

**GRAND JUNCTION/MESA COUNTY
RIVERFRONT COMMISSION**

MINUTES

October 15, 1996

The meeting of the Grand Junction/Mesa County Riverfront Commission was called to order at 7:32P.M. by Co-Chair Bill Prakken. Those in attendance from the Commission:

Paul Nelson	Jack Yates
Bill Prakken	Judy Kennedy
Lynda Boody	Carl Zimmerman
Ken Nesbitt	Kirk Rider
Jim Baughman	Bennett Boeschstein

Also present were: Elvis Guin, Don Hobbs, Joe Stevens, Sue Gormley, Patty Schrader, Tim Carlson, Jim Morris and Stephanie Schmid.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Nesbitt/Rider to approve the minutes of the September meeting as submitted.

Motion was passed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stephanie informed the Commission that a trip to Glenwood Springs to tour their trails was scheduled for Friday, October 18th. Anyone interested in participating is welcome and should contact her before Friday.

The date for the Annual Retreat has been set for January 11 and will again be held at the United Companies Hunt Club (gravel pit) at the river and 18 Road. Bill urged Commission, Urban Trails and Foundation Board members to attend and, in the meantime, to think of possible topics for discussion.

Bill reported that the fall intergovernmental meeting held on October 3rd was well attended and that the exchange between attendees was productive. He suggested that Commission members make every effort to attend future meetings.

OLD BUSINESS

Riverfront Run Update

Bill announced that this year's Run was one of the most profitable ever held with a net profit of almost \$3,800, and that the involvement of Mike Heaston as race coordinator added a measure of professionalism to the event. Participation was up about 15% over

1995. Ken Nesbitt stated that he had heard a number of positive comments about the fact that food was included. A summary of the revenues and expenses for the Run was provided to Commission members along with their minutes and other financial information.

Liability Insurance Update

Bill informed the group that Dave Roper, the Risk Manager for the City and Jamie Hamilton who wrote the Commission's current liability policy coverage both feel that the policy is limited in its coverage. Brian Mahoney continues to believe that the coverage in the current policy is broad enough to cover the Commission and Foundation under any conceivable circumstance. After reading the policy, Bill tended to agree with Brian that the policy will cover almost anything. However, he suggested that it is probably coverage that is unanticipated by the insurer.

Bill proposed that the Commission could either choose to do nothing and continue on as before, or they could request a policy that will give them broader coverage for which they would have to pay an additional premium. He asked Commission members how they felt about the issue. A question was asked as to whether or not the City would be willing to pay the additional premium. The consensus of the group present was that the possibility of expanding their liability coverage should be investigated which Bill agreed to do.

Fruita to Loma Trail Alignment Alternatives

Bennett Boeschstein, the Commission's ex-officio member from Fruita, reported on the progress of their planning effort funded in part by the Bureau of Reclamation for the Fruita to Loma trail. He also reported on the public meeting that had been held recently to discuss the three proposed alternative trail alignments. He described, for the group, the four mile section of the Colorado River along which the trail is planned between Fruita and the Kokopelli trailhead and the current land uses and jurisdictional entities involved in the area.

He went on to outline the three possible routes for the trail. The south route would involve construction of a bridge in the vicinity of the Loma boat launch and a trail paralleling existing roads on the south side of the river from the bridge through Kings View Estates and north across the river to Fruita. The north route which would start at the Loma exit of I-70 and run along I-70, through the refinery property, possibly across Skipper's Island and in to Fruita from the north. The third alternative would be placed in the right-of-way and adjacent to I-70.

The south alignment would be located entirely on public lands and would be the least expensive alternative with the major expense being bridge that would have to be built at the west end of the trail. It would be the most scenic and least costly route. The drawbacks for this route include the potential impact that trail could have on the wildlife habitat along the river and the possibility of bringing more traffic into the nearby BLM wilderness study area. The northern route would involve acquiring right-of-ways or easements across private lands. The I-70 route, although providing public right-of-way for the alignment as long as CDOT is agreeable, would require costly engineering and construction in order to deal with its proximity to the highway and the number of bridges

that would be required. This route would be the most costly. Highway noise would be a disadvantage in the case of both of the routes on the north side of the river.

Bennett explained that none of the alternatives would involve paved trails, and that the bridges would be 8 to 10 feet wide. The engineering and feasibility studies indicate that hunting and wildlife values would be preserved. The feeling in Fruita is that recreational use in the area will continue to increase with or without a trail and that active management of this growth will help protect the existing riparian environment. The report will be completed in December and may or may not make specific recommendations on which trail alignment is preferred. The price range for all three trails was determined to be between \$200,000 and \$300,000 for construction only. These figures do not include land acquisition costs.

