1800 South County Road 31, Loveland, Colorado 80537, (970) 619-4570, Larimer.org

Date: April 25, 2024
Time: 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Location: Horsetooth Area Information Center - 4200 W. County Rd. 38E Fort Collins, CO 80526- Mountain Lion Room & Zoom Webinar

OPEN LANDS ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
David Marvin	I	Daylan Figgs	I	
Gale Bernhardt	V	Meegan Flenniken	I	
Tom Shoemaker	I	Justin Core	V	
Linda Stanley	V	Lori Smith	I	
Gary Miller	I	Thanh Matthews	I	
Peter Kelly	V	Andrea Weber (minutes)	I	
Ward Nelson	I	Jody Shadduck-McNally	V	
Mike Carter	V			
Ellis Carpenter	A			

V = virtual attendee I = in-person attendee A = absent *commissioner

Call to Order – 5:02 pm

Public Comment

Agenda Review

Review and Approval of Last Minutes

Tom moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Gary seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Information and Announcements

Natural Resources events for this month: https://larimer.org/naturalresources.

To sign up for Open Lands Advisory Board updates, go to https://apps.larimer.org/subscriptions.cfm, enter your email, click “Subscribe,” and check the “Open Lands Advisory Board” box.

February 2024 Open Space Sales Tax Distribution Letter

Northern Water July Joint Board Tour Reminder - Chimney Hollow

Update and Reports

Board of County Commissioner Update

- Commissioner Shadduck-McNally noted the legislative session will conclude in May. The BOCC are advocating for the Conservation Easement (CE) Tax Credit bill.
- LC plans to send out a satisfaction survey as a follow-up to the Our Lands Our Future survey.
- Beginning the county budget process.

2024 DNR Budget Overview – Thanh Matthews

- 2024 Total Estimated Budget Revenue **$23,400,000**
  - Help Preserve Open Spaces Sales & Use Tax (*52.4%)*, Fees (*31.6%)*, Property Taxes (*3.89%)*, Lottery (*3.53%)*, Land Stewardship Enterprise (*2.63%*), Other (*5.95%)*
  - Fiscal year is January 1st to December 31st.
  - 2023 revenue was $23,138,072.
  - Grants can impact/change revenue from year to year.
- 2024 Total Estimated Budget Expenses **$14,055,431**
  - Personnel (*62%*)
    - 2% Market and 3% merit Increase
  - Operating (*38%*)
    - Internal Costs (indirect costs paid to LC, IT, Fleet, etc.) – 52% of operating.
    - Misc Operating Credit Card fees, trash, projects, etc.) – 48% of operating
  - Credit card fees cost DNR a little over half a million annually. The county is investigating a county-wide program which will include all departments instead of each department negotiating their own credit card fees.
  - Lori noted increasing fee prices will be included in the updated projection model.
- Discussion/Feedback:
  - Daylan said 15% of the funds from the Open Space sales tax can be spent in the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) reservoir parks, but not the other way around. OL funds are held in the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) fund to allow for ease of tracking.
    - Lori noted there is currently a 3.1% allowance (set by DNR) from OL funds that can be used in RP for BOR reservoir park development.
  - Board members shared concerns around having more than a small percent of the open space sales tax spent on BOR properties as the sales tax is the primary revenue available to fund open space management and capital. Daylan noted in the previous 25-year projections model, it was estimated the reservoir parks would need ~3% from the sales tax. The percentage and tradeoffs will be reevaluated when the projections are redone.
    - Staff will bring the updated projections model to OLAB to receive board feedback.
  - The board inquired about personnel wages. Thanh noted some increase with meeting economic rates. Daylan said DNR hires 150-160 temporary employees every year. For every dollar/hour pay increase for a temporary employee, there's an increase of $170,000 to the budget.

Tax Credit Legislation Update – Justin Core

- Senate Bill 126 - Conservation Income Tax Credit (bill introduced in February 2024)
  - <u>4 objectives:</u> Eliminate the expiration dates of the CE Oversight Commission (application reviewers) and the Certified Holder Program (set to expire in 2026), raise tax credit cap from $45 million to $75 million to meet demand, eliminate waitlist tied to earning credits (assign credits in order with applications) and expand the eligibility criteria for tax credit transfers.
  - <u>Update:</u> All elements currently intact
    - Proposed cap increase phased over 3 years: $45 million to $60 million in 2025, $60 million to $70 million in 2026 and $70 million to $75 million in 2027.
    - Proposed decrease in % of CE value. Valuation is currently 90% of the appraised value. In 2027, the value would decrease to 80%. Compared with other tax credit programs, 90% is high. (This occurs if someone donates a CE, they receive X% of the value of the CE).
    - Proposed increase of state income tax refundability. Currently set at $50,000, increasing to $200,000 in 2027. Benefits those who donate lower value properties for CEs.

        - New language would be required within CE to include items related to renewable energy aligning with federal tax and treasury guidelines. Larimer County's CE template currently includes this language.
        - Repeal date for the Tax Credit Program is December 31st, 2031.
        - Legislative Session ends May 8th.
    - Discussion/Feedback:
        - Board members suggested writing to their officials to support the bill. Staff provided a template but noted board members would need to omit their status on the advisory board and only represent themselves as residents/individuals.

Discussion Items

Action Items

Recommendation for charging a new fee for pay-as-you-go RV dump stations – Meegan/Daylan

- Meegan said DNR received $1.9 million in ARPA funds from the County Commissioner's to use towards projects that involve a water or equity nexus.
- DNR initially planned to use the ARPA funds to convert the RV dump station at Carter Lake from an enclosed vault to waste water septic. After further investigation, the footprint and return on investment was not adequate.
- DNR manages four total dump stations: two at Horsetooth, one at Carter Lake and one at Hermit Park Open Space.
- Staff investigated local companies that offer RV dump services, and many are on a system using a company called SaniStar. DNR's dump stations will be converted to SaniStar Pay-As-You-Go systems. The cost to convert, including the pay station infrastructure, landscaping, etc. will be ~$60,000 total.
- To ensure a return on investment, DNR has determined a $15.00 per use. The market averages $10 to $25 at other local RV dump sites. Currently, DNR is one of the only entities that offers free dumping.
- Two of the RV dump stations do not require the user to pass through a fee-station, allowing non-camping users to fee use of the stations.
- Staff reached out to all campers from 2023 and inquired if they would prefer no dump station or a dump station that was fee-based. 93% of respondents preferred to keep the dump stations with a fee.
- Ward made a motion to recommend the BOCC approve charging a $15.00 fee at LCDNR dump stations. Gary seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Next Meeting Scheduled

May 23, 2024 - Horsetooth Area Information Center: 4200 W. County Rd. 38 E. Fort Collins, CO 80526
Mountain Lion Room & Zoom Webinar

Executive Session

Pursuant to C.R.S. (24-6-402(4)(a)) for discussion pertaining to the purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of any real, personal or other property interest.

Adjournment – 6:52 pm