



STUDY SESSION MINUTES

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 6:00 pm
District Office Building
62 Plaza Drive
Highlands Ranch, CO 80129

Remote Meeting Information:

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81866185023>

Phone: 1-346-248-7799

Meeting ID: 818 6618 5023

Guidelines for effective interaction:

- Participate. Ask questions. All input is valid.
- Share thoughts respectfully. Be honest and candid.
- Seek first to understand all sides of an issue.
- Be respectful of others.
- No defensiveness. Respect constructive criticism.

Agenda:

1. Guest Presentations

a) Douglas County Sheriff's Office Update – Captain Dan McMillan

Captain Dan McMillan gave an update to the board on first quarter crime and traffic stats in Highlands Ranch which included proactive enforcement over St. Patrick's Day weekend. DUI saturation operation in Douglas County occurred on March 16th and March 17th. The operation was organized and staffed by DCSO's Traffic Unit which is comprised of 2 Sergeants and 12 Deputies. He also shared recent incidents of interest in Highlands Ranch but was limited on what he was able to say as some of these cases are still open and being investigated.

The board thanked him for his time and for everything that DCSO does for the community.

2. Public Comments and Questions

For online attendees, please use the Q&A feature to comment. Provide your full name and address with your comment. (If you prefer to keep your address private, you can email your full name and address to finance@highlandsranch.org then submit your full name and comment in the Q&A.)

There were no comments or questions in person or online.

3. Staff Presentations

- a) Points of Pride, Forestry Team: Caleb Palmer, Stephen Looney, Brian Wise, Matt Maile, Ben Kraus, Connor Grovenor – Ken Standen

Forestry Supervisor Caleb Palmer introduced the Forestry team to the board consisting of Stephen Looney, Brian Wise, Matt Maile, Ben Kraus and Connor Grovenor. Caleb shared that they maintain trees in parks, parkways and open space to improve the overall health of our urban forest. Forestry is responsible for tree removal, stump removal, tree pruning, plant healthcare and tree planting. 847 trees were lost in the tornado of 2023. The forestry team focused on hazardous trees that were leaning on houses and through fences which were highly technical removals due to lack of space around the tree. Each year forestry removes an average of 150 trees due to them being a hazard or dead or a Russian Olive which is a noxious weed in Colorado. Since 2017, 1,764 Russian Olive trees have been removed. This crew also participates in Saluting Branches whose mission is to honor veterans by providing tree care services at national cemeteries. Since its inception in 2014, the forestry team has attended every event.

Caleb also shared the tree planting strategy since the tornado. 225 trees will be planted per year for the next seven years to replace the trees that were lost in the tornado.

The board thanked them for their hard work and efforts.

- b) 7 Year Tree Replacement Plan – Nick Adamson

Natural Resources Manager Nick Adamson presented the 7-year tree replacement plan to the board. The tornado's impact of lost trees prioritizes tree replacement for the Forestry program. A budget was created to replace trees lost over the next seven years based on preliminary estimates and to provide contracted supplemental watering. Staff from Parks, Parkways, Forestry, Planning and Community Relations teamed up to develop project framework and action plan. Some potential obstacles are additional resources required such as staff and contract services and tree stock availability.

- c) Draft Social Media Policy Presentation – Sherry Eppers

Community Relations Manager Sherry Eppers presented the draft social media policy to the board. She explained the purpose of our social media platforms and reviewed the five platforms that we currently are using. She also explained the importance of managing and maintaining our brand through our logo. She asked the board to review the draft policy that they were given and asked that they email any comments or suggestions to General Manager Stanley.

4. Discussion Items

- a) Legislative Updates – Stephanie Stanley

General Manager Stanley gave an update on the work of the Property Tax Commission. The Property Tax Commission has identified the top recommendations and is in the

process of preparing their report. The next meeting of the commission is on April 12, 2024.

She also highlighted legislative items of interest to the Highlands Ranch Metro District. She is working with the Special District Association (SDA) and Colorado Parks and Recreation Association Legislative Committee to prepare to provide testimony on HB24-1080 that would impact operation of our recreation program.

b) Request for Qualifications for Legal Services – Stephanie Stanley

General Manager Stanley gave an update on the Request for Qualifications for Legal Services letting the board know it was sent to six firms in the Denver Metro area that provide services to local government agencies. Proposals are due back on April 15, 2024. The six firms include our current legal counsel. To date she has heard back from one firm that does not intend to respond because they are not taking on new clients.

