

**COLORADO RIVERFRONT COMMISSION
683-4333**

Riverfront Commission

**Minutes
September 20, 2011**

Called to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:30pm by co-chair Katie Steele. Those present from the Commission were:

Katie Steele	Ken Henry	Leila Reilly
Frank Watt	John Pabst	Brian Meinhart
Brad Taylor	Bennett Boeschstein	

Also present were Greg Linza, Donna Ross, Biz Collins, Al Pfister, Bill Prakken, Tom Burke, Pete Firmin, Amy Hamilton (Daily Sentinel) and Michele Rohrbach.

Approval – Katie/Frank. Motion passed.

Announcements – Introduced Al (Paul Peck’s replacement) to the group. Tom Burke was introduced as the new Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) third Congressional District member.

Tom gave a brief history of his experience.

New Business – Three Sisters Property – Bill updated the group on the property and the desire of the Mesa Land Trust (MLT) to purchase the property to protect as open space. MLT has entered into an agreement with the owners to purchase the property. Would tie into the Lunch Loop trail system and the Kids Meal trail could be extended about 1 ½ to 2 miles. Would put outdoor education signage but no big structures. Budget is around \$1.5 to \$1.65 million. Have submitted an application to GOCO for \$675,000 and GOCO will be doing site visit tomorrow. Have a commitment from an estate in Boulder for \$150,000 and another \$25,000 from the Quimby Foundation with (\$15,000 being spent this year). MLT will be asking the Riverfront Foundation (RFF) on Thursday for either \$25,000 to \$50,000 to help with the project. Would need to work with four landowners to connect into the already completed section of the Lower No Thoroughfare Wash Trail (LNTFW). Urban Trails Committee (UTC) is very supportive of the deal. The City of Grand Junction will be offering some City land in exchange for the Three Sisters property which will eventually be deeded to the City. Bennett asked if the MLT grant application would be competing with any of the other entities GOCO grant applications, Bill stated it was an open space trail application. Bill said that they have budgeted to have a Master Trail plan done so know what will be disturbed and what won’t.

There was no further new business.

Old Business – Brady Trucking – Leila updated on that Trust for Public Lands regarding acquiring the Brady Trucking property. Katie will be asking the RFF for \$5,000 to \$6,000 for the cost of the appraisal on the property. Brady is willing to negotiate. Bennett stated that there is an industrial piece of property adjacent to Brady's property that has water and sewer currently in foreclosure which would be ideal for Brady to move their business. Greg asked how negotiations could happen with being in litigation. Bennett and Leila should it would be out of court settlement. Brad asked if City would be willing to take title of the property. Bennett, speaking as one City Council member said yes, it would be added to Los Colonias. Looking for a response from the RFF regarding grant as soon as possible.

County's request for support of Fruita Connection Phase II and III – Greg hopes to have construction documents tomorrow. Will take five to six weeks to bid out construction contract. Working with US Fish & Wildlife on their permitting and will need to show documents to BLM. Start construction this fall with completion in June or July of 2012.

CDOT will construct Phase II – have \$680,000 of Enhancement Funds for the project and have asked for funds from the RFF and Fruita. (Construction, July – December 2012).

Donna said the County has asked the RFF for specific amount of \$25,000 for Phase II and \$100,000 for Phase III for concept paper. Timing for River Corridor Grant – money won't need to be available until 2013 and 2012 for the States Trail Grant. Katie stated that the RFF doesn't have an endless fund supply of money so she wants to know priority of the group. Brad said that Brady appraisal is high priority and solve lots of problems. Frank said he understands the connectivity of the Three Sisters property but he thinks east/west trail connections are more important than north/south trail. Ken said it's extremely important to get trail from Palisade to Loma – the timing of the Three Sisters property will hurt.

Frank said Palisade can commit funds for 2012 but can't for 2013 and will write letter for Phase III.

County has signed first right of refusal on the Skinner property and would be really nice if Bennett would sell - would have a fabulous trail.

There was no further old business.

Updates:

City of Fruita – Ken said Army National Guard was out at the Fruita location when purchased from the State Parks. South of the new waste water treatment facility and they will be removing tamarisk.

Compton planning process – Planning in continuing, good to go through the IIG property and about to enter the 65% design phase and will be going for the railroad permit. Fruita will be signing lots of documents soon. Ken stated this property was owned by three

individuals and one of the individuals is trying to hold up the process for a ten foot piece of property.

Palisade Report – Frank said the town made an attempt to partner with various entities to build a whitewater park. Had a gift from Eric Jacobson and Mr. Jacobson has removed the revisionary clause and has deeded the property to the Town. The town will commit whatever resources to develop this property. On north side of River Road - lease in place by November 1st and development of trail on north side of River Road. Looking at a safe trail going east to connect into the Palisade Rim trail and trail into DeBeque. Heading west will be more difficult. Have a meeting with Pete Firmin to find better ways to use the Island Acre campground. Have application into Corps for restoration at Riverbend Park. Will be meeting with Grand Valley Water Board on Friday to get them to partner with Town and will be asking Grand Valley Irrigation too.

25th Anniversary – Mary Ann unable to attend, Michele updated on what's going on with the 25th.

Brad stated that he has been having conversation with GOCO about partnering with lottery for advertising funds. There is \$51 million of GOCO funds here in Mesa County. Michele added that Chantal (new County Administrator) stopped in and said she knew someone at GOCO that works with Lottery advertising advising funds that aren't really tapped into – will be in town next week. Thinks great opportunity to partner together.

National Conservation Area – All zones in the NCA have been reviewed and discussed. At the last meeting - group heard from the DOW regarding the problems of domestic sheep transmitting diseases to the Desert Bighorn. At the present time, there are approximately 5 permit holders for sheep grazing in the NCA. Therefore, at a future meeting, group will have the permit holders and the DOW present to give both sides of the issue.

Tim Casey from Colorado Mesa University was there to present the results of the focus groups they surveyed regarding NCA on behalf of the BLM. The results from the Delta focus groups were very different from those in Grand Junction. The Delta focus groups were of the opinion to "leave it alone". The Grand Junction focus groups were very concerned about the preservation of the scenic values and the preservation of the desert bighorn sheep.

The next meeting is Wednesday the 22nd, and the group will review the compilation of all the discussions and feedback back from the Council and the public for each of the Zones. Group will then be in a position to review all the council and public comments and begin to give their formal recommendations to the BLM.

Capstone – Stacy was unable to attend so Katie updated about the two candidates that applied and Stacy interviewed both, made offer to one and she then decided she wasn't going back to school this semester. Stacy hasn't heard from UC Denver yet on the capstone posting timeline. Hopefully will know something by October meeting.

Committee Reports:

UTC – Biz stated still working on updating the UTC Master Trail Plan with Ken Simms and Jody Kliska. Work continues on the signage issues. Katie would like to see story boards along the trail giving some of the history.

Partners Report – Michele updated from Mike Vendegna’s email on the Blue Heron trail.

Bennett stated he and Stacy did presentation to Lions Club. Went will and some want copy of the video.

Audubon will be doing birding festival on October 8th.

Bennett talked about the Chevron grant and they’ve agreed to put up another \$7,000 this year. Michele stated that in the recent newspaper article that the RFF wasn’t given credit for the funds they added to the \$7,000 last year.

Brad suggested keeping the kids trips next year as part of the 25th Anniversary events.

Public Comment – There was no further public comment.

Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 6:50pm.