

**Grand Junction/Mesa County Riverfront Commission
Urban Trails Committee**

Minutes

March 11, 1997

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 P.M. by Co-Chair Bob Cron. Committee members present from the Urban Trails Committee:

Yeulin Willett
Lenna Watson
Pat Kennedy

Bob Cron
Mike Heaston
Gerry Tucker

Also present were Shawn Cooper, Russ Storbo, Cliff Davidson, Joseph Marie, Greg Motz and Stephanie Schmid.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Heaston/Watson to approve the minutes of the January meeting as submitted.

Motion was passed.

Additions to the Agenda

Bob Cron asked that the topic "Bicycle and Pedestrian Summit" be added under New Business and that a discussion of the a 10th Street bike lane be added to the Committee Reports.

Announcements

Dan Burden of Walkable Communities will be returning to Grand Junction on March 24th to work with the City on problems with pedestrian and vehicular traffic circulation around the college and to present an abbreviated version of the two day course he offered in September. Bob encouraged Committee members to attend the Monday evening presentation if at all possible.

CDOT will be having a meeting in Palisade on Wednesday, March 19 to discuss bike routes in Mesa County that will connect with a statewide trail system. A tour of the proposed route will be included.

Pat Kennedy announced that on March 20th, the Intergovernmental meeting will be held at the BLM office on H Road. He expressed his feeling that this was a worthwhile hour to spend listening to reports from representatives of numerous governmental entities involved in activities related to the riverfront and trails development.

Old Business

There was no old business to report.

New Business

Urban Trails Plan

The Urban Trails Master Plan is slated to become an amendment to the City/County Multi-Modal Plan. The plan has been considered by the City Planning Commission at one of their regular meetings. Two suggestions were made by persons attending the meeting. One, made by the canal company representatives, was that the canal banks not be shown on the map. The Planning Commission chose to ignore that suggestion. The other suggestion was that the Colinas del Valle area not have an inventory of trails shown because of the concern that it would attract cyclists to trespass on what is now private property. However, landowners present at the Planning Commission indicated that they would be willing to work with the City at the time of development.

Bob Cron expressed his concern that the minutes from that Planning Commission meeting did not have a definitive description of what they (the Planning Commission) wanted to have shown in the Colinas del Valle area. He suggested that the Urban Trails Committee discuss the issue and develop recommendations to the Planning Commission. Because of his concern, he has requested the plan be withdrawn from the City Council agenda until after the Urban Trails Committee has had the opportunity to discuss it.

After a lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed that the Master Plan should present a conceptual interpretation of trail alignments in Colinas del Valle, footnoted by an acknowledgment that the land is currently in private ownership. The conceptual version should include the existing trail inventory and a discussion of the need for bicycle/pedestrian trails whose location will be determined in coordination with the developers, planning and parks representatives and the Urban Trails Committee. Finally, access or connector locations at the perimeter of the area should be recommended. Among the points mentioned were Wingate Elementary School, Red Canyon Creek, the Redlands Water and Power site, 23rd Street, the Lunch Loop and existing subdivisions.

Other comments made during the course of the discussion included landowner, Greg Motz's concern that if trail alignments are fixed in the present, it will cause future development to be planned around the trails rather than the other way around. Yeulin Willett stated that without awareness on the part of landowners, developers and planning personnel, access to existing trails could be cut off. He urged the Committee to maintain a trail inventory and to speak out on behalf of preserving access to existing trails. Shawn Cooper suggested that adoption of the Urban Trails Master Plan should be the goal, with the future objective of working with the developers to achieve the desired end results as a secondary goal. Committee members agreed that there is a need to get input from the Community Development and Parks Departments in order to stay ahead of development activities in the area. It was suggested that the concept approach should apply to all parts of the county, with Colinas del Valle setting a precedent. Ideally, the Urban Trails Committee should be able to review and comment on all developments that go through the City and County planning process.

The process of approving the Urban Trails Master Plan ultimately involves its approval as an amendment to the Multi-Modal Plan by both the City and the County. It was postponed by the County Commissioners as well, according to MPO Administrator Cliff Davidson, in order to allow more time for consideration. He and Keith Fife will reschedule the plan with the County Commissioners after they have had time for more review. Cliff hopes that the County Planning Commission will make it a part of their major street plan. Bob Cron asked that he be notified when the rescheduled hearing would take place in order to be present to represent the support of the Urban Trails Committee.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Summit

Bob Cron provided copies of the proposed program for CDOT's bicycle/pedestrian summit. Discussion ensued as to whether or not a sponsorship would be appropriate and if the Committee would like to send a representative from the Urban Trails Committee. The question was raised as to the cost of attending the program. It was agreed that Bob would find out about registration fees and that a sponsorship was not of interest to the Committee.

Committee Reports

10th Street Bike Lane

Bob reported on an open house he attended for the proposed bike lane on 10th Street. About seven to eight affected residents were present. The consensus among those people present was that parking should be maintained on the west side of the street and not on the east side. The reason being that there are two parks located on the east side of the street and they felt that people should not have to park and walk across the street to reach the parks. Because most homes in the area front on the east/west streets, there was not a great concern about losing parking on 10th. There was, however, a concern about the intersection of 10th and Grand because of the heavy daytime parking that occurs in that area.

Canal Trail Feasibility Study

Bob asked the Committee if they wished to continue in the same manner as they have in the past in regard to the development of canal bank trails in Grand Junction, or would they prefer to take a more aggressive stance. He reiterated the conclusion of the feasibility study, that the Committee would pursue opportunities on the trail as they became available but not force the issue with the landowners and canal companies. The Matchett property was determined to be the best possibility for a test location, but would have to wait until the park master plan was developed.

A suggestion was made to promote a letter writing campaign directed toward elected officials, supporting of the use of the canal banks for recreational purposes. Bob expressed the concern that the County Commissioners do not understand how many people want to be able to use the canal banks for recreation. Another suggestion was to try to get a grant to fund research to determine land ownership in the feasibility study area. Gerry Tucker proposed a letter to the paper inviting public comment on the subject. Lenna Watson suggested that the Committee seek a hearing with the County Commissioners. Support of City Council candidates who are in favor of canal trails was also suggested. An educational effort with the property owners along the canal was another suggestion. Sponsorship of a panel discussion or town meeting to discuss the pros and cons of canal bank use was added to the list.

A committee was appointed to pursue these suggestions. Mike Heaston was named as chairperson with Lenna, Gerry and Bob as members of the committee.

Subdivision Trails

There was nothing to report.

Metropolitan Planning Organization

There was nothing to report.

Public Comment

Bob Cron advised the Committee that the terms for Committee members Gerry Tucker and Yeulin Willett would expire at the end of June. He requested that they notify him in advance if they did not wish to be reappointed.

City Council candidate Joseph Marie, who attended the meeting, assured the Committee that if elected, he would be support their efforts to develop trails.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 P.M.