

**MINUTES  
CARBONDALE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
January 8, 2020**

Hollis Sutherland called the Carbondale Parks & Recreation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on January 8, 2020, in the Town Hall meeting room.

**ROLL CALL**

The following members were present for roll call:

Members:	Hollis Sutherland, Chair Rose Rosello, Vice Chair Becky Moller, Member Tracy Wilson, Member John Williams, Member Ashley Hejtmanek, Member Kathleen Wanatowicz, Member Genevieve Villamizar, Member (LATE)
Absent:	Camy Britt, Alternate
Town Staff Present:	Eric Brendlinger, Parks & Recreation Director Jessi Rochel, Recreation Center & Recreation Programs Manager Luis Yllanes, Board of Trustees Representatives Kae McDonald, Boards & Commission Clerk

**CONSENT AGENDA**

There was a lengthy discussion about the nature of Genevieve’s MEM project and how it should be referred to in not only the December 2019 minutes, but as the project moves forward. The culmination of the discussion was that from this point forward it should be referred to only as a research project.

**Motion Passed:** Rose *moved* to approve the minutes from the December 11, 2019 meeting with noted corrections. Ashley *seconded* the motion, and it was *unanimously approved*.

**ITEMS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT NOT ON THE AGENDA**

There was no one present, not on the agenda, who wished to address the Commission.

**AQUATIC FACILITY MASTER PLAN: NEXT STEPS**

Eric updated the Commission on the Aquatics Facility Master Plan progress. The primary contact from Design Workshop is Jessica Garrow, and they are working towards finalizing the Master Plan Work Group. Participants currently included in the work group are TOC Staff, three Parks & Recreation Commissioners, one representative of the LatinX community, one youth representative, one specific aquatics program user, and two community representatives. An email will go out to these participants shortly and will provide information on time commitments for the work group. The work group will be tasked with reviewing outreach strategy, crafting survey questions, identify critical needs for the facility, and act as ambassadors for the project. The current time commitments are expected to be one two-hour meeting every six weeks until November, 2020, and to participate in community events as a liaison for the group. The first meeting for the work group is scheduled for the fourth week of January, and staff is currently compiling data for Phase 2: Research, Evaluation, and Data Analysis.

Questions/Comments:

Kathleen would like to see Leslie Marcus invited to participate on the Master Plan Work Group, as well.

**ROTARY PLAYGROUND NAME ACCEPTANCE**

Eric informed the Commission that the 45-day comment period has ended for the naming request of the Miners’ Park Playground. Eric received two inquiries—one person thought that the park name was being changed, and one person left a voicemail with the suggested name of “Fracking Park”—and one comment:

"I just wanted to note my general disapproval of the potential name change of the playground at Miners' Park. I'm guessing that the Rotary Club helped pay for it, but the name is too long and awkward. I would prefer it to stay as just the Miners' Park playground and it would also be confusing, I think, to have a Sopris Park and a Mt. Sopris Rotary Club Playground."

If approved by the Parks & Recreation Commission, the request will be placed on the upcoming BOT agenda for formalization. Signage would be prepared and installed in advance of a grand opening dedication ceremony this spring.

Questions/Comments:

Rose: Are there other parks with separate playground names?

Eric: There is some precedence at the North Face Park.

Tracy: Could recognition of the Rotary Club's financial contribution be fulfilled with a plaque, or is naming the park a key part of the contribution?

Eric: The request for the park naming came from the Rotary Club.

Tracy: It just seems like the naming of the playground in a park adds a whole other layer than I think we intended as a commission when we came up with the naming policy of parks.

John: Is it possible to clarify what seems to be a confusing by including "at Miners' Park" in smaller font or italics at the bottom of the sign?

**Motion Passed:** Rose ***moved*** to accept the new name for the Miners' Park playground to be the 'Mt. Sopris Rotary Club Playground' in recognition of their financial contribution to the project. John ***seconded*** the motion, and it was ***unanimously approved***.

**Motion Passed:** John ***moved*** to add 'at Miners' Park' to the sign. Rose ***seconded*** the motion, and it was ***unanimously approved***.

