

**GRAND JUNCTION/MESA COUNTY
RIVERFRONT COMMISSION**

MINUTES

JUNE 18, 1996

The meeting of the Grand Junction/Mesa County Riverfront Commission was called to order at 7:38 P.M. by Co-Chair Bill Prakken. Those in attendance from the Commission:

Paul Nelson	Jim Baughman
Bill Prakken	Carl Zimmerman
Bennett Boeschstein	Lynn James
Kathy Hall	Pat Kennedy
Lenna Watson	Connie Bennett

Also present were: Bob Cron, Greg Taylor and Stephanie Schmid.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Walkable Communities workshops will be held on September 23 and 24, 1996. The Urban Trails Committee and the City of Grand Junction are cosponsoring these workshops and hope that members of both the Urban Trails Committee and the Riverfront Commission will be interested in attending.

Bill Prakken provided a brief recap of the annual intergovernmental raft trip including a description of the visit to the fish ladder at the Redlands Dam. He raised a question as to the status of the boat take out project. Kirk Rider is following up on that issue, but was not present at the meeting.

Bob Cron informed the group that there was money in the Legacy grant earmarked for the construction of the take out. The BLM is willing to go ahead with the land exchange that will make the take out site available but it will take a couple of years. The BLM would like to then pass ownership of the land on to the City for management.

Paul Nelson mention that the possibility of doing Horsethief and Ruby Canyons next year has already been discussed with the BLM.

OLD BUSINESS

Club 20 Missing Links Update

Bennett Boeschstein explained to the Commission that the purpose of the Club 20 study is to foster regional trail systems county to county in the Club 20 area. He pointed out that they have left off numerous trails both existing and planned including the Riverfront Trail system. He said that he had given a list of the omissions to Wade Haerie of Club 20 for another update. He said that GOCO has funded the study and

apparently has a great interest in it. Bennett is not sure what the significance of it will be in determining future trail funding by GOCO, but he felt that it would be advantageous to put everything on the maps that we think needs to be on there now. Stephanie asked whether or not there was any text to accompany the maps they have distributed for review and when the project is expected to be completed. Bennett replied that he had seen no text and assumed that the process of filling in the missing trail links was yet to come. Bill Prakken requested that Wade Haerle be invited to the next Riverfront meeting to clarify their methodology and the possible uses of their "Missing Links" report. Lynn James also expressed concern about Grand Junction Parks and Recreation being a participant in the review of the Club 20 project.

NEW BUSINESS

Expanding the Commission Membership

Bill Prakken explained that the reason he had asked to put this item on the agenda was that a number of very qualified individuals had applied for appointment to the Riverfront Commission. He stated that this year, the three standing Commission members whose terms will expire have all requested reappointment, making it difficult to capitalize on the talents of the new applicants. Because of this situation, it has occurred to him that expanding the Commission might present a possible solution. Problems created by an expansion could include difficulty in getting a quorum and having a larger body become cumbersome. The positive side would be adding motivated and talented people who could share the workload of a citizen group with expanding responsibilities. Suggestions included creating another committee for rural trails or appointing alternate members. The group agreed that appointing members to represent specific areas of the valley was not desirable. As a result of the discussion, Bill decided that the best thing to do would be to let the issue slide for the time being. Structural changes may be in the Riverfront Commission's future, but they should not be rushed. Jim Baughman suggested that the discussion of the possibility of expanding the Commission and the Legacy grant would be good topics for discussion at the annual Commission/City Council dinner.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Orchard Mesa Bridge

Carl Zimmerman reported that the Corps of Engineers has received the necessary permit application. The hope is that it can be processed under a nationwide permit that will not require complicated procedures. It will also be hand carried to the Fish and Wildlife Department for their review. There is concern on their part about the bridge's impact on the southwest willow flycatcher, an endangered species. If a 404 permit is required, it could delay the project significantly.

The bridge design is 80% to 90% complete. The engineer is waiting on comments from the Corps of Engineers and Fish and Wildlife in order to complete his work because there may be contingencies. According to Carl, as it stands now, the bridge will have a 12" wide deck with two piers in the river with observation areas on both sides of both piers. Mike Denton, the engineer for the bridge would like to be on the agenda for next

month's meeting to give a report on its progress. Carl also reported that it looks like the fundraising goals have been met and there will be enough money for the bridge. Contracts for the trail construction on the south bank of the river and the bridge construction will be let separately. There is a possibility that construction of the trail could begin before the bridge and a December 31, 1996 completion date is still being forecast.

Old Spanish Trail

Paul Nelson reported that 75 to 80 people attended the dedication of the Old Spanish Trail on June 9th. He described the project as one of those classic partnerships of various groups getting together to contribute something important. Stephanie remarked that in all the excitement of dedicating the trail, a map of the trail and how to find it has been overlooked. She also acknowledged the Grand Junction Rotary Foundation for their contribution of \$475 for the purchase of tools used by several youth groups that worked on the trail. Purchase of the Ostranger property in the immediate future with the help of Legacy funds will secure more than a mile of riverbank and this has been given top priority by the Legacy Steering Committee. Carlos Sauvage has proposed the development of a bluffs trail along the Gunnison River for some time in the future.

