

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS 2A TRAILS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
August 31, 2022**

The hybrid meeting of the Steamboat Springs 2A Trails Committee was called to order at approximately 12:03 p.m. on Wednesday, August 31, 2022, in the Crawford Room, Centennial Hall, 124 10th Street, Steamboat Springs, Co as well as online via Zoom.

2A Trails Committee members in attendance were: Vice-Chair Gavin Malia, David High, Harry Martin, Jason Landers and Rich Tucciarone. Absent: Dan Bonner, Scott Marr. City staff members present included Parks, Open Space and Trails Supervisor Jenny Carey, Parks, Open Space and Trails Manager Craig Robinson, staff engineer Emrick Soltis, and Assistant to The City Manager Winnie DelliQuadri.

Laraine Martin, Kyle Pietras and Craig Frithsen represented Routt County Riders. Brendan Kelly represented the US Forest Service. Mike Morty represented Routt County Road and Bridge. Kris Middeldorf represented Colorado Parks & Wildlife.

Approval of Minutes: March 23

David High moved to approve the March 23, 2021, meeting minutes; Harry Martin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mad Rabbit NEPA Update

Brendan Kelly:

We are still working with the State. Since they are a cooperating partner with us, we worked with them to gain their input before our next public comment period. So, we're working on that component, and the next step would be to go to a 30-day public comment period. We're hoping to get to that phase in the near future. Following that would be eventually a draft decision once we finish the comment period and stuff.

I did just get a promotion to our Forest Service regional office managing trails and dispersed recreation for all forests in Colorado, Wyoming and a couple other states. But in this transition period and knowing that this is a high-priority project, we worked with my new boss to be able to have me stay on Mad Rabbit so that we can continue the momentum knowing that it's getting close to the comment period. So, I'll remain the point of contact for this project. I'm working on a transition plan with Michael on who's going to be the point of contact for any other types of partnership or things that I did. We're actively looking to fill my job, but there's going to be a little bit of a period where it will be vacant and there will be someone else covering.

Committee members congratulated Kelly and thanked him for sticking with the project.

2023 Budget Recommendations

DelliQuadri: As we discussed in the last meeting, there's about \$2.4 million left to spend. \$600,000 of that is actually the allocation for 2023. 2023 is your last year of getting that

\$600,000 allocation. Nothing has changed with the carry-forwards. So, suffice it to say, you have funds, and there is one budget request for 2023. That is from the City's Parks & Rec Department, so Craig and Jenny are here to talk about it.

Should you have other recommendations that you need to make in the future, those would go directly to Council, and they would have to agree to whatever your recommendation is.

Malia confirmed that there is no specific sunset defined as to when these moneys must be spent.

DelliQuadri: At some point, if this committee does not make a recommendation for which of those trails to fund, Council can direct staff to fund something that is eligible. I think first they would come to you and ask you to make a final recommendation for all the dollars. I think they understand right now that you're waiting for the Mad Rabbit process to play out before doing that.

Kelly said the latest proposal will be available to the public once the public comment period begins.

Landers: Are you seeing us being able to build trails in 2023?

Kelly: Until we have a final decision, I can't make that call. The earliest we could have a final decision would be 2023, but we have a comment period, objection period, and objection resolution period that carries us into this coming winter. Then, it depends on the results of that.

DelliQuadri suggested that the Committee could meet during the public comment period to determine which of the proposed items would align with the Trails Alliance proposal. When the final decision is made, the City can request that the Forest Service put some dollar figures to those things the Committee decides are in alignment with the Trails Alliance Proposal. The Committee could then make that allocation recommendation to City Council. Even if it takes multiple years to build those trails, the City will have contracted with the Forest Service for that.

Kelly hoped the public comment period would begin within weeks but could not get a definitive start time from leadership.

Craig Robinson, Parks, Open Space and Trails Manager:

There has been discussion of lack of variety and the amount of use we see up on Emerald with user conflict on some of these trails. The concept of developing downhill directional trails has gained momentum and is supported in the PROSTR Plan. NPR was our first stab at that with Spring Roll being built to help alleviate user conflicts and make the ride a lot more fun.

As you recall, a lot of these trail alignments were not approved through any process prior to being put on these maps. They were left to landowner discussion and the approval process. I think the intent of the proposal is to find alignments that meet the goals of the proposal and try to build the trails where we can.

