

**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD
March 21, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

Colin Quinn called the in-person/virtual EBoard meeting to order at 5:03 pm on March 21, 2022.

ROLL CALL

The following members were present for roll call:

E-Board Members: Colin Quinn, Acting Chair
 Fred Malo, Member
 Nicole Rebeck-Stout, Member
 Frosty Merriott, Member
 Hannah-Hunt Moeller, Member
 Genevieve Villamizar, Member
 Pat Hunter, Alternate

Town Staff Present: Mark O'Meara, Staff Liaison
 Lauren Gister, Town of Carbondale Manager
 Dan Richardson, Board of Trustees Liaison
 Kae McDonald, Boards and Commissions Clerk

Guests: Alyssa Reindel, Evergreen Zero Waste
 Natalie Rae Fuller, Dandelion Days Coordinator
 Jane Hendricks, Prospective EBoard Member
 Michael Port, Prospective EBoard Member
 Fred Porter, 213 Holland-Thompson Drive

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Fred ***moved*** to approve Environmental Board meeting minutes from the February 2022 meeting. Colin ***seconded*** the motion, and the minutes were ***approved*** with Genevieve Villamizar abstaining.

PERSONS PRESENT NOT ON THE AGENDA

Colin announced that Hannah-Hunt Moeller was approved by the Board of Trustees as an Environmental Board member.

Fred Porter (213 Holland-Thompson Drive) stated that his concern is climate action and the Comprehensive Plan update, specifically how the update relates to the Climate Action Plan as it currently exists. He suggested revising the Climate Action Plan to incorporate those topics included in the Comprehensive Plan update. He also suggested more specificity in the listed tasks so that Town of Carbondale staff know what is expected of them.

Jane Hendricks is a prospective Environmental Board applicant. She related that she moved to the greater Carbondale area in 1965 to teach at Colorado Rocky Mountain

School. She noted she is an avid organic gardening and is very concerned about the environment and the population growth of Carbondale.

Alyssa Reindel related that Evergreen Zero Waste submitted a proposal to the Town of Carbondale for the yard waste drop-off RFP. She appreciated input provided by members of the EBoard.

Genevieve Villamizar commented that she is working with Roaring Fork Audubon and Colorado Rocky Mountain School to install four additional osprey nesting poles. She added that she is having a difficult time getting a response from Holy Cross or Excel and if anyone has a contact to please let her know. She noted that Holy Cross and/or Excel will pay for the pole installation with property owner permission and volunteers install the nest.

CARBONDALE NATURE PARK (Nancy Peterson and Mark Fuller)

Nancy began the discussion by noting that she moved to Carbondale from the metro District of Columbia area in 2017. She explained that during COVID she became an avid birder and enjoyed going to the Carbondale Nature Park to engage in that activity but found that the park functions primarily as an off-leash dog park. She went on to relate that as a member of the Carbondale Age-Friendly Community Initiative (CAFCI) she approached the Parks and Recreation Department in 2021 about making upgrades to the park but both the department and the Parks and Recreation Commission have other priorities and don't seem to want to take this on. She also noted that she has been unable to obtain a copy of the 2002 OTAK report on the Nature Park revitalization but also urged the Parks and Recreation Department to pursue another Great Outdoors Colorado grant to create a revised Nature Park Master Plan. Nancy related that Genevieve recommended coming before the Environmental Board to ask if the board members would be interested in helping move the project along.

Mark explained that he is a Roaring Fork Audubon board member and has been a birder for 50 years. He noted that the Nature Park is a great resource but given its role as a dog park, other habitat has been degraded. He thought it would be a simple project to separate areas of prime bird habitat from the areas used by the dogs and thereby increasing the uses of the Nature Park. He encouraged the Environmental Board to take the topic to the Parks & Recreation Commission and the Board of Trustees to transform the area into a real nature park.

Genevieve related that she was using the Nature Park as a graduate project in 2019/2020 but the Parks and Recreation Commission Chair at the time took a personal affront to any proposed changes to the park. She pointed out that Eric has the results of a survey she undertook as part of her project, and she thought they should be able to get them. She commented that she is against fencing people off from nature and what was suggested in the survey by different voices was having dog people versus non-dog people enter distinct domains from different points. She advocates for habitat improvement as separators versus fences. She went on to explain that the Parks and Recreation Director has made it clear it will always serve as a dog park, but she didn't think that should eliminate other uses, and further noted that even among dog owners there are different factions. She discouraged pursuing public outreach for a new Master Plan because it is expensive and contentious, but rather promoted small improvements like fencing off the wetlands.

Nancy thought that Roaring Fork Audubon has already presented the Nature Park issue to the Board of Trustees.

Mark noted that the letter from Mary Harris that was emailed to the board members (and attached at the end of these meeting minutes) shortly before the meeting raises similar issues.

Nancy added that she has reached out to other environmental nonprofits in the area, and they are interested in collaborating on the Nature Park.

