

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

Thursday, October 15, 2009

1. CALL TO ORDER

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 Vice Chair Sam Pallin at the Santa Fe County Community Projects Conference Room, 901 West Alameda, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll Call indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

Members Present

Matthew McQueen, Chair [arriving later]
Sam Pallin, Vice Chair
Brent Bonwell
Jan-Willem Jansens
Judy McGowan
Jack Frost
Jerry Rogers
Stephen Schoninger

Staff Members Present

Allison Moore
Beth Mills
Scott Kaseman

Members Absent

Todd Brown [excused]
Martin Gabaldon
Lou Ann Hunt [excused]
Sandra Massengill
Scott Stovall (excused)

Others Present

Andy Ault
Bill Baxter
Commissioner Holian
Jenny Parks
Debra Post
Stephen Post

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

That agenda was accepted without changes

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 17, 2009

Judy McGowan should have been shown on the absent list on those minutes.

Mr. Rogers moved to approve the September 17 Minutes as corrected. Mr. Bonwell seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

5. ACTION ITEMS

A. Commissioner Holian requests advice on the potential support from the Regional Planning Authority for purchase of property at Sun Mountain by the Trust for Public Land.

Dr. Mills noted Commissioner Holian's presence at the meeting. It has been a controversial issue and the City has been coping with development efforts there. Commissioner Holian asked the COLTPAC to hear about the Trust's efforts there. Part of what is involved - a request to RPA for GRT receipts to go toward the purchase. Commissioner Holian wanted feedback on it because of the GRT tie in.

Commissioner Holian said they were looking at what the role of the County should be and asked Committee members to share their thoughts about it.

Ms. Jenny Parks from the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) introduced three volunteers who were also present: Andy Ault, Debra Post and Stephen Post. The TPL was working in a group called Save our Sun Mountain.

They approached the TPL in May to try to help get this property. The project was brought to the community through an ENN by the developer and generated an outcry. That project was to build 19 homes on 18 acres. Sun Mountain was a landmark and kind of sacred to many people. She was skeptical at first, asking how they could possibly raise enough money to buy it and prevent the residential development, especially given the economic condition of the City and the State.

But they negotiated a contract with the owner for \$3.2 million and began the effort. To date they have raised \$2.6 million. Of that, \$1.2 million was from charitable gifts from several hundred donors. In addition there was a conservation buyer who put up \$1.4 million. He would use only one building site and protect the rest.

If they could not raise the entire amount, the proposal was to sell the Watson House to make up the difference and have a lot line adjustment.

Mr. Jansens arrived at this time.

TPL was getting an appraisal. As a 501(c)3 organization, they had to make sure the purchase price was met. The deadline was Oct 23 to exercise the contract. They already talked with the City about the lot line adjustment. It would go to the Finance Committee and then to Public Works Committee on Oct 28th.

Ms. Parks felt they really needed the \$100,000 funding from RPA to make it work. Any extra money

would be donated to the City.

Mr. Ault shared his experience and feelings regarding this property and talked about the importance of keeping it as open public land. He noted it was very rare for any city to buy land that was within the city. And to have one so perfectly connected was rare and unique. There were historical and personal reasons why Sun Mountain was an icon for many people - including the history and buildings around it.

Ms. Post talked about the trail system there and the connections with other trails and the Botanical Garden nearby.

Vice Chair Pallin asked what the controversy was about.

Ms. Parks explained that the developer was set to go. He planned to do LEED certified homes and have a dedication to open space. But when she went to the ENN meeting she saw an opportunity . Mr. Ault agreed that it was a cry for conservation.

Ms. Post said currently, the only access was from private land so this would provide the first public access.

Ms. Parks said an appraisal was done on the home last year. It was worth \$625,000 because of its historical significance. The two private residences contemplated would be below the Watson house. The developer had planned for seven residences above the Watson House.

The Committee briefly discussed the possibility of a trail head off Old Santa Fe Trail and the problems it might raise with neighbors regarding parking there.

Vice Chair Pallin noted that part of the property was 60' wide and suggested a long trail head with parking.

Mr. Post said it might be 75' wide and thought it could be engineered.

Mr. Jansens pointed out the possible drainage issues with water running down onto Old Santa Fe Trail. But the noise and traffic would require neighbor support.

