

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS TRAILS COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

March 27, 2019

The meeting of the Steamboat Springs 2A Trails Committee was called to order at approximately 12:21 p.m. on Wednesday, March 27, 2019, in the Crawford Room, Centennial Hall, 124 10th Street, Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Trails Committee members in attendance were: Chair Pete Wither, Scott Marr, Gavin Malia, Dan Bonner, Harry Martin and David High. City staff members present were Assistant to The City Manager Winnie DelliQuadri and staff engineer Danny Paul.

Kent Foster represented the US Forest Service. Kyle Bond represented Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Mike Mordi represented Routt County Road and Bridge.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGE NDA

None.

Approval of Minutes : November 28

Scott Marr moved to approve the November 28, 2018 meeting minutes. Dan Bonner seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Committee Member Resignation and New Appointment

Winnie DelliQuadri: David Scully has resigned. There are two applicants who will be interviewed on April 16. Council typically votes after they do the interviews, however, the person has to be appointed via resolution. That will likely happen May 7.

2018 Financial Report

DelliQuadri: In addition to 2018, you can see the actuals from the previous years. Key thing to note is that even though it's very clear that we've not spent all of the dollars that were allocated, we do have contracts for those. So they're still encumbered with the entities that have those contracts. Any funding recommendation that was approved by Council for a particular project stays with that project until the project is closed out.

Wither: Any leftover funds will roll over to the next budget year.

DelliQuadri: As projects are closed out, any unused dollars go back to the money that can be allocated. Kent is working on a spreadsheet where he's taking every invoice and allocating it to a trail so that you will have the breakout of cost by trail as opposed to just a lump sum for Buff Pass Trails.

High asked him to differentiate the cost per linear foot/mile; Foster said he would.

Malia and Bonner confirmed that the unallocated \$180,000 will remain available.

DelliQuadri: Yes. Technically, I suppose I should put that under Future Trail Construction. The back has a summary of all years by trail, and I did include the cost per unit. I've not put it in there for things that have just been planned; until it's actually built we won't have a number.

2A Trails Update To City Council: May 14

DelliQuadri: We are scheduled for a work session. Gabe Preston, the consultant for the trails study, will be presenting the study. Then, City Council has asked for an update from the 2A Committee. Also, because your budget recommendation for 2019 happened after City Council approved the budget, we weren't able to put your recommendation into the budget process. So you need to make your recommendation to get their signoff for that before we can go forth and spend that money.

I'm working on making sure that we have all the updated information to give to Council: planned program and actual expenses, information on the status of each of the trails within the Trails Alliance proposal, what you've done each year. If there's something else that you want me to pull together for you, please let me know so I have some time to do that.

I'm hoping to get a little task force of two of you to work with me on the presentation and be ready to give it.

Do you want to have a meeting the first week in May to fine-tune it as a committee?

Committee members affirmed and scheduled a meeting for May 6.

Malia and Wither will work with DelliQuadri.

2019 Budget Review

DelliQuadri: I typed this up based on the motions you guys made in the last meeting. In that November meeting, you talked about all the other things that were eligible, and I tried to capture it. The reason I tried to capture it was because I thought this would be something that you would want to present to Council. The four things that you were generically interested in were:

Highway 40 Lodging Trail: We still need to assign a new staff person to this to work on the easement. Wither asked if there's any chance of moving forward on this in 2019; DelliQuadri said no, due to staffing capacity in the Public Works Department.

Committee members were surprised at the small difference between the cost of a soft-surface trail versus hard surface.

DelliQuadri reminded that those numbers are two years old. There will be a new cost estimate after the final alignment is determined.

Paul said the nature of the easement may also factor into that cost depending on whether the abutting property owner is responsible for the maintenance.

Mad Rabbit Construction:

Those are different numbers than you've seen in the past. Kent was kind enough to update them. The numbers we saw last spring were based on option C at \$1.8 million. This takes into consideration a lot of the conversations they've had and comments received.

Foster: There's always the chance that we won't get through the proposed action through the NEPA, so then it would be 0. What I did was take a harder look based on some of the numbers on Buff Pass and that Proposal C and some of the conversations we've had; that would be at the high end of that range. The low end would be without the miles of trail in the wilderness areas given the concerns we've heard. Trails are allowed in wilderness areas; this is just to show a range if this becomes super contentious. We've already been threatened with lawsuits and we don't even have a proposed action yet. So people are very concerned about that. We'll be coordinating with the State on that.

Core Trail Extension:

DelliQuadri: We talked about the possibility that there might be a way to keep the Core Trail on the same side of the river, which would reduce the cost substantially. If that happens, there would be a need to do some planning to figure out the alignment, which would enable us to do a cost estimate.

The other eligible projects you went through last time and pretty much agreed that you weren't interested in pursuing these at this time.

