City of Colorado Springs
Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services (PRCS) Advisory Board Minutes

Location: **1401 Recreation Way Colorado Springs, CO 80905**

Date: **May 8, 2025**

Time: **7:30 AM**

Meeting Attendance

- Members Present: Larry Bogue, Steve Harris, Andrea Perry, Sarah Bryarly, Julia Sands de Melendez, Greg Thornton, Steve Lenzo, Amandla Atilano-Roque, Abby Simpson
- Alternates Present: Debbie Swanson, Kimberley Sherwood, Mike Sullivan
- Staff Present: Britt Haley, Lonna Thelen, Anna Bingman, David Deitemeyer, Sandy Elliott, Mark Snow, Cheryl Godbout, Pat Gentile

Called to Order

- Board Chair, Sarah Bryarly, brought the meeting to order at 7.30 a.m.

Citizen Discussion

- Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, mentioned that in years past, there was a conversation about the process of naming trails, specifically after people. Mr. Sutela asked staff and the Board to revisit this process in the near future.
- Carol Beckman, citizen, stated that she had attended a Manitou Springs City Council meeting where staff from Manitou Springs proposed taking over operations of the Manitou Incline, and implementing a registration system that would charge a fee of $7.00 to hike the Incline, while Manitou residents could hike it for free. They proposed the system go into effect June 1st. She asked for an update on this proposal. Britt Haley, Director, responded that Manitou's City Administration and Mayor had brought forward this proposal to the City of Colorado Springs recently. She said that while Mayor Yemi has empathy for Manitou Springs' and the parking issues they face, there are a couple of reasons the City cannot move forward with this proposal. First, there has been no community dialogue over this change. Second, there is an Intergovernmental Agreement in place for ownership and operation of the Incline, and this proposal conflicts with that agreement. Britt said the City will do their best to work with Manitou toward other options and solutions, but nothing is going into effect on June 1st.
- Matthew Hadley, Founder of Rocky Mountain Parkour, informed the Board about recent events his organization hosted, as well as upcoming events. He expressed excitement about working with staff on the next Park System Master Plan and finding ways to integrate parkour into recreation opportunities.

Approval of Minutes

- **<u>Motion:</u> To approve the April 8, 2025 meeting minutes.**
- 1st – Steve Harris, 2nd – Julia Sands de Melendez, Approved, Unanimously.

Action Items

Fishers Canyon Open Space Master and Management Plan (Presented by David Deitemeyer, Senior Program Administrator for TOPS)

- David Deitemeyer, Senior Program Administrator for TOPS, presented the Board with the Fishers Canyon Open Space Master and Management Plan. This presentation included the presentation agenda; plan overview; master plan map; management plan; priorities; additional comments; boundary map; examples of fencing; proposed fencing example; and finally, the recommendation.

Board Member Questions

- Board member Amandla Atilano-Roque said she appreciated the adaptive management plan and asked if there are any metrics for public feedback. David Deitemeyer responded yes. Citizens can send in GoCOS comments and requests, share concerns with staff onsite, and through surveys. Next, Ms. Atilano-Roque encouraged staff to work with volunteer groups like Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates to leverage maintenance needs.
- Board member Steve Harris asked if there is money budgeted for the first project. David Deitemeyer responded that there is $200,000 budgeted for trail construction right now. There is also $1,100,000 in reserve for the Chamberlain Trail construction. David noted that staff is currently working through the 2026 budget right now.
- Board member Larry Bogue brought up the topic of fencing, and when that would likely be installed. David Deitemeyer responded that staff would like to hold off on immediate fencing for observation on fencing needs. However, it is possible fencing could be installed within the next few years. Mr. Bogue encouraged staff to fence on the boundary line rather than adding a buffer, to reduce issues of encroachment. Mr. Bogue then asked how the open space can be accessed. David listed off the various designated access points, which are from Wellfleet Street, or north on the Chamberlain Trail from Cheyenne Mountain State Park.
- Board Vice Chair Abby Simpson asked how well attended the neighborhood tour was. David answered that there were between twenty-five and thirty neighbors who attended.
- Board member Andrea Perry thanked staff for extending the process for additional citizen input and echoed the comments of the Board members before her.
- Board member Julia Sands de Melendez asked how many parking spaces there are at Stratton Open Space, for reference. David Deitemeyer responded that there are around eighty spots at Stratton. Next, Ms. Sands de Melendez asked how much trail can be constructed with $200,000. David answered that it's about $30,000 to $40,000 per mile of trail. However, staff can leverage volunteers and internal staff to be more cost-effective. Finally, Ms. Sands de Melendez asked how much a trailhead costs. David responded that they can cost up to $4,000,000, though staff would work through different estimates.

