

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS TRAILS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
February 5, 2020**

The meeting of the Steamboat Springs 2A Trails Committee was called to order at approximately 12:03 p.m. on Wednesday, February 5, 2020, in the Crawford Room, Centennial Hall, 124 10th Street, Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Trails Committee members in attendance were: Chair Pete Wither, Scott Marr, Gavin Malia, Harry Martin and Jason Landers. Absent: High, Bonner. City staff members present were Assistant to The City Manager Winnie DelliQuadri and Open Space and Trails Supervisor Jenny Carey. Kris Middendorf represented Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Brendan Kelly represented the US Forest Service. Mike Morty represented Routt County Road and Bridge.

Approval of Minutes: November 6, 2019

Scott Marr moved to approve the November 6, 2019 meeting minutes. Gavin Malia seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2019 Financial Report

DelliQuadri: We do not have the trail breakdowns for Buff Pass yet because we just this week finished sorting through some issues. Routt County Riders started building the Buff Pass trails ahead of contracting by the Forest Service. So Brandon identified that the Forest Service was not able to pay RCR for the work done. Then we went through a process and identified that the City could pay RCR for the work done ahead of Forest Service contracting. So that contract was signed this week and the invoices will be paid today.

Because I knew the totals, this is in the financial report. But because I didn't have the detail as to how the Buff Pass money was broken down by trail, I did not bring that information.

We budgeted \$420,000 and spent \$515,000. What you're not seeing in the budget is that every time you budget something, that money stays with the project until it's spent. So that's why I added the total. You can see the Total line is actually a little bit more important than the annual because you can see how much was budgeted for all the years. Your 2019 budget for any particular project is in addition to any funds that carried forward. So when you look at the total versus the 2019 budgets, you can see how much was carried forward and what was done in 2019. There's a carry-forward of unbudgeted funds that is not shown as part of the grand total.

We were over budget on planning, so I would like the flexibility to move some of the Buff Pass construction dollars to planning. We've spent \$529,000 out of \$536,000 and we still have planning to do this year. So we are over budget by approximately 29,000. We were under budget on construction.

Malia: How does that contract work? It's not just open ended.

DelliQuadri: No, it's a dollar amount. The City has a set contract with USFS. Prior contracts between the Forest Service and RCR were time and materials and didn't have any caps or amounts. We're moving away from that, and all future trails will be built on a contract-not-to-exceed basis. Forest Service time for construction oversight ended up for the most part being coded to planning. While I can't break that apart and say which hour of time was planning and which was construction oversight, the reality is that money ended up getting billed towards planning when really it should have been construction oversight. The overall number is fine. That's just a challenge with the way that we have it set up. Brendan would have to literally code his minutes to one or the other, which is not practical. So even though it looks like planning is over, I can't really say that it is. I don't have that level of detail. So that's why it would be good to get your direction in the form of a motion to be flexible in terms of moving some of the construction dollars to planning so that I've got them in the right buckets – knowing that everything got billed to planning last year when some of it shouldn't have.

MOTION

Scott Marr moved to allow the City to move up to \$40,000 in funding from Buffalo Pass Construction to Forest Service Planning. Gavin Malia seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Trail Counter Data From 2019

DelliQuadri: In 2019 we hired RCR through the City (not 2A Trails) budget to put in counters and download the data from various sites on Emerald. The Forest Service also did it on Buff Pass. I was hoping to have that report today, but I don't have it. But we do have the data, and I will get it so we can look at it. When I did the last look at it in September, it showed continued use; I didn't do the analysis at that point to determine the amount by which use was up, but it did increase.

Malia asked if City Council is expecting a presentation on this data.

DelliQuadri: Typically, we schedule a presentation to City Council in the spring. I was hoping to do it when we're a little closer to understanding where we are on the NEPA process. But yes, we will have that data for them. One of the things Council asked for that I have been doing is including the approved minutes in each Council packet.

Morty was interested in correlating trail use counts with traffic on Buff Pass Road to try to delineate how much of that is cyclists versus other user groups.

Morty: I submitted a Federal Land Access Program grant for the reconstruction of CR 14. I think it's good that we're capturing all this because a lot of the questions on the application were around what percentages of federal land visits are hunters and so on. I didn't have that data. So if we can have that information, it will go a long way.

DelliQuadri: The Forest Service has some cameras that we purchased in order to identify use at certain intersections for the trail study. So we have that data, though it was not in the

report. Maybe you could coordinate putting cameras at trailheads when Routt County Road and Bridge is doing their data collection.

Kelly: There should be pictures identified by date.

Kelly and Morty will coordinate.

Middledorf expressed interest in helping fund counters and dovetailing that data set with CPW's elk study.