Genevieve pointed out that there is a “Friends of the Dog Park” organization that have taken on park maintenance, mostly in the form of poop pick up. She noted that the Parks and Recreation Department has a lot to do, but the Director is very interested in the Nature Park.

Nancy thought that an economic benefit of improving the Nature Park would be to bring birders to the area.

Dan commented that based on his experience, project success includes a coalition of advocacy and cited the Parks and Recreation Department Master Plan as an example of laying out goals that are being completed. He didn’t doubt that there could be some improvement to the Nature Park but suggested keeping the process in mind if the group wants to achieve success. He asked if Environmental Board members wanted to take this project on knowing that it will take time away from others. He wondered if this was a one-off project that falls outside the guiding documents of the Environmental Board. He thought the project has merit but pointed out it needs a broader coalition.

Nancy noted that someone on the Parks and Recreation Commission had suggested taking it directly to the Board of Directors. She noted uncertainty in the best way to move forward.

Dan thought that maybe they were saying that if the Parks and Recreation Commission doesn’t support the project, it could be presented directly to the Board of Trustees. He reiterated that there needs more process for the project.

Colin wasn’t in favor of hiring expensive consultants. He thought if support could be garnered from CAFCI, the Parks & Recreation Commission, and Friends of the Dog Park, the Board of Trustees may then support the project. He thought that if an Environmental Board member wanted to take it on, they could form a sub-committee.

Pat suggested getting the legal documents on the property. He noted that Genevieve is already working with Roaring Fork Audubon, and he wasn’t sure if any other board members had expertise on the subject. He also noted that the Environmental Board doesn’t have much funding to put towards the project. He thought there were enough organizations interested to move the project along.

Colin recommended going back to the Parks and Recreation Commission and Friend of the Dog Park for consensus. He was willing to leave the topic on the table if they want to work through the Environmental Board at that point.

DANDELION DAYS UPDATE

Natalie Rae was not in attendance at the meeting. Pat was able to speak with her via cellphone and she was going to send the t-shirt designs via email so a selection could be approved. The remaining items for discussion were tabled until the April meeting.

Fred noted that he had been in contact with the director of a small marching band that will participate in the parade.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Colin related that there was good input on the Comprehensive Plan update at the last Planning & Zoning meeting. He noted that one item of concern was how the update would mesh with the original document.

Dan commented that clarity on that topic wasn't as clear as it could have been but the rather than the update serving as an addendum to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan the documents will be integrated into one. He noted that there was no discussion about integrating the environmental directives in the Comprehensive Plan update into a revised Climate Action Plan.

Colin asked if there was a timeline for the update to be presented to the Board of Trustees for a decision.

Dan replied that the timeline as currently stated is unrealistic and surmised that it will be May or possibly June before it is presented to the Board of Trustees.

Colin thought that it would be useful to pursue an update to the Climate Action Plan.

Dan replied that final comments on the Comprehensive Plan update will be gathered until the final open house on March 30th and any work integrating the update's environmental directives into the Climate Action Plan would have to take place after that date.

Genevieve noted that she went through the update in detail. She pointed out that there isn't a commercial or residential landscape code and thought that the community was at a point where one is needed. She thought that the Environmental Board should take it on.

Colin reminded the board members that strengthening landscape codes was in the top three recommendations made by the EBoard.

Pat asked if Colin had received any feedback on the EBoard's recommendations.

Lauren commented that all the comments were still being compiled and it won't be completed until after the March 30th meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD INFLUENCE

Colin opened the discussion by pointing out that he thinks the EBoard's audience is the Board of Trustees, specifically as it relates to the environment and how to accomplish those tasks.

Dan noted there will be some repetition in his comments and voiced his disappointment that the Board of Trustees and the Environmental Board are not working in concert. He added that he is a stickler for process and commented that process matters both for good governance and balance. He gave the example of Pat's most recent email regarding a

battery-powered electric bus and went on to explain that for the Environmental Board to be effective such a project needs to reference a plan and, in this case, the most effective reference is the Climate Action Plan. He noted that the Environmental Board was successful in implementing changes to the code by referencing the Climate Action Plan. He expressed concern that while the Environmental Board is comprised of strong-willed, passionate advocates, the other role is to work in concert with Town staff and the Board of Trustees. He thought that if the Environmental Board is willing to follow process, the Board of Trustees will continue to support their efforts.

Genevieve agreed with Dan's comments and noted that when she was on the Tree Board there was a lot of transition and she wondered where the power was and how to be effective. She agreed that there are vocal advocates that comprise the Environmental Board but expressed a willingness to learn how to move projects forward. She noted that some boards are healthy and collaborate effectively with one another and some boards do not. She thought it was time for the Environmental Board to step up and work to gain the Town's support. She suggested some team building activities and suggested making sure all the board members know the VCAPs to begin with. She hoped to see more support for all the boards in the coming year.

