

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

Minutes

June 11, 1996

The meeting was called to order at 7.38 P.M by Co-Chair Bob Cron. Those present from the Urban Trails Committee:

Pat Kennedy
Bob Cron

Cindy Burke
Lenna Watson

Also present were Shawn Cooper, Russ Storbo, Boyd Steele, and Stephanie Schmid.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The May meeting lacked a quorum, consequently, there were no minutes to approve.

Bob Cron asked Committee members to call if they are not able to attend meetings.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The intergovernmental raft trip will be held on Friday, June 14 on the Gunnison River. Participants should meet at the Redlands Power diversion dam at 9:00 A.M.

Laura Farnsworth has decided to resign from the Urban Trails Committee in deference to the demands of her growing family. The Riverfront Commission and her fellow Urban Trails Committee members will miss her contributions to the cause, but understand that raising a family is one of the most important responsibilities anyone can take on.

Bob and Pat Kennedy will be conducting interviews of five applicants on Thursday to choose a person to fill the vacancy created by Laura's resignation.

The possibility of increasing the number of Urban Trails Committee members is being discussed, but there has been no decision as yet. If the scope of the Urban Trails Committee is expanded in the future to look beyond their original charge, Committee membership may be increased to nine members. Bob pointed out that trails development is a part of the Countywide Master Plan effort and that there would be a need for expanded planning of in the areas not currently covered by the Urban Trails Committee. It was agreed that it was probably a good idea to keep trails advocacy under the wing of one organization, i.e. the Riverfront Commission, but with the blessing of the Riverfront Commission , City Council and County Commissioners.

Being a project oriented group, possible additional areas of interest could include Grand Mesa Slopes, the Kokopelli Trail and Mesa County connections to public lands.

OLD BUSINESS

Mark Relph has not yet completed the Grand Junction bicycle/pedestrian map and was unable to attend the meeting as scheduled. The map is an attempt to integrate the network of street bikeways and sidewalks with the trails being created in conjunction with subdivision and parks development by the Parks and Recreation Department. The goal is to create a plan that is more tangible and understandable for the City Council and the public.

NEW BUSINESS

Metropolitan Planning Organization

A discussion of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (M.P.O.) was planned for this meeting, but Gerry Tucker, who was going to make the presentation was unable to attend. Cliff Davidson, the County liaison to the M.P.O., was invited to this meeting, but was also unable to attend. He will be on the agenda for the July meeting. According to Pat Kennedy, the M.P.O. is responsible for producing the Transportation Improvement Plan for the Fiscal Years 1997 - 2002, a draft of the Major Street Plan and the Unified Planning and Work Program for streets and bridge improvements. These documents include information on plans for trails and other alternative transportation modes. Pat feels that there is a lot going on with the County of which the Urban Trails Committee should be aware. He is hopeful that, in the future, the County will adopt the "Mark Relph type of mind set" which deals with trails in the planning stages as opposed to after the project is finished. He also felt that the City and the County should strive to be on the same page with trails planning.

Tabeguache Trail/Lunch Loop

The BLM has approached the City of Grand Junction about acquiring the Tabeguache Trail/Lunch Loop area from them for \$100. Yeulin Willett feels that this approximately four square miles of trails would make an ideal mountain bike park and advocates pursuing the acquisition. Bob Cron sees the advantage of this acquisition being the City's ability to improve the parking and signage in the area and control the amount of motorized traffic. Bob, however, suggested that the City become a partner with the BLM and through a cooperative effort, provide resources that would improve the area without actually taking ownership. He would also like to see the County become a participant in the venture. The majority of the area could be maintained by volunteers and would not appreciably increase the City's responsibilities.

Club 20 Missing Links Project

Club 20 is involved in creating an inventory of trails on the western slope and hopes to use this inventory to identify ways to connect these trails into a network that will be attractive to tourists. Meetings have been scheduled in Glenwood Springs and in Delta to invite agency comment on maps they have produced. It was agreed by the Committee that Club 20 should be asked to come to a meeting to make a presentation of their project.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Government Highline Canal Trail Feasibility Study

Bob Cron reported that Ted Ciavonne is expected to have his portion of the feasibility study completed by July. This work will cover the physical parameters of using the canal banks for recreation including costs and engineering data. He has also considered what kinds of restrictions should be placed on recreation uses on the canal, what kinds of law enforcement would be necessary and what liability assumptions should be made. Pat has interviewed as many of the underlying landowners as he could find to determine whether or not they would be willing to grant easements or right-of-ways for the recreational use of the canal banks on their land.

Bob hopes to have a draft of the final report available by the mid part of July which will then be available to the public for review in August. An open house will also be planned at that time. He suggested a special meeting of the Urban Trails Committee to consider what recommendations the study should make. He also asked how the Committee felt about including these recommendations in the draft report or if they would prefer to wait until after the public review period to finalize their recommendations.

Recognizing the importance of involving the public, especially those who support the concept of canal bank use for recreation, was stressed because of the organized and vocal opposition to this project that has been present from the beginning. The City Council that strongly supported the idea at its inception may not be as publicly supportive now, if there is not evidence of public support of that position. The fact that there is no penalty for using the canal illegally will not help generate citizen support for making it legal. Committee members were encouraged to contact various organizations whose members may have an interest in using the canal banks to encourage them to speak up in support of canal trail development.

Colinas del Valle

Shawn Cooper commented on subdivision activity in the area of the Colinas del Valle trails. He said that the issue of compensation for easements or rights-of-way for open space and trails may place a burden on the City, if in fact, it is necessary and must be in the form of cash or other immediate tangibles. Bob suggested that trails should be considered as a part of the transportation infrastructure. Another possibility would be to credit the developer's open space fee obligation for the value of the easement. Unfortunately, in this case, the developer and the City seem to have a difference of opinion as to the value of the land in question.

Subdivision Trails

Shawn reported that the developer of the Valley Meadows West subdivision was, at one point, willing to grant the City an easement along the Grand Valley Canal for the length of his property ownership. Grand Valley Irrigation Company had an agreement with the developer to allow the developer to dispose of the surface runoff from the subdivision by letting it run into the canal. When GVIC found out that the developer was planning to donate the land along the canal in fee simple to the City, the canal company withdrew its offer. The City is now trying to get the developer to grant an easement to them first and then a secondary easement to the irrigation company. According to Shawn, this matter is still pending.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Boyd Steele observed that he would like to see the County become more involved in recreation. He felt that their attitude that the public land was sufficient for the needs of public recreation was shortsighted because access to the public lands is becoming a problem. He commented that he saw a lack of commitment on the part of the County for recreation while his taxes continued to go up without seeing anything in return. There was discussion about the lack of shoulders on Broadway and South Broadway and the safety concerns associated with this situation. Boyd told the Committee that he would like to be able to ride his bicycle from the Redlands to downtown Grand Junction.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 P.M.