

San Miguel County Open Space Commission Meeting Minutes FINAL APPROVED

Date: Monday, May 23, 2022

Time: 4:00 PM MST (via Zoom)

Attendance:

OSC Members Present: Chairperson Susie St. Onge, Yvette Henson, Laura Kudo, Sefra Maples, Angela Dye

OSC Members Absent: Roger Wickham, Jason Merritt

SMC Staff Present: Janet Kask, Rich Hamilton, Deanna Drew

Guests: Stacy Passmore and Diane Lipovsky, SuperBloom;
Ted Wilson, Chair, County Historical Commission

Call to Order: 4:05 p.m. by Chairperson St. Onge. A quorum was established.

Approval of 4/25/2022 Meeting Minutes: Motion by Angela Dye to approve 4/25/22 minutes as written, second by Laura Kudo, all in favor, unanimous approval.

Agenda Items:

Ilium Flume Trail- Hike/USFS Discussion: County POS Staff and Ted Wilson, Chair of the County Historical Commission (HC) hiked with John Hidy from USFS to view alignment of a new proposed trail in Ilium that would follow the historic water flume that was built in early 1900s to bring water from the Ames Powerplant to the Ilium Powerplant (Church camp). This trail is on USFS property and would be managed by USFS and added to their inventory, but would have crossover with the OSC, HC and the Telluride Mountain Club (TMtC). The majority of the flume is still present and some sections remain in pristine condition. John Hidy has flagged a trail alignment, HC has researched the history, and the TMtC is working to streamline the NEPA process. The trail is 4 miles long, and travels from the lower Galloping Goose single track up valley along the flume, and terminates near the TR35/Sunshine Trail. The new trail would require NEPA approval, 2-3 engineered bridges over Vance and Turkey Creeks, and could include a great view point overlooking the historic Ilium Power Plant/Church camp area. The OSC is supportive of this project.

Mill Creek Park- Conceptual Master Plan Update: SuperBloom presented a refined conceptual design of the Mill Creek Park after incorporating OSC feedback. The proposed design includes a dog park, screened porta-potties, bike maintenance facilities, a shade structure, picnic tables, pollinator gardens, fitness stations, nature play structures, historic timeline interpretive signage and San Miguel City artifacts. Park elements will be simple and nature-based in design. The HC is unsure of the significance of the remaining historic features at the site and suggests clarification if they must be protected and preserved during park construction. **Janet will discuss the validity of the historic features present at the site and confirm the requirements to protect them with Metcalf archaeological consultants and the State of Colorado.** A water source for the park, dog park and gardens is still undetermined. **POS staff will obtain an estimate of costs for permitting and constructing a water well at the site. HC will review the site's archaeological report and help make a determination on the historic features present. OSC Chair will talk with TOT about the irrigation ditch for the Valley Floor and circulate a list of successful plant species for the new pollinator gardens.** The OSC must still determine if the park will be open for winter use.

Old Business/Other:

Douglas Fir Pheromone Packs: In early May, POS staff applied 100 Douglas fir pheromone packs to repel bark beetles on trees in three areas of the County: Upper M59 trail, Bridal Veil Trail, and hillsides below Lawson Hill. Next year OSC intends to purchase more packets to apply to more trees and involve more people, potentially for a community Earth Day event with additional volunteers and/or children from the community.

OA Greager Site Visit(s): OSC members and POS staff are taking a field trip to the County OA Greager open space parcel on 5/25 to begin planning environmental education programs and a use management plan for the parcel. Issues under consideration include hunting, access, camping and Gunnison Sage Grouse protections. Another site visit will be planned for June.

Regional Trail Map: The new Telluride Visitors Guide magazine includes a hard copy of the new regional trails map and is now being distributed around town. Thanks again to Susie St. Onge for spearheading this effort with all local stakeholders.

Diamond Ridge Rezone: BOCC approved a rezone of Diamond Ridge land parcel near the airport for Community Housing. If a development application is submitted to the County, the POS Director will work with the OSC to review plans and prepare and submit appropriate comments.

Via Ferrata Scoping: USFS is proposing to include the Via Ferrata climbing route into their USFS trail inventory, including upgrades and safety measures, and is collecting public comment until June 1. If the route is adopted by USFS, OSC asks that local guides are used, and because this could bring many more visitors to the box canyon, parking and traffic impacts should be addressed, and that no advertising and promotion of the route should take place until these issues are settled.

Ames Penstock Trail: The County considered acquiring 3 historic Ames Power Plant structures (the diversion dam, penstock and surge tank in Ophir) from Xcel Energy and constructing a trail to parallel the penstock from Ophir to the Galloping Goose trail on highway 145. The structures belong to Xcel Energy, but the property belongs to the USFS. This project is still on hold pending the sale of the Ames structures from Xcel Energy to a private entity.

Perimeter Trail: The proposed Perimeter Trail alignment is scheduled to be surveyed this summer and POS Director will schedule a site walk with the OSC and other partners.

ToT OSC Crossover Report - Susie St. Onge: The ToT is targeting one area for herbicide on the Valley Floor, and trying to minimize traffic in Bear Creek Gorge.

Meeting Adjourned by Chairperson St. Onge @ 6:06 pm

Next meeting: Monday, June 27, 2022 @ 4 p.m. (via Zoom).