General Manager Stanley shared her recommendations to the board for the review of the proposals and interviews. Director Dickerson and Director Simonson said they would like to be on a subcommittee to review and make recommendations to the board on the proposals we receive. The board all agreed this was a good idea moving forward.

5. Agenda Items

a) HRMD24-114: Ratification of February 2024 Cash and Investment Transactions – Tom Rose

Chairperson Anderson asked if there was any objection to the item being placed on the March 26th board meeting Consent Agenda to which no objection was raised.

b) HRMD24-115: Arbor Day 2024 – Nick Adamson

Natural Resources Manager Nick Adamson presented the board with the 2024 Arbor Day Resolution asking the board to recognize April 26, 2024 as Arbor Day in Highlands Ranch. The Metro District is seeking its Tree City USA designation for the 36th consecutive year. On Friday, April 26th the Metro District Forestry Division and volunteers will observe Arbor Day by planting 26 trees lost from the June 22, 2023 tornado in Big Dry Creek Park.

Chairperson Anderson asked if there were any objections to the item being placed on the March 26th General Agenda so the Resolution can be read to which no objection was raised.

c) HRMD24-116: Highlands Ranch Mansion Rental Fee Increase – Harlan Stritchko and Neil Alderson

Mansion Manager Harlan Stritchko presented a proposed increase to rental fees sharing what our current competitors' rates are and that we are currently \$1,980 below the market average. The proposed increase would be 12% which would bring our peak season market average up to \$8,200 from its current rate of \$7,300.

The board asked various questions which Harlan answered.

Chairperson Anderson asked if there was any objection to the item being placed on the March 26th board meeting Consent Agenda to which no objection was raised.

d) HRMD24-117: Pickleball Court Project – Forrest Dykstra and Ken Standen

Director of Operations and Maintenance Ken Standen presented an update on the pickleball court project on behalf of Forrest Dykstra who was out. Ken asked the board to approve an appropriation of \$80,441 from the Capital Projects Fund for the final design of the pickleball court facility and to authorize payment to South Suburban Parks and Recreation in an amount up to \$110,441 which is 50% of the final design costs.

The facility is proposed to have 19 courts, restrooms, shelters, landscaping and appropriate parking. Staff will continue to work closely with SSPRD on the final design. An intergovernmental agreement is also being developed to identify operations and to define cost sharing of the operational costs.

The board asked various questions which Ken answered.

Chairperson Anderson asked if there was any objection to the item being placed on the March 26th board meeting Consent Agenda to which no objection was raised.

e) HRMD24-118: Quebec Street Median Renovation – Forrest Dykstra

Parks and Parkways Manager Dirk Ambrose presented the Quebec Street Median Renovation to the board on behalf of Forrest Dykstra who was out. He asked them to approve an appropriation of \$25,000 from the Major Repair Fund and approve a consulting contract with Sage Design Group in the amount of \$20,800 for landscape design services.

This median was initially constructed in 2005 and renovated in 2013. This renovation included removing and replacing trees, shrubs, removing boulders and replacing the irrigation system. Since that time there are still challenges to the maintenance required for this median. Sage Design Group is familiar with Highlands Ranch and has evaluated the medians around the community. They have worked closely with staff to address the concerns staff has with maintenance requirements and safety for staff and contractors maintaining this median.

Staff asked various questions which Dirk answered.

Chairperson Anderson asked if there was any objection to the item being placed on the March 26th board meeting Consent Agenda to which no objection was raised.

6. Public Comments and Questions: Limit three minutes per person

For online attendees, please use the Q&A feature to comment. Provide your full name and address with your comment. (If you prefer to keep your address private, you can email your full name and address to finance@highlandsranch.org then submit your full name and comment in the Q&A.)

There were no comments or questions in person or online.

7. Special Reports

a) District Staff

Nothing from staff.

b) Chairperson

Nothing from Chairperson Anderson.

c) Directors

Director Smith shared that after 23 years she is officially retired as an HRCA delegate.

Director Jones shared that Castle Pines is closing Monarch for an extended period of time due to repairs. He wonders how this will impact people who travel that road? He also shared that he and Director Schierholz met with General Manager Stanley and HR Manager Kristi Robinson earlier in the day to discuss the KPI plan they are working on and that it will be going to the other board members for a first look. Chairperson Anderson said to email any comments to Stephanie.

8. Chairperson Anderson ended the meeting at 8:45 pm.