### **RED HILLS TRAILS UPDATE: TRAILHEAD INFORMATION KIOSK DESIGN & TRAIL RULES**

Eric presented two topics for discussion including the proposed language for the Red Hill Trails Kiosk Design and the anticipated trail closure during the Garfield County Road 107 realignment. The Red Hill Trails wayfinding signs have been finalized and are in production; he anticipates that they will be installed within the coming month. The trail signs are directional and indicate separate-use trails. These are well-explained and symbolled.

The second phase of the project is to design the trailhead kiosk, and have the signage ready for installation once Garfield County Road 107 is realigned this spring. Part of the design package is to determine how to efficiently convey the posted rules and regulations to the trail users, and Eric is currently pulling together perspectives from a variety of audiences. He anticipates returning to an upcoming meeting for final approval. Eric indicated that given the fact that there are multiple jurisdictions with variations on some of the rules and regulations, developing the language to be posted at the kiosk isn't necessarily straight-forward. For example, considering how to control dogs varies across each jurisdiction involved:

- The BLM recommends that dogs be on a leash;
- The Red Hill Council (who assists in administering the Red Hill SRMA) requires dogs to be on a leash;
- Dogs must be on a leash on all TOC-owned property unless it is designated as an off-leash area;
- Garfield County (who enforces rules and regulations outside town limits) requires dogs to be on a leash, or under sight/verbal command.

Eric indicated that there are a number of reasons—both in terms of safety and environmental protections—to require dogs to be on leashes, especially at the base where three trails funnel into one.

The other two categories that pertain to the Red Hill signage are whether to have bilingual signs—to which all were in favor—and how to address the most recent ruling from the Department of the Interior to allow E-bikes on BLM trails.

Aspen Valley Land Trust will also have two signs posted. One will be along Ruthie's Trail and it will be an overview of the landscape. The other will be at the trailhead and will acknowledge AVLT and those that donated money to acquire the property.

The final part of Eric's presentation was to provide information on the upcoming public awareness campaign on the County Road 107 realignment to be completed this spring; DHM will provide a communication plan on the road closure. The road will align north-south with Highway 133, and the two new parking lots will be located to the west of the current parking lot. There will be 59 parking spaces in the upper parking lot that will primarily service access to the trailhead, and 41 parking spaces in the lower lot for commuter parking. There will be a secondary trail that will provide access from the lower lot and for those coming from town. The trailhead and all access to the trails from the front side will be closed during the road realignment. The anticipated closure is two weeks, but it could last longer. The exact timing of the closure isn't known yet.

Questions/Comments:

Tracy: We need to be sure to cast a wide net in communicating about the anticipated closure, especially to the LatinX community.

Hollis: Will there be printed maps available, as well? Are the trails going to be marked color-wise, so people can follow them easily?

Kathleen: Is it possible to flip our messaging? Rather than list out what not to do, is there a way to communicate how we would like to see everyone behave? Will an extensive list of rules change anyone's behavior?

Rose: I think less is more for a sign. Would it be possible to develop an app that could communicate pertinent information about the area?

Kathleen: Trash is a problem on Red Hill, how will that be addressed?

Tracy: I urge you to do your homework on the bilingual signage. Keep it simple and focus on the essence of what you want to communicate.

Ashley: I would like to see as much information as possible provided at the kiosk, and reduce the signage elsewhere.

Tracy: I prefer to defer recommendations on E-Bikes and trail usage questions to the Bike, Pedestrian, and Trails Commission.

Anna Rosenberg (audience member): Are there going to be rules and regulations regarding dogs? Eric: Yes, just as the BLM and the Red Hill SRMA have rules of dogs, there will be rules on dogs.

Tracy Wright (audience member): I have some ideas about Red Hill as far as the trash. It is in two parts: one idea is creating bags that people can pick up and drop off at the trailhead—it could be an interactive way for people to improve their behavior on the trails. Also, if funding permitted, it would be nice to hire a person to be an attendant on busy days.

Eric: Town staff will service the trailhead area, and there will be trash cans, recycle bins, and dog pots at the trailhead. There isn't an economical way to service trash receptacles along the trails.

Tracy: What is the anticipated start date for the County Road 107 realignment?