Kelly wanted to make sure RCR is still monitoring counters regularly to make sure they're operational.

Wither thought winter data would be important as well.

Kelly said Forest Service volunteers are surveying users at Dry Lake on weekend mornings to help determine types and proportions of use at that site as well as Rabbit Ears.

Morty, Kelly and Middledorf will meet with DelliQuadri in the spring.

Core Trail West

DelliQuadri: Core Trail West is not a part of the Trails Alliance proposal, but you expressed an interest in seeing what's happening there.

The City applied for two different planning grants. With Kris's help, we were able to get \$75,000 from CPW to do the first phase of planning. That's a recommended grant at this point; they haven't actually had the board meeting where they approve it. With CDOT, we went in for \$200,000 for engineering/design and easement acquisition for that trail segment. We were the only applicant, so we were recommended for funding for that one, too. So at this point, we should have the money we need to do the design work and easement acquisition.

That trail would start at Steamboat Powersports. We've connected it from Lagoon Court to Powersports. That will be designed over the next year or two, and we'll work on easement acquisition. The trail goes near the CDOT right-of-way close to Snow Bowl; meanders through City and Fournier property; then will likely go back up towards the CDOT right-of-way with a tunnel under Highway 40 in front of Sleepy Bear; then meander to get to Steamboat 2. That will all be hard surface to Core Trail specs. Then once you get to West Steamboat Neighborhoods area, it would be a soft-surface trail to connect to the trail system in Silver Spur. Once we get it designed, we'll have an understanding of the cost to construct.

We already applied for grant funding to try to get some initial dollars to construct Phase I, which is from the bowling alley to the tunnel.

Marr asked about the south extension; DelliQuadri said there is still no access.

DelliQuadri: We applied for a little over \$1 million to start Phase I construction. If we get awarded, it would be in 2023. City Council has already appropriated the matching funds for both planning grants and for the first construction grant by using the accommodations tax reserve.

Project Updates

Town Pathways: Walton Creek Hotel Connector

Scott Marr left the meeting for the duration of this item.

DelliQuadri: They continue to work on easement issues with the goal to figure out how to make the trail happen even if it means continuing along the creek to the Stone Lane connector.

Malia asked whether it will be hard or soft surface; DelliQuadri said it depends on the eventual location. If it ended up going on an easement between two properties, the property owners would have a lot to say about that.

DelliQuadri asked for the Committee's surface preference.

Malia asked about the cost difference; DelliQuadri said it was around \$40,000.

MOTION

Harry Martin moved to recommend the Town Pathways: Walton Creek Hotel Connector trail be constructed as hard surface. Gavin Malia seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Howelsen Hill Directional Phase II

Jenny Carey: This is next on the list to be put out to bid to finish the continuation of NPR. We're now in the planning phase. It will go to the Parks & Rec Commission on February 26.

Malia confirmed that the \$65,000 budgeted for this in 2020 includes construction.

Carey said that whether it will be done this year will depend on the availability of contractors.

Spring Creek Alternate:

Carey: We are hoping that our contractor will be in first thing in the spring to get the ditch crossing done. Once that crossing is in place, we'll finish the connecting part of the trail.

Unrelated to 2A: Last year we expanded the soft-surface trail at the bottom of Spring Creek. It starts at Amethyst right at the kiosk. It's now a six-foot-wide soft surface. We are in the planning process to continue the design through the pinch points and dealing with the wetlands. That is in the works to get built and continue that up to the ponds as a 6-8 foot wide trail.

Malia wondered whether that trail would get washed out every spring.

Carey: There was a section that did wash out this year. There was a big dam that built up in the creek from all the debris coming down; we actually cleared that out, so I'm hoping it won't happen this year.

Brendan and I will be working on the new signage that this year once we get final approval for the name. We'll be making all those signs this winter and hopefully getting them in as soon as we can next year and have everything signed permanently.

We've been talking about adding some switchbacks to make the wall piece more passable and putting in erosion control up there. We don't yet know who's going to do that work.

Buffalo Pass:

Brendan Kelly: Spring Creek is mostly done on our end except for finishing out some of the payments. We have signs made for the trails up there; they just need 4x4's installed. We're working on the budget for that. Buffalo Billy's is the last trail to construct up there; we're working on a plan to construct that this summer.

DelliQuadri: If their construction process comes back with a number more than what Kent had originally estimated when you funded it, there might be an additional request in May. But at this point, we're thinking it will be covered in what they already are carrying forward.

