

**GRAND JUNCTION/MESA COUNTY
RIVERFRONT COMMISSION**

MINUTES

September 17, 1996

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

Paul Nelson	Jack Yates
Bill Prakken	Judy Kennedy
Lynda Boody	Pat Kennedy
Lenna Watson	Kirk Rider

Also present were: Brad Taylor, Mike Heaston, Elvis Guin, Don Hobbs, Bob Cron, Wade Johnson, Joe Virgona, Dave Roper and Stephanie Schmid.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lynda Boody asked that the Urban Trails section of the August 20th minutes be revised to more accurately reflect the status of the Bang's Canyon Area lease and discussions between the City, the Parks Advisory Board and the Bureau of Land Management. She read her proposed revision which correctly detailed the current circumstances.

Motion: J. Kennedy/Boody to approve the minutes of the August meeting as submitted with the revision proposed by Lynda Boody.

Motion was passed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pat Kennedy encouraged Commission members to attend the Walkable Communities and Bicycle Facilities workshops on September 23rd and 24th. He commented that they should be excellent presentations that would be worthwhile for anyone who wished to attend.

Commission members were reminded of the upcoming City Council dinner on September 26th. Paul Nelson stressed the importance of having good participation by the Commission and Urban Trails Committee members.

Lynda Boody invited all Commission members to attend to the quarterly Intergovernmental meeting which will be held on October 3, 1996. Jack Yates, Palisade's ex-officio Commission member volunteered to have Palisade provide the refreshments for the meeting.

Paul introduced Mike Heaston, the new member of the Urban Trails Committee. He informed the Commission that Mike has also been hired to coordinate the Riverfront Run, which will be held on Saturday, October 5th at Connected Lakes State Park. Mike encouraged Commission members to either participate in the Run or volunteer to help with the event. He added that there would be a barbecue as a part of the event.

OLD BUSINESS

U.M.T.R.A. Update

Joe Virgona with the Department of Energy, briefed the Commission on the status of the clean-ups in process at Watson Island, the American Auto Salvage or Jarvis property and the River Road dike property. According to Joe, remedial work at Watson Island is very close to being finished. Decontamination of debris found on the island that was mixed with the tailings has been accomplished and the material will be transported to the local landfill as soon as the details can be worked out with the County. Once the material is removed, the back fill work must be done. The D.O.E. is working with the City to determine the amount of compensation the City should receive for doing the back fill work themselves. The City can then finish the site the way they want to. The final step at Watson Island will be to remove the temporary bridge spanning the slue sometime in October. If all goes well, the D.O.E. will be finished with Watson Island at that time.

The Jarvis property has had more than 70,000 cubic yards of tailings removed, and Joe estimated that they were about 70% done with that project. If the weather cooperates, he expects the D.O.E. to be finished hauling the tailings to the Cheney site by early next year. Revegetation of the area is planned for March of 1997. The agreement with the parties involved at the inception of this project was that D.O.E. would not back fill this property either so that the community would have the funds saved to purchase the property. The possibility of creating a lake on the site instead of replacing the tailings has been discussed.

The River Road dike will be finished by late spring, maybe May of 1997. Bob Cron informed the group that financing for trail construction in this area is a part of the third year of the Legacy project. Don Hobbs was asked about the City's schedule for repair of the Watson Island trail and planned new construction. He said that there were a number of issues under discussion at this time but that no decisions had yet been made. Wade Johnson wondered why there hadn't been more publicity on the progress of the clean-up. Joe responded that they have been holding off until they had some idea of when the work would be completed. The Commission would like to see some sort of publicity when the project is complete to acknowledge its conclusion.

State Trails Symposium

Stephanie Schmid reported that this year's State Trails Symposium was the largest ever held with a total of 250 attendees. She added that there was a large contingent of motorized trail users in attendance this year. Of special interest to her were the Canal Trails Liability workshop, the Wildlife and Trails workshop and the State Trails Grants and Plan workshop.

She said the presenters of the Canal Trails workshop expressed the opinion that State statutes would prohibit municipalities from indemnifying third parties, i.e. the City cannot assume liability for the landowners and the canal company and they also felt that any use of the canal banks for recreation would constitute unreasonable interference with canal operations.

