

MINUTES
OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS BOARD
REGULAR SESSION
September, 3 2024
530 East Main St. Aspen, CO 81611
Zoom Video Conference

OSTB Present:

Graeme Means Dist. 1	Howie Mallory Dist. 2, Chair	Amy Barrow Dist. 3	Michael Kinsley Dist. 4	Wayne Ives Dist. 5
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Staff Present: Gary Tennenbaum, Dale Will, Kim Arensdorf, Jessie Young, Carly O'Connell, Liza Mitchell, Janet Urquhart, Paul Holsinger, Drew Walters, Ted O'Brien, Richard Neiley, Rich Englehart

BOCC Present: Greg Poschman, Patti Clapper, Steve Child, Francie Jacober, Kelly McNicholas Kury

Others Present: Elizabeth Severy

Howie Mallory called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Graeme Means motioned for the OSTB to approve the amended 08/01/2024 OSTB Regular and Executive Session Draft Minutes. Michael Kinsley seconded. Motion passed (5-0).

Budget Supplementals

Gerbaz Bridge Construction Management

Jessie Young explained that the original 2024 budget was based on the engineering estimate and additional funds are needed for the second phase of construction administration and the completion of the SGM contract to ensure the bridge is built to the design specifications. The original budget amount was \$1.5m with the budget supplemental adding an additional \$55k.

Michael Kinsley asked about closures for the bridge construction. Young stated that there will be a one lane closure on Gerbaz Way for 1-2 days, and full closure will be a couple hours. The trail will be closed for one day with a detour being provided, she said.

Board action below.

Deer Creek Ranch Solar System Implementation

Ted O'Brien explained that the purpose of this project is to provide an annual budget savings to the OST program by capitalizing on Holy Cross Energy's Renewable Energy Incentive Program. He noted that it was determined that the Deer Creek Solar System would be able to provide a

200% net gain. The contractor determined that a 57kW size system would be adequate for the property's usage (44kWh/year) and objectives. The batteries will be purchased over a 10-year period through HCE's Power Plus Program, with an interest free lease to own loan program. Staff worked with Kurtis Tesch, local CPW Game Warden and lessee of Deer Creek Ranch, to carefully select a location for the solar system structure that does not impede with wildlife corridors, nor is it visible from neighboring properties or adjacent roadways.

Graeme Means expressed skepticism regarding using PV Solar on Open Space properties. He listed issues including inefficiencies for small installations being that they are a higher cost to build and maintain. PV solar arrays generate the most electricity in the mid-day, which is the least efficient time to produce energy because it needs to be stored into batteries, he said. Open Space properties are acquired for different values including scenic and habitat, therefore a large array could disturb those values. The payback on this project is a 29 year, which could be longer with maintenance needs. Graeme suggested holding off on the project and revising after the Climate Action Plan Board retreat. Howie Mallory agreed to wait until after the retreat discussion to apply what we have learned.

Kinsley noted that the program needs to take advantage of all opportunities to reduce emissions.

Amy Barrow stated that every piece OST can contribute to climate action is helpful. Housing on OST properties need to be ecologically responsible, she said. Lastly, this project would be a continuation of the County's directive for energy efficiency.

Wayne Ives provided support for the project, noting that the OST program needs to do what is possible to help with global climate.

Board action below.

BOARD AND STAFF COMMENTS

Amy Barrow highlighted that the program closed the East of Aspen Trail closure for Moose.

Graeme requested a future Board discussion on taking a deep dive look at the trail networks in the valley.

Howie Mallory applauded the stewardship provided to the OST program from Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers.

BOARD ACTION

Gerbaz Bridge Construction Management Budget Supplemental

Graeme Means motioned to recommend Board of County Commissioners approval of the Gerbaz Bridge Construction Management Budget Supplemental. Michael Kinsley seconded. Motion passed (5-0)

Deer Creek Ranch Solar System Implementation Budget Supplemental

Michael Kinsley motioned recommend Board of County Commissioners approval of the Deer Creek Ranch Solar System Implementation. Wayne Ives seconded. Motion passed (3-2). Amy Barrow yes. Graeme Means and Howie Mallory no.

JOINT OSTB – BOCC WORK SESSION
Commissioners Meeting Room; 530 E. Main St., Aspen

OSTB Trustees Present: Howie Mallory, Chair, Graeme Means, Michael Kinsley, Amy Barrow, Wayne Ives

BOCC Present: Greg Poschman (Chair), Patti Clapper, Francie Jacober, Steve Child, Kelly McNicholas Kury

Staff Present: Gary Tennenbaum, Dale Will, Kim Arensdorf, Jessie Young, Carly O’Connell, Liza Mitchell, Paul Holsinger, Drew Walters, Ted O’Brien, Richard Neiley, Rich Englehart, Jon Peacock

Others Present: Julie Kintch, Cecily DeAngelo

Media Present: Grassroots TV, Josie Taris – Aspen Daily News

Greg Poschman called the joint work session to order at 12:02 p.m.

The entire joint work session meeting video is available from this link by selecting the meeting date: <https://pitkincounty.ompnetwork.org/embed/sessions/294418>

Roaring Fork Safe Passages (RFSP) Budget Supplemental

Gary Tennenbaum stated that the initial RFSP study was conducted in March. This budget request specifically contributes funds to the Mitigation Concept Development (Stage 2) of RFSP’s work on the Airport to Woody Creek section of Highway 82. He noted that the City of Aspen will be matching funds with a potential contribution from Town of Snowmass Village.

