

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

Minutes

August 13, 1996

The meeting was called to order at 7:42 P.M. by Bob Cron. Those present from the Urban Trails Committee:

Pat Kennedy
Bob Cron
Yeulin Willett

Gerry Tucker
Mike Heaston
Lenna Watson

Also present were Russ Storbo and Stephanie Schmid.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Willett/Tucker to approve the minutes of the July meeting as submitted.

Motion was passed.

MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

Bob Cron requested that the agenda be changed by striking the new business item to schedule a special meeting on the Canal Feasibility Study in favor of having the discussion of Urban Trails Committee recommendations and conclusions at the end of this evening's meeting. There were no objections to his suggestion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Committee members were asked whether or not they were interested in attending the State Trails Symposium in Breckenridge September 5 -7, 1996. Stephanie was the only person present who planned to attend.

They were also asked if they were planning to attend the Walkable Communities and/or Bicycle Facilities workshops which will be held in Grand Junction at Two Rivers Convention Center on September 23rd and 24th. Pat Kennedy indicated that he planned to attend on the 23rd. Several others were interested, but were unsure as to their schedules.

The open house at the Nellie Bechtel Apartments was held just prior to the Urban Trails Committee meeting on the 13th of August. The purpose of the open house was to allow the public to comment on the possibility of eliminating parking on at least one side of 15th Street to accommodate a bicycle lane that would connect Patterson to Horizon Drive. Many of those attending were residents of the Nellie Bechtel facility who would not use the bike lane but would like to see parking eliminated in front of their residence. This would be the first attempt by the City to remove on street parking in favor bicycle lanes.

OLD BUSINESS

Open House - Canal Feasibility Study

Pat Kennedy felt that the open house had gone very well and that the overall response had been quite positive. The maps put together by Ciavonne & Associates were easy to understand and helped the people attending to visualize the scope of the project. Prior to the meeting, fliers were distributed by an interested citizen, encouraging written comments on the project from the public. Pat said that to date, forty responses had been received including four phone calls and thirty six written responses. Thirty five of the written responses and one of the phone calls were favorable. The possibility of using the canals for water sports was mentioned by more than one individual in conjunction with the study. Pat felt that this was an issue that was not within the scope of the feasibility study or the Urban Trails Committee. The deadline for written public comment on the study is August 16, at which point the feasibility study will be completed.

Open House - Colinas del Valle

On August 8th, the Urban Trails Committee sponsored an informational open house on their plans for the Colinas del Valle area. Bob Cron was pleased that there were forty seven people in attendance in addition to Committee members. Five of those attending were landowners while the other forty two lived near the area affected by the proposed trails. In general, people were very supportive of maintaining non-motorized trails for public use. There apparently were no motorized trail advocates present. Of the landowners, most were sympathetic to the recreational opportunities that are possible, but they were not interested in providing easements for the trails on their land. They expressed concern about encumbering their property at present. They seemed willing to work with developers in the future, but not in the near term. According to Bob, there are twenty four other landowners who did not attend the open house. Of those who have responded, the majority are not in favor of easements. Those who did attend the open house expressed interest in an effort to organize a clean up of the area to remove trash and debris and indicated that they would be willing to help.

Bob stated that he does not feel that the City of Grand Junction is not willing to adopt these trails at this time. Gerry Tucker suggested the possibility of seeking an annual easement that could be taken back when the owner chose to develop the property. The City could then offer to assume the liability associated with public use in return for the easement. Ute Water was represented at the meeting and was surprisingly supportive of the idea of recreational trails in the area.

NEW BUSINESS

Role Of Urban Trails Committee

Bob Cron summarized for the Committee a conversation he had recently with City Manager Mark Achen regarding the Colinas del Valle trails project and the mission of the Urban Trail Committee. According to Bob, Mark kept using the phrase "Riverfront Commission model" referring to the manner in which he hoped that the UTC would put

projects together and then bring them, free of turmoil and strife, to the City Council for approval. Prior to this conversation with Mark, Bob had assumed that the City would take a much more active roll in the projects undertaken by the Committee. He distributed copies of the Resolution passed by the City Council, in July of 1994, that authorized an Urban Trails Board. Pat explained that this was part of his and Bob's effort to define what the Urban Trails Committee was intended to be.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Tabeguache Trail/Lunch Loop

