

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

April 2, 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 Santa Fé County Attorney's Conference Room, County Administration Building, Santa Fé, New Mexico.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll Call indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

Members Present

Judy Kowalski, Chair
William Baker
Devin Bent, PhD
Patricia Conoway
Dave Dannenberg
Ernesto Ortega
Zach Taylor, Vice-Chair

Members Absent

Coleman Burnett [excused]
Almudena Ortíz Cué [excused]

Staff Members Present

Lisa Roach, Open Space and Trails Planner

Others Present

Bill Baxter
Bette Booth

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Ms. Conoway moved to approve the agenda as presented. Dr. Bent seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

March 12, 2014

Ms. Conoway moved to approve the minutes of March 12, 2014 as presented. Dr. Bent seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

5. ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

6. MATTERS FROM COUNTY STAFF

A. Arroyo Hondo Trail Update

Ms. Roach provided copies of the Arroyo Hondo Trail update. She reported a public meeting was held last week on the alignment study. The County had recently met with DOT and the MPO on the interchange of I-25 and Cerrillos Road. She also recently had meeting at the New Mexico Land Conservancy to consider alternatives for the Arroyo Hondo Trail to traverse the Petchesky property. The upshot of the public meeting regarding the Petchesky Property was that there was a great potential to provide nature based learning for students at this site.

Mr. Taylor asked about the trail at the Petchesky property.

Ms. Roach explained it went around the property as a connector trail, not a paved multi-use trail. The Conservancy would work on options for other uses there.

Mr. Dannenberg asked if it was the county easement shown there.

Ms. Roach said it was an adjustment to the County easement there on the northern and western perimeters.

Ms. Bette Booth joined the meeting.

Dr. Bent asked if the trail was along the edge of the flood zone or what the blue area depicted.

Ms. Roach said it was the hundred year flood zone. The red dashed line was the primary connection - the district trail which would be 10' paved to AASHTO standard.

Dr. Bent asked if it would include equestrian use.

Ms. Roach said no although there might be a dirt pathway along the side of the main trail to permit equestrian use alongside. There is currently equestrian use along social trails in the Arroyo Hondo.

Mr. Baker asked if the trail would it be raised through the floodway.

Ms. Roach thought there would potentially be bridges in a couple of locations. She

explained this was a draft and not final

Mr. Dannenberg asked if the upper right corner connector would connect with Arroyo Chamiso.

Ms. Roach said the bike path would and at the bottom right hand was the connection to the Spur Trail and on to the Rail Trail.

Dr. Bent asked if this was funded.

Ms. Roach said the design definitely was but she was not sure about construction cost. She offered to get an answer for the Committee.

Chair Kowalski asked if there were any major issues.

Ms. Roach said there were no major issues, just alignment of the trail.

Mr. Ortega referred to the very last page and said in the upper left corner was a typo. There was no "p" in Chamisos.

Ms. Roach said there would be additional public meetings once the design gets underway. She invited the Committee members to feel free to email her or Colleen Baker with their feedback.

Ms. Roach added that there was also a recent meeting on Romero Park phasing. Mr. Taylor said he attended that meeting and people were concerned mostly about water use - most of it was just around bathroom use and on the back you could see the other features. It had an impervious surface for water and trees for runoff there.

Chair Kowalski asked if they were wiping out everything.

Ms. Roach clarified that only Phase I had been funded and that was not approved by the Board yet. She thought the real details were for Phase 1 and the rest was uncertain. They wouldn't be removing anything that was there now but will focus on the lawn area in Item 1 and the playground and concession area.

Mr. Taylor agreed. He was a little disappointed that it seemed to be a small improvement of usable space for a million dollars. They were building in infrastructure, however. The water concern should be noted. He explained that the water use in the park was the same water rights for bathroom use. Low water grasses would be proposed. As they moved forward, there was a lot for the community to be excited with. The baseball field was full of weeds but still used by the community. They were thinking of just blading it to make it flat. His house was right next door and the weeds kept the dust from his house. It was a needed regional park and he didn't want to stand in the way but light pollution was a concern because they might even have league play there.

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They were not proposing big stadium lights and would be complying with Night Sky regulation.

Dr. Bent asked if there was an existing community garden.

Mr. Taylor said no. It would be new.

Chair Kowalski thought there was every kind of recreation in the plan.

Ms. Roach thought that was part of the concern there.

The Committee briefly discussed water use at the park.