Our proposal is something that came through RCR as a proposal for a black directional downhill trail from the top of Emerald Mountain all the way to the base area. It could start at the

top near the microwave towers. We don't own the very top, but it could start near the top or the quarry depending on how we look at things. The top area does have a conservation easement on it, so we would need to work with the Land Trust on any proposals up there, and they would have constraints.

From the quarry down is city-owned property, and we would follow that ridgeline to the rider's right all the way down the ridge to the gas line, to the top of the ski lift, to the ski area, to the base of the chairlift area. There would be several opportunities to connect from the existing trails system. Certain changes would need to be made to create this downhill corridor.

The funding request that we have for you today is to consider this trail as one of the directional downhill trails proposed to the 2A Trails Committee to provide an expert/intermediate alternative trail and help us address some user conflicts that we see. We see this being a draw to alleviate some of the concerns with the heavy use on NPR that we see and some of the other trails, and to provide something that's not there today.

This would be a request for funding if the trail is approved. Our process now is that if we have something that's coming through the public process that's not on an existing masterplan or identified workplan, it goes through a new process identified by our City Manager. The City Manager has authorized this proposal to go to Parks & Rec Commission. That's scheduled for November 9. If they recommend approval, it goes to City Council for consideration. If they approve it, it comes back to staff and RCR to develop an MOU talking about how we're going to build, maintain and fund this. Once that MOU is approved, we're able to move forward. That's when we would take the next steps of doing an RFP. At this point, we're considering the best option moving forward to be a design-build; getting one contractor in place for the entire project. It may be done in phases. Depending on how quickly that timeline moves forward, there's a slight chance we might be able to start construction in fall of '23, otherwise it's the following year.

If funding is in place, that's one hurdle that helps clear the way to move a little bit faster. So, I guess our funding request here is \$200,000 for the project. The distance is about two miles. We will still look at grant options, but it's hard to go out for dollars for a project that's not been approved yet. Once we have approvals in place, we will seek additional grant funding to offset and save the 2A Trails Committee funding, which would go back into your reserves.

The intention of the design is to make a low-maintenance, sustainable, IMBA-sanctioned trail. We have had a good discussion with RCR about partnerships moving forward and how we can accomplish all this.

DelliQuadri: We always talked about NPR being Emerald Directional Trail #1, but when you look at the actual description of Emerald Directional Trail #1, it was supposed to be an advanced-expert dirt jump trail. NPR is not that; it was designed as that directional beginner-intermediate dirt jump trail, so it actually is a better fit even though it's in a slightly different location; it has similar beginning and end points, which is our criteria. It has a better fit with the actual description and purpose of Emerald Directional Trail #2. This request is for Emerald Directional Trail #1 as an advanced-expert dirt jump trail, approximately two miles, starts up associated with Blackmere and goes down to the bottom of Howelsen. Even though this is visually different, I think it is an equivalent trail because I think when the 2A proposal was

done, there was not an understanding of the Orton easement, which restricted your ability to actually do the trail on that property that met these criteria.

High: My concern is that this is not going to do what NPR has done, which is to create flow that works for the mountain. Is there a way for the top section to be able to satisfy both an intermediate and expert rider? My concern is we create this expert trail that doesn't satisfy flow.

Pietras showed how the flow could work. He said there would be three spots where riders could get to NPR to take loops.

High: The biggest issue for a lot of people on Emerald is user conflict.

Frithsen pointed to routes by which the upper portion of Spring Roll could be viable for riders with a wide range of skill levels.

Frithsen: The geography on Emerald isn't really going to lend itself to massive features.

Pietras showed the possible types of features on different sections of the trail from top to bottom.

Frithsen: This trail isn't intended to attract the people that are going down Morning Gloria. Those people are still probably going to do that, but you probably will take a decent amount of traffic off of Quarry Mountain and [indiscernible].

Pietras: It will have plenty of exits and looping situations.

DelliQuadri said the Committee would first need to decide whether this trail is equivalent to Emerald Directional #2.

MOTION

Gavin Malia moved to find that the proposed trail meets the criteria of the Trails Alliance Proposal because the Committee contemplated a second directional trail that was to be advanced-expert that has yet to be completed. The physical location of one got built, but it matched the narrative description of the other, and now there is an opportunity to build the other physical trail that meets the narrative description of the other. At the end of the day, there would be two directional trails with one advanced and one intermediate. David High seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION ON MOTION

High: When we prioritized the trails, did we prioritize them in a way that would suggest we wanted this?

Malia: The only reason we didn't prioritize it was lack of information at the time. This was a long time ago. The advanced trail contemplated features, and there was question of whether or

not those features would be allowed given the land manager. Based on that ambiguity, it went down on the ranking scale.

