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In 2004 written by Jay Goldie

CHERRY HILLS VILLAGE'S BLUE RIBBON PANEL

In April of 2004 the City Council of Cherry Hills Village enacted a citizen panel (The Blue Ribbon Panel) to make recommendations on the Parks, Trails and Open Space within Cherry Hills Village in anticipation of Exclusion from the South Suburban Park and Recreation District. Citizens supported the exclusion from SSPRD because of their desire to secure more open space, parks, and trails within the City, to obtain more recreational opportunities and to achieve a better quality of trail and park maintenance.

The Blue Ribbon Panel has been working on the many issues that are facing Cherry Hills Village as it prepares to take control of the parks, trails and open spaces within the City. Cherry Hills Village has made a substantial investment in the trails system, but has relied heavily on private lands for many of the open vistas which its citizen have perceived to be perpetual. While Cherry Hills Village is lucky to have had these private resources in the past they may not be here for long. The City now has an opportunity to provide a more thorough, well-rounded and protected system of parks, trails and open space.

The purpose of the Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendations is to set and establish vision, goals and objectives needed to prioritize and ensure the success of the parks, trails and open space programs within the Village. The recommendations will support a system that connects the entire community to parks, trails, open space areas, schools and the High Line Canal, for the benefit of all of the residents. The recommendations may include an analysis of the various methods of acquiring trail segments, parks and open space areas including cost estimates, implementation strategies and maintenance standards. In order to accomplish this, the Blue Ribbon Panel has been studying what is currently available to the citizens and what is necessary to create a cohesive park and trail system that is an amenity to the whole Village and surrounding communities.

There are many important trail connections that need to be completed within the system. The Panel has been exploring opportunities to expand the trail system along important natural features serving as both neighborhood and community trails. The Blue Ribbon Panel has involved the Cherry Hills Village Parks and Trails Committee and tapped into their experience to help identify some of the deficiencies in the City's current parks, open spaces and key trail links.

Many of the key views and open spaces that are so valued by citizens and wildlife are based on private ownership and could face development in the future. Should the ownership change on any of these key pieces, the resources could be compromised and the character of the community could be altered dramatically. The Blue Ribbon Panel is looking into ways to promote opportunities for citizens to protect key natural and scenic properties within Cherry Hills Village with methods such as donations of conservation easements, trail easements, deed restrictions, grants, and cash purchases.

The Blue Ribbon Panel will also be making recommendations that may include changing or adding ordinances that will provide for permanent protection and enhancement of the

resources that are within Cherry Hills Village's parks, trails and open spaces. The Panel's vision is to build on the Village's historical strength of a unique semi-rural character, and to preserve and acquire open space, parks and trails and to preserve remaining vistas for greater public access and enjoyment. Maintaining this semi-rural character that has drawn many of Cherry Hills Village's residents to live here is one of the Panels main focuses.

Results from our recent survey are on our website at www.cherryhillsvillage.com just click on Boards then Blue Ribbon Panel then Blue Ribbon Panel Questionnaire Results and Update. We appreciate everyone who took the time to complete the survey – THANK YOU!

The Blue Ribbon Panel will be making recommendations to City Council in March or April of 2005. The Panel is currently soliciting input from the general public to help them formulate their recommendations for Council. If you have not done so, and would like your thoughts and ideas to be known, contact the Blue Ribbon Panel. For contact information log onto www.cherryhillsvillage.com or call Jay Goldie at 303-783-2704.