This encapsulates the formal direction based on your motions to date.

Martin: Why was the Strawberry Park Loop so expensive?

DelliQuadri: Because they wanted to keep it all on School District property and add grades to get down from the ditch, which was going to be substantial work.

Asked by Malia, DelliQuadri reported that Emerald Mountain #2, a directional downhill trail, would require moving dirt, which could not be done in that location due to the conservation easements. It's not included on any trails master plan.

Fish Creek Underpass:

Paul: Since you met in November, we've had mostly victories. We've successfully secured the easements to allow for the project. I think it took two years of negotiating with the landowners. With that, we were able to go out to bid; bidding will open April 9. We were just informed that we'll need to obtain a permit through City Planning for some walls that will be constructed within the Safeway property, so we've submitted that. We were also notified by Colorado Parks and Wildlife that the feds had some extra money that they gave them, so they were going back to applicants who didn't get the funds on the original grant. We were one of the first ones in line for that. However, this group had already met and agreed to allocate the 300, so I told them we had already gotten some additional support and I wasn't sure we'd need our full amount that we applied for the first time. But I'm pretty confident that this 300 can go down as low as 200. Before we go to Council that night in May, we'll definitely have that more dialed in so we can downsize the request.

DelliQuadri will put that on the May 6 meeting agenda.

Paul: There were three very interested contractors here for our pre-bid meeting. So if all plays out, we'll start construction late June-early July. We've got a commitment with CPW to have the in-stream work done by October 3 with the whitefish that move into that area. It's going to be a 3-4-month long project, so it's tight, but I think it's doable.

Trail Use and Economic Impact Study Update

DelliQuadri: Here it is. I need to do one final read of it; I just got this Monday. Then it will be ready for release. It will be posted on the City's website, and I will send each of you electronic copies.

Highlights:

- Buffalo Pass Trail counts are approximately 18% of the overall estimated use in the three trail systems of Spring Creek, Emerald and Buffalo Pass. Emerald and Spring Creek are about 40% each.
- There's a higher percentage of visitors or part-time residents utilizing Buffalo Pass compared to full-time residents.
- Survey respondents were nearly evenly split between bikers and those on foot. Full-time residents and visitors had slightly higher bike use; part-time residents were slightly higher on hiking use.
- 54% of full-time residents cite convenient location as a key factor in how they choose their route; 42% cite time and distance.
- With visitors, 42% select a route because they heard about it or it was recommended.
- Typical user outings are 1-3 hours. Part-time residents and visitors have substantially longer outings than do full-time residents.
- In terms of economic impact, the study estimates that between 31,300 and 43,500 trail-related visitors spend between \$17.3 million to \$24.1 million per season.

I'm just really excited that we actually have data to inform the discussions.

High wanted to compare the data to the original proposal.

DelliQuadri: Do you want to have a separate presentation and meeting where Gabe presents to you and you have the ability to ask him questions? I think you might have more questions on the section looking at Trail Count-Informed Use Patterns. I suspect your questions may be different than Council's.

Bonner: Let's get a copy of the study, and if we have enough questions for him, maybe we can do a teleconference at a regular meeting.

Martin and Wither thought it would be helpful for future projects.

Committee members asked for a presentation on May 14; DelliQuadri will work with Gabe to get that set up, either at noon on the 14th or a breakfast meeting on the 15th.

Trail Maintenance Fund

DelliQuadri: I talked to Helen. Thus far this year the fund has received \$2,605, and the balance is \$473,396. Most of their dollars come in during the summer. We are in year four. At the end of year three, we wanted to have \$300,000, and we had \$470,000.

Martin: I just put \$2,200 from our store in today.

DelliQuadri: Then you can add \$2,200! The spend rate on the fund is 4.5%, so if no other dollars go into the fund, that would be a little over \$21,000 a year forever for maintenance. We have a marketing campaign mapped out for ten years with a goal of 1-\$1.5 million.

Wildlife Habitat Improvement Local District Fund

DelliQuadri: Donations year to date are \$15,999, and the total amount in the fund is \$47,981. That fund is barely a year old. In the fall will be the first grant round.

DelliQuadri encouraged committee members to donate and spread word of the importance of the fund.

High: We have Helen working on marketing for the Trail Maintenance Fund. Do we have anyone working on that for this fund?

DelliQuadri: We don't have that, and we need to find those people to carry the hat for a while.

Wither suggested that Keep Routt Wild could take on that role.

DelliQuadri pointed out that the success of the fund may not be in alignment with the goals of Keep Routt Wild. She will be putting some effort into figuring out how to get the word out for the WHILD Fund this year. People behind Keep Routt Wild may be more interested in the fund after the NEPA process is completed. Then there can be a broader community conversation about local wildlife habitat issues based on development in Steamboat, and we need ways to address those as well as trail closures that aren't working and illegal trails, which this fund could help address.