Mad Rabbit NEPA:

Kelly: I'm taking the lead on that project. Rita Bennett did a lot of the compiling of all the surveys from this past summer and working through the plan. Right now I'm putting all of that information to work adjusting trails as needed. We'll need to do some re-surveys this summer to check on some of those reroutes. There were a lot of large wetland areas that disrupted conceptual plans, so I'm working through a mapping exercise to reroute around those spots. We'll do some reassessments in the summer to clear those routes and be on track towards putting out a draft.

We cannot sign off on a final environmental assessment unless the archeological surveys have been fully completed and run through SHIPO, which is the state agency for historic preservation. We realized that the reroutes around the wetlands would be big enough that what was surveyed will need to be re-surveyed. They gave us a 30-meter buffer on both sides, which addresses all minor adjustments during construction. But it didn't account for the larger sections of wetlands we encountered with last summer's surveys. We didn't have enough time going into the fall to get the reroutes done and get them resurveyed.

I'm working on the timeline for that, and the specialists will be fine-tuning the project this summer so we can get SHIPO concurrence to be able to sign off on the final NEPA as we go through the process.

Landers asked how far on the schedule this is putting Kelly back.

Kelly: They have to be able to see the ground to do the archeological assessments, which means late June, July for the start of the survey work. I still don't have the exact program of work of the number of miles of reroutes that will be needed, but likely at least a month's worth of reassessing all that. We also have a big workload; summer is a heavy draw for specialists. Once we get everything finalized on the ground, it goes to analysis where specialists write reports of the impacts to their resource areas. Based on their workloads, that's going to have to be late summer into the fall. Once they do that, that gets us to the draft. I can't give you a formal date yet because I haven't finalized the number of reroutes and the timeframe to study them. But basically, it will be fall. Our specialists have large workloads outside of recreation, so they won't be able to get back to the office to write their analyses until fall.

Wither confirmed that the comment period will be next fall-winter.

Kelly said that once the draft is release, the process has a stricter timetable and he will be able to give clear dates around the comment period and appeal period.

Wither confirmed that the goal would be to start building trails in the summer of 2021.

Martin: It sounds like the federal government is loosening up NEPA restrictions on a bunch of stuff. Will that affect this at all?

Kelly: When it comes to doing broad-scale new trails, there's the potential for significant environmental impact. We're in a comment period on categorical exclusions, which would exclude us from having to do more extensive NEPA. But there's not going to be one for this type of project.

Trail Maintenance Fund

DelliQuadri: It's at \$593,919.64 as of December 31. That was a little down compared to prior years in terms of total donations. When we set it up, we were told that the challenging years were going to be six, seven, eight. I think that is indeed the case. In 2019, it had 157 individual donations totaling \$76,929. That was down in terms of donors and dollar amount; it was the first year we didn't hit our goal of \$100,000. So we need to re-emphasize that.

Wildlife Habitat Improvement Fund

DelliQuadri: WILD is at \$42,587.06 as of December 31. It had 16 donations in 2019 totaling \$17,884. So we need to really spread the word about that fund. But in general, they're both doing what we intended. The WILD fund did its first round of grants this year.

Carey asked how the donation kiosks are doing; DelliQuadri reported that per conversations with Helen Beall, they're doing around \$1,000 a month.

Routt Recreation Roundtable

Middledorf: We're meeting this afternoon to discuss how the Roundtable will be paid for in 2020. There are six paying members: Forest Service and BLM are ex-officio, with CPW, the

Land Board, the County, and the City being on the executive committee. February 14 we'll have a meeting where each land manager is going to come with a 15-20-minute presentation of all the planning processes and projects they have for the coming year and into the future.

Kelly: I was asked by some of the members to present about Dry Lake on our plans for the parking area and managing the use up there.

Malia expressed interest in attending.

Middledorf said the County would likely be presenting about incorporating recreation into the 2020 Master Plan.

Morty: If you haven't already, go to the county website at <http://navigateyourroutt.com> and take the survey for the Master Plan. The goal was to capture 2% of the county population for survey returns, and I think we're currently at 3%. I believe it closes in a week or week and a half.

DelliQuadri will add updates regarding the recreation component of the Routt County Master Plan to future agendas.

Middledorf encouraged Committee members to engage with land managers and the Roundtable with any opinions on recreation in the County.

Middledorf: I think Roundtable members really want to talk about an overall vision rather than individual projects.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Middledorf mentioned a YouTube video showing collaboration between CPW, RCR and Forest Service. He sent a link to Committee members.

2020 Meeting Dates

May 13: Counter data; final Forest Service numbers, prepare Council update.
September 2: Budget meeting.
December 2: NEPA open house.

Adjournment

Gavin Malia moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:58 p.m. Harry Martin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

MINUTES PREPARED, REVIEWED AND RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY: Timothy Keenan and Winnie DelliQuadri. Approved this 13th Day of May, 2020.