

**Grand Junction/Mesa County
Riverfront Commission**

245-0045

Minutes

June 17, 1997

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Bill Prakken at 7:38 P.M. Those present from the Commission were:

Judy Kennedy	Pat Kennedy
Lynda Boody	Bill Prakken
Paul Nelson	Carl Zimmerman
Bill Findlay	Jack Yates
Bennett Boeschstein	

Also present were Paula Anderson, Sue Gormley, Bill Chenoweth, Bob Cron, Brad Taylor, Elvis Guin, Joe Stevens, Kurt Mill and Stephanie Schmid.

Approval of Minutes

Bob Cron requested that the reference to the need to raise the matching funds for the Old Fruita Bridge in the Legacy report be deleted.

Motion: Prakken/Nelson to approve the minutes as amended.

Motion was passed.

Announcements

Bill Prakken announced that the terms of four Commission members would be expiring as of the end of the month. Of those whose terms expire, Paul Nelson, Judy Kennedy and Jeanette Main-Goecke wish to be reappointed. Ken Nesbitt, who has served two three year terms, does not wish to be reappointed. Appointment or reappointment of Commission members is the responsibility of a panel of representatives from the Grand Junction City Council, Mesa County Commissioners, Fruita and Palisade. Because only one response has been received to Grand Junction's ad for filling the vacancy, Bill suggested that another ad be run. He also asked that Palisade and Fruita be contacted to make sure any applications received by them were forwarded to the Grand Junction City Clerk.

Bill asked that discussion of the planned bridge dedication be deferred to old business where the tenth anniversary celebration was to be discussed.

Joe Stevens informed the group that Council had approved the name Las Colonias Park for the old Climax Mill tailings site. Ground breaking for the trail across the site is planned for June 18th.

Paul Nelson thanked Lynda Boody for organizing the annual raft trip. Lynda plans to send thank you notes to the individuals who provided rafts and/or boatmen.

Old Business

No Thoroughfare Gulch

Bill told Commission members that he has informed Redlands Water and Power of the Commission's interest in accepting the conveyance of a piece of property located between Monument Road and the Colorado River. They (Redlands Water and Power) are willing to transfer the property if the Riverfront Foundation is willing to cover the costs associated with the transfer, i.e. attorney's fees and filing fees. These costs should be negligible because of the willingness of either Bill or Kirk Rider to do the legal work. Bill stated that the question needing to be addressed is whether or not the Foundation is willing to take on a situation that is almost certain to have some boundary disputes and other hassles involved. Bill stated that his personal inclination was to go forward with the acquisition because it presents an opportunity that has the potential of connecting the Tabeguache trailhead and Monument Road to trails along the river. He added that neighbors in the area are interested in cleaning up the site and would probably be willing to participate in the effort. Bill closed the discussion by proposing that, if there were no objections, he would proceed to review the documents provided by Redlands Water and Power and pursue the matter. He added that the proposal would be discussed with Foundation board members at their meeting in July.

Bridge Dedication/10th Anniversary Celebration

Bill outlined the issues involved in the planning process for the bridge dedication and the 10th anniversary celebration. The first thought of the Bridge Dedication Committee was to make two separate media events out of the bridge dedication and the marking of the Riverfront Commission's 10th anniversary. A dinner was planned for the second week in July and the bridge dedication ceremony set for August 14th. However, time has run short on organizing an anniversary celebration that would take place in less than a month, making that plan unfeasible. Possible options discussed included combining the dedication and a dinner for the anniversary celebration, ruling out an invitation only dinner because it does not necessarily make a great media event, making the event a fundraising opportunity where any one willing to pay would be welcome, holding the dedication in the late afternoon with an anniversary dinner to follow or emphasizing the reunion aspect of bringing all the Friends of the River, past and present together.

Commission members did finally agree that plans for the bridge dedication should not be held up by indecision on what form the anniversary celebration should take. They agreed that the date for the celebration should be put off, allowing more time for planning and cooler temperatures for an outside event. A less formal affair seemed to gain support, but how the event should be funded was left undecided. Commission members seemed to support the idea of a date some time between mid September and the Riverfront Run the first weekend on October. The possibility of a dinner the night before the Riverfront Run was suggested.

Fruita/Loma Trail Update

Bennett Boeschstein informed the Commission that Fruita is on record as being in support of the dedication of 120 acres of the Westcort refinery property for the purpose of establishing a trail alignment along a northern route of the Fruita/Kokopelli trail. This dedication of land would represent only a partial payment of their property tax obligation to Mesa County. If the dedication takes place, the right-of-way would be deeded to the County which would transfer it to State Parks which would in turn take on responsibility of trail maintenance. The acquisition would provide one-third of the right-of-way needed to make the trail link a reality. Bennett felt that the remainder of the land needed would fall into place without too much difficulty if this were to deal go though. The other landowners whose cooperation would be needed are United Companies, Pabco and CDOT. In addition to right-of-way acquisition, several bridges would be required to cross drainages along the route. Bennett pointed out that State Parks has offered to work with Fruita on that. The value of the dedicated land could be used as local contribution for matching purposes for the Legacy grant.

