

MINUTES
CITY OF ASPEN, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOARD MEETING
Held on July 16, 2020
5:00pm – Online Meeting

City OST Board Members Present: Charlie Eckart, Howie Mallory, Adam McCurdy.

City Staff Members Present: Austin Weiss, Mike Tunte, Matt Kuhn, Brian Long, Chris Petersen.

Adoption of the Agenda: Howie moved to adopt the agenda (there was no second).

Approval of the Minutes: Howie moved to approve the minutes and Adam seconded.

Public Comments, for topics not on the agenda: None.

Staff Comments: Austin mentioned that a stage 1 drought has been declared; the City is working to reduce water usage by 10-15%. Charlie asked whether the City will offer water audits to water utility customers; Austin said such audits are offered ongoingly. Brian mentioned that Hunter-Smuggler Co-op phase two signage has been installed. Ranger Simon Longacre helped with a successful injury evac on Sky Mountain Park recently. Rangers continue with mask education on trails. Mike will continue working to schedule a Board retreat this fall. Matt mentioned that Santos Marquez was nominated by Theatre Aspen for an award for his work to keep public spaces open and functional during the COVID-19 shutdown. Matt mentioned that Mike Tunte will take on the roles of overseeing the Open Space Board and Cozy Point Ranch.

Board Comments: Charlie mentioned Claudia Kirby's resignation from the Board for technical reasons and expressed sincere thanks for her contributions. Austin asked Board members to encourage strong candidates to apply for the two open Board positions. Howie asked Austin to check with the City Clerk about expediting filling the positions. Adam asked which entity will manage the new Castle Creek Trail and commented on the need for visual cues to let cyclists know they can ride uphill using the trail. Austin explained that it is jointly managed by the City and the County and they are looking into stenciling. A discussion followed concerning buffers and the multi-use lanes. Howie emphasized the need for clear signage. Howie commented on the good aesthetics of the concrete retaining wall opposite the multi-use lanes.

Howie suggested adding speed tables at the ABC Trail crossing on Cemetery Lane. Austin said he would speak with Engineering about this. Howie brought up the Sanitation Department's irrigation pipe that needs a pump and state approval before it can be operated. Austin said that the Utilities Department is working on that project and he will get an update for the Board. Howie would like this to be an August meeting agenda item. Charlie mentioned safety concerns on the Hallam Street Bike-pedway, and asked whether cross streets have bike-pedway caution signs. Brian explained that they do not and he will pass along this concern to the PABST

Committee. Howie emphasized that Brian should request more police presence on the Bike-pedway.

New Business: John Wilkinson of Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council asked the Board to consider changing winter management of the Rio Grande Trail to grooming across the full the width of the trail between Aspen and Slaughterhouse Bridge. Like similar trails managed successfully in Snowmass Village, this would allow multi-uses including classic and skate skiing, walking, and fat biking. Adam expressed concern that the plowed trail surface is important to users who do not want to walk on snow. Chris said frequent grooming would be necessary and that it could be good to try this winter. Charlie expressed support. Austin added that this idea as a living lab during winter 2020/21 should be a discussion item at an upcoming City Council work session.

In collaboration with AVSC, Parks is discussing creating a homologated 2.5 km Nordic sprint course on the Moore Open Space. This long-range plan estimated to cost \$10,000 also involves snow-making. Board support is sought to accompany the application to Community Development. The Board expressed support and Howie suggested a site visit. Charlie asked for clarification on past sprint courses and which requirements are lacking. Chris and Austin explained that sprint races have not been hosted recently because there is no homologated course and that length and width requirements for sprint heats are currently lacking.

Adam moved to recommend continuing the planning and construction pending a Board site visit for the Moore Playing Fields cross-country skiing platform improvements, as presented to the City of Aspen Open Space and Trails Board on July 16, 2020. Howie seconded. Chris will plan a site visit.

Old Business: Austin asked for Board direction on the Portal Trail concept. Howie expressed that this seems like a lower priority trail effort compared to others. He advised spending more time on environmental impacts and financial costs. Adam added that it would enhance the trail system and should be kept as a project to keep for future opportunities. Adam also asked about other site visits that should be done prior to a Board retreat. Charlie suggested a visit to the upper portal trail (holy grail area) in order to look at wildlife habitat considerations. Charlie asked when the ½ cent open space tax will come up for renewal; Austin said it will be in 2022. Howie mentioned the importance of being poised for any potential future negotiation opportunities with owners of the Smuggler Mine.

Diane said that Sarah will check with Torre and respond next week about expediting filling the Board positions. Matt added that the budget approach is conservative for the next two years. Two big ticket items are Herron Park playground replacement and Cozy Point Ranch improvements; Maroon Creek Road and Brush Creek/ Hwy 82 redevelopment projects are future priorities and as such site visits may not be needed at this time.

Adjourned: Howie moved to adjourn; Adam seconded.

Next Meeting Date(s): August 20, 2020