Eric: February or March.

John: I would like to see the bench legs raised from 18 inches to 20 inches.

Eric: That is part of the AVLT project on Ruthie's Trail.

### **MEM PROJECT: NATURE PARK SURVEY QUESTIONS REVIEW**

Eric provided background information on the MEM project for the benefit of the Commission and audience members. The Parks and Recreation Commission is working with a student working on a thesis for a Masters in Environmental Management project. She is providing 600 hours on a research project, and the Commission was looking at where we needed a Masters-level student to provide some data on one of our parks. We came up with the Nature Park because it is a well-used park, and it has some maintenance challenges, and so research on how to best manage the park is what we have asked her to complete. The research is aimed at gathering background information on the park including the history of the park, the types of flora and fauna that are currently present

within the park boundaries, and the current uses of the park, with the goal of developing recommendations on how to manage the park. There is currently a misconception among the community at large about the fact that this project is looking to change the current uses at the park. Eric also pointed out that the topic for consideration at tonight's meeting was specifically devoted to the questions to be included on a survey anticipated for release in the next few days. There will be a link to the survey on Carbondalerec.com, and there will also be a link to the survey on the Parks & Recreation Facebook page. Hollis also disclosed that while Genevieve is a member of the Parks & Recreation Commission, she is recused as a commissioner for this discussion and is representing herself as the project proponent.

Questions/Comments from the Commission:

Kathleen: Can we discuss the process to review these questions? That being said, I would like to revisit what is the strategic question we are trying to solve with this questionnaire before we go into "are these the right questions?"

Tracy: I think we should focus on the questions that will be most helpful, and what kind of data Genevieve is trying to get at.

Genevieve: In trying to research how best to take care of the park, and instead of coming up with my own solutions, I would really like to take into consideration what the community sees in and how it uses the park.

Becky: But you sent an e-mail out saying the uses aren't going to change.

Genevieve: Well, no, they aren't going to change. The biggest question is dogs, and no I'm not going to change that. But in terms of uses, as a Parks & Recreation Commissioner and to see that park in terms of biodiversity and habitat—for me, that's the big thing. It has had several past uses as a wash-out field for industrial use, it used to be pasture, it used to be a potato field, and we all see it as a nature park, and I love the biodiversity in terms of flora and fauna, and if I can make a difference in my community, and I can ask how can we take advantage of this park that is in transition. What kinds of programming can we put into place so I can affect that. I am not trying to change the use, but I do want to see it flourish. So, how do I go about doing that, and who does that impact, and how does that impact the people that are really heartfelt about this property?

Kathleen: To summarize the objectives and the goals: to introduce more biodiversity, have the Nature Park flourish, identify all the uses, and investigate long-term management tools that would help achieve those goals. The Nature Park is a great place, and the goal is how to make it better.

John: There are a lot of people that don't think anything is wrong, and would prefer to not do anything to it.

Questions/Comments from the Audience (specifically concerning the questions on the survey):

Andrea Bauer: I enjoyed the summary. Are there problems you are trying to solve with this project, and what are those? There needs to be some clarity.

Jeannette Whitcomb: I have been visiting the park a long time when there was a master plan on the books, and I was told as a user it is not a nature park, it is Delaney Open Space. There is a lot of confusion about the name and the space and what it stands for, and so the question for the Town is what do the Trustees see it as? What is the name on the books? The people who took ownership of the space were the dog owners, because they wanted to recreate with their dogs. It is a crown jewel as a dog park—people know it as dog park, and I think it has been referred as that even in magazines, not as a nature park. Is this research into a plan to manage for existing uses, or is this a wish? I would like the survey to get at an understanding of what the community sees the park as, but even at the end of the project there may still not be any money to take care of the park. We need to manage the park better, we need a management plan.

Frank Busse: I have been using the park for years. While visiting the space I have seen big hawks, eagles, moose, herons, and all sorts of other birds. The one question I would like to see on the survey is "Do we do nothing to the park?". I would also volunteer to hand out the survey at the dog park. I also know of at least one other person willing to volunteer to help maintain the park.

Tracy Wright: I think one of the big issues is dog poop. Crested Butte has a contest every year that awards prizes for the most pounds of poop collected. I do think there can be a resolution of the problem where both sides come away winning.

