

THE RED ROCK RAG

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News and Views on Red Rock Canyon

April, 2001

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VOTE APRIL 3!

Zydeco withdraws open space offering

On March 7 the Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation Department received notice that Zydeco had withdrawn its offer to sell 245 acres of the Red Rock Canyon property to Colorado Springs as open space.

In a report in the March 9 Gazette, Zydeco attorney Bruce Warren was quoted as saying that, "Zydeco withdrew because there seemed to be no consensus about it and no positive response." However, Warren was also quoted as saying that, "Zydeco will remain open to proposals from TOPS and the city and certainly consider them."

As an alternative to annexation into Colorado Springs, Zydeco representatives have suggested that Zydeco may develop the property in the county -- possibly as 35 acre lots.

Nevertheless, Zydeco representatives have since contacted some Colorado Springs City Council candidates in an effort to influence them to become more favorably disposed to Red Rock Canyon annexation and to the previously offered Zydeco plan and open space offering. A similar pitch is being made to members of the TOPS Working Committee.

A year ago ...

Had Zydeco not withdrawn its open space offering, the Zydeco proposal would have been considered at the TOPS Working Committee meeting on March 14, 2001.

A year earlier, on March 14, 2000 Zydeco made a presentation to the Manitou Springs City Council in which Zydeco outlined a proposed Red Rock Canyon development which would grow to include 512,000 square feet of retail space, 1,389,000 square feet of office space, 600 hotel rooms, 900 town homes, 700 apartments, 800 single family homes, and 60 cluster homes.

As the tale was spun by Zydeco's representatives, this development was to be such a benefit to Manitou Springs that the town should not only annex Red Rock Canyon but also create an urban renewal district which would deal with conditions of blight such as the mobile home parks and provide tax money to Zydeco for building infrastructure.

On May 17, 2000 Zydeco held a public meeting on the project which was so noteworthy that it later earned Kyle Blakely and Parry Thomas recognition in the *Colorado Springs Independent's Best of Colorado Springs*. In recognizing Kyle and Parry, the *Independent* stated, "Anybody who can stand in front of an entire town and do a fairy dance around the truth deserves recognition."

Then, on June 1, 2000 Richard Yates of Zydeco wrote to people who attended the May 17 meeting concerning a subsequent public meeting. In that letter, Mr. Yates stated, "We will send written notices for that next meeting very soon."

Before "very soon" came, however, the citizens of Manitou Springs circulated two petitions for initiatives which would require voter approval for annexation; and the Manitou Springs City Council then passed an ordinance requiring voter approval for most annexations over three acres. The *Colorado Springs Independent* recognized this, too, as the "Best Public Uprising" of 2000.

... And, "very soon" never came.

And, Zydeco withdrew from Manitou and sought annexation to Colorado Springs.

Our Thanks

The Red Rock Canyon Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the following people who have made contributions for operating expenses during the past month.

David Dahm
Jo Cervone
John & Anna Monroe

We would also like to express our appreciation to the Village at Skyline for providing our meeting room.

Candidates' Statements:

(NOTE: Red Rock Canyon Committee chairman Joe Fabeck invited each of the candidates for Colorado Springs City Council to provide a statement for publication in the Red Rock Rag expressing the candidate's position on Red Rock Canyon. The following are the statements which were offered)

AT LARGE

Judy Noyes:

I am in complete agreement with the "Red Rock Rag" and the thousands of citizens in our community who I'm sure believe that Red Rock Canyon is a unique and extraordinary land feature that must be preserved and protected. At this moment I think annexation by the City of Colorado Springs is unlikely, but there is reason to believe that ultimately there can be some visionary and creative involvement that will help to keep the most spectacular (and vulnerable) acreage designated as open space/park land for perpetuity. A great deal of discussion is yet to take place and I trust that will lead us to a solution. The question here is "what is the right thing to do for our community and future generations?" To me, the answer is clear. As stated at the recent TOSC forum, I will do everything I can to preserve Red Rock Canyon.

Tim Pleasant:

(Statement not received)

DISTRICT 1

Jim Null:

I believe that we should not annex Red Rock Canyon until we get the open space we want for that area. I believe that if the areas not suitable for open space (or for other uses) are properly managed and mitigated by some developer then the rest of the area might be considered. In my view the ball is in the City's court and we should only annex the area when it is to the City's advantage to do so.

DISTRICT 2

Charles Wingate:

I want to begin by thanking the Red Rocks Canyon Committee for granting me an opportunity to address its members.

I ask for your support, because I believe that I am the best person to represent this district when Councilman Bill Guman leaves office this April.

My goal will be to ensure that we provide the essential services to our citizens. Former Mayor of Indianapolis, Stephen Goldsmith, once said that, "the purpose of any city government is to make sure the roads are smooth, the drainage and you don't get beat up on your way to school, work or church". It is the vision of Mayor Goldsmith that I seek to bring to the Colorado Springs City Council.

I believe that if the City Council will focus on providing the essential services, public safety and public works, then the inevitable growth of Colorado Springs will be positive and beneficial to us all.

Thank you.

