

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Quincy Farm Committee
City of Cherry Hills Village, Colorado
Tuesday, May 21st, 2019
at City Hall

Chair Lucinda Greene called the meeting to order at 8:17 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present at the meeting were the following Quincy Farm Committee Members: Lucinda Greene, Melinda Haymons, Earl Hoellen, Gordon Rockafellow, Klasina Vanderwert, and Joel Sydlow.

Dale De Leo was absent.

Present at the meeting were the following staff members: City Manager Jim Thorsen, Parks and Recreation Coordinator Emily Black and Parks Operations Supervisor Jeff Roberts.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Jeri Neff, 4400 East Quincy Avenue, expressed that she believed the public access plan does not ensure compliance with the conservation easement. She stated that Quincy Farm is a protected nature area that should be left as a "relatively natural habitat" under the easement. She also stated she does not see Cherry Hills Village police patrolling the area, unless she calls them to respond to her house. She also asked to make a correction to the plan that Candy Gray placed the nesting box in the tree for the owls, and proposed an alternative entrance to the Farm.

Natalie Anderson, granddaughter to Catherine Anderson, stated the Conservation Easement explains what Cat wanted for the Farm. She believes the public access plan violates the terms of the conservation easement and fails to protect the safety and privacy of the Farm's tenants. Ms. Anderson distinguished between the uses allowed on the East side and West sides of the farm, and stated her family supports the Quincy Farm Committee's original recommendation to Council.

Susan Maguire, Executive Director of the Cherry Hills Land Preserve, 14 Mockingbird Lane, explained CHLP was beginning to move forward with planning for programming. She stated they would work with the Audubon Society in June or July for a bird-watching event along the canal (not on Quincy Farm itself). She explained stargazing was tentatively planned for August or September. She concluded that CHLP would launch the Trail Passport Program this weekend on the High Line Canal at the Dahlia Hollow bridge.

CONSENT AGENDA

Committee Member Hoellen motioned to approve the minutes from the April 16th, 2019 regular meeting, seconded by Committee Member Haymons. The motion passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ongoing Projects and Budget

Parks and Recreation Coordinator Black updated the group on ongoing projects. She explained staff requested to modify the budget for the Arapahoe County Open Space grant to accurately reflect the new lower costs of the irrigation project and to be able to plant trees at the Farm using match money, since the trimming would likely come in under budget. She stated the beehive was installed and the sewer project was complete. She continued that the sewer project was complete,

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and the irrigation project contract would go to City Council that evening. She walked the group through changes to the irrigation budget.

Committee Member Rockafellow asked if horizontal drilling rather than trenching would be considered to disturb the vegetation less.

Parks Operations Supervisor Roberts stated he was in the process of getting more information about this, but it was not yet part of the existing contract.

Ms. Black reviewed options for the Historic Structure Assessment once a better idea of cost is obtained. She continued the Master Plan consultant project would be bid out after clarifying discussions with Colorado Open Lands. She stated the City Engineer would hopefully be able to come to the next meeting to present the draft Dam Assessment Report. She explained recent maintenance at the house to fix the furnace. Finally, she noted Mayor Stewart had given a report at the last Council meeting about the irrigation assessment by Denver Water, and that she was waiting for a contact to come from the Mayor to move forward with this assessment.

Ms. Black explained the other budget attachments related to the memo, and walked the Committee through each of the revenue accounts and where funds come from into each account.

Committee Member Hoellen stated it might be useful for the Committee to discuss whether it would be appropriate to spend future funds from South Suburban exclusion on Quincy Farm, and that in his opinion that would be appropriate.

City Manager Thorsen agreed Quincy Farm would fall under the umbrella of parks and open space and would be appropriate for those funds.

Chair Greene asked roughly what the dollar amount would be; City Manager Thorsen explained there are two funds being paid to South Suburban – one was to pay for the land when it was turned over, and the other was a bond measure. Between the two, about a million dollars per year will be freed up within the City budget. He noted Council would likely discuss the plans for those funds at their retreat the following day.

Chair Greene asked if Committee Member Hoellen had a motion. He stated he did not, but he believed it was important to state as a Committee that we believe Quincy Farm would be an appropriate use of those funds, and he would hope Council would take that into consideration. Chair Greene suggested that be brought up in the study session that night, and Mr. Hoellen agreed. City Manager Thorsen stated he could reiterate that at the retreat.

