

Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2019

Attending: Thom Bredenberg (Chair), Carol Beidleman (recording secretary), Mike Rogers (HOAMCO representative), Mary Clark, Paul Butt, John Parker, Tom Brimacombe.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tom Bredenberg at 7:03 p.m.

1. **Approval of Agenda:** Approved on motion by Paul Butt, second by John Parker.
2. **Appointment of Recording Secretary:** Carol Beidleman
3. **Approval of October Minutes:** Approved on motion by John Parker, second by Paul Butt.
4. **Excused Absences and Introduction of Guests:** Excused: none; Guests: John Reynolds, Paul Fink, Jim Shaklee.
5. **Report from the Board Liaison:** David Sorkin was not present, so there no Board report or discussion of the 2020 budget.

Gmail Accounts: Thom Bredenberg said anyone can now contact him at the Conservation Committee with the gmail account. He can get the notifications on his phone, but not his laptop. It is an improvement.

6. HOAMCO Report:

Mike Rogers: The new Board members are Nancy Sulzberg, Melicent D'Amore and Carol Sanguinetti. Phase II of pool is in progress: getting proposals for a mechanical room; have contractor for family changing room (separate building); working on shade structures; will do re-stuccoing. Julie will be back next Monday.

Mowing Greenbelt Trails:

Thom Bredenberg said an email had been sent to Nancy Sulzberg from Bob Desmond, with whom we are not familiar, indicating a plan of mowing all greenbelts, presumably for fire safety, which has raised a red flag for the Committee. Paul Butt said no one knows what the standard of care would be. John Parker said we don't know what the greenbelt boundaries are, and don't endorse mowing people's property. Thom Bredenberg said we said that we have a 6" minimum standard. John Parker reminded us we've been down this road, had this discussion, and that mowing was taken off the table; a workable alternative hasn't been identified, and there is no real support on the Committee for this. Paul Butt said we've hashed this out, and it is up to individual homeowners what they consider to be fire safe for their properties. Carol Beidleman said there really isn't a "fire safe." Paul Butt said that on the greenbelt that parallels Moya Loop, somebody mowed (4' wide) from the Vista Grande outlet back up to his house and up to Chusco Road, killing the vegetation and destroying the cover; likely a rogue operation. The Committee agrees this mowing of the greenbelts is not a good idea, for many reasons, but we want to know the derivation of this idea.

John Reynolds suggested we let the Board know how much it would cost to survey [all the properties along the greenbelts]; it always came back to the borders. This is the first barrier to anything being done on the greenbelts, that it could be on someone's property. Until the Board adopts a plan to establish the greenbelt borders/private property boundaries, nothing should/can be done.

Thom Bredenberg said Nancy Sulzberg indicated this person would make a presentation to the Board, maybe in November. Mike Rogers asked if it was possible to mow to make a fire break. John Parker said it depends on the prevailing wind. Paul Butt said grass fires are low and don't have the impact; fire impinges on soil microflora. John Parker said mowing is an

unsatisfactory surrogate for grazing. Thom Bredenberg will make this an action item—he will write David and Nancy for more information, tell them it has raised some concerns regarding boundaries and mowing height.

7. Review of New Business:

Drainage issues 400 trailhead

Mike Rogers said had talked to Todd Handy about drainage issues at the 400 trailhead parking lot. He went up there with Johnny Manzanares (who did the water system at the stables) and looked at it; he thought it would need about 60 feet of culvert or a culvert at drive areas and open ditch between the two. We might need to talk to the County. Paul Butt suggested looking into making it official with the County to get a driveway easement, so it was on their GPS if they plow. Thom Bredenberg has heard from the community that it's a problem. Tom Brimacombe said we could just shape it (best when there's moisture) so it is not so severe, make it a little wider; he thinks culverts create another set of problems. John Parker said would need a level area for culverts, so even if debris water would push it through. Paul Butt said it was possible to do what Tom Brimacombe said, up to the community property, and try to smooth it out. John Parker thinks the trailhead is part of preserve, but we haven't demarcated the driveway. He said the County maintains the culverts because it's a driveway easement, so Paul Butt's is a good approach, as a driveway off the County road. Paul Butt said it's worth a call to County Roads; also the Roads Committee has a working knowledge of this stuff, an active liaison. Mike Rogers said James Mason wants to be head of the Roads Committee, but there is no one else; Todd Handy has knowledge as used to be on the Road Committee. We should suggest to the Board that it needs to be an official driveway, with an assessment to us at the beginning. Thom Bredenberg wants to defer to January, or remind Todd about; he will contact Todd and tell him we're interested in proceeding, to see if it is feasible and what steps need to be taken and through whom.