Kyle Bond: I understand that the political atmosphere around this has been a little tense lately. We could probably work with the Community Foundation to inform folks that it's not just about offsetting or mitigating development or trails; it also goes toward research and enforcement. I don't see why the WHILD Fund and the Trail Maintenance Fund can't work synergistically.

High: If I'm giving a dollar to the fund, and I know that 50% of it is going toward offsetting trails I don't want, but 50% is going to a purpose that I agree with, I would still fundamentally object to that.

DelliQuadri: But at this point, none of the fund is going to offset trails that you don't want. The only way that could happen is if we actually put into the NEPA as a required offset. So it's neither here nor there as far as the NEPA study is concerned in terms of where it is today.

It's already a tool. If the Forest Service uses it as an offset, then it will be an offset; but it's not automatically an offset.

Bond: Should there be an instance where we have a trail that's been approved and put together, and Trail Maintenance Endowment Fund helps to maintain that trail, if there is a seasonal closure, the WHILD Fund can help fund the enforcement to help maintain that trail. So they can work together. I hope the political tension between the two can ease in the near future.

City Parks, Open Space, Trails and River Master Plan Update

DelliQuadri: Rather than have that plan be adopted, Angela is working with a group of stakeholders to prioritize the plan's recommendations into some framework for implementation. It will likely not go to Council for adoption until the fall.

Project Updates

Mad Rabbit NEPA: Foster: We've assembled a roundtable to look at different options. The meetings have been very well attended. We were hoping to get to a community consensus for a proposal; we haven't gotten there. At the last meeting, I think nine individuals presented ideas that they like. We're taking all those ideas, putting them together, and I'm taking those as comment. By mid-May, we're hoping to have a notice of proposed action. That will be the detailed, final proposal we're going to go out with for a 30-day comment period. Based on the comments, we'll do our analysis. At this point in time, we're jumping back into the formal NEPA process to take into account all the different considerations and making sure we can come up with a proposal. That will be ongoing this summer.

Buffalo Pass:

Foster: We do have some trails to wrap up this summer; hopefully we'll get them all completed this summer. Soda Mountain, Buffalo Billy's, a little bit of cleanup on some of the other trails, and Gem Trail, which goes up to the top of Buffalo Mountain. We'll also be working with the City on the lower part of Spring Creek Alternate. We are moving forward with a design to improve the parking situation at Dry Lake Campground. We'll be talking more with the County about the condition of the road.

Mike Mordi: It's just getting beat to death. We're barely able to keep up with it. We spend about 30-\$40,000 on maintenance alone on 38 and 36. So we want to have our voice at the table to remember that you need the county road to get to these trails. The development over there is what's kind of giving the commissioners a little bit of heartburn because it went through the process, went through the BLM, BLM was okay with it, but nothing ever came to us about road maintenance or increased traffic levels. It's a minimal-maintenance road and always has been.

DelliQuadri: Was the County involved at all in their master planning process?

Morty: We made comments.

DelliQuadri: The BLM master planned that property, which is why the parking lot could be done at all. You might want to look at their master plan because it calls for another parking lot.

High: I remember asking at the beginning of the process if the County wanted to step up and get involved, and the answer was no.

DelliQuadri: The response was “no, but we’d really like some money to fix the road.”

Mordi: Because it sees one piece of equipment per year out there at most. It serves its function to access the back of the Ranch in mid-late summer. But now you’re seeing increased traffic up there because it’s one of the first trail sections to dry out. We tried to fix the road and get some more drainage so it doesn’t overtop the road. When we were doing that, we had bikers creeping through the construction site when there were Road Closed signs posted all over the place. So that and enforcement is our two biggest things. That was my main comment at the Roundtable.

Meyer suggested having a gate just passed the first parking lot on the back side of Emerald that could be closed based on the elk closure to help avoid damage in the early spring and late fall.

Mordi: I’m trying to get creative with grants in conjunction with Kent and CDOT. It would be about \$7.5 million to go from the end of the pavement by the church up to Dry Lake Campground and pave it.

Next Meetings:

- May 6: Review City Council presentation.
- May 15: Trail Impact Study Presentation

DelliQuadri: You might want to meet after the Council work session to debrief from that. In the past we’ve always met in July so you could move dollars around if something came in over budget, but you don’t really have a lot that you might need to do. You are going to need to meet in late August or early September to do your budget recommendation for 2020. In the past you wanted to meet in fall to hear what happened over the summer.

- June 5: Council work session debrief.
- September 4: Budget.
- November 6: Construction Wrap-Up and NEPA Update

Adjournment

Gavin Malia moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 1:34 p.m. Dan Bonner seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

MINUTES PREPARED, REVIEWED AND RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY: Timothy Keenan and Winnie DelliQuadri. Approved this 6th Day of May, 2019.