

GRAND JUNCTION/MESA COUNTY  
RIVERFRONT COMMISSION

MINUTES

February 18, 1997

The February meeting of the Grand Junction/Mesa County Riverfront Commission was called to order at 7:30 P.M. by Co-Chair Bill Prakken. Those in attendance from the Commission:

Paul Nelson	Pat Kennedy
Bill Prakken	Bill Findlay
Lynda Boody	Kirk Rider
Judy Kennedy	Jim Baughman
Jack Yates	Mike Sutherland

Also present were: Brad Taylor, Elvis Guin, John Schneiger, Sue Gormley, Kurt Mill, Ted Ciavonne, Sandy Stern, Clayton Dause, Jan Pomrenke, Carlos Sauvage, Stacey McLennan, Bob Cron, Joe Stevens and Stephanie Schmid.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Kennedy/Findlay to approve the December minutes as submitted.

Motion was passed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Clayton Dause, the newly appointed liaison from the Botanical Society and Mike Sutherland, newly appointed ex-officio member representing the Grand Junction City Council were introduced to the Commission.

OLD BUSINESS

Liability Insurance Update

Bill Prakken announced that Jamie Hamilton, the Commission's agent with Home Loan Insurance, has been unable to find any evidence that the Commission's current insurance coverage is inadequate. Bill's recommendation was that there was no need to spend additional money at this time for liability insurance.

Gunnison River Boat Takeout

Kirk Rider reported that the land swap between Redlands Water and Power and the BLM was moving along. Surveys of the two parcels have been completed, deeds of exchange will be drafted when the BLM completes its public hearing phase and title insurance should not be a problem according to Kirk. He was reluctant to name a date, but felt that the process should be complete within the next six to eight weeks. He added that Carlos Sauvage has been instrumental in accomplishing the exchange.

Bob Cron added that Elam construction is rebuilding the road to the site of the boat take out and Kirk stated that Elam is donating the gravel to surface the parking lot for the takeout. A fence to separate the parking lot from the gravel pit is expected in return. Bob said that there were funds in the GOCO Legacy project to pay for the fence.

#### River Road Property

Kirk reported that Scott Thompson of Thompson Langford has donated many hours to produce the survey information necessary for the boundary adjustment on the Hotchkiss property. The title work for the project has been donated by Abstract Title. Bill Prakken explained the reason for concern about this issue was that the boundary adjustment and a right-of-way vacation were a part of the negotiations for trail right-of-way for the Blue Heron II Trail. Part of the trail remains on private property because the right-of-way vacation and boundary adjustments on the Hotchkiss property have been stalled for several years. Ted Ciavonne suggested the retention of a fifteen foot easement in the old county right-of-way for access to the trail.

#### Grand Mesa Slopes Update

Carlos Sauvage briefed the Commission on efforts to establish some sort of conservation easement on the Somerville Ranch in order to realize some sort of dollar value for the property in the form of matching funds for future openspace grant applications. He also reported on the acquisition of a piece of land owned by the federal government that would provide an ideal boat launch site and a link to Delta County along the Gunnison River.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### Watson Island Trail

Ted Ciavonne brought the Commission members up to date on the status of the trail planned to connect the north end of the Orchard Mesa bicycle/pedestrian bridge to 5<sup>th</sup> Street. According to Ted, the trail will someday extend from the new bridge to the Jarvis property, but thus far no right-of-way under the railroad bridge has been negotiated and funding is probably not available to go beyond the 5<sup>th</sup> Street bridge. Ted has divided the trail into three sections; the part between the railroad bridge and the 5<sup>th</sup> Street bridge, from the 5<sup>th</sup> Street bridge east to the 9<sup>th</sup> Street extension and east from 9<sup>th</sup> Street to the new pedestrian bridge. The two sections west of 9<sup>th</sup> Street can be located on the top of the levee engineered by the Army Corps of Engineers that is above the 500 year floodplain. The dike done under the auspices of the Department of Energy may not have been engineered and DOE is not willing to provide details at this time. Ted doesn't know if it will meet 500 year flood standards or what effect the manmade wetlands in that section will have on the site.

His recommendation is that this trail remain "high and dry" or approximate the 100 year floodplain elevation in order to accommodate commuter traffic. With that in mind, he suggested alternative trail alignments on or off the levee in the area of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and a route that would lead either to 7<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> Street to access downtown instead of under the 5<sup>th</sup> Street bridge. He told the Commission that there is a shelf under the 5<sup>th</sup> Street bridge for the trail, but that it could not be kept dry during high water. He also stated that cost estimates for the trail were based on a 12 foot width which would require widening the levee to allow for shoulders.

Property ownership could become a problem if the levee is widened. Concern was also expressed on behalf of the Botanical Society about the loss of real estate on their property if the levee is widened. However, it was agreed that the twelve foot width would provide a much safer trail surface.

### Earth Day

Sandy Stern, representing the Grand Valley Earth Coalition, spoke to the Commission about changes in the structure of their organization. They have decided to drop the Earth Day event as it has been done in the past and devote their efforts to a year-round program. They have identified four projects for this year including internships for local teachers with local agencies, an environmental lecture series, a roundtable with area college and high school students dealing with environmental conflict issues and development of riverfront interpretative signage. They plan to use middle school students to do the research on environmental issues while the signs themselves will be designed by professionals experienced in interpretive work. She requested a letter of support from the Commission for an EPA grant they are seeking to fund the program.