Robinson: When we proposed NPR2 and started talking about tabletops and jumps and berms, it was such a new concept for a lot of people here in Steamboat that there was some concern that it would be too challenging. So, we made sure it was all rollable, and now that people have experienced it and seen where the industry is going, it really has shown itself to be an intermediate-beginner trail.

DelliQuadri shared prioritizations as of March 2021.

DelliQuadri: On this one, Emerald Directional #2: Not started; not in PROSTR; on conserved lands; trail not feasible as proposed. What this new proposal is, is saying yes, it's not in the PROSTR, however, the City now has a process by which things that aren't in the PROSTR can actually be approved for construction, and this has made it through the first two steps of that. The trail was not feasible as proposed in the Trails Alliance proposal because it was in the conserved area, but this proposal basically takes the same trail concept and moves it out of the conserved area.

High asked for an example where the Committee adopted a trail with a new alignment such as this; DelliQuadri pointed to the Amethyst Drive connection, the bottom of NPR and Spring Roll.

DelliQuadri: There are a lot of examples where the trails serve the same purpose, meet the specifications, but when you start actually doing on-the-ground planning, you identify the actual corridor as opposed to the anticipated corridor. Even the Hotel Connector is not now proposed to go where the Trails Alliance Proposal shows it, but its new alignment accomplishes the same thing in a way that's actually feasible.

VOTE

The motion carried unanimously.

MOTION

Gavin Malia moved to approve \$200,000 for 2023 towards the design and construction of the proposed trail. Rich Tucciarone seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION ON MOTION

High: One of the failures I think when we looked at Spring Roll for the benefit of it satisfying a need for directional is when that trail was announced and opened and created, it was very much seen as an extreme trail. I think that fell on some pretty difficult ears in the community when we did that. I think the idea that we are focusing as much on flow and user experience as well as satisfying different user groups would be really important to see.

Malia: I think it goes a long way towards alleviating more conflict.

VOTE

The motion carried unanimously.

Project Updates

Hotel Connector:

Emrick Soltis, City Engineering:

As you may know, the contract was awarded to Native Excavating earlier this year, and we provided them within the contract the opportunity to construct this year with an incentive or to defer that to next year. It sounds like, due to the current workflows, they will move forward with construction this year [it sounded like he said this year, but then he says...], so it will likely occur that either early spring or mid-summer, we'll start construction on that trail.

Whistler Area Connections

Soltis: There hasn't been any updates from Baseline since the last meeting. We plan to receive final designs in September or October for those alignments and determine if it's feasible to construct next year.

I think the property owners are willing to work with us on any easements that may be required.

High asked if there has been discussion on making a better connection from the end of the Fish Creek Underpass beyond just dumping out in the Safeway parking lot.

Soltis: There have been discussions, and I believe it's in the Transportation Mobility Plan that was approved by City Council last year. There's a section that's a connector from where this trail terminates to Rolling Stone Drive, and there's a proposed concept of an underpass at that location. Looking at that, it's not really feasible at this point due to the costs; I think it's \$2+ million.

DelliQuadri: Staff looked at trying to get an easement from Safeway to just continue along the creek, and that was not forthcoming. That's why the TMP has it as an underpass.

Landers: What about the other side of the Fish Creek Underpass? I get lost over there, and the sidewalk is...

High: That's a commercial space, but it's not for bicycles.

Soltis: I think that was discussed in quite a bit of detail with that development, and without a connection, I think there's wetlands or a property further on past the affordable housing development where there would need to be a pedestrian bridge constructed to allow that connection to get you to the Core Trail. They constructed the trail to where you could go onto the soft surface and go around that redevelopment and back towards the railroad crossing, or you take the trail up to the sidewalk at the intersection of Pine Grove and US 40 and go down to the Core Trail from there.

Core Trail South

Robinson: It's shown in the PROSTR Plan. Through the Routt County Master Plan update process, there was acknowledgement from the County about the importance of the Core Trail and trails and general for recreation and transportation. Currently, we don't have any easements past the current terminus at Snow Country and Dougherty Road. There was an easement at one point in time by Ed McArthur at the waterski lake or a trail easement on the west side of the lake by the railroad tracks. That had a five-year termination date on it if the City did not construct it. We went through the efforts of doing a full design and feasibility study and alignment. The project came back to City Council, and it was not funded in that timeframe. Now, we're looking at options on the east side of the lake. Without crossing the river two times, it is likely to be considerably cheaper, but again, we don't have easements in place. Right now, Snow Country is in a planned unit development process with Routt County, and there is an open space requirement. The project is on hold while the City and the applicant come to terms about what that trail access might look like through the property. We're trying to resolve alignments ahead of construction. Then we have Mount Werner Water that owns the next parcel; then we have private property and a couple more, depending on the alignment, to get to Legacy Ranch. The goal of the Master Plan is to get to Legacy Ranch perhaps either crossing 131 to get to the golf course or eventually down towards Chuck Lewis. The original goal was to get back up to Emerald via the [indiscernible] in that area.

