

**MINUTES OF THE
SANTA FE COUNTY
COUNTY OPEN LAND AND TRAILS PLANNING AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(COLTPAC)**

Thursday, August 20, 2009

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

A regular meeting of the Santa Fe County Open Land and Trails Planning and Advisory Committee (COLTPAC) was called to order on the above date at approximately 6:00 p.m. by Chair Matthew McQueen.

Roll Call indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

Members Present

Matthew McQueen, Chair
Brent Bonwell
Todd Brown
Jack Frost (Alt)
Sandra Massengill
Jerry Rogers
Scott Stovall

Members Absent

Sam Pallin, Vice Chair
Martin Gabaldon
Lou Ann Hunt
Jan-Willem Jansens [excused]
Stephen Schoninger

Staff Members Present

Scott Kaseman
Beth Mills
Allison Moore
Scott Rivers, River Coordinator

Others Present

Scott Wilber
Bill Johnson
Bill Baxter

2. ASSIGNMENT OF ALTERNATES

None.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair McQueen noted there was not a quorum at the last meeting so the June minutes had not been approved.

Dr. Mills apologized that she did not have copies at this meeting.

Chair McQueen asked that they be approved at the September meeting. Dr. Mills agreed.

Mr. Bonwell moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Stovall seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

Chair McQueen pointed out that the Petchesky property was not on this agenda but would be on a future agenda. The tour of the property was to give members an opportunity to see it before acting on it.

4. ACTION ITEMS:

Dr. Mills said she would like to switch the order so that they could accommodate Scott Rivers who was present to present the South Meadows Open Space Master Plan.

B. Review of South Meadows Open Space Master Plan

Dr. Mills showed the South Meadows Open Space on a map and located the Santa Fe River and La Cieneguita on it. The South Meadows Trail was in the Village of Agua Fria. She showed where a bridge was going across the river. It was a 22 acre piece purchased in 2000. An arterial would connect to Cerrillos Road to 599 on the west side. She described it as a fast growth area of the County.

Mr. Frost asked about the jurisdiction of the park.

Dr. Mills said it didn't affect their ownership.

Mr. Scott Rivers introduced himself as the County River Coordinator and showed the two concept plans. Dr. Mills handed out the hard copies.

Mr. Rivers said at the time it was purchased, the property was on the outskirts of Santa Fe and South Meadows didn't exist north of Airport Road. Rufina Road did not exist. In the meantime, South Meadows was constructed from Airport to Agua Fria and Rufina built from Siler to South Meadows and dead ended at the northeast corner of this property. Centex Homes got property on three sides annexed and had high density development there, mostly single family homes. There was a mobile home park and to the south was an industrial site.

The County was fortunate to be farsighted to see that this parcel was unique - a large piece undeveloped and in an area of potentially high growth. In 2006, the County worked on a master plan for this property and had a couple of charettes. In 2006 no Centex home was under construction.

The Morningside Subdivision was on the west side and got the property in front of COLTPAC for purchase. They continued to have a high level of involvement.

Mr. Rivers said he and Dr. Mills did a community meeting last Saturday to update people. They needed to get the new neighbors involved and keep the old ones involved to get a consensus on the master plan.

Ten people attended last Saturday's meeting.

Within walking distance of the property were 3-4 schools. In the initial planning process they got the students from Thomas Ramirez out there with a GPS activity. That was one of the components: to keep the land open to schools in the area for utilization as an educational component if they wished.

The master plan was based on input from the community and quite a few outside organizations. The property right now was being used passively. A series of trails through there were used by the neighborhood. Part of the master plan was to try and keep the passive recreation going on but formalize it so that it didn't impact the environment there.

Dr. Mills had some pictures of it on her laptop. She spoke to the environmental aspect. She thought the pictures did give a feel for the property. It was unique. It was once in agriculture and an old ditch ran through the property. There was a prairie dog colony there. They had a chance to educate school students about ecology and to understand species of plants and soil interaction. This was a master laboratory for high desert in the midst of dense development. There were flowering and herbaceous plants as well as cacti. Her pictures also showed the old neighborhood on Morning Drive separate from the new development.

Mr. Rivers showed where the boundary of the river was and the rezoning that took place. The County actually obtained the easement on the northern boundary there. Power lines were underground. On Rufina to the west were high tension lines but they stopped before getting to López Lane.

