LARIMER COUNTY
COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2025

LAND USE HEARING

The Board of County Commissioners met at 3:00 p.m. with Jenny Axmacher, Planning Manager. Chair Stephens presided. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally and Commissioner Kefalas were present. Also present were Justin Currie, Kassidee Fior, Jared Seay, Jim Johnson, and Ryane Oswandel, Community Development; Connor Sheldon and Traci Shambo, Engineering; Rebecca Everette, Community Development Director; Frank Haug, Assistant County Attorney; and Lindsey Jones, Deputy Clerk.

Chair Stephens opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board did not wish to remove any items from the Consent Agenda. No members of the public wished to remove any items from the Consent Agenda.

TABLED ITEMS TO FEBRUARY 10, 2025:

1. SERELL RESORT CABINS ASR & APPEAL, FILE NO. 23-ZONE3442

PUBLIC HEARING CONSENT ITEMS:

1. ANDREASEN ACCESSORY LIVING AREA APPEAL, 24-ZONE3607: This request is an appeal to Article 3.4.5.A of the Larimer County Land Use Code which limits the size of a detached Accessory Living Area (ALA) on lots with an area of 100,000 square feet or greater to 75% of the square footage of the single-unit dwelling or 1,200 square feet, whichever is less. In this case, the applicant is seeking a detached ALA to be 1,407 square feet rather than the maximum of 1,200 square feet.

The subject property is approximately 16.26 acres in size, and it is zoned Rural Residential-2 (RR-2). It is located at 4482 Howling Pines Way, Loveland, and is approximately 1000 feet northwest of where W. 43rd St in Loveland terminates and continues as Pidge Park Way to the north.

The property contains a single-unit residence that was constructed in 2022 with the intent to become an ALA upon completion of a larger proposed dwelling on the parcel in the future. The new primary dwelling on the property is proposed to be 5,593 square feet in size as indicated by the site plan, while the size of the existing dwelling unit proposed to be converted into the ALA is 1,407 square feet. The proposed ALA would not exceed 75% of the square footage of the main residence; however, it would exceed the maximum 1,200 square foot requirement outlined within Article 3.4.5.A of the Larimer

County Land Use Code. The requested 1,407 square foot ALA would be approximately 68% of the square footage of the first floor of the primary dwelling alone and would only be 25% of the size relative to the proposed 5,593 square foot proposed home. The proposal is to allow the existing residence to be converted into an ALA and to be 207 square feet over the 1,200 square feet maximum required of ALA structures.

Both the ALA and proposed main dwelling have access to Howling Pines Way via an existing 60-foot access easement within the Ponderosa Ridge MLD. The property is served by an existing permitted well on-site. The property is also served by an on-site septic system which has the capacity to serve both the proposed main residence and existing ALA dwelling unit. Neighbor notification of the proposed project was sent to 8 properties within 500 feet of the subject property. Staff did not receive any written comments from neighbors as of the date of this report.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES TEAM RECOMMENDATION:

The Development Services Team recommends approval of the Andreasen Accessory Living Area Appeal, File #24-ZONE3607, subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant must obtain building permits for the change of occupancy as well as the alteration to the dwelling unit.
2. The Accessory Living Area shall be located as shown on the approved site plan.
3. The Accessory Living Area must not be rented or leased separately from the single-family dwelling.
4. The Accessory Living Area cannot contain kitchen facilities, as defined by the State Engineer's Office as containing either a stove or oven or a 240-V electric hookup or equivalent gas piping for cooking facilities; or a refrigerator more than 6 cubic feet in size.
5. The Accessory Living Area cannot be permanently occupied by a party other than a member of the family that would otherwise live in the main single-family dwelling, or by employees who provide supervision or care to residents of the main single-family dwelling and who would otherwise reside in the main single-family dwelling.
6. This Accessory Living Area shall not use water for non-residential purposes such as producing a product for sale, or for an office or other facility that has restrooms for customer or employee use.
7. The owner is responsible for paying all applicable fees which may include building permit fees, impact fees, and Transportation Capital Expansion Fees applicable to an Accessory Living Area.
8. Failure to comply with any conditions of the Administrative Special Review approval may result in reconsideration of the use and possible revocation of the approval by the Board of County Commissioners.
9. The approval shall automatically expire in three years if the use has not commenced and/or a building permit has not been issued.
10. One off-street parking space shall be provided for the Accessory Living Area.