Julie Kintch explained that stage 2 of this project is focusing efforts on priority area of Highway 82 from Aspen Airport to Woody Creek. The mitigation goals are to reduce wildlife conflict and improve long-term permeability for wildlife across Hwy 82. RFSP is in the process of evaluating the mitigation alternatives, she said.

Kintch provided the potential mitigation potential scenarios:

- Improve existing wildlife fence
- Nighttime speed limit reductions
- Replacing existing wildlife box culvert
- Two of more wildlife crossings
- Improve sightlines for drivers

Kintch stated that potential wildlife crossings site specific evaluation criteria include:

- Habitat use and movement patterns
- Safety and human use
- Land ownership and land use
- Terrain and landscape characteristics
- Crossing structure type and considerations
- Constructability

Kintch provided the Airport to Woody Creek mitigation planning budget:

- Mitigation Strategy Development (April-Dec 2024: \$52,685 (Funded)
- Concept Development (Sept. 2024): \$35,659 (Fundraising)
- Outreach and Communications Materials: \$22,360 (Committed Private Donations)

Michael Kinsley asked why the valley and highway corridor was not being looked at as a whole at this time. DeAngelo explained that the Airport to Woody Creek section was chosen first due to the complexity and ability to create a network of over/underpasses. The other areas in the corridor, which are smaller and less expensive, will be looked at in Q1 and Q2 of next year, she said.

Howie Mallory asked why there are not fences installed up to the Airport along Hwy 82 similar to down valley. Kintch stated that fences create a barrier to wildlife movement. Cecily DeAngelo stated that there are a lot of constraints on each side of the roadway along that section.

Board action below.

Aspen Airport Business Center (AABC) to Brush Creek Park and Ride (BCPR) Trail

Tennenbaum explained that the goal of today's meeting is for the BOCC and OSTB is to provide direction and whether to move forward on next phase of design, engineering, and cost analysis. Additionally, to review potential options for the AABC bridge, and review results from the 2024 community engagement process.

Tennenbaum provided the AABC Bridge alignment locations. A follow-up survey was conducted this summer to collect public feedback on the potential new bridge alignments while respecting the public process conducted in 2023. Significant public outreach was conducted in 2023 with almost 500 survey responses collected. There was significant public support of 69% for some type of connection from the AABC to the Rio Grande Trail. Tennenbaum provided themes based on the public comments which included the following.

Comments in support include:

- Helping residents in the area with transportation choices
- Just getting it done
- Improvements over what exists today
- Better connectivity
- More commuting options

Comments that expressed concerns include:

- Impact on neighborhoods
- Environmental impacts to river and habitat

- Congestion at AABC
- Cost
- Visual impact

Tennenbaum explained that a 2023 estimate puts the cost for the twin bridges alignment at \$20-25 million, and costs will only rise. With a better feasibility study, the city and county can consider their options with the most accurate estimates, he said.

Tennenbaum stated that the next phase will study any potential environmental impacts with the AABC Bridge location. He noted that staff will keep Healthy Rivers and Streams involved with those studies.

Tennenbaum stated that the staff recommendation is to proceed with contracting for the design and engineering for the BCPR Bridge and refine the AABC Bridge locations.

Mallory noted Pitkin County's Climate Action Plan and goal to reduce carbon emissions. These bridge connections offer an opportunity to commute and connect communities. Additionally, the public has expressed interest in this connection, he said.

Graeme commented that the 5 miles along the Rio Grande Trail up valley is on the other side of the river from most of the housing communities. He urged the BOCC to continue on to the next step as the project would help the public recreate and commute where they live. OST has a good partnership with the City of Aspen for this project and other funding can be looked into, he said.

Wayne Ives stated that OST is required to spend 10-40% of the budget on trails. This project is an appropriate place to spend those funds for connectivity, and the community support is there, he said.

Amy Barrow supports the additional funding. She stated that there has been a gap in connectivity in this area, and 69% of the community supports the project for varying reasons.

Steve Child provided support for the AABC Bridge connection, however was unsure of the need for a BCPR bridge to the Rio Grande Trail.

Kelly McNicolas Kury expressed interest in looking further at transportation, environmental benefits, and other funding participation. Tennenbaum commented that the environmental analysis for the BCPR Bridge is complete, however the new AABC Bridge locations will need to be analyzed.

Francie Jacober stated that there were a lot of public comments not in favor of the bridge, one of which included people at the AABC being negatively impacted by the increase of traffic. She added that there would be environmental impacts to the bank of the river from the bridge abutments.

Tennenbaum stated that the 2024 budget funding for this project is already approved with \$250k funding support from the City of Aspen. Today staff is looking for support from the BOCC to

spend the funds to conduct further connection analysis and public engagement. Steve Child, Kelly McNicholas Kury, and Commissioner Greg Poschman provided support for further analysis of the project. Patti Clapper and Francie Jacober were not in support.

BOARD ACTION

Roaring Fork Safe Passages (RFSP) Budget Supplemental

Michael Kinsley motioned to recommend the Board of County Commissioners approve the Roaring Fork Safe Passages (RFSP) Budget Supplemental. Graeme Means seconded. Motion passed (5-0).

ADJOURN

The OSTB and Joint OSTB-BOCC meeting of September 3, 2024 adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Approved:



Howie Mallory, Chair
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails Board

Attest:



Kimberly Arensdorf
Pitkin County Open Space & Trails
Administrative Specialist