

**MINUTES OF THE  
SANTA FÉ COUNTY  
COUNTY OPEN LAND TRAILS AND PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
(COLTPAC)**

**October 1, 2014**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Santa Fé County Open Land, Trails and Parks Advisory Committee (COLTPAC) was called to order on the above date at approximately 6:00 p.m. by Chair Judy Kowalski in the Projects, Facilities and Open Space Conference Room, 901 West Alameda St., suite 20C, Santa Fé, New Mexico.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Roll Call indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

**Members Present**

Judy Kowalski, Chair  
Zach Taylor, Vice Chair  
William Baker  
Devin Bent  
Dave Dannenberg  
Ernesto Ortega  
John Parker

**Members Absent**

Patricia Conoway [excused]  
Almudena Ortíz Cué [excused]

**Staff Members Present**

Maria Lohmann, Open Space and Trails Planner  
Erik Aaboe, Assistant County Manager

**3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Dr. Bent suggested that under Matters of the Committee, Chair Kowalski might tell the Committee about the BCC presentation. Chair Kowalski agreed.

Mr. Taylor asked to discuss long term goals.

Mr. Ortega said that Ms. Lohmann has focus group as an item under Matters from Staff.

Chair Kowalski said she also asked Ms. Lohmann to talk a little about the Pedestrian Master Plan because she is on that focus group.

**Dr. Bent moved to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.**

#### **4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – September 3, 2014**

Ms. Lohmann said Ms. Ortiz Cué wanted quotes around “force” as in to visit all tables.

Mr. Ortega requested a change on page 13 in the middle - members should work through the Chair. Through the county government entity staff.

Dr. Bent requested a change at the top of page 13. He didn't mean 27% of property values and asked to just delete that. He explained that the pueblos are fencing off the land so they are reducing open space. He asked to delete the sentence about the pueblos buying up the land also.

**Mr. Ortega moved to approve the minutes of September 3, 2014 as amended. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.**

#### **5. MATTERS OF PUBLIC CONCERN**

There were no public comments.

#### **6. MATTERS FROM THE COMMITTEE**

Chair Kowalski gave an overview of her presentation at the Board of County Commissioners' meeting and noted that Ms. Lohmann and Dr. Bent were there to support her. Ms. Lohmann introduced her and she gave a four-page talk about why we felt it was necessary to create the new vision and felt it was important because of the changing nature of COLTPAC and our focus should change and good opportunity to inform the public more about open space and properties acquired over the years. The commissioners were attentive and had many comments, mostly thanking us for our work and willingness of members to put in the time.

Commissioner Holian was very interested about the agricultural land and if COLTPAC intended to obtain public input. She thought that was good because it is important to her. So one of the focus groups should include agriculture.

Dr. Bent said the BCC focused on it and asked questions. Chair Kowalski did about as well as he could imagine anyone could do.

Chair Kowalski appreciated Dr. Bent being present. She said Commissioner Mayfield specifically asked Dr. Bent if he agreed and he said yes.

Chair Kowalski said there were not many questions but mostly it was support and they agreed the COLTPAC mission needs to be updated.

Dr. Bent noted that some said the County needed to manage what we've got and not go for more land.

Chair Kowalski thought maybe they should engage more people through the focus groups.

Ms. Lohmann said she had not talked with the Commissioners about that.

Chair Kowalski summarized that they were very complimentary about the Committee and it was nice to have that support.

### **Goals and Objectives:**

Mr. Dannenberg related that he ran into Mr. Taylor and they talked about strategic planning long range. There is a place for the Committee to take on the higher visibility projects of the County and pull them under our belt, shepherd them, help move them along. So they should have a long range plan with some short term results.

Chair Kowalski said she did mention to the BCC his idea about access to the Glorieta Trails as a shorter term project to tackle and also about revising the application for donations.

Mr. Dannenberg said the Committee cannot go off on its own but it needs to be something that Ms. Lohmann and staff has in their sights.

Chair Kowalski agreed but said COLTPAC can help identify needs.

Mr. Taylor noted that Dr. Bent brings up a lot about the need for parks in his area and that would be good to have as short term as well as Romero Park.

Mr. Dannenberg added access to BLM land.

