would like staff to determine how a management plan fits into the priorities of the department and engage with partners when this fits with the departmental program. Staff should also take a new look at the social trails in the area with the Forest Service to determine a system of conceptual trail connections. A look at the Town of Blue River Master Plan would also be a good first step, along with an inventory of the ditches, trails, and possible reroutes. Including winter uses in the inventory and plan is also imperative.

Review and Discussion of OSAC By-laws

The by-laws and a short memo were included in the packet. During the Master Planning process, OSAC members voiced that it may be appropriate to review the by-laws and ensure that they fit with the current role of OSAC and the department. Director King asked the council if there was anything that jumped out at them during their initial review of the current by-laws.

Council members stated that the current by-laws are focused on Open Space protection. Updating these to include Open Space management and reference the Open Space and Trails Master Plan would be good first steps.

John Taylor asked about how the OSAC fits in with Affordable Housing? OSAC infrequently gives recommendations on purchases and pricing for parcels for affordable housing. The BoCC may have new direction on how OSAC plays into the affordable housing discussion. This topic isn't in the current Open Space and Trails Master Plan.

For more context, OSAC gives input on Open Space parcels that may have areas that are appropriate for housing in some cases, early in the negotiations and prior to recommendation. OSAC was also charged with looking for potential housing parcels by a past BoCC. Conversations could be had with Jeff Huntley on the history of this provision and if this should continue to be included in the by-laws.

Introducing more management into the by-laws and what types of recommendations OSAC gives would also be advantageous. Jeff Zimmerman added that the qualifications for OSAC members now say that members cannot serve on Planning Commissions, however allowing PC members to serve on OSAC could be an opportunity to share information. Other members saw that there could be a conflict of interest for individuals who serve of multiple commissions.

OSAC reviews of development are another aspect of the council's role that could be addressed in the by-laws in the future. The Rural Land Use Subdivision is used infrequently and OSAC doesn't get involved with development review process often. Staff and OSAC could look for more ways to collaborate with Planning Commissions in the future.

Executive Session to Discuss Acquisition of Real Property Interests: A motion was made to enter Executive Session, and it was seconded. OSAC entered Executive Session at 7:03 p.m.

Motion by: Jeff Zimmerman

Second by: John Uban

Motion approved.

A motion was made to exit Executive Session and seconded. OSAC left Executive Session at 7:42 p.m.

Motion by: Dave Bittner

Second by: John Uban

Motion approved.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Director King reiterated that communication about meeting attendance is crucial for planning meetings and requested that all members respond to planning emails. A virtual meeting format was also discussed. Most members prefer in-person or hybrid meetings. Better reference maps and hard copy maps in Executive Session were requested by council members.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Motion by: John Uban

Second by: Paul Semmer

Motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordan Mead

Jordan Mead, Open Space and Trails Resource Specialist