Chair Kowalski asked about the "snake run" area. Ms. Roach explained it was a type of skate park. She said the ballfields would only be primarily for local neighborhood use. They couldn't have tournaments there because they only had two fields.

Mr. Taylor said they were trying to find funds to contract for maintenance.

Dr. Bent reminded Ms. Roach that the Trust for Public Lands did a study on maintenance and he would appreciate getting a copy of it.

Ms. Roach handed out the first page of the Santa Fé Rail Trail design for Eldorado. The design for all of it was in place and segments 2 and 3 would go out to bid this weekend. That area started where the spur trail takes off. Vista Grande - Segment 4, would go out this fall for bid. They generally had positive feedback. Construction would be an 8' wide soft surface crusher fines multiuse trail, similar to Segment 1 which was already built. She just rode it by bike on Friday with Colleen Baker and it was very nice with few maintenance concerns.

In response to Mr. Dannenberg about the cost for that section, Ms. Roach didn't have a figure for it. But it was 5 miles of trail.

Mr. Dannenberg said he wanted a copy for conversation with Galisteo Basin trails. He was surprised how inexpensive they were.

Ms. Roach said with it in place, and once the Arroyo Hondo Trail is constructed, people could ride bike from Eldorado to work or go to the 599 station.

Ms. Roach agreed to general project updates on the agenda for the future.

B. COLTPAC Resolution Update

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Ms. Roach had updates on the resolution - a memo to try for clarity on revising the resolution. At this point she was not allowed to distribute the draft resolution to the Committee. The County intends to revise it. They would be looking to the County Manager and Legal for the parts on acquisitions. So this was all she had for the Committee today. She acknowledged that there was a request to bring the resolution draft to the meeting but unfortunately she could not do that today. She explained that this was one of the first tasks she had been given when she took this position. It began with restructuring of the program. He had been asked to get COLTPAC input and now it was taking a different direction.

Dr. Bent said the BCC passed Resolution 2011-4 and if there was a conflict the resolution wasn't affected. He was disturbed because that resolution kept the 2000 plan alive. It was a very good plan but the 2011 left out the reference to that 2000 plan and drove a stake in the heart.

Ms. Roach said our charge was to replace that plan with a new one by the end of the next fiscal year.

Dr. Bent said the 2000 plan said the County would have six acres of park per thousand population and then it was cut to 1.5 acres.

Ms. Roach said those were valid concerns. In the absence of 2000 plan being the official document and Legal having not issued an opinion on its status, they still had the element in SGMP for open space and parks so there was not a total void in the policy. But she did hear the concerns.

Dr. Bent explained that up in his end of the county there were no trails and no connections and the 2000 plan had some proposed but they were dropped from the map in El Norte.

Mr. Baker said it was even worse in the southern part of the County.

Ms. Roach assured them that a detailed needs assessment was part of the planning process for the new plan, and that there would be ample opportunity to identify those needs.

Dr. Bent said he would still like to see the resolution before it goes to BCC.

Ms. Roach said she had conveyed that but he is welcome to contact his commissioner directly if he wished.

Mr. Dannenberg asked if this related to SGMP.

Ms. Roach said the 2000 plan was adopted as part of the 1999 Growth Management Plan. There were several bond issues that came as a result. Since then a new

comprehensive plan was adopted (the Sustainable Growth Management Plan – 2010) that didn't reference the 2000 plan but the 2000 plan would be the foundation of our work. It was not being thrown out.

C. Open Space Management Planning Needs

Ms. Roach had heard in previous meetings that site-specific management plans were a top priority of the group. To date they have created two for the County's open space properties. She had discussed with both the Growth Management and Public Works departments how this was to be handled and had proposed funds through Public Works for the coming fiscal year. The budget hearings in April and May would determine whether or not funds would be available.

She had been asked for the top three properties needing management plans and staff decided on the top four and was asked for COLTPAC's opinion. The priorities might be the same but she asked them to look at the draft project descriptions for the four they came up with for the budget.

Dr. Bent suggested that the Thornton Ranch really needed a management plan and because there was a lot of interest it needed protection. In the Economic Development plan it said open space and recreation were top priorities. People wanted to see the petroglyphs.

Ms. Roach said the cultural resources, management plan and master plan contracts were being negotiated currently for the Thornton Ranch property. The Arroyo Hondo open space had a management plan already. Santa Fé River Green way had a conceptual plan.