Melissa Sumera: I appreciate what everyone has said, I got interested in the project and came to a meeting before the holidays. I signed up to be on the steering committee for this project, but I am just as confused about this project as seemingly everyone else is. This has been unlike any public process I have been involved with before, and we have yet to have a meeting. The steering committee was never convened to draft these questions—there was a meeting to discuss the questions that Genevieve had drafted, but as I look at this updated draft in concert with the statements of the problems that are trying to be solved, I don't see any questions about the trails themselves (where people do or don't want to be walking). I've heard a lot of conversation about the addition of kids and youth stewardship projects, and that seems incongruous with the current use. I don't think the question about who you are going to meet at the park is relevant. There has been no call for major stakeholders to participate in this process. Even with all of the information I have been privy to, this whole process has just been very confusing.

Adam Wibby: One of the things I think we get lost in is that if you try to create spaces that accommodate everyone and everything, it is like mixing all of the colors in your paintbrush--you just end up with brown. Parks are a great place for kids, but not so great for dogs, and dog parks are great places for dogs, but not so great for kids. Rather than try to accommodate everyone everywhere, we need to find solutions to accommodate somebody somewhere.

Continued Questions/Comments from the Parks & Recreation Commissioners:

Hollis: To summarize the takeaways from previous comments:

- We need to understand the problems we are trying to solve;
- The confusion over the use and the name;
- There is a "Do Nothing" option;
- How can we authorize/mobilize volunteers to help maintain the space;
- How do we accommodate a wide variety of uses and perspectives;
- Input on the project's process.

Kathleen: My interpretation is that our role as a Parks & Recreation Commission to help Genevieve and guide her in this project. But at the end of the day, this is a Master-level work product—it isn't really a product of the Parks & Recreation Commission. The best thing that we can do tonight—as an Advisory Board--is to provide her with that high-level guidance to facilitate her work.

Ashley: I think it is fair to say that we don't necessarily vote on this, or adopt this as a product in and of itself.

Rose: It is also fair to say that staff worked to help Genevieve choose this project, because there is a lot of information to be gained in terms of the history of the park.

Becky: I think we need to look at this in that we approved this project at a different park, and then it got changed—and it was never vocalized to this Commission that it was changed until someone asked a question about it in October. And then in November you came back with a new agreement that ultimately didn't get voted on, so there is a lot of contention up here because it isn't following the normal process. There isn't consensus on this Commission that it's a nature park, and to represent the project as such is misleading. It's primary use is as a dog park, and I see it as a place where I can go with my dogs where they can be off-leash and I'm not bothering nature, and I keep them on-leash when I go up on the trails.

Rose: Genevieve, do you think you could add that as one of your questions: "Do you like the current name of the park?"

Genevieve: That was the purpose of the first question: "What is the name of the 33-acre open space at 4<sup>th</sup> Street & Merrill Avenue?"

Tracy: That is one of the questions I would like to omit, because we are not asking the public to name it and I

think it is misleading in a way. I think it is good feedback and illustrates that we as a town should be consistent in what we call the park.

Luis: It seems to me that the survey is not ready to be launched in its current state. Perhaps we should take a step back and create a better product. I agree with Kathleen that we should be providing high-level guidance to this process.

Kathleen: Is there a time constraint?

Genevieve: There is a fudge factor of about four weeks.

Kathleen: I do feel like what is really lacking are defined goals and a defined process. I think we need to refine the strategic question of what the project is trying to solve, and then work on the survey questions.

Tracy: I want to be mindful of Genevieve's timeline, but we shouldn't be rushing the public process. I think that we as a Commission have rushed the public process because we were trying to be supportive to Genevieve, but we need to take the time to do this well or we are going to end up with a lot of confused citizens who don't know what is happening to the park. We haven't even been able to distill what this project should be called until tonight when we determined that it should be called a research project. We need to take time to do it well, and the public process can't be bound to a graduate project. We need to look at it as what it is, which is a citizen gathering information. Once something has been put down on paper, those documents don't go away. I don't want the questions we are asking now to be used to change the park's use in the future.