- Board member Steve Lenzo thanked staff for their work on this project. He noted that the Fishers Canyon Trail is listed as both a high and medium priority. David Deitemeyer responded that it would be ideal to do the trail construction, however understanding budget constraints and needing to work with neighboring land managers. Mr. Lenzo agreed with the postponement of fencing installation until further observation is made. He then asked if the fencing on the trail would be similar to the examples David provided. David answered yes. Finally, Mr. Lenzo asked why mountain bikes weren't permitted on the Fishers Canyon Trail. David said there were a couple of reasons: resource protection and management, maintenance and steepness, and the potential for user conflicts.
- Board member Greg Thornton asked if it's possible to connect to the Chamberlain Trail from the Fishers Canyon Trail. David Deitemeyer answered yes, while it is seasonally open. Mr. Thornton then suggested that it would be beneficial to the neighbors to form a Friends Group for the property. David said that the master plan does identify a need for a Friends Group.

Citizen Comments

- Sandie Gilliam, citizen, is a neighbor to the property and expressed concerns about the public process. She said there is a lack of trust with the Department, and that staff refused to come to meetings and instead met with neighbors one on one.
- Wayne Booker, President of the Spires Homeowners Association (HOA), said that he appreciated the work done by the Department and other City Departments on wildfire mitigation and the drainage area. He said that the HOA has three additional requests. First, they would like to see continued development of an adequate fire response plan. Second, they would like to see closures of the property on red flag warning days. And finally, they would like to see the drainage plan before it is submitted to Public Works.
- Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, stated that his organization was in general support of the master plan, but did ask for a slight change in the language of one sentence. The change would be to the last sentence on page 57 of the master plan, and would change the sentence from "MacNeill Ridge trail connector could be considered for biking if future potential regional connections become available to "MacNeill Ridge Connector and Fishers Canyon Trail will be considered for biking access if future potential regional connections become available."
- Laurie Meacham, citizen, is a neighbor to the property and lives adjacent to one of the proposed trails. She shared a story about a lightning strike that hit a tree in the early 2000s and created a fire, saying that the call she received was terrifying. She stated that the main concern of the neighborhood is the possibility of a fire given the proximity of homes, and the inability to monitor or enforce no smoking or fires. She added that parking at full capacity is equal to about 20% of the homes in the neighborhood.
- Carol Beckman, citizen, shared support for the master plan. She encouraged staff to fence on the boundary line to deter encroachment. She said the neighborhood's demands for more fire hydrants would not make a difference to the risk of wildland fire, as wildland fires are not fought using hydrants. She stated that the original plan for the area was the

development of seventy houses, so this seems like a much better use of the space. Finally, she stated that the open space is for everyone who pays into the TOPS tax and pointed out the many compromises in the plan that staff had added in response to the neighbors' requests.

- Dave Zelenok, citizen, said he was speaking on behalf of many neighbors who don't have issues with the recreation aspect of the plan, but issues with the fire and life safety components. He stated he believed that this master plan was in violation of a development code concerning dead-end streets. He also said that there was no consensus on whether additional fire hydrants were permissible. And finally, Mr. Zelenok said that the evacuation modeling was not sufficient, including the Traffic and Engineering plan. He urged the Board to delay a decision until these issues were resolved.
- Glenn Carlson, Executive Director for the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC), said his organization was in favor of this master plan. He stated his belief that it is a good use for the space and that the public process was very thorough. He commented that he liked Mr. Sutela's suggestion of the language change.
- Victoria Liu-Elliott, citizen, is a neighbor of the property and created a petition in opposition of the master plan, that she said has 575 signatures. She thanked staff for extending the process but echoed the concerns of Mr. Zelenok. While she said she understood the property should be available to all, she also urged the Board to understand why the neighbors have so many concerns. She appreciated the suggestion to create a Friends Group. She urged the Board to delay approval to grant more time to fix flaws in the master plan.