Mr. Post said there were only five neighbors. The area was all zoned R-1. They had not heard any opposition to creating a trail.

Mr. Rogers asked if there were any remnants of the Old Santa Fe Trail there.

Mr. Post said there were some near Tatum Lane and were defined by Mike Battell in 1989 who did a study of the Santa Fe Trail for the City. The studies did not turn up any new remnants of it. The remnants were not east of Old Santa Fe Trail. The property had been extensively surveyed, mostly by Ron Winters in the last two years. He was pretty well informed.

Mr. Ault said there were 200 acres of privately owned undeveloped land just to the north.

Commissioner Holian asked for a COLTPAC member to attend the RPA next Tuesday at 4 p.m. She felt it would be very helpful to have someone present the Committee's position.

Dr. Mills said the requested action was a recommendation to the RPA regarding an investment of \$100,000 of funds from RPA to complete the purchase amount.

Vice Chair Pallin asked Dr. Mills for staff's position.

Dr. Mills said the concern has always been on access and public use. Her concern was with the City's ability to construct and maintain trails that were needed to really realize the full conservation value.

Ms. McGowan asked how much was in that fund.

Vice Chair Pallin thought it was over \$600,000.

Mr. Jansens supported this kind of protection but conditioned upon the explicit support of the neighbors and that maintenance stewardship be added to it.

Mr. Frost said they didn't even know that the City would accept it yet.

Mr. Rogers thought this was more open space than trail but it did have a trail

Mr. Jansens felt they should use the normal criteria to consider support. He went through the criteria and the Committee determined that most of the threshold criteria were met.

Mr. Bonwell thought they should list their concerns. Mr. Jansens agreed.

The Committee's concerns were public trail access, parking, traffic, drainage, plan for maintenance, cost of development, parking and drainage mitigation (post acquisition costs). They also felt it was important for RPA to consider what other priorities of RPA would be affected.

Vice Chair Pallin said the plan for the future of it was immature.

Mr. Bonwell added that there was insufficient information about adverse impacts and the feasibility of their assumptions regarding its use.

Mr. Jansens suggested some phrasing: that while it was an admirable goal to provide open space that public could access, COLTPAC would recommend further study because the Committee could not give an informed opinion. He listed several and noted that all but one of the threshold criteria had been met. There was insufficient information regarding the three homes for the property.

Dr. Mills thought staff could phrase their recommendation adequately so someone could take it to the RPA next week.

Mr. Bonwell moved to direct staff to present the consensus of the COLTPAC to the RPA. Mr. Jansens seconded the motion. The motion passed by majority voice vote with Mr. Rogers voting against.

Mr. Frost asked to include in the statement that COLTPAC appreciated being included.

Vice Chair Pallin agreed to go to the RPA meeting.

Ms. McGowan asked Mr. Rogers how he would have worded a motion.

Mr. Rogers said he would recommend acquisition now and would like to see it brought to fruition and not blunted by procedure.

B. Review and Discussion of the Michael Bentley's proposal for purchase of property adjacent to Thornton Ranch Open Space.

Dr. Mills shared a handout regarding the Bentley proposal. It was an incomplete application so this was just to make the Committee aware of it and discuss an initial recommendation. He asked whether they should have a site visit and ask him to complete the application. He felt the process wasn't explained to him properly and he tried to circumvent it by going higher up.

Vice Chair Pallin preferred to have him complete the application first.

Dr. Mills said they would table it then but she had hoped to get past the threshold because a site visit should be done before the next meeting.

Vice Chair Pallin said they needed to be careful with limited funding.

Mr. Jansens asked what the substantial addition to county property that would be the most important reason to pursue this was.

Dr. Mills said it was continuity of property to the south of 42 and to be sure no house would be built there.

Mr. Bonwell asked if there was a conservation easement on it. Dr. Mills agreed.

Mr. McQueen arrived at this point, having been at the CDRC meeting at County Commission Chambers.

Mr. Bonwell moved to table the application from Mr. Bentley. Mr. Frost seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

6. MATTERS FROM OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS STAFF

A. Update on Resolution 2009- ____, establishing the process and procedures for acquisition of real property under the County's Open Space and Trails Program.

Dr. Mills reported that the Attorney turned this around without any corrections but a couple of comments so she submitted it for the BCC to hear it on October 27th for approval and she would be present that day.