Mr. Baxter added that Ortiz Mountains Open Space was managed now by Santa Fé Botanical Garden. He didn't think they could defend a priority for this but they once had a plan. He was surprised that San Pedro Open Space did not have one.

Ms. Roach said San Pedro Open Space had received a lot of attention by BLM and by the County Fire Department and the ongoing activities by the East Mountain Regional Trail Coalition. The County property was envisioned as a trail head and access for a larger trail system in the San Pedro Mountains. Someone from the Coalition would come speak to the Committee about that project later on.

Ms. Booth raised an objection that documents distributed here must be part of the public record.

Mr. Baxter thought the four draft project descriptions were well chosen because they were open spaces in peoples' back yards. La Cieneguilla was very important, as well.

Ms. Roach said she might have been premature on sharing the draft scope with the Committee.

Ms. Conway said since it was a draft anyway, it wasn't like it was final so she questioned why it was a problem if it was public.

Ms. Roach explained that to share language that may appear in a future RFP might give an advantage for anyone bidding on it.

Mr. Taylor said the Committee could be conscious of it.

Chair Kowalski agreed. And the discussion was part of the public record.

Dr. Bent thought inviting someone to talk with COLTPAC on the open meetings act.

Ms. Roach said she had been here six months and had not been instructed on it her management.

Mr. Taylor said it helped to have these conversations.

Dr. Bent said that at any time the Committee could vote on the opinion of the Committee.

Mr. Dannenberg didn't want to spend the whole meeting on it but they needed to have a way to structure it so it would serve the Committee's needs.

Mr. Taylor thought it might come back to haunt the Committee. He didn't want to shut it down so much that they couldn't discuss anything.

Ms. Roach agreed to talk with Legal about the issue.

Chair Kowalski favored asking specific questions on how to handle this topic.

The Committee agreed by consensus.

Dr. Bent suggested they could also ask Legal specifically when the Committee could have a closed executive session.

Chair Kowalski asked Ms. Roach about criteria for evaluating priorities for open space management plans.

Ms. Roach said that was pretty informal but one was whether it leveraged any other funding such as Abandoned Mine Lands Program mining mitigation or the Santa Fé River Traditional Communities Collaborative efforts. For Los Potreros they would be building on momentum of the Chimayó community planning effort. The Santa Fé River

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Traditional Communities Collaborative was meeting monthly on a collaborative management plan and seeking funding. If the County could step forward, it might be a catalyst to bring other partners to the table. La Cieneguilla was waiting for the Airport management plan to come out.

Mr. Baker said they needed to make the rationale for quantity of open space and trails. There were some numbers in there but they had zero on the quantitative side.

Ms. Roach said that Public Works was doing a quantitative analysis on Levels of Service and deficiencies under the Sustainable Land Development Code.

Mr. Baker asked if the Committee could have that information by the June meeting.

Ms. Roach agreed to ask Public Works for it.

Mr. Baker pointed out that even 90% would be much better than what they had now.

Chair Kowalski understood there would be a budget submitted for consideration at month end and there would be some for management plans. She asked if that had to be specific.

Ms. Roach didn't know.

Chair Kowalski said if there were threats to the resource that perhaps should be considered most important.

Ms. Roach said they could go down the list and speak to each of them.

Ms. Conoway agreed.

Mr. Roach reviewed each one on the list. Edgewood had a new equestrian facility and the majority of it was already developed with some trails. It was not top priority. El Rancho was a resource preserve not open to the public and had no immediate threats so maybe it was a medium priority. Peñasco Blanco was not open to the public and had several different parcels that need to be evaluated. Lamy included a park area in one section and an archaeological site in another that could potentially be an interpretive place and could be on the list of priorities.

Mr. Baxter said it was a very significant archaeological site and to his mind not threatened - medium priority.

Ms. Roach said Little Tesuque was on Hyde Park Road, connecting Dale Ball trails with Forest Service trails.

Dr. Bent noted the issue of parking here.

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Mr. Taylor agreed. It was high use.

Ms. Roach said people were parking along Hyde Park Road.

She said Los Potreros was a priority with the recent work on Rio Quemado including drainage structures. It was an agricultural preserve and was leased out for grazing.

Mr. Ortega added that community planning was going on right now.

Ms. Roach said it had potential to improve access to the BLM lands and formalize existing trails being used there now. There were a variety of issues for that property. It would be great to have a management plan done by the County.