Vice Chair Vanderwert noted in the original ballot measure regarding those funds, it stipulated they could be spent on parks and trails or capital projects.

Committee Member Hoellen clarified they were capital projects associated with parks and trails, and stated part of the point is that Quincy Farm is a park, so it's a legitimate use if the City decides to use the money that way. He stated there was a lot of controversy over those funds, and he'd like to be forthcoming about this.

Chair Greene stated she would like to clarify the use of the word 'park' in relation to Quincy Farm, since she believed it was a separate entity and she would discourage the Committee's use of the word park. Mr. Hoellen asked how would it be referred to, and what city department it should fall under. Chair Greene answered as long as there is a common understanding that it is to be considered part of open space, but the group needs to help the community understand it is a specific, unique asset. She stated she was concerned there was a significant lack of education in the community about this.

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Mr. Hoellen stated he believed that was a great point, and this was a different type of asset, but that it is a park asset, and that might be something for Council to take on in the future to provide guidance.

Chair Greene thanked Mr. Hoellen and invited Ms. Black to continue with the budget discussion. Ms. Black stated she'd like to give a brief summary of how the City's budget is created and how it works, so that everyone was coming from the same understanding as the group discussed the budget. She explained how the budget was drafted, shaped, and approved and that it is a public process. She also explained that the budget is the maximum that can be spent that year without a separate action from Council, but not necessarily exactly the amount the City expects to spend that year. Finally, she explained the relationship between revenues in a given year and expected spending, and explained the revenue accounts related to Quincy Farm.

Chair Greene asked if the City was on the calendar year, which Ms. Black confirmed. Chair Greene asked for historical numbers, and Ms. Black noted they had been in the packet for the previous meeting. Chair Greene thanked Ms. Black for putting together all the budgets.

Cherry Hills Land Preserve Programming Update

Ms. Black explained Ms. Maguire has already summarized well prior in the meeting. She only added that she and Ms. Maguire were working with Kent Denver to coordinate use of their parking for events at Quincy Farm.

Update on response to Colorado Open Lands (Public Access Plan)

Parks and Recreation Coordinator Black explained the plan was sent to Colorado Open Lands last week with many of the Committee's comments incorporated into the plan. She stated also attached in the packets are everyone's comments, some of which should be discussed at this meeting to incorporate into the Master Plan. She thanked Mr. Rockafellow for his comments about parking, stating that section was added back into the plan before sending. She also thanked Chair Greene for her comments about dandelions and pasture management, which were added to the Weed Management Plan for Quincy Farm. She continued that some items valuable for addition to the Master Plan included a Citizen Education Plan, which was Chair Greene's suggestion. She also explained next steps to address the question of the use of the main house with Colorado Open Lands.

Mr. Hoellen asked for clarification that the Committee would be reviewing materials about use of the main house before it is sent to Colorado Open Lands; Ms. Black confirmed.

Chair Greene stated it was her understanding the Committee was going to discuss the public access plan more prior to it being sent with Colorado Open Lands. Ms. Black stated this was the plan as discussed at the last meeting, and that she reiterated it in the email to the Committee about the plan. She clarified the difference between this plan and the use of the main house discussion.

Mr. Hoellen stated that was discussed at the last meeting and it appears in the minutes. He stated he thought the Committee needs to continue to evolve towards taking specific positions and speak up and be clear if someone is not in agreement at the time, since no one voiced concern at the last meeting.

Chair Greene stated her direction and understanding from staff was that it couldn't be discussed over email. Ms. Black stated she would like to make it clear that refraining from discussion over email between Committee members is not something she came up with; it is part of Colorado Open Records law to ensure decisions are made in a public forum. She continued that at this

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point, the decision making is with Colorado Open Lands as the entity tasked with overseeing compliance with the easement.

Mr. Hoellen stated he was in agreement, but that he suggested sending the plan to the Committee at the same time it was sent to Colorado Open Lands. He stated that the Committee discusses and makes a recommendation, and Council makes a recommendation, and at that time it is a reset, and the Committee should support the Council and take their marching orders.