Genevieve: All of this is part of the process, and will be included as part of the project.

Eric: The pressure on the timeline came from school requirements, as well as some pressure from Staff since the Aquatic Facility Master Plan survey will be launched later this spring. We didn't want to confuse the public by trying to gather information on two projects at the same time. But looking at the pool project, that survey will be launched sometime between mid-March and mid-April, so there is still some time.

Becky: Genevieve, you have this stakeholder list, have you reached out to people on the list?

Genevieve: Yes, but I was having e-mail issues that has since been resolved.

Hollis: Can you send us a copy of the stakeholder list and identify which category they represent?

Tracy: For the next meeting, could you model your update to follow the example of Eric's update on Red Hill?

Hollis: So how can we help Genevieve and move forward on these survey questions. Eric, is it possible to approve them remotely?

Kathleen: I actually think there are three or four questions that we could approve right now:

- 1) Do you think a management plan should be considered for the Nature Park?
- 2) What elements of the nature park could use some love?
- 3) What improvements, if any, should be at the nature park?

This is a school project—we are not embarking on a public process to change the nature park, but, I do think it would be helpful for Genevieve to get some insight. Can we find a compromise with some broad stroke survey questions?

Melissa (from the audience): I have some confusion about what Kathleen just said. I was invited to a public meeting where I signed up to be a member of a steering committee of a public process related to the student project. So, as the Town sponsor of the project to say that you are not conducting a public process is incongruous with how this was presented to me at the meeting that I attended with Town staff and Commission members. So given the current lack of clarity, it is indicative of needing to take a few steps backwards so that everyone understands what is the process, and what is the public element of the project.

Tracy: I agree with Melissa, and I still think that even coming up with four questions tonight is trying to rush this and making it fit within the confines of somebody else's schedule.

Kathleen: Who is owning the management of the public process?

Luis: It should be Genevieve; it is her project.

Kathleen: But isn't that hard to have a volunteer take on this process?

Luis: But that was what was done for the Weed Management Plan, and it took five years. You can't rush this, as is evident by the comments from everybody here.

Kathleen: From my perspective, this was a school project and so wasn't a high priority for me.

Tracy: Knowing how much people care about this park, I just don't think this was the park to do a school project on because it is so important to so many people. There is so much that needs to go into it, it isn't going to be a one-semester kind of project.

Genevieve: We agreed that it doesn't have to be done in a semester. I appreciate the fact that so many people came out to speak for the park. It doesn't matter if it takes a long time, this project is bigger than my program and it is one of the reasons I joined the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Hollis: Given the length of time we have spent on this topic tonight, we need to move forward and decide whether we are going to have public opinion via a survey and how are we going to get these questions done. First question—are we going to have the survey.

Genevieve: Can I make a suggestion? I would really like to put an article in the paper about this project, and discuss all of the issues involved with the hope that people will reach out and talk to me.

Tracy Wright (Audience member): I would suggest that Genevieve pick one thing--for example, improving the trail—and start from there. I just feel like the survey has a lot of questions and there is not a lot of focus to her project.

Dustin Roe (Audience member): I think there are quite a few good things on the survey that everybody thinks about. I think it would be silly not to go forward with a survey when there are so many people that are concerned about it. Maybe there could be a survey box at the dog park to help distribute the survey. There are also a lot of ideas that people have that (as volunteers) could help improve the park.

Janet Long (Audience member): I feel like there is a disconnect between the mandate of the Parks & Recreation Commission and the subset that is being discussed here with the overall picture of what is managed. Where does this project fit into your mandate? If you put the survey out, you are raising expectations.

Tracy Wilson (P&R Commissioner): For better or worse, the project has been launched. This is a glowing example of why it is important to take time to get it right. I would be in favor of doing a survey—but taking our time to gather information from stakeholders and take time to get the survey questions right so we can be supportive of Genevieve's project.

Kelly Ulrich (Audience member): There is a lot of confusion. Maybe the Steering Committee needs to take more time to develop scope of the project. Start small and let the project grow is probably the better solution to this. We are all here because we heard that the dog park was going to change.