Mr. Ortega suggested there could be some concepts as a base for discussion and consideration for the general management plan.

Madrid Open Space was a project in the top five for 2015 capital funding and part of scope would be a management plan. The plan would include storm water improvements identified by the Abandoned Mine Lands Program. Unfortunately, there was some push back from the County Administration and a desire to explore alternatives to manage this open space.

Old Pecos Trail Open Space was for conservation purposes and not a top priority. For Ortíz Mountain Ms. Roach would look into the current agreement with Santa Fe Botanical Garden for management. Rio en Medio was already discussed briefly. Talaya Hill was part of the Dale Ball system and actively managed right now in cooperation with the City.

South Meadows was part of the annexation into the City. It had a Master Plan and whether the County would continue or the City takeover was not yet decided. Santa Fé River Green Way was discussed previously. La Cieneguilla had many issues and in her mind should be a top priority. They needed more active collaboration with neighbors.

The Committee briefly discussed the water issue, threatened resources, and possible flooding, all of which were serious maintenance concerns and possibly needing a bridge replacement.

Los Caminitos Wilderness was a major conservation area. Dr. Bent disagreed. It was given to the County for enjoyment of Santa Fé County residents, not conservation. That's not to say it wouldn't be developed. Ms. Roach said it was not a preserve. It was adjacent to the Santa Fe National Forest and the public access was through the forest. Dr. Bent said it was a gift from the gated community there.

Mr. Dannenberg said the concern was risk of fire. Ms. Roach agreed and they

needed to check that out.

The last one was San Pedro. Mr. Baker said the BLM had agreed they would open this area for recreation. The challenge was that the only access was through the County-owned land there. FLAP funding might provide for access there.

Ms. Conway agreed to help with future grant applications.

Ms. Roach said the result was a focus on Lamy, Los Portreros, Madrid, Rio en Medio, San Pedro and La Cieneguilla.

Chair Kowalski felt San Pedro and La Cieneguilla had strong arguments.

Mr. Dannenberg suggested doing this as one plan. Some priority should be given to those in imminent danger.

Mr. Taylor wasn't sure much could be done at Rio en Medio and that might be another criterion to use.

Ms. Roach summarized that part of the work was to identify basic management strategies to have a base line survey of resources present- the property had these resources and these concerns and needed evaluation. So there were six priorities with two being the highest and the other four about the same. Lamy could be delayed. She agreed to convey these priorities to Public Works and wrote down the criteria.

Ms. Roach suggested postponing the next two items to the following meeting.

The Committee agreed to take action on the Open Space Management Planning Needs at the next meeting and make a recommendation to the BCC.

D. Public Works Design Manual - Open Space Trails and Parks Guidance

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

E. Next Steps for Santa Fe County Open Space, Trails and Parks Plan

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

Ms. Roach asked that the vision for COLTPAC be discussed more next time.

7. MATTERS FROM THE COMMITTEE

There were no matters from the Committee.

8. MATTERS OF PUBLIC CONCERN

Ms. Booth apologized for being aggressive on the point she raised earlier. She explained that for POSAC they could have a motion on any agenda item. She said POSAC had lots of questions about the annexed area. In 2010, the RPA allocated funding that was to go to South Meadows Park. So they wanted to know who they should talk to about that and the process for how decisions would be made.

Councilor Rivera was very interested in this park because Tierra Contenta was overused. They asked about playground equipment and had heard it would be more open space with trails so they didn't know what they could do.

Ms. Roach said she asked the very same questions and as yet did not have an answer. She had been asking Adam Leigland but it was unclear who would make the decision about the properties in the annexation area but it was probably between the BCC and City Council. She agreed to relay POSAC's concern and follow up with her later.

Ms. Booth explained the procedure that POSAC was involved in regarding reviewing the projects before going to Council. They went to Council to talk about them and each member had a relationship with a Councilor from their district. Council believed that process strengthened their decisions.

She said POSAC would really like to have another joint meeting with COLTPAC to coordinate the work, especially in the annexation area.

Ms. Roach thought Commissioner Chávez and Councilor Dominguez would be good people to have the conversation with.

Mr. Baxter said the Cerrillos Hills Park Coalition would likely come to COLTPAC with a gift of 20 acres adjacent to the park - the south half of O'Reilly Acres - the little appendix. He showed it on the map. The upper twenty acres might follow that later.

9. NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, May 7, 2014

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

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