Review of 404 Meadow project progress

Thom Bredenberg had a handout on what has been done and what remains to be done. John Parker said the excavator did little damage getting in there, as they have rubber tracks. They changed on the fly the rundown at the end, which became a rock rundown on the side for stabilizing. Paul Butt said it was not that expensive, \$440 for rock from Eldorado Rock. What remains to be done on the 404 needs to be scheduled. Thom Bredenberg said at the downstream end we need to put in juniper to stabilize it. He will be with Jan-Willem Jansens (JW) tomorrow and will talk about if anything that is remaining in 2019. John Parker said there are still problems downstream, but would consider this Phase I done. Paul Butt said the fastest way is to ask JW to give us a memo as to where we are, the total plan, and anything remaining to be done before the ground freezes. If not, we can just pick up in the spring, maybe doing one of the rock dams. We still have rock up on the hill.

Project status updates: 401 Gully

We will look at this in spring. John Parker said we know what Jeremiah would charge (came in high); he will talk to PNM about getting publicity, no obligation to do something but may want to from good PR. Tom Brimacombe said it has been surveyed and staked, GPS survey markers. John Parker asked if we could sit down with Julie Navarro and Mike Rogers to discuss how to execute procurement. Paul Butt said we have language and can start the procurement process in January 2020, so can go to bid with enough time for a contract to begin on May 1.

Project status updates: Library Trail

Paul Butt has a call in to Southwest, and will stay on it; they were supposed to do it this month, but we'll see as they are having turnover. Thom Bredenberg said it came up reasonable in cost.

Project status updates: 101-104 braiding, 11-06-19 survey

Thom Bredenberg said there will be a meeting here tomorrow at 9 to go over there through Apache Springs (Frank and Minnie Murray's property), thanks to Mike Rogers. Mike Rogers said they are concerned about the gully behind their property on our property, that runs off downs off onto their property.

Cholla on North spur of Pueblo Canyon (pilot) Trail, marker 3

Thom Bredenberg said Jim Daniel said there was cholla getting close to the trail on the north spur of Pueblo Canyon (pilot) Trail at marker 3; not a major operation. Can get a shovel under it and get 70-80% of the roots to cut down on growth, to pop it up, and can just drag it off. We don't have to schedule a special work day; Thom can go out in the next 60 days. There are several discrete ones growing close to the trail, where the dirt pile is, .3 miles west of there. Thom will send out a Committee email. Tom Brimacombe said the guidance is 2' clearance on either side of the trail of a 4' trail, but we don't adhere to it. John Reynolds said cholla is hard on dogs, and big sections of trail are choked with cholla; there are people who go out on their own and remove dead cholla.

Community Garden waste in Gavilan arroyo

The Community Garden put waste in the Gavilan arroyo on October 26th, on the southern spur of the pilot trail. They have done that every year, and we weren't in a position to say don't do it. John Parker asked if there were rules in putting unwholesome materials in arroyos; is it really green waste. Paul Butt said it doesn't appear to be hurting anything. We should have them plan to compost/do something else with it next season; the Committee has a problem with dumping things in arroyos, don't think it's a good idea; it's ineffectual and a bad precedent. Thom Bredenberg will contact Mark Young.

8. Old Business:

Remaining 2019 Budget

Paul Butt handed out budget; got copy of general ledger report today. He and Thom Bredenberg should meet with Rachel Turnbough; don't know what reclass is for \$60, but concerned re \$1200 from Fast Signs which is not the Conservation Committee's [Thom will follow up with Rachel; it was later removed by HOAMCO from our budget]. Have spent 12% in greenbelt survey to date. For Ecotone, we're at 55% total, but would like Ecotone invoice from May for \$754 to go in there. JW sent in October invoice, ca. \$800. Will get Forest Guardians bill, and another from JW, which will put us at the top of the budget. The Committee is using the budget asked for and staying within the approved projects. Paul Butt hasn't figured out where the Board and Finance is regarding getting together on the FY20 budget; we want to know because work in progress could be at risk.

