

**MEETING MINUTES
CONSERVATION EASEMENT OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING
June 27, 2024**

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MINUTES
CONSERVATION EASEMENT OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING
June 27, 2024
COLORADO DIVISION OF CONSERVATION
1560 BROADWAY, SUITE 1550
DENVER, CO 80202

Commissioners in Attendance

Paul Holsinger, an individual who is qualified to analyze conservation purpose, appointed by the Governor; Carmen Farmer, representing a certified conservation easement holder, appointed by the Governor; Kelly Romero-Heaney, representing the Department of Natural Resources; Keli Cavaleri, representing the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Program; Maggie Hanna, a member of the general public, appointed by the President of the Senate; and Jill Ozarski, representing a member of the general public, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Staff in Attendance

Aaron Welch, Director, Beatrice Lawson, Compliance Specialist, Madeleine Green, Compliance Specialist, and Ashley Moller, First Assistant Attorney General.

Notice of the meeting was timely published and the meeting was held pursuant to the Colorado Sunshine Laws, Title 24, Article 6, C.R.S., as amended.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The meeting was called to order at 9:33 a.m.

Approval of Minutes - April 11, 2024

Commissioner Farmer asked for a correction to be made to the minutes regarding a misspelling. It was moved by Commissioner Romero-Heaney and seconded by Commissioner Farmer to approve the corrected April 11, 2024 minutes.

Motion carried.

Public Comment

None.

POLICY MATTERS

Commission Update

Director Welch provided an update about the Commission. This June meeting is Commissioner Holsinger's last meeting. Maggie Hanna will be joining the Commission representing a member of the general public, appointed by the President of the Senate. Kelly Romero-Heaney introduced herself as Tim Mauk's replacement representing DNR. Lastly, Director Welch updated the Commission regarding what other Commission seats need to be filled.

Applications Update

Bea summarized application activity since the last meeting. The Division has 24 tax credit certificate applications pending review. The Division has received 25 applications so far in 2024 (that's 6 applications for conservation easements donated in 2023 and 19 applications for conservation easements donated in 2024). The rate of incoming applications suggests the Division can anticipate 60-65 tax credit applications this year, which would be an increase of 15% to 25% over the average number of applications across the last four years (52 applications per year during 2019-2023). The Division has issued tax credit certificates for 47 applications received last year. The conservation easements involved encumber over 65,000 acres in 24 counties. Bea then gave an update on the 2024 certified holder renewal process. The Division currently certifies 37 organizations, composed of 13 government agencies and 24 nonprofit organizations, to hold conservation easements. The 2024 certified holder renewal season has wrapped up. 34 organizations have been formally renewed at the full certification level, while 2 have renewed at the stewardship-only certification at a lower cost, which is for organizations that do not acquire new conservation easements. Lastly, Bea and Director Welch updated the Commission on how the new bill affects how the Division processes applications moving forward. Suspension agreements were sent out to landowners that would benefit from the new bill.

Legislative Update

Director Welch provided a brief summary of bill SB24-126. The bill becomes effective on August 7, 2024. Discussion regarding the bill was brief. Commissioner Farmer asked about how other tax credits are issued compared to this one and if they also pull from future years.

Commissioner Hanna and Commissioner Ozarski joined the meeting at 10:07 a.m. Commissioner Hanna introduced herself.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Director Welch informed the Commission that there are no updates in regards to TCC-2022-050 Rugby Goes to the Dogs. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 20. Topics may include a discussion of the 2024 Trying Times program and the election of a new chair and vice chair.

ADJOURN

The Commission adjourned the meeting at 10:19 a.m. on June 27, 2024.