Mr. Rockafellow asked if Mr. Hoellen thought that City Council had clearly received the Quincy Farm Committee's recommendation and position. He stated he had not seen anything going on record to show that Council or Colorado Open Lands had received that position.

Mr. Hoellen stated he could not speak for Colorado Open Lands, but for Council they were fully aware and it was fully debated. He continued that Council did acknowledge that they were taking a position that was different from the Quincy Farm Committee's when the decision was made.

Chair Greene stated it was her understanding that this was the request but it would then be up to the Quincy Farm Committee to set the parameters and hours once we received Colorado Open Lands response.

Ms. Black stated that was not correct; Council's recommendation was about how to open the Farm. She reviewed Council's recommendation of a March 1, 2019 opening from sunrise to sunset seven days a week, and that staff was to report to Council on a monthly basis about how it was going and how the Farm was being used.

City Manager Thorsen stated there was conflict between QFC, PTRC, and Council about the recommendation, but the final recommendation from Council was what was sent to Colorado Open Lands. He stated staff was trying to comply not only with Quincy Farm's requests but also City Council's, and the report was submitted to try to comply with Council's request.

Committee Member Hoellen stated there had been discussion at the Council meeting that the City could be more restrictive following the request from Colorado Open Lands, and that is the same as any other thing the City does. He continued that Council's position was to request to Colorado Open Lands this amount of opening to get that much permission, and the City has the freedom to do less than that.

Vice Chair Vanderwert asked if Council had received the letter from Colorado Open Lands in response to the original request; Ms. Black stated the City Manager sent it to Council. Vice Chair Vanderwert stated we should be careful not to get crosswise with Colorado Open Lands and that we'd gotten off on the wrong foot with them. Ms. Black disagreed, and explained she has been working with Cheryl Cutre for two years and there is a positive relationship between Colorado Open Lands and the City. She noted Ms. Cutre called prior to sending the letter to explain what the response would be, to give staff a heads-up ahead of time. Ms. Black cautioned against the idea that being told 'no' created a negative relationship. She stated it was Colorado Open Lands' responsibility to inform the City what is and is not possible, and the City's responsibility to ask before acting – but getting a response that something isn't possible does not constitute a poor relationship.

Committee Member Hoellen compared the situation to other contractual relationships, and stated this was something to work through together to bring more specificity to a document that isn't completely clear. He continued that that was okay to work through. He stated Colorado Open Lands' job was not to utilize the Farm for the maximum benefit possible; similarly, it was not the City's job to do Colorado Open Lands' job, but to optimize the property for the citizens. He concluded there is a position that the City has done a great job fulfilling its obligations to CDOT, to the County, and to other organizations, but in this instance, it's going to fail. Mr. Hoellen

stated he thought the relationship with Colorado Open Lands should be approached from the idea that it will be successful, like the other relationships and obligations the city has. Vice Chair Vanderwert asked if Ms. Black would be comfortable calling Ms. Cufre about the plan; Ms. Black confirmed she would. Vice Chair Vanderwert stated the expectation was that use would be low, but asked how we would know. Ms. Black explained the plan to place trail counters will give an accurate count, and that staff is on the property regularly to note how many people are using the farm.

Chair Greene stated there was a procedural issue since Committee members did not have an opportunity to respond to each others' comments before the plan was sent out.

City Manager Thorsen stated he thought staff would agree that that is the way we would all typically like things to operate, but there is a difference here with Council's expectations along with Quincy Farm expectations. He stated for future Quincy Farm Committee documents, things would not move forward until everyone had a chance to comment and come together to review comments to give final approval.

Committee Member Haymons asked what would happen with the comments Committee members sent in and the plan asking for access.

Ms. Black stated most Committee member comments had been incorporated into this plan, and those that weren't were highlighted in the packets for discussion at this meeting to include them in the Master Plan or otherwise capture them. She stated if Colorado Open Lands approved the public access plan, the opening of the Farm would move forward based on Council's recommendation.

Committee Member Hoellen reiterated the importance of coming together around a decision once it is made and moving forward, since ultimately that's the City's position.

Chair Greene thanked Mr. Hoellen and asked if there was any other action to take at this time now that the plan was with Colorado Open Lands. Ms. Black replied there was not. She recommended staff reach out to Ms. Cufre. She asked if there was anything else to discuss under this item, and hearing none, moved on to reports.

