

September 14, 2023
REAP Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Kirk Holwell at 12:05 pm.

Attendance

Mark Harding	Frank Linnebur
Savannah Vickery	Donna Sus
Gary May	Kirk Holwell
Holly Swain	Kip Cheroutes
Justin Reyher	Sherry James
Carrie Bonds	Nathan Sumner
Tisha Jackson	Greg Thompson
Wes Price	Steve Phillips
Jeff Baker	Becky Zierer

Attending by TEAMS

Robin Schincke	Strasburg Parks & Rec
Diane Kocis	Lynn Baca
Loretta Daniels	Nichole Harrell
Janet Lundquist	

Approval of August 10, 2023 Minutes

The minutes were approved as submitted

Chairman Report

No Report

Program

Arapahoe County Commissioner, Jeff Baker, gave an update on various county programs, issues, post-flood repairs, & open space policies.

Jeff gave a background on himself. He has been with Arapahoe county for 25 years. He is in his 2nd 4-year term. He is on the presidential cycle & running for a 3rd term re-election. His background is in law enforcement with the US Army & worked on criminal & felony investigations & crimes against children. He also worked for Auroa PD as a CSI supervisor & worked for Arapahoe County human services in finances.

Roads & Bridges

The county had the wettest May-June on record. The road & bridge division made repairs to 15 roadways that were damaged & the Public Works Department worked day & night, & weekends to make repairs. Most roads were open in a few weeks & all were opened in a month.

Only County Road 38 west of Deer Trail is still in repair. The condition of the bridge has caused a reduction of speed & limited weight. The County has spent \$500,000 on all the repairs. Parks & open spaces trails are currently open except for 1 trail at Ridgeway Ranch. Cherry Creek Eagle Park has 1 trail being repaired.

Property Acquisitions

Arapahoe county acquires property through a 3rd party & then an appraisal is done. They are prohibited by law to acquire any property above market value. There are also leases for grazing. A future lease may be for bison. The County has been working on building a relationship with the Arapahoe Tribe from Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. An open space sales tax of ¼ of 1% was made permanent by voters in 2022. The sunset period of 10 years has been renewed twice. The money can only be used for parks & open space acquisitions. These funds can't be used for buildings or playgrounds, but grants can go to parks & recreation districts & through a share-back program. A Master Plan can be found online for more possible acquisitions. There are currently no plans for the west bijou greenway through Byers. The Kiowa Creek open space Master Plan adopted in 2022 which is 2 miles south of Bennett includes 265 acres for public recreation & equestrian use, multi-loop trails, parking for trailers, archery range, & an outdoor classroom should be completed in 2025. A 74-acre property was acquired south of Bennett & contains a section of Kiowa Creek 60% in the floodplain for the purpose of increasing wildlife corridors & habitat. They are working with the town of Bennett to provide a safe trail from Antelope Hills into Bennett. It will also protect the environmentally sensitive area & preserve scenic views & support future recreational opportunities. It is not open for active recreation. Bijou basin open space master planning will also begin soon. Residents will have an opportunity to provide input.

Former Ridgeview Campus in Watkins

The campus was transferred from CO Dept of Human Services to DOLA & served as a juvenile confinement facility with low security. It is a great place for learning trades & training & included an auto shop, beauty parlor, & a full kitchen to train in food service. The goal is to convert the facility for individuals 18 & older experiencing homelessness to meet the recovery goals. It will serve as a housing program with wrap around case management with a focus on recovery for alcohol & drug rehab. It will also provide employment services such as resume writing & certificates in IT. The stays are limited & based on the Ft. Lyons model. A continuum of behavioral health services & detox are provided. It will be a Federally qualified health center available for residents & will have ambulances & medical staff. The Master Plan will be completed in 2023 with stakeholder engagement opportunities through this summer. Renovations will begin in 2024 & the State legislature has to fund it.

Property Appraisals

The County Assessor can answer questions about how properties are evaluated & assessed. Most assessments came in at 40% higher. Proposition HH will be on the ballot. Arapahoe county is not completely debriused, it is not subject to TABOR limits so they can keep all the taxes they

collect. They were considering putting forth a ballot measure to debruiise & a possible sales tax on the November ballot. Public polling showed there was no interest for debruiising & a sales tax, so it was decided to not put it on the ballot. The public does not want a sales tax. Baker is opposed to both measures & there will not be a ballot measure for this year. Baker believes Proposition HH is an end around for TABOR.

The ARPA (Biden Administration) & CARES (Trump Administration) funds were explained & Baker answered audience questions regarding areas of trash along the roadways, road expansion, & infrastructure including how these items are funded. Most of this infrastructure is funded by the developers, but the County is searching for creative ways of funding. He also discussed child support & programs to train people for jobs who can't fulfill the judge's orders.

Adams County Commissioner, Lynn Baca (on TEAMS), reported 28 road closures during the flooding & currently down to 4 still closed. One is road has substantial & will require working with Army Corps of Engineers. A new facility management building opened in Commerce City. The County is working on distributing \$101M of ARPA funding. They are debruiised & can keep all the taxes collected. The first \$50M was distributed to nonprofits, & the remaining funding is going to mental health & farm worker housing. At the end of the month, they will be going to DC to lobby for highway 287 improvements.

Executive Director's Report

Construction is underway on Imboden Road & will last until December. The Byers Water District was awarded a \$3.8M expansion package. REAP assisted the consultant to help get the financing through.

Arapaho County is underway with the 2015 water study & REAP is involved & participating in the Advisory Group. The last presentation is available for anyone to review. The next meeting is in December. Arapahoe County is also developing a Fiber Optic Master Plan for the eastern plains & REAP will be involved.

There are 2 sub-area plans on-going: The Strasburg sub-area planning process will begin soon & REAP will take an active role in that as well as the Byers sub-area plan.

Deer Trail approved a CORE financed installation for an EV charging station & the trustees approved a REAP marketing plan. Signage will be needed to advertise & storefronts along the charging station area will be notified. Expected installation is in October & REAP will organize an event for the opening. An Arapaho County trail is located within steps from the charging station & REAP coordinate & assist with developing signage to direct EV charging users to the trail.

Membership notices will be going out soon & Kip encouraged those who are not currently a member to join as REAP is becoming a very influential group in the region.

Next meeting is October 12th. REAP will host a special meeting regarding water policies & the status of eastern plains aquifers. A speaker from DNR will be giving the presentation.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm.