



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, July 10, 2024**

**Members Present:** Bob Falcone, Paula Krantz, Wendy Howe, Jeff Davis, Bob Shafer, Chelsea Gondeck, Hank Scarangella, Emily Danti

**Members Absent:** Blaze Panariso

**Alternates Present:** Randy Courduff

**Alternates Absent:** David Bundrick

**Parks Board Liaisons Present:** Larry Bogue, Abby Simpson, Greg Thornton

**Staff Present:** Britt Haley, Lonna Thelen, Eric Becker, Kim King, Anna Bingman, Emily Duncan, Scott Abbott

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TOPS Working Committee Chair Bob Falcone brought the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

**Agenda Preview**

Committee Chair Bob Falcone announced the agenda for the meeting.

**Announcements**

Lonna Thelen, Design and Development Manager/TOPS Program Manager, made the following announcements:

- There will not be a site visit this month.
- Stephanie Surch has resigned from her position of Analyst II for Grants. Staff are working to get this position posted online.
- Anna Cross is the new Park Operations Administrator at Rock Ledge Ranch, following the retirement of Andy Morris.
- The e-bike survey is still ongoing. Over 3,000 responses have been received so far, and staff have handed out over 2,500 cards informing citizens how to provide input.
- The Blodgett Open Space Master and Management appeal at City Council was unsuccessful. The plan will move forward as it was approved.

Committee Chair Bob Falcone made the following announcements:

- Mr. Falcone thanked Councilmember David Leinweber and Michelle Talarico for joining the meeting.
- Mr. Falcone explained the meeting procedures for how alternate members can comment and ask questions about presentations.
- Mr. Falcone apologized for the misunderstanding about the July meeting date change, and that the website had reflected the incorrect meeting date. Mr. Falcone explained

that Department staff are unable to edit the website and all changes must go through City Communications. While it was an accident, Mr. Falcone apologized again for any inconvenience this caused citizens. Staff will do their best to avoid this issue in the future.

### **Approval of Minutes – June 5, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion: To approve the minutes of the June 5, 2024 TOPS Working Committee meeting.**

1<sup>st</sup> – Hank Scarangella, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Jeff Davis, Approved, Unanimously.

### **Citizen Discussion**

Keith Cole, citizen, was involved in the e-bike pilot program in 2021, and expressed frustration that he felt the data collected in that process had not been used to move forward on a policy. He would like to see e-bikes allowed on soft surface trails. Mr. Cole commented that trails are a much better way for people to travel and commute than riding on the road, since bike lanes on streets are not always maintained.

Melissa Hortee, citizen, stated that she is 60 years old, and e-bikes allow her to enjoy riding a bike again. She advocated in favor of e-bikes being allowed on all trails. She noted that e-bikes are not traveling anywhere that regular bikes cannot go or are prohibited, and that e-bikes do not cause additional damage to trails. Ms. Hortee said some of the phrasing in the survey was confusing, as well.

William LaPalme, citizen, spoke in support of e-bikes. While he is happy that there is an ADA accommodation sticker for the use of e-bikes now, that is an extra step for people to take to enjoy riding an e-bike on the trails. He said that needing to go through the extra step for an accommodation feels discriminatory. He asked if staff had used the mountain bike study completed by the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs on how bikes, including e-bikes, cause less trail damage than horses, in the creation of the survey.

Nick Eimer, citizen, said he took the e-bike survey. Mr. Eimer stated that speed being a reason people want to prohibit e-bikes on trails is a nonissue, as regular bikes can often exceed speeds that an e-bike can reach. Mr. Eimer argued that e-bikes are not built for speed, but rather to assist in uphill riding and long rides. Mr. Eimer noted that there is a bad stigma around a small group of e-bike users, but e-bikes help many people stay out on the trails.

Ron Ramsey, citizen, stated that Class I and Class II e-bikes were authorized for use on trails by the State in 2017, and felt it was ridiculous that it's taken an additional seven years to address them in Colorado Springs. Mr. Ramsey added that he had never been told the reason that e-bikes were not previously included in studies about the impacts of biking on trails. Mr. Ramsey also commented that the survey had some confusing wording in it. Finally, Mr. Ramsey stated that he hoped the use of e-bikes would be a ballot issue but hoped that the informational

material developed around the issue would truly help the public to understand the pros and cons of e-bikes.

Cory Sutela, Executive Director for Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, thanked staff for the updates on the Blodgett Open Space appeal. He also thanked the many citizens who came to speak about the e-bike survey. Mr. Sutela asked if there were any updates on the Fishers Canyon Master Plan. Lonna Thelen responded that staff is working on the environmental studies and preparing for a second public meeting, which staff anticipates taking place mid-September.

### **Action Items**

There were no action items on this agenda.

### **Presentations**

**Urban Trail Ranger Team (UTRT) Update** (Presented by Scott Abbott, Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space Supervisor)

Scott Abbott, Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space Supervisor, presented the Board with the Urban Trail Ranger Team (UTRT) Update. This presentation included the fully staffed UTRT; presence on trails; mapping illegal camps and trash locations; and finally, collaborations with other departments and organizations.

**Legacy Loop Update** (Presented by Emily Duncan, Trails Development Coordinator)

Emily Duncan, Trails Development Coordinator, presented the Board with the Legacy Loop Update. This presentation included the Legacy Loop overview; Rock Island Trail; Pikes Peak Greenway; Shooks Run connection: the last gap; Shooks Run connection: easement acquisition; Shooks Run connection: easement/property acquisition; Shooks Run connection: conceptual design options; Shooks Run connection: funding/partnership opportunities; other City projects; looking ahead; and finally, where to find additional project information.

### **Citizen Discussion**

Susan Davies, Executive Director for TOSC, noted that the trail is open under the road on the west side of Mesa Road. Ms. Davies commented that her organization receives a lot of questions about bathroom availability in parks, and asked if there is a list of which parks have open bathroom facilities. Eric Becker, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager, said he

would get Ms. Davies this list. Finally, Ms. Davies said she had contacted a bike shop in Larimer County that rents e-bikes, and the shop informed her that people are using them on soft-surface trails.

**Motion to Adjourn: Motion to adjourn the TOPS Working Committee meeting at 9:20 a.m.**

1<sup>st</sup> – Wendy Howe, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Chelsea Gondeck, Approved, Unanimously.