Issues raised in community meetings included restricting vehicles from the property. They also wanted to make sure there was plenty of pedestrian access. People walked from their neighborhoods. They also wanted to be able to maintain their use of the property as a place to walk dogs. So one component was an off-leash dog park.

Another component was a picnic grove. It was a big piece of property with a loop trail system and their first thought was to have picnicking around the site but after looking more at it and realizing the infrastructure needed, the space for picnics evolved into a picnic grove in a central area with a parking area. On Saturday, the neighbors gave good feedback on that plan. The plan would also have the ability to have little spurs off the main loop for interpretation like for prairie dogs. At the Airport Road end of the property in the south east, there were stupendous views of the Sangre de Cristo and Jemez Mountains.

Mr. Baxter supported this as an urban park since the prairie dogs wouldn't be there in ten years. He envisioned intense use, not staying on trails, bicycles everywhere. The playground use was inevitable.

Mr. Rivers said they proposed the concept because they realized it would be more urbanized so it should be provided with the paved loop trail. People were out there now pushing baby buggies. He agreed that this land was going to get used probably more than some of their other open spaces that were further out. That was why they also propose restrooms, drinking fountain and paved parking that would accommodate school buses. Neighbors asked for a dedicated spot for a police vehicle to have a presence

there. Lighting in the open core was proposed. Nobody thought this would be a mini MRC.

Mr. Rivers compared it with Frenchy's Field; even with community gardens and demonstration plots. In discussions with master gardeners and neighbors they were encouraged to plant butterfly gardens etc. He acknowledged that although Frenchy's Field was analogous, it was less than half the size of this property.

Mr. Bonwell asked Dr. Mills since this might be annexed soon, if anyone had talked to the City about development which was significant. The County would do a whole lot of work and then the City would get the tax base. When they picked up the tax base they should use some of it to develop the space there.

Chair McQueen thought they had a good relationship with the City and should keep in mind that people who lived in the City also lived in the County too. It would be City police going by instead of Sheriff's cars.

Mr. Frost thought the County could take it up to a certain level and then let the City take it from there.

Chair McQueen liked this master plan with the dog park and picnic tables with parking and restrooms and a playground close by.

Mr. Rivers clarified that the dog park area would be fenced for off-leash use. The City had one on the north that was not fenced and lost dogs were common. Eldorado thought the one out there would not get used but their dog park was packed.

Mr. Stovall asked what was requested of the Committee.

Mr. Rivers asked that the master plan be reviewed and approved by COLTPAC before being approved by the Commission.

Mr. Rogers asked about the acequia.

Mr. Rivers said the acequia did run through it. He showed the location.

Mr. Rogers suspected there might be major cultural resources there. He asked about a photo on page 10.

Mr. Rivers didn't know its location but agreed to research it and find out.

Mr. Stovall asked what the budget allocation was.

Mr. Rivers said there was no budget at this point. With the current economy they couldn't come in and build it out in a year but with phasing, they could get the trail and maybe the picnic area.

Mr. Brown asked if they would use portables.

Mr. Rivers said there was a sewer out there so hopefully they could construct real facilities. The neighbors were very active as a stewardship group. They were quite concerned about people driving in at night to drink beer. He said if the Committee felt they needed more information before recommending to the Commission he could come back on it next month.

Chair McQueen said they spent a million dollars on this property and he was anxious to see something done on it. And there were people dropped in all around who would love to use it.

Mr. Stovall moved to approve the draft master plan contingent on questions and concerns from the board. Mr. Rogers seconded the motion.

Chair McQueen thought it would be worth calling the City. They just had a bond but that was all allocated.

Mr. Bonwell estimated another million to put in the improvements.

Mr. Stovall amended his motion to include not only determining any cultural resources but to pursue some joint powers agreement with the City. Mr. Rogers agreed it was friendly and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

A. Review of New Resolution for Acquisition Process

Dr. Mills explained this request was to approve the resolution about how applications were considered. She sent it by email to the members and had more copies if needed. They were looking for action to approve this language so staff could move it on to the legal department for their review.

Mr. Frost asked if it would come back to the Committee.

Dr. Mills said it would not unless the motion said so now.

Mr. Stovall noted there was a lot of discussion a couple of meetings ago whether the applications would come by a package or as received.