Bennett also reported on the results of the old Fruita bridge restoration report done by CSU engineering students. According to the report, restoration of the bridge is feasible. Two alternatives were developed for replacing the bridge decking, but the report concluded that the piers were stable. The high end estimate for the work was \$250,000. With only \$50,000 budgeted in the Legacy grant, it will be necessary to raise additional funds to complete the project.

Palisade Update

Jack Yates reported that another Americorps group was working at the Palisade park site. They are engaged in picking up every bit of "foreign matter". He is looking for an early July opening of the park. Jack is also waiting for GSA to do its part in making it possible for Palisade to acquire the bridge that was used to cross Highway 50 at the UMTRA staging site. He estimated that it would take about sixty days to finish the process. He is making every effort to keep the cost of moving the bridge to a minimum. He was asked if a formal ceremony was planned for the opening. Jack responded that he hadn't thought that far along. Bill Prakken asked him to keep the Commission informed as to their plans.

Name the Bridge Contest

Bill informed the Commission that the Grand Junction City Council had failed to adopt the recommended name for the bridge. In fact, they didn't seem to like any of the names on the Commission's short list. Until a better name surfaces, it appears that the Council has decided to defer naming the bridge. The Council did adopt the name Las Colonias Park for the mill tailings site. Bill suggested that new suggestions should be encouraged in hopes of coming up with a suitable name.

Old Spanish Trail/Orchard Mesa Irrigation District Update

Paul Nelson reviewed the situation with the easement across land owned by Orchard Mesa Irrigation. The original understanding, according to Paul, was that they wanted an assurance that the County would approve a subdivision of the property in question

when they decided to do it. As of this May, they informed the Commission and the County that they expected the Commission to go through the subdivision process for them and that they would close that trail if it was not done by a June deadline. Paul, with the help Judy Kennedy, Sue Gormley and Linda Dannenberger, has convinced the ditch company to wait until the County can survey the property and the subdivision process can be completed. As of this date, they are willing to accept the county's time line for completion of the task and have agreed to not close the trail.

New Business

Paula Anderson, Volunteer Coordinator with the Grand Junction Police Department, informed Commission members of the start of a trail host program for the Grand Junction sections of the riverfront trail. She explained that she is working closely with Colorado River State Parks to combine efforts to patrol the Redlands loop section of the trail. State Parks already has a program of volunteers and the plan is to add trail hosts on the Blue Heron sections of the trail to make the coverage contiguous.

The goal will be to provide a "friendly presence" on the trails, not to have enforcement responsibilities. The volunteers will be provided with cell phones for emergencies, helmets and shirts that coordinate with the State Parks volunteer shirts. The hope is that the volunteers will ride their own bicycles. Additional training will be provided to the volunteers. Ages 15 and up may participate in the program. Shifts will be two hours and will be scheduled between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. Thursday through Sunday.

High Water Trail Damage Report

Bill asked for information from the group as to how the trails had been affected by the spring runoff. According to reports the trails are in their usual springtime condition. Two benches on the Blue Heron trail were temporarily removed to prevent them from floating away with their concrete pads. The intention is to return them to their original locations once the water levels subside. Joe Stevens reported that there were more serious problems with the Blue Heron boat launch and the east end of Watson Island. They don't yet have a solution for the boat launch, but the attempts to prevent any further damage to Watson Island were successful. Very little additional damage was sustained there.

Committee Reports

Orchard Mesa Bridge

Carl Zimmerman reported that the bridge is nearing completion. The concrete trail leading to the bridge on the south side is finished. The little bridge across the Orchard Mesa Canal behind the middle school is in place. The railing on the bridge, the final grading along the path, fencing and the parking lot are all that remain to be done. According to Carl, the foreman on the job expects to be finished by July 15th.

Urban Trails Committee

Bob Cron reported that he plans to brief the County Commissioners on the Urban Trails Master Plan sometime in July. Grand Junction has already adopted the plan as a part of the Multi-modal Plan. He also reported on the County's public meeting on the proposed improvements to 30 Road from I-70B south to D Road. He commented on the plan, suggesting that there be actual bike lanes instead of just additional width to accommodate bicycles. He also objected to putting bicycle traffic on to the sidewalks in the area of the railroad underpass.

