

MINUTES

CITY OF FORT COLLINS • BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS



Land Conservation & Stewardship Board

November 12, 2025

Regular Meeting – Excerpt

Members:

Ross Cunniff, Chair

Scott Mason, Vice Chair

Denise Culver, Member

Jennifer Gooden, Member

Steve Joyce, Member

Holger Kley, Member

Elena Lopez, Member

Mark Sears, Member

Tom Shoemaker, Member

1. CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

2. ROLL CALL:

LCSB: Denise Culver, Scott Mason, Tom Shoemaker, Mark Sears, Steve Joyce, Jennifer Gooden, Holger Kley, Elena Lopez, Ross Cunniff

NAD Staff: Julia Feder, Tawnya Ernst, Matt Parker, Nick Van Lanen, Elaine Calaba, Katie Donahue, Emily Shingler, Mary Boyts

Excerpt related to this Council Meeting Agenda Item: Acquisition of 1303 N. Shields Street from Larimer County.

6. ACTION ITEMS

Acquisition of 1303 N. Shields Street

Tawnya Ernst, Land Conservation Lead Specialist stated she was seeking a recommendation from the LCSB that City Council approve the acquisition of 1303 N. Shields Street from Larimer County. Per City of Fort Collins Municipal Code Section 1-22 agreements between the City and other governmental entities involving direct monetary payment of more than \$5,000 must be approved by City Council.

The 12-acre property which includes a 1/3-mile stretch of the Poudre River immediately south of North Shields Pond Natural Area has been on Natural Areas' priority acquisition list for many years. Its acquisition will support Natural Areas' long running efforts to conserve the riparian corridor and extend river restoration efforts that have taken place on adjoining, downstream natural areas.

Discussion

LCSB: Who is going to use this land; how does this space get used?

Staff: Natural Areas has been leasing part of the property for 8-10 years to provide parking and recreational river access. The onboarding process will identify potential use of the existing infrastructure. The parcel sits just east of an area where NAD has done major riparian corridor restoration. Natural Areas sees a huge opportunity to do additional restoration on this property connecting areas that have been the focus for previous work to enhance ecological function.

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LCSB Question: Would staff find it unlikely that it would be more natural area? It's easy to envision spending hundreds of thousands of dollars if it's trying to restore the property to a natural state.

Staff: As part of the standard onboarding process a phase one environmental assessment will be conducted and staff will evaluate any existing infrastructure and potential uses. The existing ecological condition of this property is in is not uncommon for the properties that we've historically acquired in the urban context. Values that staff considered when prioritizing this acquisition include habitat connectivity and river restoration opportunities. Acquisition of the site also provides an opportunity to reduce the visitor use footprint by moving from two parking areas to one, enhancing safety for visitors accessing the area.

LCSB Comment: The river has traditionally not been well cared for, but it has become a vision of the community to acquire it, to piece it together. I would invite some sort of a tour of Magpie Meander and McMurray to view those areas where there has been a huge effort to restore some of the natural stream function; they're really coming along beautifully. Most places do take a little imagination to consider what it could become.

LCSB Question: How do you decide the worth of the property?

LCSB Comment: The Board has had a long-time vision of trying to conserve the entire river corridor. There is not a cap on how much NAD would pay for a parcel except that it cannot pay more than reasonable fair market value. Prioritizing the river corridor can mean buying properties that are less glamorous and will take a lot more TLC.

LCSB Comment: There is probably a couple hundred thousand dollars' worth of work to get rid of the gravel parking lots and get rid of the fuel stuff and tear down the buildings.

Staff: NAD facilities team is excited to explore the site's existing capacity for additional staff offices and equipment storage as part of the onboarding process. The existing building is move-in ready.

Staff: It will take investment to rehabilitate the ecological health of this site. It's really hard to come by a property in the urban context without facilities on it, without some kind of structure.

LCSB Question: Is it too much to pay or not? The Board didn't see an appraisal or any information to substantiate the purchase price.

Staff: Natural Areas has a land acquisition policy that was approved by City Council. The policy states that any properties or acquisitions being considered that either are \$2 million or more or could be considered controversial, must receive special attention from City Council. Typically, that's handled via a confidential memo to City Council. The City has a Real Estate Services department that reviews any appraisals that are obtained. NAD typically obtains an appraisal for acquisitions or uses the Real Estate Services team who have qualified appraisers on staff to

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conduct an in-house market valuation.

LCSB Comment: Normally the Board receives property information during confidential executive sessions with the opportunity to ask questions, but not to make decisions. The Board has received probably half a dozen updates on this parcel over the past couple of years so are much more intimately familiar with it than the public.

LCSB Comment: Members reiterate offer to guide a tour of NA river properties.

LCSB Comment: Member states they felt like there used to be more property information provided during executive sessions including cost benefit and appraisal; they would like that level of information in future land conservation updates.

LCSB Comment: This parcel costs almost \$141,000 per acre; it's a lot of money. We hear people complaining about the cost of the Hughes property at \$80,000 per acre. I will vote for this but would like more information.

LCSB Comment: Member states they would like property coordinates included in land conservation update maps as well as aerial images.

Staff: Staff can incorporate some of these pieces into the January quarterly land conservation update.

LCSB Question: If NAD keeps the buildings for storage, maintenance facility, offices, etc. versus for visitor amenities, does that affect what portion of the purchase price would be blue versus green funds?

Staff: Anything included in the purchase price, including existing infrastructure, is acquired using green dollars. The ballot language is not specific in distinguishing or separating out portions of properties. Operations and restoration are split after acquisition.

Member Culver made a motion that the Land Conservation and Stewardship Board recommend that City Council approve the acquisition of 1303 N. Shields Street from Larimer County. Member Gooden seconded the motion.

Chair Cuniff amended the motion: the Land Conservation and Stewardship Board recommend that City Council approve the acquisition of 1303 N. Shields Street from Larimer County and the associated Intergovernmental Agreement. The amended motion passed unanimously, 9-0.