11. The use must comply with the Larimer County Noise Ordinance which outlines noise levels as well as noise disturbances, with lower sounds/decibels at property lines between 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

12. The site shall be developed consistent with the approved plan and with the information contained in the Andreasen Accessory Living Area Size Appeal, File #24-ZONE3607, and the supplemental regulations listed above, except as modified by the conditions of approval or agreement of the County and owner. The owner shall be subject to all other verbal or written representations and commitments of record for the Andreasen Accessory Living Area Size Appeal.

2. **VINDEKET APPEALS, FILE NO. 24-ZONE3703:** The applicant is requesting three appeals, including an appeal to §4.3.4.2 (Drainage), §4.5.5.A (Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation) and §4.6.7.E (Design, Use, and Location of Vehicle Parking – Multi-Unit Residential and Nonresidential Development) of the Larimer County Land Use Code. The appeals are requested to waive the requirement to install curb and gutters, to install sidewalks, and to allow additional parking spaces on site to be a gravel, all-weather surface rather than concrete or asphalt as required by the Code. This request is intended to facilitate a tenant finish/change of use of an existing building from a log furniture business to a no-cost food market without requiring the above-noted improvements on-site.

The subject property is located at 400 Delozier Drive, Fort Collins, Colorado, and is zoned Commercial Corridor (CC). The property is located within the City of Fort Collins Growth Management Area (GMA) and is more specifically located within the boundaries of the East Mulberry Plan. The property immediately to the north (398 Delozier Drive) is also owned by the applicant and is also zoned CC and is currently vacant with a fence. This vacant property is not subject to the site plan or related appeal requests and is not proposed to be developed at this time.

The subject property is 0.69 acres (30, 056 square feet) in size and is currently developed with a single-story commercial retail/warehouse structure. The property is served by Boxelder Sanitation District, has an existing tap from East Larimer County Water District, and falls within the jurisdiction of Poudre Fire Authority. No additions or external changes to the building are proposed. The subject property is surrounded by a mix of vacant and commercially developed properties, including a parcel within the City of Fort Collins intended to contain future commercial uses.

The applicant is seeking approval through a concurrent Site Plan process for a no-cost, non-profit market to operate three days per week in an existing structure. The related Site Plan application has been submitted under Application Number 24-ZONE3703, and a Building Permit application has been submitted under Permit Number 24-COM0083 for a Tenant Finish/Change of Occupancy on the site.

The Board of County Commissioners is only hearing the appeal requests. If the appeals are granted by the Board of County Commissioners, the Site Plan for the site can be approved administratively by the Community Development Director or their designate. The three Land Use Code standards being appealed are:

- §4.3.4.2 (Drainage) of the Land Use Code which requires that for new developments within the Urban districts and GMAs, "stormwater drainage shall be achieved through concrete curb and gutter systems throughout the development".
- §4.5.5.A (Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation) of the Land Use Code which requires that "sidewalks shall be installed on both sides of all arterials, collector streets, and local streets, including cul-de-sacs, and within and along the frontage of all new development or redevelopment."
- §4.6.7.E (Design, Use, and Location of Vehicle Parking – Multi-Unit Residential and Nonresidential Development) of the Land Use Code that requires "multi-unit and nonresidential parking areas and associated private local access roads in the Urban districts and GMAs shall be paved with asphalt or concrete, with the exception of listed situations where a gravel, all-weather surface is acceptable."

The applicant is requesting the three appeals to permit the change in business on-site to occur with minimal infrastructure improvements as the existing development of the site provides no logical place or space for curb, gutter and sidewalk, and the applicant has indicated that they have very little financial means of providing these improvements as a non-profit organization. The appeal to waive the requirement to pave additional parking spaces is also due to financial and time constraints. The applicant has also indicated that they are at risk of having to stop or pause operations for extended construction delays. The proposed all-weather surface area for volunteer parking is illustrated on the site plan.