Urban Trails Committee

According to Pat Kennedy, Bob Cron has completed a draft outline of the feasibility study paper. Ted Ciavonne and Joe Carter are near completion on their trail design and engineering for the project. Part of their analysis includes the pros and cons of using either the north or south sides of the canal for recreation purposes. The advantage of the north side is that there are fewer headgates and less operations and maintenance activity on that side. Issues of trail security and liability have been discussed at length with a goal of minimizing the landowners' and the Grand Valley Water Users' exposure to liability. Prototype signs have been developed by the City that will display rules and regulations, i.e. prohibited uses and times of useage for the proposed trail. It is expected that a public open house for review and comment will be held before the study's due date of September 1, 1996.

The Urban Trails Committee has also been working with Cliff Davidson of the Metropolitan Planning Organization to facilitate trail planning cooperation on a countywide basis. They are looking at the Tabeguache Trail area with an eye to having the City of Grand Junction pick up the lease if or when the Museum of Western Colorado decides not to renew their lease with the BLM. They see it as a wonderful opportunity for the development of a mountain bike park in that area and would hate to loose this valuable asset to development. The City is concerned that, if they take it over, there will be expectations for urban park amenities, but the BLM needs a public entity to work with if the property is to be kept off its disposal list. Bennett Boeschstein expressed the opinion that there is a need for a management plan for the area which will dictate where the trails will and will not be, who's going to do what where and how. It has been proposed that COPMOBA be involved as volunteer in the maintenance and management of the area.

Urban Trails is also involved in discussions with a developer in the Colinas del Vale area to secure easements for trails in the plans of his proposed subdivision. They are

working with Mark Relph, the City's Director of Public Works and Shawn Cooper with Parks and Recreation to develop a map to show street striped bike paths and ways and trails associated with subdivisions and parks. The end product will give the City Council a better idea of what the long range plan of the Urban Trails Committee is.

Laura Farnsworth has resigned from the Urban Trails Committee due to increasing family responsibilities. Interviews of applicants for her replacement have been completed. Six people applied to be on the Urban Trails Committee, four of those were able to make the interview session. Pat Kennedy remarked that all four were excellent candidates and he would like to have accepted all four, only one could be chosen at this time. The person chosen to fill the vacancy on the Committee was Mike Heaston. In addition to Mike, current Committee members Lenna Watson and Cindy Burke have terms that will expire as of June 30. They both wish to be reappointed, It was requested that all three appointments be ratified by the Commission

Motion: Nelson/Watson to approve the appointment of Mike Heaston to the Urban Trails Committee and to approve the reappointment of Cindy Burke and Lenna Watson.

Motion was passed.

Bob Cron stated that the Urban Trails Committee is getting a lot of interest in expanding the scope of the Committee outside of the area with which it currently deals. He added that the Countywide Land Use Plan proposes a county trail plan, and there is a need to work some of this out. It was agreed that all four entities, Grand Junction, the County, Palisade and Fruita should be involved in the discussion of the future direction of the Riverfront Commission. Jim Baughman and Kathy Hall volunteered to speak to their respective boards about the matter.

Legacy Update

Bob Cron announced that the Great Outdoors Colorado Board has granted the Colorado River Greenway Legacy Project \$4.5 for projects in Mesa County. He provided information on GOCO's four funding quadrants and the distribution of the award among the quadrants. There was a press conference at Junior Service League on May 23 attended by GOCO's Executive Director, Will Shafroth, State Natural Resources Director Jim Lockhead, State Senator Tillie Bishop and a large turnout of local supporters of the Legacy project. Restrictions in the grant included no money for the botanical gardens, limited funding to Fruita in the local government quadrant and reduced funding for the Land Conservancy's orchard heritage project. Some of the priorities that have emerged include purchase of the Ostranger property, completion of the Orchard Mesa bridge and money for Palisade for an Americor program that they are developing to improve their riverfront property. Bob is confident that all the partners except the Botanical Society will get a fair share of the money that was awarded. He announced that he will be continuing his association with the Legacy project as the Coordinator on a contract basis. The importance of the Botanical Society and its significance to the Legacy project was discussed. There was an informal pledge by the Commission to continue its support of the Botanical Society in its quest for funding.

Stephanie reported that the Colorado Lottery office had sent a videographer to Grand Junction the previous weekend to make a film record of the before on the Legacy project sites. Their plan is for her to return when the work is completed to film the end result. These films will be used in the future to promote the benefits of the lottery in Colorado.

Safety Committee

The current focus of the committee has been to videotape the trails to discover and alert people to safety hazards on the trails. The tapes are being shared with the appropriate authorities to assist them in effecting the eradication of serious safety hazards.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Stephanie reported that a transfer of \$3,000 from the Riverfront Foundation to the Riverfront Commission was in progress. This represents half of their commitment to the Commission and with that deposit, the revenues and disbursements for the first six months of 1996 will be in balance and in budget. There were no questions about the report and it was approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Paul Nelson passed around a copy of a letter from Louis Brach expressing his concern about trespass on his property adjacent to the shopping center and Audubon trailhead. Paul has volunteered to gather the key players together to work on this problem. He stated that Louis is within his rights in objecting to the trespass but feels that he is also willing to cooperate if the authorities are willing to cooperate with him. The consensus of the Commission was that a designated parking area and a fence to protect the remainder of the property would be the best solution. How to acquire the right-of-way for that parking area is an issue that has needed resolution for some time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Stephanie wished to thank Dr. Lynn James for his efforts in raising the Rotary Foundation contribution of \$475 for tools for work on the Old Spanish Trail. A round of applause for Dr. James followed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:24 P.M..