Dr. Bent added the State Parks management plans that have goals already attached.

Mr. Taylor asked what the process for the plan would be. He would like to be able to work with Ms. Lohmann as the project manager.

Ms. Lohmann suggested that COLTPAC and staff talk about it and put things on the table to consider in the short-term and that would lead to prioritizing for the strategic plan.

Mr. Aaboe said the fact that COLTPAC meets regularly is a great resource to the County. And when there is agreement, that item needs to be addressed and direct the Committee to do that. If a lot of stuff comes up we will have to focus on some. Tonight we have the acquisition process and need everyone's

perspective on it.

Ms. Lohmann said she had been able to prioritize, based on the Committee's feedback - looking at the application and the resolutions.

Mr. Ortega suggested that staff share an action plan with the Committee. In a strategic plan we look long range - 5-7 years out. But a shared annual action plan means we could focus on what we could do to help carry those action items out.

Mr. Dannenberg agreed and asked if this would work for staff. It was just the simple focus of the Committee and periodically look at them and work on them on the side. If there is a roadblock that COLTPAC could get out of the way, it would help.

Mr. Parker agreed. It should be an ongoing agenda item on what is on staff radar - not to meddle but to understand.

Mr. Taylor asked if we should let them come out organically, which makes sense to him. Some things that we want on the agenda we can put horsepower behind.

Mr. Ortega said once the Committee knows what is on the radar for staff, we can intermingle our own concerns with staff focus and add or supplement what is being worked on and then help prioritize them to determine specifically the avenues we have to take and collectively accomplish goals or action items.

Dr. Bent thought that was great. He thought maybe COLTPAC should invite the workers in Public Works to talk so we would know what we could reasonably ask for.

Mr. Taylor recalled when he first started on COLTPAC, Ms. Baker was project manager and was here every time and asked the members for advice or feedback about the projects. But he was not sure we could get her to come to the meetings.

Ms. Lohmann noted that Ms. Baker lives in Albuquerque and late nights are difficult for her.

Mr. Parker said that at least those reports could be shared. His interest is to report back on what we are all about. It would be great to have more of that information. He was not sure it is all on the web.

Mr. Aaboe appreciated what Mr. Parker mentioned earlier- by bringing up a running tally of initiatives that are ongoing. And asking Ms. Lohmann to report out on those projects. That might help the Committee to determine how to prioritize them. It is also a good reminder to staff on what they need to do next. As a government entity, the County has to have many balls in the air at once. And if it is not a verbal presentation on open space projects - the project manager should report on the ongoing projects so the members could let the public know about them.

Chair Kowalski said the Committee has identified the problem that there is not a lot of public knowledge about all the properties the county has or understanding the open space program.

Mr. Taylor suggested outreach and how to do it, be put on the next agenda - things like putting together a web page or e-blasts for people.

Chair Kowalski added how the County plans to upgrade the web site or use Facebook.

Mr. Aaboe said the County does have a PIO to provide maintenance of the web site and social media. This is another thing to add to Ms. Lohmann's list and there are many ways to do it. We could run through them at a meeting and decide on ones we want to modify.

Chair Kowalski thought it would be nice to post pictures of the Arroyo Hondo Trail when things are in bloom.

Mr. Dannenberg said they could consider more than just web sites.

Mr. Aaboe noted that the PIO has a number account on Twitter and Facebook and she is always looking for more things to put on it. She also puts out a newsletter as an e-mail blast and will also put relevant stuff on Facebook or tweet them. You could flood it with open space things rather than building your own web page.

Dr. Bent said the website lacks showing where the trails are; where the parks are.

Ms. Lohmann said she recently attended a conference where there were examples of interactive map platforms and would be doing that soon. The GIS Division has all the tools and makes it easy. It is on her list.

Chair Kowalski suggested the Committee talk about these things each time and share ideas and findings of members.

## **7. MATTERS FROM COUNTY STAFF**

### **A. Open Space Staff Updates**

Ms. Lohmann handed out the focus group update and needs some names to contact for the Parks focus group.

Susan Newhall was suggested on outdoor education.

Ms. Lohmann said she was going to contact them but wanted a little more structure and a timeline to ask them to commit. She hoped to get more structure and it isn't quite final. She wouldn't call them until she knew more. If there are people on more than one list perhaps they could eliminate the duplications.

