
MINUTES
Monolith Ranch Advisory Committee
November 14, 2013, 1:00 PM
405 Grand Ave., Laramie, WY
Annex Conference Room

The regular meeting of the Monolith Ranch Advisory Committee will meet at the Historic Carnegie Building, 405 Grand Avenue, 1st Floor Conference Room.

I. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Cal Van Zee, Paul Rechar, David Evertson, Joe Lord, Jason Sherwood, Vicki Henry and Earl Smith
Staff Present: Darren Parkin and Danielle Brewer
Guests: David Schott, Keith Wardlaw, William Gribb and Mindy Meade

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION BY LORD, seconded by Evertson, to approve the agenda. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 1, 2013

MOTION BY LORD, seconded by Rechar, to approve the minutes from the August 1, 2013 meeting. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. William Gribb – University of Wyoming, Geography Department – Environmental Inventory and Land Use Options Proposal

Proposal submitted to the committee to assist in putting together an environmental inventory and land use examination on the Monolith Ranch; in conjunction with a class taught at the University of Wyoming titled Environmental Planning. This class is a 16 week program; limited to one semester for seniors and graduate students. Due to the time frame and the season, field work would be limited; the program would start in January based on the students vote to participate and would be done by the first week in May with the students presenting their findings. The City would be provided one electronic copy of the report, all the data compiled by the students and all GIS setup specifically for the Ranch.

This study will take inventory and examine some of the potential uses based on the City's plan for the area. Students will look at different aspects of the landscape and data, based on the goals of what the committee wants, and propose some options for policies to help meet the goals and objectives of the committee. The basic data put together on the environmental side would include topography, geology, soils, vegetation, hydrology and wildlife. Complementary digital information will also be collected and incorporated into the analysis; land use, historic features, adjacent land ownership, transportation routes, public infrastructure and buildings.

Floor was open for discussion. **MOTION BY LORD**, seconded by Henry, to accept the proposal presented. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

B. Mindy Meade – US Fish and Wildlife Service – Bird Habitat/Pioneer Pasture Rehabilitation Project

The program – the Partners for Fish and Wildlife – a non-regulatory branch of the Fish and Wildlife Service, works predominately on privately owned land, tribal land and community lands to restore/enhance or create habitat for Federal Trust Species including endangered species, threatened

species, petition species or migratory birds. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has interest in the Pioneer Pasture (public access area off of HWY 230) consisting of 378 acres. The pasture is in need of some rehabilitation work; the US Fish and Wildlife Service would like to work with the ranch to meet some mutual goals.

The Pioneer Pasture contains about 200 acres of grease wood; this pulls salt from the ground that gets into the leaves; as the leaves fall off the salt perpetuates on the surface and changes the whole dynamic of the grass land, this can eventually whittle away and eliminate all valuable forbs and grasses. The current discussion entertains treating the grease wood with a herbicide (Telar) and bringing back more valuable forbs and grasses; this would not only improve bird habitat but could potentially create better grazing land. US Fish and Wildlife would like to have the support from the committee to further investigate the pasture and explore the options.

Floor was open for discussion. **MOTION BY LORD**, seconded by Henry, to have the committee make a recommendation to the City Mangers Office that they pursue this study and find the potential for a mutual benefit to be worthy of discussion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Standing Report from Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan Ad Hoc Advisory Committee

Henry reported that the committee has become inactive. The report is being written by the City Planners. They will revisit recreational activities at the ranch once the water rights have been transferred.

B. Quarterly Report from Water Resource Specialist

Good hay season, 433 acre-feet of water was put on the alfalfa field. This breaks down to an application of 8" of water before the first cutting, and 16.5" before the second cutting. The alfalfa yielded three tons per acre, although we lost about 30% of the yield on the second cutting due to the rain in September.

Hay yield was 2100 total tons between the grass and alfalfa on the ranch this year, last year the yield was about 1400 total tons. There was a large increase despite the center pivot not getting started early in the season for the first cutting and the rain in September which hurt our yield even on the grass hay. We had all water off on August 26th to make sure hay was put up and haying was not completed until the end of September. We had a good hay year but a bad consumptive use year because the water had stayed off that long.

Conversation with the old ranch manager, Dick Little, regarding the agreement with the Bath Ranch to not allow us to run on the haul road ditch later in the year. There is an agreement, drawn up by a lawyer and approved by City Council, although he has not been able to produce the paperwork.

Stanley Baer provided a list of infrastructure improvements that need to be done. While these are being looked into, some of the improvements might fold into the lease renewal. Stock tanks have been changed out, drains have been updated, and water diversion records will hopefully be available at the next meeting.

The ranch has grown in size by 160 acres. We purchased the property for \$60,000. The property itself does not have water rights with it but it does have mineral rights. This property sits high and has been quarried out in the past, due to its elevation it may not be a candidate for irrigation.

C. Pivot Update

P Diamond Irrigation seems to be unable to live up to the terms of their contract with the City, dialog continues with them. They did put it in writing, they guaranteed the project to be done by December 31st, however, due to the floods in Colorado, we may have been pushed back on their list. This project was supposed to be completed April 15th. Further discussion is taking place to discuss the contract with P Diamond.

D. Ranch Tour Follow-up

Tour dates were August 20th and 21st and a third one on the 10th of October. Most questions or observations on the tours are very wide ranged. The first tour was mostly Game and Fish hunting questions, the second tour generated most discussion based on the Pioneer Pasture.

VI. SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was set for January 9, 2014, at 1:00 pm.

VII. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

- A. Standing Report from Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan Ad Hoc Advisory Committee
- B. Quarterly Report from Water Resource Specialist
- C. Pivot Update from Water Resource Specialist
- D. Titus Survey Update from Water Resource Specialist
- E. Update from US Fish and Wildlife Service – Mindy Meade
- F. Lease Negotiations

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY EVERTSON, seconded by Sherwood, to adjourn the meeting. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.** The meeting adjourned at 2:24 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL

s/Danielle Brewer
Secretary
Ranch Advisory Committee

Date