Additional Board Discussion

- David Deitemeyer clarified that adding hydrants is not an operational decision from the Fire Department. He added the Traffic Consultant ran multiple evacuation models, and that at full capacity, there were no impacts to level of service. Young Shin, Associate Attorney - Corporate Division for the City Attorney's Office, added that the development code requirements for dead-end areas that were referenced during citizen discussion only apply to developments, not parks.
- Board member Greg Thornton said he empathized with the neighbors on their fire concerns, however that is not something the Department can address.
- Board member Steve Lenzo mentioned the proposed MacNeill Trail connection. He said that, if approved, the only people who can access that trail are people who can afford to stay at Cloud Camp, and he disagrees with that. He urged staff to do everything they can to make that trail accessible to everyone.
- Board member Steve Harris asked David to respond to Mr. Sutela's request for the language change that would allow bikes on the Fishers Canyon and MacNeill Trails. David Deitemeyer responded that this could create a challenge if access is granted after the trail is already constructed. David said it would be possible, but another alignment would need to be considered.

- Board member Amandla Atilano-Roque said she felt the plan was the result of a thoughtful process. She reiterated the push for public access.
- Board Chair Sarah Bryarly thanked staff for the process, and said she appreciates that there are lessons learned through every master plan process that makes the next process even better. Ms. Bryarly advocated to keep the planned hiking-only trails, as is.
- Board Vice Chair Abby Simpson asked what the next steps after the approval of this master plan would be. David Deitemeyer answered that Colorado Springs Police and Fire Departments and the Office of Emergency Management would begin additional planning. Britt Haley, Director, added that there is a Director's meeting twice a month where each Director informs the other of their department's projects and happenings.
    - **Motion: To approve and adopt the Fishers Canyon Open Space Master and Management plan as presented, with a modification to the last sentence on page 57 to read "the MacNeill and Fishers Canyon Trail will be considered for biking access if future potential regional connections become available."**
      1st – Greg Thornton, 2nd – Steve Lenzo
    - Board Member Discussion on Proposed Motion
      a. Board member Andrea Perry asked if the word "will" in the amended sentence be changed to the word "may." Board member Greg Thornton said he agreed with this change. David Deitemeyer explained that the trail is currently designed to hiking-only standards. Multiple Board members asked what would happen if the trail access was granted, but already constructed for hiking-only. Britt Haley, Director, said there could be a public process in the event that occurred. Young Shin, Associate Attorney, said that "may" would be a sufficient change to the wording to capture the intent of the Board.
    - **Motion Restated: To approve and adopt the Fishers Canyon Open Space Master and Management Plan as presented, with a modification to the last sentence on page 57 to read "the MacNeill and Fishers Canyon Trail may be considered for biking access if future potential regional connections become available."**
      1st – Greg Thornton, 2nd – Larry Bogue. Because this item is quasi-judicial, it required a roll call vote.
        - In Favor: Amandla Atilano-Roque, Steve Harris, Larry Bogue, Abby Simpson, Sarah Bryarly, Andrea Perry, Julia Sands de Melendez, Steve Lenzo, Greg Thornton
        - In Opposition: N/A

Presentations

- **2026 Parks Department Fees and Charges** (Presented by Sandy Elliott, Tourism and Finance Manager; Matt Mayberry, Cultural Services Manager; and Mark Snow, Community Recreation Manager)
  Sandy Elliott, Tourism and Finance Manager, Matt Mayberry, Cultural Services Manager, and Mark Snow, Community Recreation Manager, presented the Board with the 2026 Parks Department Fees and Charges presentation. This presentation included the fees and

charges process; Government Finance Officers Association Best Practices; City User Fee Policy; cost recovery levels; areas proposed for 2026 fee changes; and finally, proposed fees.