Chair Kowalski said the members should put their names on the list too.

Ms. Lohmann handed out a signup sheet for the committee.

## **Romero Park**

Ms. Lohmann reported some changes to the final plan. Invitation for Bids garnered one bid and it was over budget so the bid will be reissued.

Dr. Bent asked if the budget was there.

Ms. Lohmann said it was but this bid was significantly over. It was a surprise.

Mr. Taylor asked if the commitment of funds issue got worked out.

Ms. Lohmann thought so.

## **Other Matters**

Ms. Lohmann said Scott Kaseman had asked her to share the efforts to acquire more properties on the Santa Fé River and their work to resolve multiple acquisition issues.

Mr. Aaboe said they are near San Ysidro and some went through the river bed so they were looking either for easements or fee simple purchases. It also involves lot splits and is very difficult. We are working to streamline the process and identify early on whether an easement or an acquisition is the right way for that specific property.

Ms. Lohmann added that the Santa Fé River is getting some repair at San Ysidro which she thought was vandalism. The notice to proceed was given and construction is to start soon.

Ms. Lohmann said Ms. Branch shared that the "adopt an open space" program is a huge success. She listed trails that have been adopted and volunteers are being set up to help with them. There has been lots of interest in properties too.

Mr. Parker said his group had been working on the spur trail and were unsure of what that encompasses for expectations.

Ms. Lohmann said the Stewards of the Rail Trail make note of where damage has occurred and then report it to Carol Branch.

Mr. Parker said they would need to take equipment out there to fix some of the damage. So it is more just to coordinate with Carol.

Ms. Lohmann agreed. She can't be there on all of the trails so the volunteers are the eyes to see what needs attention.

Mr. Parker asked if there was a way to find out when contracts have been let.

Ms. Lohmann didn't know. There is nothing on the web.

Mr. Aaboe said sometimes it took a long time or them to close. A press release goes out and he agreed to get that to Mr. Parker.

His understanding was that in adopting a trail, they look for things and inform the County who can get equipment out there or remove graffiti, etc.

Dr. Bent asked then if the volunteer was reporting back rather than doing the work.

Mr. Aaboe agreed.

Ms. Lohmann said she been spending a lot of time piggy-backing on Chair Kowalski's presentation. She was looking through the resolutions to clean them up, which includes the application process.

Chair Kowalski said the Pedestrian Master Plan is one of many efforts out there. It is a giant one for NMDOT, the MPO Transportation Plan and they are now working on Pedestrian as part of that. The planning area is not just the City and the County might want to pay more attention to the Pedestrian Plan. There is a working group.

Ms. Lohmann said that Master Plan working group has finished meeting. They did a similar thing with the focus groups. They talked about conditions and things to look at and then work on those things with consultants to figure out where the needs are the biggest - like lack of sidewalks near the school. There are a lot of different variables.

Chair Kowalski said she was unable to attend either of the two public meetings. There was nothing on the MPO web site regarding the Pedestrian Master Plan. The Plan is really focusing on a portion of the City.

Ms. Lohmann said part of that was because of the lack of data. The consultant went up and down every street to find where no sidewalks existed. Through ADA, a lot of data is being collected.

Chair Kowalski noted that it was labeled phase 1 but she didn't know what Phase 1 is.

Ms. Lohmann said Claudia Horn is coming to our next meeting.

Mr. Baker asked if they could get a report on the contract that was inventorying the county resources - where they are and what needs yet to be done.

Ms. Lohmann said they had a meeting a few weeks ago and the consultant is generating that data now.

Mr. Ortega said it was a very good meeting. The first one was all over the place and the second was very focused. The consultant came in with a specific process to inventory the county. Ms. Lohmann helped that happen.

Mr. Aaboe provided updates:

The Pojoaque ball fields closed a week ago Monday; acquired from the Pojoaque School District and the County will resurface the soccer field and add signage. It was government to government and there were water rights involved. It has closed so the design will be completed sometime this fall and go out to bid late in the fall. Ms. Baker is the project manager.

Ms. Lohmann said they have to tweak the original design because the field flooded last week. It needs to be protected from the water.