Signage and Map Updates

Tom Brimacombe said he has the files from Mark Young for trail junction signs and trailhead maps, and will work on the big map first, this month, and put the new trails in there, with Fast Signs, then will send out to Committee for review. For maps of trails, we don't need photos. Paul Butt asked if we could look at existing photos and see if we have others, not only for the greenbelts but also the Preserve. John Parker said the last thing on the 404 is signage, then we should have a grand opening with new maps. John Reynolds suggested getting photos

from one of the work days, showing who maintains those trails. Send ideas and photos to Tom Brimacombe.

Salt cedars in the 200 arroyo

Want to keep this on agenda; will need to be cutting them back in spring again.

Work on fence parallel to 404

Some work still needs to be done on the fence there. It's simple to bring in steel posts to where staged rock and carry in. Paul Butt could talk to Julie Navarro about HOAMCO doing that fence maintenance. The wire is good, just need a post. Once we do clearing, let Mike Rogers know; set GPS coordinates, or yellow flagging, for Mike so he knows where to put posts. Paul Butt will walk it and send information to Mike.

Tom Brimacombe said regarding wildlife getting across fence lines, it is good to know how to build a fence with wildlife in mind. Paul Butt said there is growing interest in this issue. John Parker said we should buy signage regarding no trapping (could catch a dog). We need to check if our signs say no trespassing only; should also say no hunting, or trapping. Paul Butt said there are signs on 400 main and the upper gate, but should check wording. Good time to check fence line along Galisteo Creek, Cougar and Hidden Canyon, where cattle could walk under the fence, but there has been no recent cattle problem.

Weed Management update

Thom Bredenberg did contact the Chair of the Road Committee regarding their possible involvement, but no response. There was discussion about how the elm trimming volunteer group works, how it is coordinated and works with the County, and what resources it has. This could be a model for weed management, but it would need someone with expertise and enthusiasm to create such a separate volunteer group given that the Conservation Committee doesn't have the capacity. Paul Fink has been involved in the elm pruning group, led by John Gervers. He said John approached the Road Committee suggesting that the Eldorado Roadside Tree Project be subsumed under the Road Committee, but he didn't know the outcome. There has been some support from the County because of the relationship between John Gervers with Deputy Works (?), and the crew foreman responsible for Eldorado's roads, to dispose of branches. He's not sure who John Gervers is dealing with now given personnel changes. Volunteers prune and stack and periodically a crew comes by and picks up as they can. John Gervers coordinates with Chris Senna?; they are asked to not prune at certain times when they can't pick up. This is informal coordination with the County, and has nothing to do with ECIA. ECIA did talk to John Gervers and Julie Navarro; ECIA provided traffic cones, safety vests, road signs, and a pole saw, but hard hats are personal. Thom Bredenberg asked out of who's budget?--County roads, not Eldorado. If the County gets a complaint about visibility, they'll call John Gervers. Thom Bredenberg is trying to get more information about how that group is organized, because we've been requested for the Committee to get more involved in weed management; we do want to encourage participation and activity, and there are knowledgeable people who can head it up. Could spring for safety vests; the Road Committee has a budget.

John Reynolds said John Gervers had a passion, knew how to deal with a governing authority, to set up guidelines. He thought if the Conservation Committee was interested, there would need to be an agreement as to the rules, what to do and how, and we would need a passionate person who will train everyone. Thom Bredenberg has asked the Environmental Stewardship Committee about their interest in this effort, but hasn't heard. John Reynolds said the problem is not knowing boundaries. Paul Butt said we could report to the Board about a

recommendation, ask the Board to embrace this as a community-wide project to get surveying/marketing done first. John Reynolds felt the Conservation Committee should have a sub-committee for the greenbelts and bring in other committees so it doesn't tax the main committee. Paul Butt said what we do should be based on current need.

December meeting?

Traditionally we don't have one in December and there is no compelling reason to have one next month, so the decision was made not to meet in December.

9. Open Forum

Jim Shaklee wanted to ask the Conservation Committee where we will be a year from now? Tom Brimacombe said we have 30 miles of trails to manage, so we are never done. Paul Butt said we have 2-5 years of deferred maintenance and we don't have the resources to maintain all trails at any consistent level of attention, care or quality. The 404 is the last new trail for the foreseeable future, the 300 series has some areas with dire need, the 100 series has been an issue; this is all more than this Committee can handle. John Parker said we should take a breath and celebrate our success. We recognize Jim's contention that we could do a lot of good as a community to address noxious weeds, but we're not sure what are the best management practices and we lack the capacity.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m. (motion by John Parker, second by Paul Butt).