- **2026 Cemetery Fees and Charges** (Presented by Cheryl Godbout, Park Operations Administrator)
  Cheryl Godbout, Park Operations Administrator, presented the Board with the 2026 Cemetery Fees and Charges presentation. This presentation included the fees and charges process; service levels; revenues versus expenditures; new fees; and finally, the fees and charges process.
- **2026 Golf Enterprise Fees and Charges** (Presented by Pat Gentile, Golf Division Manager)
  Pat Gentile, Golf Division Manager, presented the Board with the 2026 Golf Enterprise Fees and Charges presentation. This presentation included the mission statement; cost of goods; percent increases; non-potable water increases; projected revenue versus expenses; capital projects; proposed fees; proposed extra fees; and finally, course comparisons – 2025 pricing.

Staff Updates

HSD2 Contract Update (Presented by Mark Snow, Community Recreation Manager)

- Mark Snow, Community Recreation Manager, provided a verbal update on the HSD2 Contract. HSD2 has officially notified the Department that they will be ending the before and after school childcare program contract at the conclusion of the 2024-2025 school year. Since August of 2021, the City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services department has been a contract service provider with HSD2 to provide before and after school childcare at six school sites. HSD2 was able to fund this contract thanks to the temporary federal COVID-19 stimulus funds and state funding. For the current school year, HSD2 funded $1,600,000 for this childcare contract. Unfortunately, that funding has officially ended. Approximately thirty Parks department employees were employed through the contract. Department Leadership is thankful for these passionate and dedicated staff who have committed themselves to serving youth and families in our community. Staff are working internally to transition these staff to other programs and support them in finding long-term employment. Staff understand that childcare is a challenge and a great need for many in our community. Unfortunately, with no contract funding to continue operations, the Parks department does not have the financial capacity to continue before and after school childcare at these school sites. Beyond the HSD2 before and after school childcare contract, staff are working to assess and address any secondary impact on our youth programs for the 2025 summer and fall seasons.

CAPRA Visit Recap

- Britt Haley, Director, informed the Board that the CAPRA Reaccreditation visit went very well. Our judges were impressed with our thorough work. The Department will receive the final notification of reaccreditation in September.

Board Business

Westside Community Center Working Committee Appointment
Mark Snow, Community Recreation Manager, informed the Board that the Westside Community Center Working Committee currently has a regular member vacancy. Staff would like to move current Alternate Gayle Abe into this regular position.
Motion: To recommend approval of Gayle Abe to the Westside Community Center Working Committee for a term of two years.
1st – Amandla Atilano-Roque, 2nd – Greg Thornton, Approved, Unanimously.

Other Board Business

- **Greg Thornton** – Mr. Thornton announced that the Westside Community Center Working Committee will be hosting another Midland Trail Cleanup on May 10th. They will meet at South Park Brewery at 10 a.m. Additionally, the Westside Community Center Working Committee is having their annual Saleabration event on June 14th. Mr. Thornton then asked for an update on the City Auditorium, and for clarification on what the City received from the $2,740,000 in APRA funds while the City Auditorium had a vendor. Britt Haley, Director, informed him that from those ARPA funds, there was a feasibility study and plan made that included structural assessments, design plans, and defined needs. The City now owns these plans and can use them moving forward.
- **Julia Sands de Melendez** – Ms. Sands de Melendez said there was a LART meeting later that day for those interested in potentially joining the LART Committee.
- **Abby Simpson** – Ms. Simpson thanked staff for the wonderful Arbor Day event at Prairie Grass Park and said a future dog park would be a great amenity in this Park.
- **Larry Bogue** – Mr. Bogue asked for an update on the reclamation work at the Pike View Quarry. Britt Haley responded that all reclamation work has been completed. Mr. Bogue then asked if the Board will be able to review the comments submitted on the proposed e-bike rules and regulations. Britt answered that she is reviewing comments and happy to share feedback at the June meeting.
- **Steve Lenzo** – Mr. Lenzo asked for background information on the naming policy that was discussed at citizen discussion. Britt Haley provided information about the previous naming process she was working on ahead of the mayoral transition and other projects taking precedence. She is happy to revisit this topic with the new City Leadership.

Adjournment

- **Motion**: **To adjourn the May 8, 2025 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meeting at 11:19 a.m.**
- 1st – Julia Sands de Melendez, 2nd – Andrea Perry, Approved