



MEETING OF THE PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BOULDER COUNTY, COLORADO

Regular Meeting Minutes

January 25, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

Third Floor Hearing Room

County Court House

1325 Pearl Street, Boulder

Members Present: Janet George
Tony Lewis
Trace Baker
Paula Fitzgerald
Kristine Johnson
Derek Turner
Carol Byerly

Members Excused: Drew Adams
Jackson Moller

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1. **Call to Order**
 2. **Roll Call**
 3. **Election of New Officers**

Paula Fitzgerald nominated Tony Lewis for Chair; Kristine Johnson seconded. Approved unanimously.

Paula Fitzgerald nominated Janet George for Vice Chair; Trace Baker seconded. Approved unanimously.

4. Approval of the Dec. 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Moved by Paula Fitzgerald

Seconded by Trace Baker

APPROVED

5. Approval of the Dec. 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Paula Fitzgerald asked to amend the Dec. 14 minutes for the East Boulder Creek item to add POSAC's inclusion of Trailhead location #5 as an alternate location.

Approved as amended.

Moved by Janet George

Seconded by Trace Baker

APPROVED

6. Public Comment Period for Items Not on Agenda

Members of the public spoke against the use of chemical herbicides and aerial spraying by Boulder County:

Hunter Lovins, Unincorporated Boulder County.

Tess McDonald, Lyons.

Laura Mayo, Unincorporated Boulder County.

Sara Hart, Unincorporated Boulder County.

Erin Meschke, Boulder.

Dona Smith, Nederland.

Karin Nance, Boulder.

Evan Ravitz, Boulder.

Bridgett Mars, Boulder.

Kathleen Sands, Lyons.

Tara McDonald, Lyons.

Daniela Poppy, Boulder.

Bethy Lovelight, Boulder.

Rich Andrews, Gunbarrel.

Amanda Dumenigo, Boulder County

Ellen O'Donnell, Lafayette.

India, Boulder.

Paloma, Jamestown.

Steven Cavanaugh, Boulder.

Raven Armour.

Christy DeArmit, Boulder.

Maria Christina Lopez, Unincorporated Boulder County.

Yoli, Longmont.

Landon Hilliard, Boulder.

Marin, Lyons.

Renee Royal, Boulder.

Andrew, Boulder.

Christel Markevich, Unincorporated Boulder County.

Alex Markevich, Unincorporated Boulder County.

7. POSAC Members Comment Period for Items Not on Agenda

Kristine Johnson spoke about a pollinator health study, accessible through the Dept. of Natural Resources website. She mentioned that Professor Tim Seastedt gave a seminar on cheatgrass in December, and she would like to discuss the seminar publicly. She also requested to hear a response from staff relating to a possible to conflict of interest that has been raised by the public.

8. Presentations

8.1 Wall Street Mill Acquisition

Staff Presenter: Tina Burghardt, Senior Land Officer

Action Requested: Recommendation to the BOCC

This presentation was given by Aaron Clark, Land Officer.

Question: Given the age, is there any urgency to stabilization and repair.

Response: The structural assessment indicated that repairs are needed immediately and it is not a hazard.

Question: I'd like to hear more at some point about the BCPOS partnership with the Indigenous communities.

Question: Can information about what mineral rights are being acquired be included in future memos?

Response: In most cases, we are acquiring all mineral rights. We would specify if the purchase doesn't include all mineral rights.

Moved by Trace Baker

Seconded by Paula Fitzgerald

APPROVED

8.2 Sky View Acquisition

Staff Presenter: Tina Burghardt, Senior Land Officer

Action Requested: Recommendation to the BOCC

This presentation was given by Aaron Clark, Land Officer.

Question: Is there any room on these properties being acquired for building affordable housing for farm workers?

Response: The department is looking at the affordable housing issue, but we have not settled on any particular site. The difficulty in using open space for affordable housing is that open space is bought with sales tax money and sales tax money can only be used for open space uses, so we can only provide housing for county agricultural tenants. It's a question that is broader than just county agricultural tenants. I don't know if either of these properties tonight would be

appropriate. This agricultural housing topic is on the Feb. 24 POSAC Retreat agenda.