Notice of this application was sent to a total of 128 property owners within 500 feet of the property. No neighbor comments were received as of the date of this report.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES TEAM RECOMMENDATION:

The Development Services Team recommends approval of the Vindeket Appeals, File No. 24-ZONE3703, subject to the following conditions:

1. Site Plan Review and approval must be completed for the use, and building permits must be approved for any changes to the existing building.
2. The all-weather surface shall only be used for volunteer parking spaces and not for parking for the general public, unless further approvals are granted, or the parking spaces are paved.
3. Parking shall be accommodated on-site or through shared parking agreements. At no time shall the traffic flow of Delozier Drive be impeded or otherwise impacted.
4. All required right-of-way and utility easements as deemed necessary by Larimer County Engineering must be dedicated prior to or at the time of Site Plan review.
5. The proposed final surfacing material of all-weather gravel must be adequate to control dust and prevent off-site transport to reduce impacts to air quality and nuisance conditions for neighboring properties.
6. A Development Agreement shall be required to be entered into between the developer and Larimer County that sets out the expectations and requirements for future installation of required on- and off-site improvements, which may include provisions

such as lot sale prohibitions or a restriction on the issuance of further building permits to require such improvements.

MOTION

Commissioner Shadduck-McNally moved that the Board of County Commissioners approve the Consent Agenda subject to the conditions in the staff reports and further moved to authorize the Chair to sign the Findings and Resolutions.

Motion carried 3-0.

PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. ASKELAND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE APPEAL, FILE NO. 24-ZONE3601: Justin Currie, Planner II, gave a presentation. Mr. Currie described the location of the subject property on the south end of Horsetooth Reservoir. The applicant is requesting an appeal to the Larimer County Land Use Code (LCLUC) to deviate from the requirement of the installation of Electric Vehicle (EV) parking spaces and associated EV charging station infrastructure.

Mr. Currie offered some background information about the subject property. The applicant has submitted an Administrative Special Review application (24-ZONE3601) that involves a Change of Use of a vacant building to a microbrewery and tasting room with the addition of an outdoor patio. The Administrative Special Review requires compliance with certain requirements of the LCLUC including but not limited to the County's Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure requirements. The number of EV spaces required is a percentage of the total parking required by Minimum Off-Street-Vehicle Parking Requirements of the Land Use Code.

Based on the proposed use, microbrewery, the zoning district, CC-Commercial Corridor, and that they are proposing a patio, the minimum amount of parking required is 22 spaces. Based on the minimum parking spaces required, the proposed brewery is required to install EV infrastructure. The required amount of EV spaces counts toward the minimum parking requirements and is not meant to be an addition to. The requirement for EV infrastructure for a parking lot with 22 spaces is two EV-capable spaces, two EV-ready spaces, and one EV-installed space.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Mr. Currie gave an overview of the Review Criteria. When considering whether to approve an appeal to deviate from standards or requirements of the Land Use Code, other than minimum lot size requirements, the Board of County Commissioners may grant the appeal subject to safeguards and conditions consistent with their findings concerning the factors below. The County Commissioners will consider each of the following factors and make findings pertaining to each one, which, in their discretion, applies to the appeal:

a. **Approval of the appeal will not subvert the purpose of the standard or requirement.**

As discussed above, the applicant is proposing to not install any of the required EV charging infrastructure subverting the purpose of the code requirement that in this case calls for five spaces dedicated to EV charging infrastructure.

b. Approval of the appeal will not be detrimental to public health, safety, or property values in the neighborhood.

Approval of the Appeal could possibly be detrimental to public health by slowing the adoption of EV charging infrastructure and making it more difficult for existing EV owners and potential new adopters. Making the availability of owning an EV more difficult would continue the use of gas/diesel powered vehicles and the emissions they create that are harmful to the planet and public health. As far as safety and neighborhood property values are concerned, an electric vehicle is just as dangerous as a non-electric vehicle and there are many variables that contribute to property values and the type/number of parking spaces is unlikely to affect property values.

c. Approval of the appeal is the minimum action necessary.

Approval of the appeal is the minimum action necessary to allow the applicant to not install EV charging infrastructure.

d. Approval of the appeal will not result in increased costs to the general public.

Approval of the Appeal would not result in increased costs for the general public because Larimer County is not responsible for installing EV charging infrastructure, so County residents will not be paying to install the required infrastructure in place of the applicant should the appeal be approved.

e. Approval of the appeal is consistent with the intent and purpose of the Code.

The applicant is appealing the requirement to install EV charging infrastructure and is proposing to not install any EV charging infrastructure. If the appeal is approved, it would not be consistent with the intent and purpose of the Land Use Code, as it requires that a minimum amount of EV infrastructure be installed and not having any would subvert that requirement. This requirement was added to the Land Use Code based on State and County emission goals along with several County plans such as the Comprehensive Plan, the Electric Vehicle Charging Plan and the Climate Smart Future Ready Plan.