DelliQuadri: The next easement that may happen would be on the Snow Country property, and if that happens, there may be a request for you to fund that little 100-foot segment of trail. Rather than wait until the whole thing had an easement, you just construct what we can do.

Robinson: That is one of the sticking points. They don't want a trail to nowhere to end that much further on the property and have that public access. There is concern about the trespass situations where the trail ends currently. If it is extended west of the City, our guidance to the City is to not build it until it's further away [indiscernible].

DelliQuadri: However, the Planning Commission might put a time period on it for construction, so if we don't construct it during that time period, we'll lose the easement. It will be interesting to see how those negotiations play out and whether or not it's something that needs to be constructed quickly or not. So, it may come to you, or it may not.

Trail Maintenance and Wildlife Habitat Fund Updates

DelliQuadri: Trail Maintenance Fund has taken a hit because of the stock market. With Hellen moving to a different position, I need to find out who's going to take point. We have two years left on the campaign. So, I will find out how Tim wants to handle this and bring that back to the next meeting.

The City is still paying for all the campaign materials each year and for next year.

Kelly: The Forest Service and BLM are on target for meeting all accomplishments for trail maintenance to what we talked about in our grant.

DelliQuadri asked Middledorf if he had an update on the Wildlife Habitat Fund; Middledorf said he did not but can provide that information to Winnie.

Routt County Roundtable Update

Robinson: They continue to meet quarterly. They are working on a mapping exercise that is going to go live to the public here shortly to identify priority areas for conservation, protection, recreation. It's a questionnaire and mapping exercise to identify best directions to move forward. They will do a couple public meetings in each area of the community and walk people through this exercise. It does take a little bit of time; it's going to be a commitment for people who want to have their voice heard and be part of the planning process.

Once that information is gathered, they will put together a master plan/mapping plan to show what areas are most conducive to whatever specific types of recreation and what some conservation priorities might be.

There is another project they've worked on recently to install a camera on Buffalo Pass at Dry Lake. I think the Forest Service is going to own the cameras and manage them at the end of the day, but it was a big collaborative effort to get those put in place to help manage parking challenges in wintertime.

Frithsen: It actually provides a boost for cell service on Buff, which will help with emergency responses or calls.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Frithsen expressed his appreciation to the Committee and staff for their work over the years.

High asked for an update on the Buff Pass Road to Dry Lake.

Kelly: We've already completed an EA for improvements from Dry Lake up to the top of Buffalo Pass to improve safety, get it up to our modern road standards for a passenger vehicle road, which is what it's designated as.

Right now, there's a big backlog for contracting. We're having troubles getting appropriate pricing to implement the full project, so we're looking at breaking it into components to see if we can complete parts of it and get additional funding for future components. We currently have partial funding, but we don't have complete funding. I'm trying to work out the details of the contracting component to implement it.

DelliQuadri: When might you start doing the work? Is that a 2023 project?

Kelly: It could start as early as 2023, but I haven't heard progress made on getting the contract signed. If they're able to get that signed this winter, then it could start as early as next summer. We'll definitely be doing a press release and plenty of public outreach when we do look to implement that project because it's going to impact the short-term ability to travel up and down on the pass.

The Dry Lake Improvements project for the campground and trailhead improvement, we originally were going to contracting for that as well, but the bid came in way too high. So, we're transitioning in the last month to try to accomplish that through partnerships. So, we are engaging National Forest Foundation, and we're going to work with the Routt Recreation

Conservation Roundtable. I think we're probably going to have better success with that particular project through partnerships.

Next Meeting Date

DelliQuadri said she could set up a meeting whenever the Committee would like but suggested waiting until the Mad Rabbit NEPA is released for public comment or she receives another funding request.

Committee members agreed with that approach.

Adjournment

David High moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 1:03 p.m.; Malia seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

MINUTES PREPARED, REVIEWED AND RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY: Winnie DelliQuadri. Approved this 24th day of October, 2022.