B. Update on County Sustainable Land Development Plan

Dr. Mills reported that staff worked this week on the plan. They got it last Friday to review the relevant portions and comment to Jack Kolkmeyer. The Open Space Strategic Plan and program intersect the draft. She submitted a draft this afternoon to Planning and would see how they incorporate the comments. They were reacting as fast as they could. Staff incorporated their own strategic plan into those comments.

Vice Chair Pallin asked if the Committee could see them.

Dr. Mills said her comments were three pages but the document was over a thousand pages. She said she could circulate her comments that were easily referenced. She did goals and objectives and data input as well as the official map.

Mr. Jansens felt it was a very important plan. Although well intentioned, how it was written and presented was nearly indigestible. It needed a much boiled down executive summary. The Planning Dept or the consultants needed to do that.

Vice Chair Pallin invited a motion.

After more discussion Vice Chair Pallin ask Mr. Jansens to communicate that request to the Planning Department on behalf of COLTPAC.

C. Discussion of master plan and budget for Edgewood Open Space

Dr. Mills had hoped Ms. Baker could have led this discussion. In her absence, she would just say she had been talking with the folks in Edgewood and they were continuing to make progress with the collaboration that needed to go on. It was nothing substantial. She wanted to have clarity on the budget and then propose some initial steps to initiate a design.

Mr. McQueen asked that they keep it on the agenda for next meeting. Dr. Mills agreed.

7. MATTERS FROM THE COMMITTEE

A. Discussion of a Resolution to Protect Agricultural Land in Santa Fe County.

Mr. McQueen said this resolution was tied into conservation easements. Under federal tax law - one of the conservation pieces was to protect agricultural lands and policies. It wouldn't cost the County to write such a policy. He had hoped to have a draft but was still working on it. He added that the Food Policy Committee was also looking at it.

Mr. McQueen said for the COLTPAC project at Vista Grande, he thought they were going to pay \$1.3 million. They would get 200 acres and lots of trails. Two COLTPAC members spent days out there laying out trails. But the owners pulled out and wrote a nasty letter. It was strange and the project went away.

Ms. McGowan said they thought the value would go up.

Mr. McQueen said right now there were 6,000 acres being offered for \$6 million. It was owned by the Montoya family and Dicky Montoya died.

Vice Chair Pallin asked if a professional fund raiser could be used.

Mr. McQueen thought it would not work with this economy.

Mr. Jansens said it would constitute an enormous corridor there. Many conservation easements were there. This would connect to Ortiz Mountain. But it did have tailings and cyanide from the gold mining all around Delores Creek. Those have been obstacles with the high levels of contamination.

Vice Chair Pallin asked if the County would be required to clean those up if they owned it.

Mr. McQueen said he had more information about it and they could talk about it in more detail later.

Dr. Mills said there was a document with a complete EA. The archaeology resource was enormous and the agricultural features were huge also.

Mr. McQueen said an article in the newspaper said the BCC agreed to spend \$7 million for the 400 acre Santa Fe Canyon Ranch. The Journal had a letter to the editor saying the developers bought a larger parcel for \$2 million two years ago and the County was proposing to buy part of it. He wondered what was going on and why the County would spend that much if they could not develop it. It was recommended by the County Manager to the BCC.

Vice Chair Pallin said they could ask staff to carry the request.

Ms. McGowan asked if they were having an appraisal done.

Dr. Mills said they did and it supported that price. It included the residence at the ranch. There were actually three residences. Pendleton was the appraiser. The idea was to protect it from development. The additional 300 acres on the mesa was negotiated by TPL for BLM. She explained that it was everything east of Alamo Creek. She agreed to make a presentation on it next time if the Committee wanted one. She added that the BCC already approved it.

Mr. Jansens asked for clarification on the role of COLTPAC and the role of the Division on acquisition of this property and if there would be any stewardship of it.

Dr. Mills said right now it had nothing to do with open space.

Mr. Jansens moved that staff present information on this acquisition at the next meeting. Mr. McQueen seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.

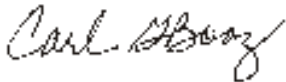
8. ADJOURN

Having completed the agenda and with no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Approved by:

Sam Pallin, Vice Chair

Submitted by:



Carl Boaz, Stenographer