There is one vacancy on the Urban Trails Committee, caused by the resignation of Yeulin Willett. Bob and Pat are in the process of interviewing candidates to fill that vacancy. They are also seriously considering increasing the committee size to nine members. It is their hope that the addition of new members will reenergize the dynamics of Committee, particularly if they can bring in three new members instead of just one. Bob asked for the Commission's thoughts on expansion. Bill stated that he didn't recall any condition that would limit the size of the Committee, but that if that was what they wished to do, there should be formal authorization from the Commission. Bob and Pat requested that said approval be given.

Motion: Kennedy/Findlay to expand the Urban Trails Committee roster to nine members assuming qualified candidates can be found to fill those positions.

Motion was passed.

Bob closed by telling Commission members that the Committee is considering a retreat to be held sometime in the fall. He would like to be able to include the new committee members and extended an invitation to the Commission co-chairs and any other Commission members interested in helping to rechart the course of the Committee.

Bennett remarked that River Road has been resurfaced, but that no appropriate shoulders have been included. He asked if that was a County or a City project. Bob responded that he would ask Mark Relph about why Multi-modal Plan guidelines had not been followed.

Legacy Update

Bill suggested that the detailed Legacy annual report be deferred to the July meeting in favor of a brief update. Bob reported that State Parks has issued contracts on improvements at Island Acres and Corn Lake including another half mile of trail between 30 ½ and 30 Roads. Negotiations are also in progress on acquisition of land for the Fruita riverfront park. The land conservancy has purchased an option on 14 acres adjacent to the Grand Junction Wildlife Area and they have been involved with the Bureau of Reclamation in purchasing 487 acres on the river near DeBeque.

Mesa County has applied for acquisition of 109 acres of land southeast of Whitewater which should provide an ideal site for a parking lot and boat ramp as well as creating a trailhead for access to BLM lands to the south. This acquisition combined with state held lands further to the south will provide a potential trail alignment that could go all the way to Delta. Bob thanked Sue Gormley for her help in organizing the site visit to

the Cotter property with National Park Service representatives who are playing a key role in the acquisition process.

He reported that it appears that there will be enough money in the Watson Island trail construction budget to extend the trail eastward toward 27 ½ Road. The fund request to GOCO for the cost of fencing at the Redlands boat take out has been submitted. Elam Construction has donated an estimated \$18,000 in in-kind services at the take-out in the form of gravel and earthwork. Bob felt that this amount was probably a conservative estimate. He added that after a full year, the master agreement was still not signed but GOCO seems to be willing to give us money anyway, as long as we continue to get projects done.

Safety Committee

Lenna Watson was not present but faxed a report to Bill Prakken to be read to the Commission. A grid system will be used for purposes of identification of locations on the trails. Each marker will have two numbers. The top number will be the grid number, and the number on the bottom will be a mile marker for people wanting to know the distance they have covered. Carsonite markers have been recommended and will cost approximately \$1500. The Grand Junction Lions Club has been contacted for a possible donation. Paula Anderson, from the G.J.P.D., has discussed the trail host program with the Committee. Fred Bohlmann with State Parks provided the guidelines for the trail host program. He also presented the Committee with samples of the updated safety sign from which the Committee selected their preference. This sign will be presented to the Riverfront Commission for their approval. Lenna is working on having public phones located near the Audubon Trail at Brach's shopping center and at Junior Service League Park. The president of Junior Service League will be contacted for help. The sheriff's posse will begin patrol of the trails in September of '97 in cooperation with the city police.

Bridge and Trail Dedication Committee

There was no report.

Trail Map Committee

Lynda Boody reported that Committee members are finishing up "G.P.S.ing" the trail. They will include additional information in the map as requested and depending on how much money can be raised to pay for the printing. The digitized information on the trails will be incorporated in to the County's G.I.S. system.

Administration

Financial Report

Stephanie reported that the office computer experienced a hard drive crash about three weeks ago. The mechanical failure made it necessary to reinstall all of the software and nudged her into making the long overdue conversion to Quick Books accounting software. Bill expressed the Commission's appreciation of Fruita, Palisade, Grand

Junction and Mesa County's timely payment of their 1997 sponsorships. There were no questions or comments on the financial statements.

Memorial Bench Program

In response to Bill's request for an update, Stephanie reported that the Riverfront Foundation offers a memorial bench program. For the price of \$1000, a memorial bench can be purchased. The price includes the bench, a 4" by 6" bronze plaque and installation of the bench and plaque at an approved location along the trail. Three benches have been purchased so far this year, one on the Corn Lake Trail, one in Connected Lakes State Park and one for a site to be determined on the new Watson Island Trail. She stated that the Foundation makes approximately \$250 on each bench. Ted Ciavonne has provided a map locating about a dozen possible sites along the Blue Heron Trail and has promised to do the same for the new trail connecting the bicycle/pedestrian bridge to 5th Street. Brad Taylor, manager of the Colorado River State Park will work with individuals on specific bench sites when they have a location in mind that is within the park boundaries.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 P.M..