From the wildlife workshop she learned that the Colorado Natural Heritage Program, headquartered at CSU in Ft. Collins reviews trails projects to determine their potential wildlife impacts. GOCO and the State Trails Committee have both used them to evaluate the wildlife aspects of projects requesting funds from them. They will review projects for nominal cost. The CNHP representatives recommended that a wildlife habitat plan be developed in order determine where wildlife is wanted and where it's need is not as critical. Their advice was to maximize opportunities and minimize losses through planning.

Stuart Macdonald, Coordinator of the State Trails Committee, urged participants in his workshop to apply for funding for as many trails projects as possible in order to keep the funding sources available for trails. Rick Hum, the Deputy Director of GOCO, had stated at the welcoming ceremonies of the Symposium, that trails grant requests were down and open space grant requests were up indicating that more dollars should be allocated to open space and less to trails. Stephanie asked the members for suggestions for trails grant requests from the Riverfront Commission. Suggestions included a link from the proposed Broadway underpass to the Audubon Trail and a way to connect the Orchard Mesa Bridge to the Old Spanish Trail.

Parking Lot Paving Completion

Paul informed the Commission that the parking lots at the Blue Heron II access on River Road and the Riverside Park access to the trail have been paved, thanks to the efforts of Mark Relph. He stated that he would like to send a letter to Mark expressing the Commission's appreciation for his help.

Brach's Shopping Center Update

Louis Brach has offered to sell a piece of his property to the north and west of the shopping center to be used for a parking lot and trailhead. Tim Woodmansee, the City's property agent, is working on this possibility. The Public Service Company's former transformer site may offer another solution. Paul is looking into that possibility also. He reported that he has talked with merchants in the shopping center who claim that their business is down since the de facto trailhead has been closed.

NEW BUSINESS

Glenwood Springs Trails Visit

Stephanie explained that Kurt Mill, Bob Cron and she had given half a dozen Glenwood Springs officials a tour of the Grand Junction riverfront trails last May. They, in turn, invited the Riverfront Commission to come to Glenwood Springs to view their trail system at some time in the future. Conversations with the city planner, Andrew

McGregor have resulted in identifying several possible dates in October for the reciprocal visit. After some discussion, it was determined that October 11th, 18th or 25th would be considered, and that Stephanie would call Andrew to determine which date would best for him. People interested in going to Glenwood would then be notified.

Trash Force II

Wade Johnson informed the Commission that Trash Force II has been in existence since April of this year. Its goals encompass the desire to beautify Mesa County and to expand recreation opportunities on the public lands. Patterned after an effort in the Farmington, New Mexico, it is working to identify and clean up sites that are subject to unauthorized dumping. Making people more aware of illegal dumping is also a priority. The partners in Trash Force II include the Mesa County Landfill, the Energy Office, the BLM and the Colorado Alternative Sentencing Program. Cleanup efforts focus on involving citizens affected by the dumping as well as the aforementioned partners. Dump sites that require cooperative efforts are the targeted. Signs recognizing the cleanup participants are left to alert others that the area has been cleaned up. Pat Kennedy advised Wade that the Urban Trails Committee had identified a site that needed help with cleanup in the Colinas del Vale area. Wade said that there has been some discussion on that area and the concern was that most of the area is privately owned. He said that Sandi Stern with the Energy Office was really the one to talk to about whether or not that location would work for their program.

Liability Insurance for Riverfront Commission

Dave Roper, the risk manager for the City of Grand Junction, discussed his concerns over the adequacy of the Commission's liability insurance coverage. He stated that the City of Grand Junction has a \$100,000 deductible on its liability insurance and that any successful suit against the Commission could cost the City up to \$100,000 in cash. He said that there is also a question as to whether or not the Commission is in fact a governmental entity and consequently may not be protected by the State's governmental immunity clause. Other concerns included Commission activity outside the City limits, exposure of individual Commission members and complications brought on by the Commission's involvement in the Legacy project. The possibility of incorporating the Commission in order to reduce exposure was also discussed. At the conclusion of the discussion, Bill Prakken appointed an ad hoc committee to meet and review the issues discussed and choose a course of action. Appointed to the committee were Kirk Rider, Pat Kennedy, Dave Roper, Bill Prakken and Brain Mahoney.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Orchard Mesa Bridge