Mr. Currie explained that the applicant is proposing not to include any of the required EV charging spaces as required by the Land Use Code. The proposed appeal will not comply with all regulatory requirements of the Land Use Code and does not meet all applicable criteria if the appeal is approved.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES TEAM RECOMMENDATION:

The Development Services Team recommends Denial of the Askeland Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Appeal, File No. 24-ZONE3601.

Mr. Currie explained that as of the morning of this meeting, the applicant has agreed to install some EV charging spaces. Staff would be willing to change the recommendation from denial to approval depending on what the applicant proposes.

The Board asked for clarification about the number of required parking spaces as there was a discrepancy in the report. The initial application showed 22 proposed parking spaces, but the final application showed 50 proposed parking spaces. Mr. Currie explained that the applicant would provide more information. However, if more parking spaces are proposed, more EV spaces will also be required.

The Board asked if the current electrical situation would be explained further in order to understand why the current infrastructure cannot support the required EV spaces. Ms. Axmacher noted that the present members of the Building Inspection Department could comment at this time, or after the applicant's presentation. The Board decided to ask this question after the applicant's presentation if necessary.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION:

John and Rachel Askeland gave a presentation about their proposed appeal. Mr. Askeland described the building that is on the property that was formerly a water treatment plant. The Askelands are planning to convert the existing building into a brewery with a tasting room and patio.

Mr. Askeland commented that the initial site plan showed 22 parking spaces, but after speaking with Staff and with surrounding similar businesses, they decided to add additional parking for a total of 50 spaces. Some parking spaces would only be utilized during the peak summer season. With these additional parking spaces, one additional ADA-compliant space would be added. The applicants also proposed to add one EV-charging space. The required EV spaces for a 50-space parking lot would be five installed EV spaces.

Mr. Askeland explained that the current utility capacity is limited by the existing transformers on the site. Mr. Askeland also explained how much power each EV charging station would require and how this could be detrimental to the other functions of the business. Realistically, only one EV charging station could be installed with minor upgrades to the existing electrical infrastructure.

According to an estimate from Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association, upgrading the current infrastructure would cost roughly $20,000. Additional costs for replacing the meter, along with engineering and permitting costs would bring the total cost for a full upgrade to between $60,000 and $75,000.

Mr. Askeland concluded by referencing one section of the Land Use Code that states that when the requirement for adequate public facilities would result in a disproportionate cost expense to the applicant in relation to the overall cost of the project, the Community Development Director may work with the applicant to prioritize which improvements need to be made and which could be made at a later date.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment in person or online.

Chair Stephens closed public comment.

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICANT AND STAFF:

The Board asked the applicant to clarify the change in the requested number of parking spaces on the application. Mr. Askeland responded that he is willing to install one EV charging station and agrees that the current infrastructure would support the one space. However, with 50 parking spaces, the current electrical infrastructure would not allow for the required five installed EV spaces.

The Board asked about the cost of installing five EV spaces. Mr. Askeland confirmed that the total expected cost for the business is $188,000 without any upgrades to the electrical infrastructure. Upgrading the electrical infrastructure would add 30% of the cost to the total.

The Board commented that the 50 parking spaces are all there regardless of the season. Based on this, the applicant would need to install the additional EV spaces as well. Mr. Currie confirmed that EV infrastructure going forward would be based on 50 parking spaces and not 22.

The Board asked the members of the Building Inspection Department to explain what would realistically be needed. Jim Johnson, Larimer County Electrical Inspector, did not agree with the accuracy of the math in the initial plan. The math presented by the applicant was better, but still not completely accurate. Mr. Johnson was also not formerly aware that the existing transformer was only 75,000 volt amps. The current transformer could support 22 parking spaces with the one installed EV charging space. For 50 parking spaces, the infrastructure would need to be upgraded. After the information presented today, Mr. Johnson understands why the existing infrastructure would need to be upgraded. However, he has not visited the site.

The Board asked how old the current infrastructure is. Mr. Askeland confirmed that it is about 25 years old. The Board asked if some items may potentially need to be upgraded regardless of the EV charging spaces. Mr. Johnson stated that it would be unlikely because standards have not changed drastically in the last 20-30 years. Unless the existing infrastructure is dilapidated, it would likely still be compliant.

