

Midway City Council
21 January 2021
Planning Meeting

Open Space Bond

Memo



Midway

Date: January 19, 2021
To: Midway City Council
From: Courtland Nelson
Re: Open Space Advisory Committee 2020 Review and Future Direction

Council members,

I was asked by Mayor Johnson to prepare a brief letter to the Council summarizing our work to date relative to the distribution of Midway Open Space bonding funds for your annual work session on Jan. 21st, 2021. In addition, our committee would appreciate feedback on our processes in working with Midway landowners and partners, as well as any direction which you wish to share for the evaluation of forthcoming requests for bonding funds moving forward. In general, we are pleased with our efforts to;

- 1) Contact all landowners of 2 acres or more about the opportunity to attend an open house session at Midway Town Hall or contact the City offices, to have questions answered regarding open space bond funds (March 2019 mailer);
- 2) Reviewed fourteen Midway landowners who submitted a Notice of Interest form (NOI), many of whom met with the Open Space Committee and established a file with the City planning office. All landowners or their representatives were encouraged to work with a Utah Certified Land Trust (Utah Open Lands, Summit Lands Conservancy) in their efforts to understand the issues involved in open space protection and related family decisions. Of the 14 landowners, five were interviewed by the Open Space committee and four submitted additional forms for City and committee review (Oct. 2019 City Council presentation);
- 3) Recommend funding for three applicants for Midway bond funds, which were forwarded to the City Council and staff for action during the latter part of 2019 and 2020. Two of the applicants were not a part of the initial interviews but came forward during the regular monthly meetings and informal conversations of 2020. Projects include the Albert Kohler Legacy Farm (\$1m), Gardner properties (\$1m) and Mt. Spa project (\$1.5m). All staff and committee recommendations for funding were approved by the City Council, with various amendments and requirements. Additionally, all three projects represented partnerships with either Utah Open

Lands or Summit Lands Conservancy as recommended, as well as other funding partners (Wasatch [Co.] Open Lands Board, State of Utah grants, Federal grants, private donations, etc.);

4) Discuss the process of Open Space committee actions moving forward into 2021 with the remaining \$1.5m in unallocated funds (Sept. '20 and Oct. '20 Open Space committee monthly meetings).

Our Committee has general questions for the Council to discuss relative to our remaining unallocated funds and interaction with Midway landowners. Should you feel the need to give feedback and/or direction for the Committee, we would appreciate the guidance-

a. We have several landowners who submitted a NOI but have not followed up with the City since the initial request in 2019. Should we re-contact these landowners or their representatives regarding the bonding funds?

b. In our Committee discussions in Sept. and Oct. of 2020, we discussed the opportunity to reach out to landowners who have either met with City officials in some manner or contacted a committee member about bonding funds. These properties "appear" to have strong open space values, relative to our Open Space chapter and our three funded projects. Our Committee had a diversity of views on this issue, but in general felt that we needed to be cautious about Committee contacts with landowners, retaining an independence and 'arm's length' relationship. Conversely, after our work over the last 18 months, the Committee is well aware of larger properties that either are available for sale, in a planning discussion with the City for zoning or other decisions or have new owners who may be very interested in finding out more about Midway's Open Space bond funds and conservation measures in pursuit of protection.

c. Also, we have had several comments from residents who recommend that the Committee consider being proactive about 2-3 larger parcels that are currently limited for development by City codes but could be changed by future Council action and be potentially lost for protection. Under the current codes, these properties would not be as expensive for protective easements of some type from bonding or other funds due to the limitations currently in place. However, this outreach is also an action that the Committee would like some clarity on for our reference and understanding.

d. Our Committee seeks to understand the role of our body with regards to 'annexation issues' with properties that border Midway's boundaries. We are a committee that makes recommendations to the City Council. Should annexation questions be part of our tasks in those recommendations?

e. Is our Open Space definition both clear and somewhat flexible for the purposes of funding open space projects in Midway and working with partners? Are there other areas of City planning that we can work with in protecting open space in general such as large-scale developments or neighborhood projects?

Thank you for your consideration and continued support. Our committee is proud of our work to date, and in that spirit, we hope to finish this term of work with a strong conclusion to our bonding efforts for the residents and visitors to Midway.

Respectfully, the Open Space Committee.