Bill Prakken read a memo from Carl Zimmerman stating that the 404 Permit application for the bridge should be approved within the next two weeks. Patty Schrader of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will finish drafting the conditions of the permit and send it to Denver for USF&W and Corps of Engineers approval. Conditions of the permit will include the provision that the City develop a habitat improvement plan on City owned

property that is approved by both the City and Fish and Wildlife that will mitigate the impacts of the bridge project.

Urban Trails Committee

Pat presented a prototype of the Urban Trails Map that was presented to City Council on Monday, September 9th. It shows an extensive trail system throughout the urbanized area of Grand Junction, including Colinas de Valle and the Tabeguache Trail areas. The map includes some of the Clifton area and looks toward Palisade. Cliff Davidson has provided the Committee with a map that includes some of the trails in the Ridges.

Pat expressed concern about connections to the riverfront trail being developed by State Parks between Corn Lake and the Climax Mill site. Because this area is under the jurisdiction of the County, who should be responsible for these access points is a question. Pressure on the Committee to take more of an interest outside the boundaries of its original charge is also a concern of Pat's. He expressed the need for some direction on how to approach the County in regard to recreation and trails.

Bob Cron presented the Canal Trails Feasibility Study to the City Council on September 9th. The recommendation of the report was to go outside the study area and develop a demonstration canal trail in conjunction with the future Matchett property park site where land ownership is not so diverse and landowner support is not as much in question. Pat said that the Feasibility Study presentation went well and that Bob did an excellent job of explaining it to Council members.

Bob and Pat indicated that the Colinas del Valle project has run into some political snags as far as getting the City to adopt the existing trail network. Instead, the Committee is working with the individual landowners to encourage the dedication of trail right-of-ways as the properties become subject to development. The Tabeguache Trailhead issue is tied to the BLM's Bang's Canyon Ad Hoc Citizen's Planning Committee which has another year to complete its study. Keith Mumby, with the City Parks Advisory Board, has taken an active interest in the project and has agreed to see it through. Pat's concern is that the delay may put the project in jeopardy as far as future support from the City Council.

Legacy Update

Bob Cron reported that GOCO has requested that some of the second year projects planned for the Colorado River Greenway Legacy grant be put back to 1999 in order to accommodate their (GOCO's) cash flow needs. Bob has met with most of the sponsors and has their consensus on how to deal with GOCO's request. The other issue for the Legacy Steering Committee is the GOCO's Master Agreement, the sub-agreements between all of the Legacy partners and the Riverfront Commission and the issue of whether or not the Riverfront Commission can or will assume liability for the Colorado River Greenway Legacy project. The sponsors have decided that they would like to meet every other month and have scheduled the next meeting for November 12th.

Safety Committee

Lenna reported that none of the Committee members were able to attend the September meeting. In the meantime, Dave Roper has agreed to join the Committee and Don Hobbs is in the process of getting air photos of the trail sections to aid the Committee in identifying sections of the trails that present potentially hazardous conditions.

ADMINISTRATION

Financial Report

Motion: Rider/P. Kennedy to approve the financial report as submitted.

Motion was passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Nelson took the opportunity to thank Bob Cron and Pat Kennedy for their excellent work on the Canal Trails Feasibility Study.

Jack Yates told the Commission of a situation in Palisade where they might be of assistance. He described a piece of Town owned property that requires an easement in order for several nearby landowners to access their properties. Jack suggested that the landowners trade a trail easement along the river in return for the easement across the panhandle of Town property. The landowners have refused and Jack would like support from the Commission in convincing the Trustees to hold out for the trail easement. Bob Cron offered to work with Jack on behalf of the Legacy steering committee and the Riverfront Commission.

Jack also reported that the first contingent of Americor volunteers would be in Palisade starting on October 20th to work on cleaning up the new Palisade riverfront park. They will return in the spring to do the landscaping work.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28P.M..