The Board asked the applicant to address the comments made by Mr. Johnson. Mr. Askeland asked Mr. Johnson to explain some of the inaccuracies with the math in the application. Mr. Johnson gave a brief explanation and offered to review the complexities in more detail at a later time.

Mr. Haug stepped in to simplify some of the questions the Board had asked. The Board was essentially seeking to understand what other reasons besides the cost are preventing the applicant from installing the EV parking spaces. Realistically the applicant could move forward with the originally proposed 22 total parking spaces and the one installed EV space without any additional exorbitant cost. Mr. Askeland agreed that cost was the primary reason for the appeal.

Ms. Axmacher also clarified that some information was received shortly before this hearing began, so Staff had not been able to provide enough detail to explain the appeal.

Mr. Haug mentioned that this item could be tabled if needed.

DELIBERATION:

The Board discussed the possibility of tabling or continuing this item until the new information could be compiled into a more accurate representation of the applicant's request. The Board also asked about the provision in the Land Use Code that discusses disproportionate costs in regard to the total cost for the applicant.

The Board discussed whether this item should be moved to a specific date or left open-ended. Mr. Haug explained the legality of both options. Ms. Axmacher explained that leaving it open-ended would require re-noticing the appeal so that the public could be made aware of the increased size of the parking lot. The Board decided to continue this item to a specific date with the condition that the neighbors would be re-notified to include the request for additional parking spaces.

MOTION

Commissioner Kefalas moved that the Board of County Commissioners continue the Askeland Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Appeal, File No. 24-ZONE3601 until February 24, 2025, and that this item be re-noticed to the surrounding neighbors.

Motion carried 3-0.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS MEETING

The Board of County Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. with County Manager Lorenda Volker. Chair Stephens presided. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally and Commissioner Kefalas were present. Also present were Michelle Bird, Public Affairs Director; Tom Clayton, Commissioners' Office; and Lindsey Jones, Deputy Clerk.

Chair Stephens opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT: Patrick Erickson, a Fort Collins resident, addressed the Board to comment on a trespassing law. Mr. Erickson stated that multiple businesses have removed him from their properties in a way that he feels is discriminatory. Mr. Erickson also requested to speak with the Board regarding housing affordability in Larimer County, specifically for condominiums and apartments. High cost of housing is causing homelessness, and many people are struggling to qualify for apartments due to an inability to pay multiple months' rent up front.

Chair Stephens closed public comment.

The Board responded to Mr. Erickson's comments, thanking him for sharing his experience in a public setting. The Board mentioned that trespassing laws are usually mandated by the municipalities such as the City of Fort Collins and not by Larimer County. The Board also mentioned some services that the County provides to members of the public who are struggling. The Board highlighted their ongoing commitment to housing affordability and mentioned several agencies that the County works with to assist citizens who are experiencing homelessness.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 20, 2025:

M O T I O N:

Commissioner Shadduck-McNally moved that the Board of County Commissioners approve the minutes for the week of January 20, 2025.

Motion carried 3-0.

3. REVIEW OF THE SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 3, 2025: Ms. Bird reviewed the upcoming schedule with the Board. The Board made several additions to the upcoming schedule.

4. CONSENT AGENDA:

AGREEMENTS

1. GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO (GOCO) GRANT AGREEMENT – LIVERMORE CONSVERATION PROJECT

2. AIA DOCUMENT A101 – 2017 AND AIA DOCUMENT A102-2017 (B24-11 – CONSTRUCTION – CENTRAL DIVERSION & TRANSFER STATION)

APPOINTMENTS

1. RECOMMENDED REAPPOINTMENT TO THE KORAL HEIGHTS PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT #46 – Jonathan Hauger

2. **RECOMMENDED APPOINTMENT TO THE KORAL HEIGHTS PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT #46 –** Carol Delbecq

3. **RECOMMENDED REAPPOINTMENT TO THE KORAL HEIGHTS PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT #46 –** Nancy Curtiss

4. **RECOMMENDED APPOINTMENT TO THE COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS ADVISORY BOARD –** Cyndi Dodds

LIQUOR LICENSES

1. **LIQUOR LICENSE RENEWAL – LITTLE D LLC DBA MISHAWAKA AMPHITHEATRE – TAVERN – BELLVUE, COLORADO**

2. **LIQUOR LICENSE RENEWAL – RIVERSIDE COLORADO LLC DBA POUDRE PARK MARKET – FERMENTED MALT BEVERAGE AND WINE – BELLVUE, COLORADO**

MISCELLANEOUS

1. **LORSON LLC NOMINEE FOR LORSON NORTH DEVELOPMENT CORP (68.15) CALEB DEVELOPMENT LLC (31.85) STIPULATION AS TO TAX YEAR 2024 VALUE**

2. **PLUM OWNER FT COLLINS CO LLC STIPULATION AS TO TAX YEAR 2024 VALUE**

M O T I O N

Commissioner Kefalas moved that Board of County Commissioners approve the Consent Agenda for January 28, 2025.