NEW BUSINESS

None

REPORTS

Chair Greene reviewed that there would be a study session that evening with City Council and asked for topics the Committee would like to discuss. Committee Member Rockafellow asked about an email directory of residents. Ms. Black affirmed the City had an email directory that citizens could sign up for, as well as social media accounts, but that the sign-up rate was low. City Manager Thorsen also explained people could sign up for specific items (like police alerts) and that the city could only send the type of information people signed up for. Mr. Rockafellow stated he thought email would help keep the citizens informed about what is coming up on agendas. Ms. Black stated it was a constant struggle to try to get the word out to residents, and welcomed suggestions to have more people sign up for email notifications. Committee Member Hoellen stated this was a difficult subject and the City had been elated when about a hundred people came out for the John Meade Park planning. He stated often people only start showing up if they're against something, and that it is a point well-taken that trying to get the word out is very important.

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Chair Greene asked if Council was aware of the Committee's plan to hire a Master Plan Consultant and that that could be discussed at the study session, and that she would like to clarify misinformation about the budget stated at a prior Council meeting. She also stated the group should further clarify the Citizen Education Plan, and explained the difficulties of social media and other types of outreach, but that Quincy Farm could be used to create a comprehensive social media presence.

Vice Chair Vanderwert stated the group should let Council know they plan to work with Kent Denver for parking for events. Mr. Hoellen agreed, especially in the context of other discussions going on with the city and Kent Denver, that Council should know that the Committee is working with them.

City Manager Thorsen explained the reason for these study sessions was for the Committee to lead a discussion with Council so that there can be more clear communication and an opportunity for direct discussion. Ms. Black added that the group could bring up the irrigation project, since the contract was on Council's agenda for that evening.

Mr. Hoellen stated he thought it was important for Council to provide direction, and recalled the Committee's discussion about optimizing the use of the Farm within the bounds of the Conservation Easement. He noted one of the topics for discussion at the retreat tomorrow was the future of the Quincy Farm Committee, and the Committee could ask Council what they were thinking about that. Mr. Rockafellow agreed it would be good to get as much feedback as he could.

Chair Greene suggested each member choose a topic to speak about that night for the first half hour, and the second half hour could be asking for as much feedback as possible to give the Committee direction. She asked if everyone had seen the resolution in the Council Retreat packet. Hearing no response, she worked with the Committee to assign discussion topics to members.

Committee Member Hoellen asked if the Committee should come to a position on the item in the retreat packets about the future of the Quincy Farm Committee, and gave options for the Committee's structure. Chair Greene asked if a decision would be made at the meeting tomorrow; City Manager Thorsen stated it would likely be a high-level discussion on the items, and any decision would probably be direction for staff to bring the topic back to Council in another meeting.

Chair Greene ran through the proposed schedule for the evening study session a final time and asked for any other items in reports. Committee Member Sydlow stated he thought it important to tell Council that the Committee should continue; he stated he joined to add his knowledge of historic structures, and that knowledge would be lost if the Committee was turned over to PTRC. Mr. Hoellen again asked whether or not it was a park, but stated the importance of there being a citizen body weighing in on Quincy Farm with particular knowledge and experience.

City Manager Thorsen stated the item in the retreat packet is really a request to make it a long-standing Committee in the code, similar to other city commissions.

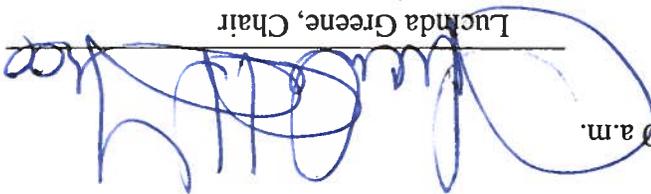
Vice Chair Vanderwert recalled the formation of the Committee and how there are external documents governing the farm, and the Committee was to understand and interpret those documents to guide decision-making.

Chair Greene thanked everyone and asked if she could prepare a short agenda for everyone. Ms. Black stated that would be great, and she could put it on the dais for Council.

ADJOURNMENT

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The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.



Lucinda Greene, Chair

Emily Black, Parks and Recreation Coordinator