Yeulin Willett reported that the City Parks Advisory Board had recommended to the City Council that they accept a lease from the BLM for the 1200 acres lying between Monument Road and Little Park Road. The City Council voted unanimously in favor of accepting the recommendation of the Parks Board. The BLM requires that a management plan be developed by the City before it can enter into the lease. The Bang's Canyon ad hoc committee, organized by the BLM, should finish its research and prepare a report which will be completed within the next six months that can serve as a management plan that the City can use. Yeulin's feeling is that the area will more likely be designated as a non-motorized area. Pat Kennedy informed the group that a letter from Tim Woodmansee states that the 30 acres in Colinas del Valle, currently owned by the BLM, would be included in this Area I plan. Yeulin added that Keith Mumby of the City Parks Advisory Board had volunteered to serve as the liaison between the City and the Bang's Canyon ad hoc committee. Keith would like to extend the City's involvement to the other side of Little Park Road to include what is commonly known as Gunny Loop, but realizes including that might be taking on too much for right now.

Subdivision Trails

Bob informed the group that Committee member Gerry Tucker has requested that he be allowed to assume an inactive posture with the Committee for the next six months due to personal business demands. Cindy Burke, who was not present at this meeting has agreed to fill in for him during this time on the subdivision trails issues. At the end of the six month period, Gerry will decide whether or not he will have time to participate fully in the Committee's activities.

MPO

Cindy Burke, who is the Committee's liaison with the MPO, was unable to attend the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Russ Storbo reported that representatives of all the local canal companies had made an appointment to talk with Dave Mutz, the person who heads up the local BOR office, when its local director, Carol De Angelis is out of town. Pat Kennedy wanted to know if feasibility study committee members would have the opportunity to participate in future discussions between the BOR and the canal company representatives.

GOVERNMENT HIGHLINE CANAL TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY

Discussion Of Committee Recommendations And Conclusions

Bob Cron informed the Committee that after approximately a year's work with a steering committee involving representatives of the Urban Trails Committee, the City of Grand Junction, the Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Valley Water Users Association, Mesa County and Grand Valley Irrigation, a draft of the final report of the Government Highline Canal Trail Feasibility Study is "on the streets". It was his intention to discuss, at the August 13 meeting, the draft recommendations from the report and sign off on them as a Committee instead of scheduling a special meeting. He reminded the group that the comment period for the study was still open, and that final recommendations or conclusions would have to wait for its close of the comment period. He felt that should additional issues be identified by the public comments yet to be received, these issues could be resolved by telephone calls among the Committee members. No one objected to this plan.

Copies of the draft recommendations were distributed to the Committee members who were encouraged to spend a few minutes reviewing them. After consideration of the recommendations and spirited and lengthy discussion among the Committee members, the following issues were identified as having some cause for concern:

- the scope of the report, whether or not the recommendations should address the study area only or be applied to the entire valley.
- whether the report should be limited to simply identifying the problem of uncertain land ownership in and around the canal banks, or if it should involve itself in recommending solutions such as title searches and surveys and possible funding sources to pay for those activities.
- questions about property ownership along the canal in the vicinity of the Matchett property/future park.
- whether or not the Bureau of Reclamation should be asked to assume management responsibility for a canal trail along the Highline Canal beyond the City limits.
- if and or how the County might be involved in the management of a canal trail along the canal between the Matchett property and Palisade.
- the best surfacing material for a canal bank trail.

In response to the issues raised above, the following suggestions were made:

- it was agreed that the report recommendations should be limited to the study area as defined in the BOR contract.
- the issue of land ownership should be left up to the appropriate jurisdiction, in this case, the City of Grand Junction.
- money for title searches and surveys could come from the cost share agreement between the City and the BOR which could be up to \$500,000.
- conclusions drawn from the study, but not specific to the study area, should be listed in a separate section of conclusions by the Urban Trails Committee.
- a conclusion of the study endorsed by the Committee was the recommendation that the best place for a pilot trail section would be along the canal on the Matchett

property where obtaining the permission of underlying landowners would not be an issue.

- it was agreed that the preferred trail surface was crushed granite.
- the suggestion that the BOR be responsible for management of the proposed canal trail between Indian Wash and Palisade be left in the report.

Pat Kennedy agreed to revise the Committee's recommendations, add a separate section for the conclusions drawn from the study and fax them to the other committee members by Monday or Tuesday of the following week. Committee members who have comments or questions should respond contact Pat by Thursday, August 22 if they wish to make further changes. Pat would then see to the printing and binding of the final report for distribution.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 P.M..