Bob Cron suggested that Sandy visit with the Legacy sponsors who have already identified several potential sites for interpretive signs and the architectural theme for the displays. He added that they also have funding for several of those sites. Joe Stevens stated that it was his understanding that this program would include maintenance of the interpretive signs they create.

### Rapid Creek Trail Grant Application

Stacey McLennan provided the Commission with information on the Rapid Creek Road trail project for which the County has requested funding assistance from the Colorado State Trails Program. Additional assistance will be provided by the Partners organization, the Mesa County Jail work crew and the County Road Department. The project encompasses improvements to Rapid Creek Road and construction of a parking lot at the trailhead. Ute Water has donated the land for the parking lot. The trail will be open to non-motorized users only except during the rifle hunting season in the fall when it will be open to motorized vehicles. The total project is estimated to be in the neighborhood of \$170,000 with half of being requested from the State Trails Committee. According to Stacey, the issue here is public access to public lands and the Rapid Creek Road improvements and trailhead parking lot will help to make that possible.

### Trails Day Committee

Bill Prakken proposed that a committee be appointed to plan a "splashy" event in June to celebrate the completion of the bridge and trail. Those appointed included Carl Zimmerman, Bill Prakken, Judy Kennedy, Jeanette Main-Goecke and Mike Heaston.

### Trails Map Committee

Bill reported that Stephanie has requested the appointment of a committee to work on developing a new trails map for the riverfront. Lynda Boody, Judy Kennedy and Bill Findlay volunteered to serve with Lynda acting as point person.

### Coors Porcelain Trail Access

Bill explained that the access trail to the east of the Coors property will be closed by the end of the month because the land is needed for their expansion. Coors employees are concerned about their loss of access to the Riverfront trail because of this closure and would like to have a gate in the fence along the trail on the Coors property. Bill asked the Commission to speak out in support of a gate to provide access to the Riverfront trail from the Coors property.

Motion: Rider/P. Kennedy to resolve that the City of Grand Junction should be encouraged to allow a gate on the Coors property.

Motion was passed.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### Orchard Mesa Bridge

Zimmerman reported that the ground breaking ceremony went very well on January 7<sup>th</sup> with a large turnout in spite of the cold weather. He learned that by changing the alignment of the deck to the bridge, substantial savings will be realized. Construction is on schedule, all four caissons and the two piers are in and the pier caps are being formed this week. Carl said that if the number of people who are observing the construction are any indication of the number of people who are actually going to use it, traffic lights may be necessary. Students at Orchard Mesa Middle School are also anxious for the bridge to be completed.

On another matter, Carl reported that we are a finalist for the \$50,000 grant that he had applied for to mitigate Jarvis property and develop backwater fish habitat. The plan is to use that money to provide the wildlife habitat mitigation required by U.S. Fish and Wildlife in conjunction with the bridge construction. Fish and Wildlife has said that they will match the grant from Exxon if it is received. Carl answered Bob Cron's question about trail alignment by stating that the trail will probably be located to the north of the pond, somewhat distant from the river.

#### Urban Trails Committee

Pat Kennedy reported that the Urban Trails Committee attended the Mesa County Water Association's three week Water Course in lieu of holding a February meeting. Background on canal bank ownership and water rights was the essence of the first two classes. The third class will feature presentations by Stuart Macdonald, the State Trails Coordinator and GVVUA Manager, Dick Proctor on the pros and cons of recreational use of canal banks.

The Committee has been working with Mark Relph and Shawn Cooper on the Urban Trail Master Plan which has been reviewed by the City Planning Commission and recommended for adoption by Council. They are working with Carlos Sauvage on a small connector from the Seasons subdivision to the Liberty Cap trailhead on the Monument. They also supported the Council's denial of the request for right-of-way vacation of a portion of G Road adjacent to the Highline Canal.

### Legacy Update

Bob Cron reported that the Legacy master agreement has been signed by all the cities involved, the County and the Mesa County Land Conservancy. It is waiting for approval by GOCO who should sign and return it this week. The state agencies, Parks and DOW are working on a separate agreement because portions of the agreement that were acceptable to the local sponsors was not acceptable to them. The first GOCO check has been received by Mesa County for Palisade High School, Columbus Elementary School and the first installment of GOCO's share of the Legacy Coordinator funding. Bob added that he expects to hear by the end of the month as to which projects have made the cut for Legacy 3. The final awards will be announced in July. He has submitted an application for another \$3 million in this round of funding.

### Safety Committee

The focus of the February Safety Committee meeting was choosing a grid system for marking the trails for easy location of trail users in need of assistance, emergency or otherwise. According to Stephanie, who reported in Lenna Watson's absence, the consensus was that a G.I.S. grid system which is familiar to the dispatch and search and rescue personnel was the best solution. The Committee is also developing a trails maintenance form or comment card which will be tested at several locations along the trail to alert maintenance providers to problems that create safety hazards. The suggestion of the Commission was to do both linear distance and coordinate locations on the trails.

## ADMINISTRATION

### Financial Report

The financial statements were approved without comment.

### 1997 Budget

Discussion of the 1997 budget was deferred until the March meeting.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Pat Kennedy expressed concern that future development of the Brach's Shopping Center property take into account the location trail access to the Audubon Trail and strive to make the trail an amenity to the site.

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 P.M. .