Motion carried 3-0.

5. **COMMISSIONERS' GUESTS:** The Commissioners did not have any guests.

6. **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

1. **PROCLAMATION COMMEMORATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH FEBRUARY 2025:** County Manager Lorenda Volker presented this discussion item. The Board of County Commissioners encourages the celebration of Black History Month through programs, ceremonies and activities in the community to learn from the past and understand the experiences that have shaped Larimer County and invites all to visit the Association for the Study of African American Life and History at https://asalh.org to learn more. Manager Volker emphasized the thoughtful work that went into the creation of this proclamation.

Commissioner Shadduck-McNally read the Proclamation Commemorating Black History Month February 2025.

The Board emphasized the importance of understanding the complexities of our history and learning from that history in order to prevent making the same mistakes again. Some of the core values of Larimer County relate to equity, diversity, and inclusion. This is a community of belonging where everyone is welcome to a seat at the table.

The Board also reflected on the recent Martin Luther King Jr. Day and the many diverse people who helped to build this country. The Board commented on this opportunity to acknowledge the pain and suffering that has occurred in this country, and how slavery, Jim Crow, and many other atrocities have affected the Black community. This proclamation is a renewal of the County's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. This is also a time to celebrate and recognize Black individuals within our own community.

MOTION

Commissioner Shadduck-McNally moved that the Board of County Commissioners approve the Proclamation Commemorating February 2025 as Black History Month.

Motion carried 3-0.

2. VETERAN'S SERVICE OFFICE: SERVICE OVERVIEW AND REAPPOINTMENT OF LEE COOPER: Marcy Kasner, Associate Director of Economic and Workforce Development, introduced this discussion item and request for reappointment of Veterans Service Officer Lee Cooper.

Trisha Reynolds, Veterans Service Program Supervisor, described the work that the Veterans Service Office does. This is the only Veterans Service office in Colorado that has four Service Officers in the office that help veterans with Veterans Affairs (VA) claims. This office helps veterans to navigate benefits, advocates on behalf of veterans and their families, collaborates with community partners, and provides many other services. Ms. Reynolds shared some statistics from the Veterans Service Office, including the number of customers helped via phone, email, and in person, as well as monthly disability payments handled directly by the office. Between the fourth quarter of 2023 and the third quarter of 2024, four Service Officers answered thousands of phone calls and helped file 780 claims for veterans.

Ms. Reynolds highlighted some of the impressive work that has been done by Lee Cooper as the Director of the Veterans Service Office. Mr. Cooper participated in 274 events in 2024, was given an award by Colorado State University, and much more.

Ms. Kasner thanked the Board for continuing to prioritize funding for this department. Ms. Kasner shared that Mr. Cooper is the only Veterans Service Officer who works out of the office in the community 100% of the time, which allows for a much higher quality of assistance for veterans in Larimer County. Ms. Kasner also recognized Ms. Reynolds for her upcoming role as a national trainer for the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

Mr. Cooper expressed his gratitude for the fantastic work and collaboration done by the four members of the Veterans Service Office. Mr. Cooper thanked Ms. Reynolds for her exemplary leadership of the team as well.

The Board asked about the property tax exemption that applies to veterans. The Board wanted to know how often the Veterans Service Office receives inquiries about the exemption and how they respond to those requests. Ms. Reynolds described a new law that was passed that applies to veterans who have been awarded individual unemployability. This new addition will add some volume to the number of requests received by the Assessor's Office. Ms. Reynolds has partnered with the Assessor's Office to be able to assist those veterans who qualify.

The Board thanked the Veterans Service Office for their hard work. The impact of their work is immeasurable and changes the lives of veterans and their families. The Board also commended Mr. Cooper for his dedication. Mr. Cooper always attends the Veterans Day Parade event in full costume to create fun and excitement for the event. The Board expressed their pride in this opportunity to reappoint Mr. Cooper to this team.