Dr. Mills said this would rescind the previous resolutions and provide that applications could come in at any time and members and staff could bring them in. Then it outlined that staff reviewed them first and then it outlined how the applications got reviewed. Those were the changes.

Chair McQueen added that they formed a subcommittee to work on it and pared it down. Then last meeting with no quorum it became a subcommittee meeting and they finished reworking it. At the end they were all pretty satisfied with it.

Mr. Bonwell presumed that the thirty days was okay with staff.

Chair McQueen said there was a lot of discussion over the any time vs. quarterly basis. He thought, given the various time frames, that they should not have to artificially extend that. There was a lot of discussion on it.

Mr. Bonwell agreed with the staff review before coming to the Committee.

Dr. Mills said if staff rejected it, the applicant could have Committee members there to hear the appeal.

Mr. Frost felt the Committee should review the resolution when it came out of Legal. If the attorney did something to it, the Committee might not be comfortable with it.

Mr. Stovall thought a redline version was reasonable.

Mr. Frost moved to approve the proposed resolution and request that it would come back to the Committee after legal review before submission to the Commission. Mr. Bonwell seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

5. MATTERS FROM OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS STAFF

A. Michael Bentley Property Update

Dr. Mills reported she had a couple of calls from Mr. Bentley regarding his property. It was 40 acres between new and old purchases at the Thornton Ranch. His was the only property the County didn't own there. He had his property on the market for a couple of years and was taking it off but asked if the County was interested in purchasing it. He would either sell it to County or if not, he would build a residence out there and not sell it to someone else. He was anxious to let the Committee know that.

Mr. Brown asked if there was a house there now.

Dr. Mills said there was not. This was down by the railroad crossing and there was a conservation easement on it.

Chair McQueen pointed out that the conservation easement would reduce the property value. He wanted to walk it out there and they would need a consensus price. If he was willing to do a bargain sale with tax credit, maybe the Committee could work something else out.

Mr. Stovall asked if he had submitted an application.

Dr. Mills said she would suggest he submit an application.

Chair McQueen suggested they could meet with him He might not be aware of the tax credit or the conservation easement. The tax credit was good for 20 years and transferable. It was a credit on state income taxes and it could even be sold to a corporation.

Dr. Mills said she would ask if he wanted to meet with staff and then she would suggest he submit an application.

Mr. Frost asked if he was a citizen.

Dr. Mills said he had dual citizenship here and in Nova Scotia.

B. Thornton Ranch Site Tours

Dr. Mills reported that the tours were continuing. They would go again on Sunday at 10:00. She had a schedule for the rest of the tours for 2009 if anyone wanted to go.

Mr. Stovall thought it was a great article in the paper.

Dr. Mills said there was also a good sharing of information on petroglyphs and the Galisteo Basin. Beyond that she met with the Galisteo Protection Committee. They reminded her that it would be good to have stewards and other interested people, even if not a docent, just to go along and help people understand what to do. So they would accompany her on those tours. Then they would have an interactive on the web site for next year. They would do docents in September.

C. COLTPAC Site Visits

Dr. Mills said she had fallen off organizing the site visits because they were not well attended this summer. She had put out a schedule in May. She asked if they should continue to do site visits and if so, it they should do them during the week.

Mr. Stovall thought it would be nice to have them closer to the COLTPAC meeting day. That way members could plan on being present at both.

Chair McQueen suggested having them at 4:00 on that day.

Mr. Stovall said that would work for him.

Mr. Bonwell agreed and thought it would work well to have a meeting there at the site.

Chair McQueen agreed that was the plan.

Dr. Mills said they could start with the September meeting and line up as much as needed and actually hold the meeting there in September.

Dr. Mills thanked for the feedback. It gave her better direction.

D. September Meeting in Edgewood

The Committee agreed to have the September meeting in Edgewood.

E. Program Updates

The Committee briefly discussed some problems with construction of the parking lot at Arroyo Hondo.

6. MATTERS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Chair McQueen noted that South Meadows was being annexed. The neighbors at the meeting were not happy about that. They didn't want to be in the City.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments from the public.

8. ADJOURN

Mr. Bonwell/Stovall moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Stovall seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 pm.

Approved by:

Matthew McQueen, Chair

Submitted by:

Carl Boaz, Stenographer