Colin added that board members need to be self-reflective and know their audience and what they want to accomplish. He urged everyone to know what their role as a board member was and what their role as a private citizen was. He reflected that as an Environmental Board member, it was a blow when the proposed plastic ban was rejected by the Board of Trustees and their unwillingness to restart the plastics/waste reduction after the COVID pause. He thought it was largely a result of not communicating well.

Hannah-Hunt stated that as a new member, this was an interesting discussion. She thought it helpful to know and understand the Climate Action Plan and the driving force behind the Environmental Bill of Rights. She agreed there were lots of thoughts expressed in email strings and that the idea to store these ideas in a Google Doc was a good way to help focus the group but pointed out that the process piece is still missing.

Genevieve expressed her hope that by 2030, the Environmental Board has the same power as the Planning and Zoning Commission. She thought that if the Environmental Board had more decision-making power it would help mitigate development. She used the example of the Main Street and Highway 133 project that was recently completed and noted that nobody is controlling the landscape component.

Colin pointed out that the Planning and Zoning Commission implements code, it doesn't set code.

Genevieve replied that there isn't a horticulturist on the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Dan apologized for not following up on the plastics issue given its priority with the Environmental Board.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pat noted that Natalie had emailed everyone the t-shirt designs and asked that everyone review them.

Natalie explained that the design is limited to three colors and to keep that in mind when considering the designs.

Jane asked what kind of t-shirt fabric would be used and noted her opposition to a polyester blend.

Natalie replied that the fabric is usually cotton and there are a variety of colors to choose from.

Genevieve suggested an alternative would be to have fabric paints available and everyone could paint their own.

Frosty asked what the difference in cost would be for four colors.

Natalie didn't have the cost breakdown available but noted that she recalled there being a big jump in cost to add the fourth color. She noted that it will cost approximately \$1,200.00 for 100 t-shirts using a three-color design.

Alyssa added that in the past they used a three-color design in combination with a variety of shirt colors. She noted they try to use an organic option for the fabric and the printing is done locally. She pointed out that they have tried the "paint-your-own-design" in the past, but someone must oversee the process and it still costs money to purchase the fabric paints.

Based on a straw poll, the in-color bird design was selected by board members.

Fred announced that Senate Bill 138 is moving through the legislature and is aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. He noted that one of the items removed from the bill was a ban on gas-powered mowers and weed whackers. He suggested approaching the Parks Department to advocate for replacing those items with electric versions.

Dan commented that Erica Sparhawk brought forward a grant request for support by the Board of Trustees and the Parks Department will be trying out a few electric-powered versions this season.

Pat suggested contacting Ace Hardware and the Roaring Fork Valley Coop to see if they would be interested in sponsoring demo models for community members to try.

Fred suggested offering rebates if they switch from gas-powered to electric versions.

Pat noted that projects under the realm of the Environmental Board have a "tag."

Colin replied that it would be preferable to put the project in the context of the Climate Action Plan to avoid a "one-off" plan.

ADJOURNMENT

The March 21, 2022, regular meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2022 at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kae McDonald

CARBONDALE NATURE PARK

Roaring Fork Audubon has been reaching out to the Town Trustees and the Rec Dept for several years with suggestions on how to accommodate both the community of those who want to go to the Nature Park to enjoy a peaceful walk in nature and those who are solely interested in using it to walk dogs, usually off leash. We think we have a very good solution.

Carbondale has a mix of folks, and since the park is designated for mixed use, the obvious solution is to divide the large park to please the two most popular types of usage. This way everyone should get what they want. There is plenty of room for us all.

We recommend keeping the character of the park's social aspect. Dog lovers meet, chat, and make new friends there. We also recommend allowing folks to run their dogs in the same manner and in the same area that most already do. Some dog owners want a place for their dogs to jump in the water. That can be done by creating a pool using water from the ditches. There is a good example at the Crown Mt Park in El Jebel where this exact thing has been done, and it is much larger and nicer.

The wetland area in the west end of the property encompasses about one-third of the total acreage and would need to be fenced off to all pet traffic. The pond with the cattails that supports nesting birds and native turtles would be an integral part of this wetland area. This would allow those who want to enjoy this natural resource a safe and quiet place to share with wildlife and not feel excluded from their Town's Nature Park. In time installing a Trex type of walkway would make it much easier for older adults and mobility challenged to navigate.

The Carbondale Nature Park has one of the few wetlands with year-round water in our valley. Wetlands are becoming more and more scarce and are a magnet for wildlife, especially our birds trying to survive in the middle of winter. Wetlands provide nutrition and easy access to water from a sheltered place that the river cannot provide.

It is because of what this special habitat provides that there is such an incredible list of bird species, 134 in total!

While most of the dogs running around the Nature Park are well behaved, many nature lovers and older adults are afraid to come into the park because of the occasional dog that has charged at folks, barking in a threatening manner, or one that gets overly excited and jumps up on people. Neither is welcome and people who do not want to experience this behavior should not feel uncomfortable and afraid to visit their town's park.

Mary Harris
Co-Chair
Roaring Fork Audubon
March 21, 2022