

DENVER PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
May 14, 2009 – 6:00 pm,
City Park Golf Course

Attendees: Bollinger, M., Copeland, N., Ewing, M., Holdman, A., Horn, E., Kester, B., Loshbaugh, H., Nguyen, P., Ott, D., Pryor, K., Robinson, D., Sharp, B., Truwe, D., Watson, D.

Absent: Done, E. (excused), Elfenbein, S. (excused), Gilmore, S. (excused), Navarro, F., Norbie, D.

Staff – Kevin Patterson, Manager, Jill McGranahan,, Gordon Robertson, David Marquardt, Pam Schooley, Patrick Wheeler, Scott Robson, Chantal Unfug

Guests – James Sample, Diane Helper, Charlie Busch, Cindy Johnstone, Katy Fisher , Ray Ehrenstein

BOARD ACTION ITEMS

Approval of minutes from April 9th Meeting. – approved with no corrections

UPDATES AND PRESENTATIONS

The scheduled update from Fred Weiss was skipped. He was not in attendance.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Jill McGranahan – Notebooks, Orientation, and Ethics Handbook

Jill wants to make sure that all board members have the new “tabs” in their notebooks. Please contact her if you are not current with this latest addition. Since there are so many anticipated new board members over the summer months, the orientation has been scheduled for September.

A copy of the City and County of Denver *Ethics Handbook* was passed out to all board members. An apology was given for the delay in providing it to board members. This booklet is the revised July 2008 edition.

Gordon Robertson & David Marquardt /Dog Park Master Plan

David reviewed the results of the dog park survey and handed out copies of the Dog Park Master Plan & Policy Recommendations. The next phase of this project involves the forming of the internal technical and external stakeholder committee meetings. This group will develop the draft master plan recommendations and policy recommendations. Several board members questioned the reported statistic from the survey that over 89% of Denver residents own dogs. Also, it was revealed that the survey could be taken multiple times by participants. David Marquardt admitted that the staff was aware of this. The survey response was larger than any survey that the department has ever seen. The revelation of an opportunity for multiple responses from one person brings these numbers into question.

Carla Madison has been selected as the representative from City Council. Fifteen citizen

participants have been selected from a pool of over 900 who asked to volunteer for the program. The department sought people with a balanced approach and technical background. The stakeholder group will be set up by June 1.

Keith Pryor addressed the issue of equity in the dog park system using the Railyard Dog Park as an example. Darrell Watson requested that Manual High School be included in the stakeholder group, because there is a deep emotional divide in the Fuller Park neighborhood over their existing dog park. Ellie Horn supported the need for maximum public involvement in this process after realizing that many citizens do not know about this projected expansion of dog parks in the city.

Scott Robson spoke to the effort by Parks & Rec to realistically weigh the number of public comment opportunities which can be offered.

Kevin Patterson – Budget

Kevin reported that at this point the department is facing a 7% reduction in funding. They are looking at what can be done differently and how costs can be lowered across the board. He did not go into details, but shared that they are looking at a shortfall of \$3 million. Questions from the board included the possibility of furloughs, which Manager Patterson addressed. The plan for now is to leave vacant positions open.

Gordon Robertson/ Pam Schooley – 2010 Capital Improvement Projects

This presentation spoke to the proposed changes to the capital improvement projects process. The previous way of doing small projects in parks all over the city is not cost effective. The new plan is to combine multiple projects and do them all at the same time. This will solve the problems of the past, which required returning to parks over and over for a series of small projects. By lumping the projects at a certain site together the whole park will benefit and the department can get more work done.

Pam Schooley handed out an informational sheet which shows the planned CIP development process for 2010 thru 2015 which starts with an informational kick-off in February and ends with the final CIP plan by the end of May. The department heads are challenged to come up with all projects that they see to assist in the planning of the work to be done at a particular site.

A second handout showed where our funding comes from and the budget management 2010 CIP targets. Pam stated that as mandated payments for projects, such as the Jason Street Commons Park and Gates Tennis Center, come back into the system, the money will be added back into the available funding.

Dianne Truwe suggested that an \$8 million budget does not sound like a lot of money for a large city and she hopes they find other sources of revenue. Several board members addressed needed projects in their districts. More courts, playgrounds, and sidewalks in parks stood out as most desired project considerations. Cathy Donahue spoke up to let the board know that Winter Park ski area expects an increase in revenue, because they will be gaining a percentage of every lift ticket in the upcoming ski season.

Kevin Patterson wrapped up the discussion with the comment that there is flexibility in this plan and dollars can be shifted.

Patrick Wheeler/Kevin Patterson – Utility Policy Update

Since 2006 the department has tried to discourage utilities in our parks. When necessary, these systems need to be installed underground. Board members may check the utility policy online to review how existing utilities are addressed. Terms and conditions are stated in this policy that direct the Parks & Rec Manager on how to decide whether or not utilities may go through parks.

Heidi Loshbaugh questioned the concern over the rights of designated vs. undesignated parks when it involves the utility policy. Patrick Wheeler explained that the policy applies to both equally. Non designated parks would not be more vulnerable as was the case in the past.

Kevin Patterson/ Gordon Robertson – PAL Follow-up –

Two options for the commemorations logo at Valverde Park were passed around by Gordon. The logo was requested as recognition of the \$3.6 million gift from the police athletic league to construct two state of the art ball fields at Valverde and Parkfield. The logo would only appear on the Valverde field. The donors prefer that the logo be placed in the center of the field.

A packet was passed out covering the dog waste pick-up bag dispenser pilot program. The department is implementing a pilot program in 16 parks with over 200 dispensers to be installed. The reasoning behind this program is the strong response from the public and environmental health that dog waste is a major issue in our parks. The company Poo Free Parks will rent out the advertising space on the dispensers to supporting businesses. The city attorney stated that this plan is legal under the gifting policy which was designated for the for profit corporate donors.

Many board members questioned this project being called “pilot” when so many parks and dispensers are involved and there is a not a reasonable “review time” to gauge success or failure. Noel Copeland was under the impression that our board would get a look at the options prior to implementation. Several members of the public were in attendance to voice their concern for this program, but were not allowed to speak because the meeting was not a scheduled public hearing. Board members and RNO representatives have written about the lack of a public process in this project. The commercialization of our parks is a major concern for many who fought to rid the parks of advertising in the past. The advisory board has not to date taken a vote on this matter.

Meeting Adjourned