Dr. Bent said that land was received with the condition it has to be used for recreation in perpetuity.

Mr. Aaboe agreed and the School District was willing to reduce the price.

Mr. Taylor asked who manages the use of it then - the league play.

Chair Kowalski said it was whoever the land owner is.

Mr. Taylor asked if the County had resources for that.

Mr. Aaboe thought it was possible to work with the Little League so they could do scheduling but those details haven't been worked on yet. There is a natural turf softball field and an artificial turf soccer field. And the county doesn't own a riding mower.

Mr. Aaboe said the other item was that the County got notification from FHWA that we will be receiving the documents for El Camino Real Trail multi-agency Project. The Park Service did the heavy lifting. The project cost is about \$3 million and the City contributed \$150,000. It was reprogrammed bike trails money. The project would go from the River under 599 and then adjacent to Caja del Rio Road. There are about six miles and then dirt at Diablo Canyon, following El Camino Trail. The Feds were excited about it. It is the end of the federal fiscal year so the paperwork isn't here yet. In this project, the FHWA does all the work.

Ms. Lohmann added that it is on Youtube.

Mr. Aaboe said it is FY 16 money and today is the first day of FY 15. They will probably ask for local match to do the design. Steve Burns from the National Parks local office is the passion behind this and he probably wants to do the whole trail from Chihuahua to Colorado.

Dr. Bent said all the heirs of the Spanish land grant have to vote to provide the land.

Mr. Aaboe said the County signed a lease with the Jacona Land Grant primarily for a transfer station but also for a playground park as part of the large parcel and a walking trail around it.

## 8. ACTION ITEMS



There were no action items to consider.

## 9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

### A. Discussion of Property Application Process

Ms. Lohmann sent the original application documents to the members and she started to look at it. Her first idea was to show how she changed it but wanted to get direction from the Committee before going ahead. She got rid of the 2009 deadline.

Dr. Bent said Ted Harrison has gone through the process four times. Maybe we could just do instructions to them.

Ms. Lohmann had met with Mr. Aaboe and they decided on having a stronger pre-application process - sitting with the applicant to see how the property would benefit the County.

This application is enormous and it is difficult to find out some things like who owns the mineral rights. So we can do a cover sheet to answer why the County should think about their property.

They thought about having a kind of technical review team with staff members. Staff could advise them on how to make it work.

Mr. Aaboe said he went through Lisa Roach's notes on Glorieta. Early on the application should be a question: "Are you interested in donating this property to the County?" and create an off ramp from purchasing to a more simplified process. When we spoke to Ms. Baker, we identified that there are probably ways to make it clear by stripping it down to the minimum amount of information needed.

If it is to be a donation, we should get the property details and then find out if the County wants this property donated to it. So we could short-list it. We do need to do an investigation on encumbrances and other problems and then generate a process that is logical and add the things that would be required. So it meets COLTPAC's wishes.

Chair Kowalski asked if the pre-application would come to COLTPAC.

Mr. Aaboe thought that was possible.

Chair Kowalski said it was not officially sanctioned.

Mr. Aaboe said it is baked into a resolution. Ms. Baker is concerned that there would be things acquired that are not in the County's best interest so we need safeguards built in.

Mr. Taylor thought that was fairer to the applicant too, rather than having this cumbersome, long process.

Mr. Ortega asked if the Committee could have some core elements in the process brought to COLTPAC and decide whether to proceed with a more comprehensive process, because some folks don't have the ability to fill out an application of this magnitude. It would consider their interest and whether there was any benefit for the landowner to donate.

Mr. Baker agreed. COLTPAC's responsibility seems to be tied around funding but there is no process here for donations. So our primary responsibility for being in the County's interests is not there.

Chair Kowalski agreed. The resolution outlines a very detailed process that locks us in.

Dr. Bent thought they could amend the application because it is not part of the resolution. The earlier resolutions had the application as part of them.

Ms. Lohmann mentioned the resolutions and suggested starting on the documents first rather than the resolutions, and then go back to the resolutions. She had looked at what other counties were doing and seen that they have something similar to what we already have. So we need to look at something new.

Mr. Taylor asked if a COLTPAC review could actually be part of the pre-application.