Question: Regarding the Sky View and Cottonwood acquisitions, why should the county prioritize this amount of public money for these properties? What is the interest in these by the county?

Response: We have over 100 properties on our priority list and we have plans to acquire all of them. These two, while expensive individually, are not big purchases in regard to the large pot of money that we expect to have over the next 10-15 years. We have a right of first refusal with the Cottonwood property. When we ask for that, it is because the county has a desire to ultimately purchase the property. Cottonwood has significant water rights, which have high value. Sky View offers proximity to transit, which allows us to do different types of leases with different types of tenants.

Moved by Paula Fitzgerald

Seconded by Trace Baker

APPROVED

8.3 Cottonwood Property Acquisition

Staff Presenter: Aaron Clark, Land Officer

Action Requested: Recommendation to the BOCC

Question: This is a great hay field. Will it stay in grass hay production?

Response: Our Agricultural Resources staff will need to time evaluate future use, but I imagine the easiest thing is to continue current production until we have a decision.

Moved by Janet George

Seconded by Paula Fitzgerald

APPROVED

8.4 Von Reyn-2024 ROW Transfer of Management

Staff Presenter: Don Durso, Land Officer

Action Requested: Recommendation to the BOCC

Moved by Trace Baker

Seconded by Kristine Johnson

APPROVED

8.5 Goat Grazing for Weed Management

Presenter: Jordan Sarazen, Owner and Operator of Goat Bros. Grazing

Action Requested: Information only

Questions: Do areas like ditch embankments prevent goats from getting in there effectively?

Response: Goats are very agile and so it's no problem for them. They like grazing hillsides.

Question: Do they stay out in the field all night? Are predators a concern

Response: The goats stay out all night. Electric fences help keep them in and predators out. Keeping the goats in large herds also protects them.

Question: Are there concerns about interactions with other animals, like off-leash dogs and cattle? Most park rangers will patrol the areas where the goats are grazing asking visitors to put their dogs on a leash. We haven't had problems with dogs.

Question: How long does it take to clear 10 acres?

Response: It depends on where they're grazing and what the project is. They can clear anywhere from half an acre to an acre a day, depending on the vegetation density and weather.

Question: Boulder County currently has one herd of bighorn sheep and the numbers are declining. Respiratory disease is one of the biggest threats to bighorn sheep. Goats can escape and spread pathogens. What measures are you taking?

Response: Our goats are vaccinated every year and they always have fresh water. If we know there will be big horn sheep in an area, we take additional precautions.

Public Comments:

Tess McDonald, Lyons. She spoke in support of using goats to control vegetation on county lands. She also spoke about the problems with weed-free hay due to the use of pesticides.

Erin Meschke, Boulder. She spoke in support of using goats to control vegetation and the various benefits.

9. Director's Update

- Therese Glowacki addressed the conflict-of-interest question: Jim Sebastian works on our weed crew. His son, Derek Sebastian, works for Bayer. Jim doesn't have decision-making power and there is no financial interest for Jim when the county uses the Bayer products. Our Asst. County Attorney, Conrad Lattes, does not believe there is a conflict of interest in this case.
- East Boulder Creek at Prairie Run: Two of the county commissioners agreed to remove the trail and trailhead and all amenities on the NE section of the property, which is adjacent to water with a picnic shelter and where the larger parking lot was planned. They did not make a decision on the 109th Street trial parking lot. Commissioner Levy has requested another visit to the area. Another BOCC public hearing will take place on March 28. There was no discussion of the topic coming back to POSAC.
- The Coalton Trail is scheduled to reopen in the coming weeks.
- Soil Health grants are available to farmers. This is to encourage soil health practices. The deadline to apply Feb. 12.
- Boulder County contributed \$20,000 for a conservation easement with Estes Valley Land Trust for the Highlands Camp in Allenspark.
- Work is moving forward with the Conger Mine and Sherwood Creek restoration project to daylight the creek and remove the mine tailings. CO DRMS [Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety] is contributing \$161,000, The Colorado Water Conservation Board is contributing \$300,000, and Boulder County is contributing \$62,000.
- The Twin Lakes boardwalk resurfacing is almost done.
- The annual POSAC Retreat will be on Feb. 24.

10. Adjournment

9:43 p.m.