Leon Kirk:

It seems to me that three groups have an interest in Red Rocks Canyon. I identify them as the preservations, the developers that want to develop all or part of the land and the City of Colorado Springs whose interest is difficult to define. The group that wants to preserve the natural wonders of Red Rocks has a powerful and persuasive position. The natural features are second only to the Garden of the Gods and they still exist in a relatively pristine state (except for the landfill, septic tanks and other man made pollution. The developers see the canyon as a source of building sites with valuable natural features in an area that is growing short of building sites with desirable natural features for building high value homes (and produce large profits which is, after all, their right). They promise to clean up the pollution to establish their rights to part of the canyon. There is also an implied right of the owners of the land to sell their land for any purpose to any party. The only interest the City has is to control the future of the land which may eventually become part of the city. If the City were to choose to annex the canyon, they would also assume liability for the infrastructure and cleaning up the pollution. I do not see any advantage to the City taxpayers in annexation and the resulting liabilities. I do see reasons to work with the land owners, the developers and the preservations to preserve the special features of the canyon while having private money pay for pollution clean-up. There are advantages to both sides. The developers can gain beautiful building sites, the best natural features can be preserved and pollution factors can be at least reduced and maybe eliminated. In the event that it is impossible to reach agreements on both sides, I would favor preserving the canyon for future generations in it's natural state.

Kevin Butcher:

Have I not made my position clear already?

DISTRICT 3**Sally Clark:**

Red Rock Canyon is a natural asset to our community included as a Potential Open Space Area in the Colorado Springs Open Space Plan. It would connect an important trail system in our community. While there has yet to be a master plan submitted for Red Rock Canyon by the developer, I believe that currently annexation of this area would be a burden vs. a benefit to the City of Colorado Springs. The cost of providing infrastructure and utilities and the environmental hazards associated with development, should not be placed on the taxpayers. If the land were annexed and later sold for open space, the price of the property would increase significantly due to the benefit of annexation. I am encouraged by the possibility of a non-profit organization partnering with TOPS/City of Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs to purchase some or all of the land and preserve it for open space.

Linda Barley:

(Statement not received)

DISTRICT 4**Margaret Radford:**

I greatly value the Red Rock Canyon area and would like to see it in Colorado Springs portfolio of protected open spaces. Annexation must be decided on whether it benefits the city and I doubt that it would. The costs of infrastructure and the environmental hazards raise many red flags. Annexation is not a right but might give present and future owners new rights. For these reasons I am unlikely to support annexation for the purpose of development. I believe we can go forward as a community and raise the money needed to preserve this tremendous resource for all to enjoy.

Luis Ybarra:

(Statement not received)

Kendell Kretzschmar:

(Statement not received)

April 19 is John S. Bock's Birthday
Happy Birthday, John!

CALENDAR**Meetings of Possible Interest:**

April 3 **COLORADO SPRINGS MUNICIPAL ELECTION**

April 5 Colorado Springs Planning Commission
8:30 A.M. City Council Chambers,
30 S. Nevada, first floor

April 5 **Red Rock Canyon Committee**
7:00 PM Village at Skyline,
Building No. 1
2305 Patriot Heights,
off Lower Gold Camp Road

April 10 Colorado Springs City Council
9:00 A.M. City Council Chambers,
30 S. Nevada, first floor

April 11 **TOPS Working Committee**
4:00 P.M. Colorado Springs
Parks and Recreation Building
1401 Recreation Way
(east of I-25, 2 blocks north of Uintah)

April 17 El Paso County Planning Commission
9:00 A.M. Hearing Room, 3rd Floor
County Office Building, 27 East Vermijo

April 24 Colorado Springs City Council
9:00 A.M. City Council Chambers,
30 S. Nevada, first floor

April 25 **TOPS Working Committee**
7:30 A.M. Colorado Springs
Parks and Recreation Building
1401 Recreation Way
(East of I-25, 2 blocks north of Uintah)

April 25 **Manitou Springs Open Space
Advisory Committee**
7:00 PM Manitou Springs City Hall
606 Manitou Avenue

May 3 Colorado Springs Planning Commission
8:30 A.M. City Council Chambers,
30 S. Nevada, first floor

May 3 **Red Rock Canyon Committee**
7:00 PM Village at Skyline,
Building No. 1
2305 Patriot Heights,
off Lower Gold Camp Road

NOTE: Scheduled meetings can be subject to change or cancellation (as happened to both March TOPS meetings)

Check these web pages within a week of the scheduled meeting to find out if there are agenda items related to Red Rock Canyon:
The Colorado Springs Planning Commission agenda:

www.colorado-springs.com/PublicPlan/Schedules/schedules.htm

Colorado Springs City Council meeting agenda:

www.colorado-springs.com/go/info/finagen.htm

El Paso County Planning Commission:

www.co.el-paso.co.us/Planning/agendas/PD-AgnPC.htm

YES, I WANT TO SUPPORT RED ROCK CANYON OPEN SPACE!

- Enclosed is my contribution to the Red Rock Canyon Committee for operating expenses
(Check payable to "Red Rock Canyon Committee", not tax deductible.)
____ Do ____ Don't acknowledge my contribution in the Red Rock Rag.
- I want to be involved
My efforts could best be used for: _____
- Keep me informed with the **RED ROCK RAG**.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

For more information, contact **Scott Flora** at the *Trails and Open Space Coalition* 633-6884,
or e-mail: help@saveredrockcanyon.com

Opinions expressed in **THE RED ROCK RAG** are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion
of the Red Rock Canyon Committee.

WE WANT YOUR INPUT!

Letters, articles, comments (and glossy photos) may be sent to:
Rag Editor
Red Rock Canyon Committee
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Colorado Springs, CO 80901-2352

Electronic submissions may be sent to:
help@saveredrockcanyon.com
Please send electronic text in plain ASCII (txt) format.
Digital images are welcome and should be 300 dpi or better
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