Bill Prakken inquired as to what role the Riverfront Commission might be expected to play in this process. Bennett's response was that they were interested in ideas and/or suggestions Commission members might have and they would appreciate evidence of support in writing from the Commission for use in applying for grants. He added that until there was more consensus from the community in determining which alternative had the most support, they didn't plan to seek any funding.

The discussion that followed among the Riverfront Commission members indicated that there were as many opinions about the best location for a trail as there had been at the public meeting in Fruita. One suggestion that came from this discussion was the possibility of limiting the times of the day or season that the trail could be used in order to accommodate the wildlife and hunters.

NEW BUSINESS

Sensible Environmental Solutions

Tim Carlson, representing Sensible Environmental Solutions, spoke to the Commission about his interest in developing a science park in the vicinity of the Colorado River. He and his colleagues are in the process of measuring community interest in a project of this sort and are contacting organizations who may have similar interests. He asked the Commission for the names of entities who would share his interest in a regional science park. According to Tom, his plan is to apply for a planning grant from the National Science Foundation to determine the feasibility of such an undertaking and to identify other sources of funding. He asked the Commission to provide a letter of support for the project should the NSF indicate that they are interested in seeing a full fledged application from his organization. Responses from Commission members included pointing out the importance of many partners in such a project and concern about who would bear the cost of maintenance and operations if the facility were built.

Commission Vacancies

Stephanie asked that the Commission approve a change in the signatories on the Riverfront Commission checking account due to the resignation of Fid Braffett who was one of the signatories. She suggested that Pat Kennedy be named as the fourth person to sign on the account.

Motion: Rider/Nelson to remove former Commission member Fid Braffett from the list of signatories for the Riverfront Commission checking account and replace him with Pat Kennedy.

Motion was passed.

Mesa County Land Development Advisory Board Representation

Paul Nelson suggested that Elvis Guin be appointed as the Commission's representative to the MCLDB. Judy Kennedy also expressed interested in participating but was concerned about meeting times during business hours. It was decided that Elvis would at least attend the first meeting to represent the Commission until meeting dates and times were determined.

Blue Heron Trail Maintenance Project

Don Hobbs, Assistant Parks Director for the City, suggested the possibility of a volunteer maintenance project on the Blue Heron trail. He emphasized the need to coordinate and schedule support from Parks staff in advance in order to maximize the accomplishments of the effort. After some discussion on how to get rid of the tamarix, it was agreed that Judy Kennedy and Don Hobbs would work on setting up a work date for cutting back the vegetation along the Blue Heron Trail. Carl Zimmerman agreed to work with Don on the use of appropriate chemicals to ultimately kill the plants and how to establish a revegetation plan to create a long term solution for the problem. A February date was determined to be best for scheduling the project.

Americor Volunteers

Jack Yates will have fifteen volunteers working in Palisade on cleaning up their riverfront park site. He is looking for projects for these people to do inside in the event of inclement weather. Anyone having thoughts on this should contact Jack at Palisade Town Hall.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Orchard Mesa Bridge

Carl Zimmerman reported that the "final comment" design for the bridge has been mailed. When that is returned with the CDOT's approval, the City can proceed with the invitation to bid. This should take place within the next couple of weeks.

Urban Trails Committee

Neither of the Committee Co-Chairs were present to make a report.

Legacy Update

Bill reported that the Steering Committee is in the process of finalizing the contract between GOCO and the Commission. Until that is done, no Legacy funds will be transferred.

Safety Committee

There was no report.

Gunnison River Boat Takeout

Kirk Rider reported that the BLM thinks the land exchange between them and Redlands Water and Power can be completed by the end of 1996 making the site for the boat takeout available for construction.

ADMINISTRATION

Financial Report

Stephanie reviewed the analysis of receipts and disbursements for the Legacy Project Coordinator that was included in the meeting packet. She reported that everyone except State Parks, DOW and GOCO has already paid their 1996 obligation. There were no other questions or comments about the financial report.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kirk informed the Commission that there has been progress on the matter of the r-o-w vacation south of River Road at 24 ¼ Road. The City has agreed to purchase the tax certificates from the County for the one piece of private property that has been blocking the vacation. However, a part of the deal struck back in 1993, included the transfer of the remainder of the Hotchkiss property to Woody Walcher. Kirk has learned that a portion of the Walcher property is still in the County and will have to be annexed in order to be combined with the Riverfront property so that the replatt can be completed.

Judy told the Commission that the appraisal for the Ostranger property had been completed and that there were more acres in the parcel than was originally thought. However, the project is still a go in spite of the fact that the price will be a little higher. The BLM has found the extra money to complete the transaction and the County will become the owner of the property.

Joe Stevens reported that the City is looking into the possibility of acquisition of the Audubon Trail.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23P.M..