Ms. Lohmann agreed. Some technical review with staff and they would then present to COLTPAC to sell the Committee on why this property should be considered by the County. Then staff would provide them with the other requirements - what the County would provide and what the applicant would provide. Maybe then the bigger application would not be as complicated and COLTPAC would then make a recommendation to the BCC on it.

Mr. Baker thought that was also part of the process and maybe not even call it a pre-app.

Mr. Parker said if the applicant is presenting to COLTPAC, prior to making a preliminary response, it needs to be reviewed by staff first.

Mr. Aaboe said that is the current process. Staff reviews an application and either says accepted or rejected. If staff rejects it, the applicant can appeal to COLTPAC so staff is inserted at the top of the process as written. The only problem is that the application was not attached to the resolution.

Chair Kowalski understood that COLTPAC would only see it when staff says the application is complete and accepts it.

Mr. Aaboe agreed and then COLTPAC would decide if it is in or out.

Mr. Dannenberg observed that the problem we are trying to solve is the donation one. And it is sort of a vetting of the value of the property and decide if we might want to acquire it or if it is too far out of the box.

Mr. Taylor concluded that the application is in two parts.

Chair Kowalski agreed, and what Ms. Lohmann suggested is that a resolution is the right way to go

about it.

Mr. Aaboe added that if the applicant doesn't pass this test, why go on?

Ms. Lohmann asked if the process needed to address urgent projects since the County doesn't have a big pot of money to spend.

Dr. Bent thought if they could streamline this process, they wouldn't need that part.

Mr. Baker recalled this started when Mr. Baxter said they wanted to donate property near Cerrillos Hills and wanted to get it done before they died. That land is appropriate but we don't know how to get over the road blocks. More details on the property are not needed in the application but at least a legal description but not fair value of property.

Chair Kowalski added proof that the person actually owns the property.

Mr. Baker agreed. Negotiation is irrelevant but a Site Map would be good and the Commission would like to know of any problems associated with it.

Mr. Aaboe felt they should work on a process that encourages submittals. We can do the site map and get assessor information. So if we just broaden the top of the funnel to catch a lot and identify what the County would do thereafter.

Mr. Parker said the aesthetics didn't seem that onerous.

Mr. Aaboe suggested just asking the donor, "Why do you think the County would be interested in this property?"

Mr. Taylor said access is key. Chair Kowalski agreed.

Mr. Aaboe said there is legal access and also ease of access.

Ms. Lohmann said access doesn't have to be easy.

Chair Kowalski recalled with Dr. Bent that in the beginning the Committee went to look at a couple of properties to decide if they were worth considering.

Dr. Bent recalled and said it was not a complete application.

Mr. Taylor added that it was through their presentation that it became evident they were just trying to unload this property. That presentation was really key. On paper, it looked good.

Mr. Parker said it is more onerous to identify potential liabilities and COLTPAC would want to focus on these other attributes to just decide if there was any interest.

Chair Kowalski agreed that would be really useful. So rearranging it to part 1 and part 2 might be all we need to do and it might work for donations too. And then there is the evaluation process.

Mr. Dannenberg asked how they would rationalize the cost to the property owner who wants to donate.

Mr. Aaboe said the only way would be to get a tax exemption or as a write off. That is something he didn't see as needed. He said he was naive and Ms. Baker was hardened. They just had different perspectives. He offered to take the Committee's input and sit with experienced open space staff and develop a tool with checks and balances.

Chair Kowalski asked what needs to go to the Board of Finance.

Mr. Aaboe said above a certain amount, it would be required.

Chair Kowalski said the EA has to be done also (environmental assessment).

Chair Kowalski asked if they needed to do a sample based on this discussion.

Mr. Baker thought it should be divided and first part is required for all acquisitions and this part isn't needed for donations.

Ms. Lohmann said that helps a lot. She thanked the Committee for their input.

**10. NEXT MEETING: November 5, 2014**

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Approved by:

  
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Judy Kowalski, Chair

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Geraldine Salazar, County Clerk

Geraldine Salazar, County Clerk

Submitted by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Carl G. Boaz, Inc. by Carl G. Boaz

Carl G. Boaz, Inc. by Carl G. Boaz