County Manager Volker thanked the Veterans Service Office team for bringing fun and joy to their work, especially as many of their clients are experiencing very difficult situations.

MOTION

Commissioner Kefalas moved that the Board of County Commissioners approve the reappointment of Veterans Service Officer Lee Cooper beginning January 28, 2025, through January 28, 2027.

Motion carried 3-0.

3. APPROVAL OF THE PURCHASE OF THE LONE PINE LIVESTOCK CONSERVATION EASEMENT, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD AT ITS JANUARY 23, 2025, MEETING: Meegan Flenniken, Natural Resources, presented this discussion item.

Justin Core, Engineering, explained that this project includes Larimer County's acquisition of a 2,416-acre conservation easement on the Lone Pine Livestock property in the Livermore Priority Area. This project will confer a variety of public benefits by protecting scenic, buffer, agricultural, and wildlife habitat values. This is an iconic 4-mile viewshed and landscape connection between US Forest Service, State Wildlife Area, State Land Board, County Open Space, and numerous conservation easements on private lands. This easement will also protect wetlands and water quality, as well as a critical habitat for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse. This land is primarily used for livestock cattle grazing which will be preserved with this easement.

Mr. Core gave an overview of the acquisition costs for this conservation easement. The $7.5 million project will receive funding support from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), The Nature Conservancy, Gates Family Foundation and a private donor. An Intergovernmental Agreement will formalize additional partnership funding support from the City of Fort Collins. Once this conservation easement is finalized, Larimer County will hold the easement.

Mr. Core also wanted to thank the landowners who offered their support for this project, which could not have come to fruition otherwise.

The Board thanked Mr. Core and Ms. Flenniken for their hard work in creating this conservation easement and many others. The owners of this property have been excellent stewards of the land, and the Board expressed their enthusiasm for protecting this beautiful property.

The Board asked about water rights within this conservation easement, and whether the water rights will be tied to the land in perpetuity. Mr. Core answered that any development in this area will be limited to four building envelopes that will limit the impact on the scenic viewshed. The water rights also cannot be separated from the property because of the association with the conservation easement. The Board also asked about the unique species that will be protected on this property. Ms. Flenniken responded that two Colorado Heritage Program biodiversity sites will protect the critically threatened Preble's meadow jumping mouse and mountain mahogany shrublands.

The Board asked what the monetary incentives are for landowners to participate in conservation easements. The Board also asked where the $5.164 million will come from that allows the County to invest in protecting this land. Ms. Flenniken responded that Help Preserve Open Space sales tax dollars will fund this project. This sales tax will be in effect until 2043. Funds are split 50-50 between Larimer County and the incorporated municipalities. Mr. Core discussed some of the funding options for the unfunded projects, the primary incentive for landowners comes from tax benefits, such as a State of Colorado income tax credit that is available to landowners who donate conservation easements.

Manager Volker commented that these partnerships and relationships take years to build. County partners are trusted to care for the land. The creation of these types of projects speaks to the Natural Resources team's love of their work and the authenticity of the conservations they have over many years.

MOTION

Commissioner Shadduck-McNally moved that the Board of County Commissioners approve and adopt the Resolution approving the acquisition of Lone Pine Livestock Conservation Easement Statement of Authority and accept the donation offered by Scott James in relation to this property.

Motion carried 3-0.

7. COUNTY MANAGER UPDATE: County Manager Volker briefly detailed the events of the previous week.

8. COMMISSIONER ACTIVITY REPORTS: The Board detailed their attendance at events during the previous week.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Executive Session pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 24-6-402(4)(b): Conferences with an attorney for the purpose of receiving legal advice about analysis of legal positions regarding Child Care Assistance Program.

M O T I O N

Commissioner Kefalas moved that the Board of County Commissioners enter into Executive Session pursuant to C.R.S.24-6-402(4)(b): Conferences with an attorney for the purpose of receiving legal advice about analysis of legal positions regarding Child Care Assistance Program.

Motion carried 3-0.

The Board entered into Executive Session.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Kristin Stephens

KRISTIN STEPHENS, CHAIR
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

TINA HARRIS
CLERK AND RECORDER

ATTEST:

Lindsey Jones, Deputy Clerk

LARIMER COUNTY CLERK
SEAL
COLORADO