Susan Terra (Audience member): When I put time into taking a survey, I need to know why I am taking the survey. Taking a survey for a management plan, makes me a little nervous, but if it is brought forward as a research project, it would help me embrace it a little bit better.

Hollis: Going forward, the timeline has shifted. The way I am looking at this, Eric will be the primary contact for

this and we will be a resource to help guide you. But, Genevieve the best way to handle this is for you to back to your Steering Committee and refine the project needs are and refine the survey questions.

### **REPORT & UPDATES: STAFF AND COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Eric Brendlinger, Parks & Recreation Director:

30/60/90 Staff Work Plan and Outstanding Project Status Report (it is the last page of the packet):

- Red Hill signage is in production;
- RVR Triangle Park playground equipment demo has started and new equipment ordered;
- Doggie Pots stations at installed at Thompson House and Centennial Park;
- Nuche Park parking and signage will be funded in 2020;
- Partition options for the women's restroom at Gianinetti Park are being reviewed;
- Sopris Park Playground equipment painting is dependent on warmer weather;
- Electrical upgrades at the Gateway RV Park are in progress with completion anticipated prior to May 2020 opening;
- Electrical upgrades at the Gus Darien Arena are in progress;
- The Aquatic Facility Master Plan is underway.

Jessi Rochel, Recreation Center and Recreation Programs Manager:

- Membership Appreciation Sale on Now (Buy 3 Months, Get 1 Free)
- Full Moon Winter Tri Saturday, January 11 at 4:30pm (Run, Ski, Bike)—Individual or Teams of 2-3, Need Volunteers
- First Friday Community Skate Party was really well attended (60+ people)
- Now Partnering with RenewActive: Free Membership for United Healthcare participants 65+
- Next Blood Drive Wednesday, January 29 from 11:30am-2:30pm at the Carbondale Rec Center

Hollis Sutherland, Parks & Recreation Chair:

- Eric and I met with Nikki Delson with CAFCI to discuss that organizations role with the commission and with the Parks & Recreation Department. Nikki is working with Kevin Schorzman, Town Public Works Director to look at grant funding from an organization called Next 50 Initiative to fund a project to create an ADA accessible sidewalk trail to complete a missing piece of sidewalk infrastructure on a walking loop on Cowen Drive from the Red Hill Animal Shelter to the Highway 133 trail. A \$25,000 ask with the Town as the fiscal agent but no match needed. CAFCI volunteers would write the grant. The CAFCI is also exploring Rocky Mountain Health Foundations grants to help with ADA access to Miners Park playground. Eric mentioned that an idea incubated at this meeting would be to promote a Senior Day once a month and highlight existing programming at the recreation center and a possible senior lunch on that day in conjunction with Judy Martin with Garfield County Health and Human Services. This would be a promotional piece to highlight existing programming.

### **FURTHER DISCUSSION ON MEM PROJECT**

The commission talked about next step for the survey. Eric mentioned that there was an article coming out in the Sopris Sun on Thursday that informed the public that there would be a survey and suggested we simplify this process with a four-question survey. These questions have already been published on the original document that went out to potential stakeholders and to the general public through postings at the nature park. Those four questions are:

- How do you use this park?
- How would you like to see it improved?
- What are your issues and concerns with the park?
- What changes are needed?

The commissioners felt this was appropriate in scale for the research project goals without needing to define specific goals and to maintain a narrower scope of project deliverables in the time frame allotted for the project. The commissioners were interested in additional clarification of the context of the research project and that this explanation accompanies the survey as an introduction. It was proposed that this document comes back before the board at the February meeting for approval, so the timeline for the process originally looked at would be delayed a month and the new survey time frame would be February 14 to March 6th.

John Williams brought up an interest and leading the effort to get a "Friends of the (Nature) dog park" together and to start with the citizens that showed up to the meeting to organize a spring dog poop clean up, much like Bill Lukes used to



conduct. He also thought the volunteers could handle the dog waste management by bringing the trash from the north side of the park to the entrance on a regular basis. John also asked the other commissioners if he could start the renaming procedures to drop the nature park name and call it a dog park.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The January 8, 2020, regular meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm. The next regularly scheduled meeting is set for February 12, 2020, at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kae McDonald