

DENVER PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

November 10, 2011

Wellington E. Webb Building

Attendees:

Jay April

Paul Burton

Noel Copeland

Mary Ewing

Scott Gilmore

Anne Green

Florence Navarro

Keith Pryor

Jason Robinson

Dan Smink

Leslie Twarogowski

Darrell Watson

Absent:

James T. Allen (JT)

Michelle Fenton

Conor Hollis

Marcus Pachner

Ronald Picaso

Derek Sandos

Bernie Sharp

Denver Parks and Recreation Staff (and soon-to-be staff) in attendance:

Erin Brown

Lauri Dannemiller

Dody Erickson

Arthur Gilkison

Dolores Moreno

Kelly Kitts

Fred Weiss

Scott Gilmore

Introduction and Welcome – Darrell Watson

Darrell Watson called the DPRAB meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

The October minutes of the DPRAB were approved. The minutes for the DPRAB meeting will post to the website within two weeks of the meeting date. The posted minutes will read not approved. The board will approve the minutes at the following months meeting and at that time the minutes will be official approved on the website.

Darrell Watson presented Dody Erickson with flowers from the board and staff

Laurie Dannemiller, Erin Brown, and Scott Gilmore were introduced as new Parks and Rec officers.

New PRAB board members Jason Robinson, Dan Smink and Anne Green were introduced.

Dody Erickson gave the following updates:

- Announcement made that a \$350,000 Great Outdoors Colorado grant has been earmarked for Wier Gulch in Sun Valley. Keith Pryor asked for clarification on whether this area was already receiving money from FasTrack sources; Dody confirmed this is not the case.
- Civic Center park was listed as a “Frontline” park by the national City Park Alliance (not to be confused with Denver’s City Park Alliance).
- Update on Occupy Denver; no significant issues regarding trash, curfew, etc. and no unusual/significant impact upon Parks and Rec budget or operations. Mary Ewing asked about restrooms in the park, and Dody said that there is a San-O-Let already existing near the McNichols building and there are restrooms near the Greek Theater.
- No impact on budget from the cancellation of a anticipated Big Air event.

Dolores Moreno gave a background in permitting policy to explain changes set forth in the updated Recreation Facility Permitting Policy. Draft 6.23.11 was circulated at the meeting, though noted that a more recent draft, one that was not significantly different, had been posted online. Significant changes from the previous policy includes: a general improvement in consistency across recreation centers, required documentation for and clarified definitions of a “nonprofit organization,” and updated damage and cancellation policies. Fees were also increased. Special consideration for fee waivers or other unusual requests will now go to Erin Brown. Dolores noted that the biggest policy change was reducing the fee for nonprofits, which had been given a 50% discount, would now be allowed only a 25% discount under the new policy. Also, fees for after hours use would increase. Changes in this policy is under the authority of the Manager and do not need to go to a vote of City Council.

6:13 James Henderson and Roger Birleigh of the Denver Squids swim team gave a statement regarding the hardship that will follow an increase in permitting fees and the difficulty in securing consistent practice facilities. They noted that over the Squids’ history, the organization has made donations of pool equipment to the Parks and Rec facilities. They feel that losing the 50% discount would cause extreme hardship on their group, and they and other long-term user groups should be given special consideration. Following the public hearing portion of the meeting, board members and parks staff (including Kelly Kitts of Stapleton Rec Center) had a discussion regarding how Parks and Rec could effectively meet the needs of the Squids or similar nonprofit groups.

6:20 Public hearing closes

6:21 Noel Copeland arrives

Mary Ewing asked whether a liaison could be made available for long-term user groups like swimming, soccer, etc. Dody responded that the City Attorney discourages contracts/agreements with long-term groups over concerns of “ownership” of spaces by outside entities and hindered equitability for short-term users. Keith Pryor questioned the usage of the “Memorandum of Understanding,” and Dody replied that the City Attorney did not want to use it.

6:50 Kelly Kitts, Supervisor at Central Park Rec Center described the new software system and hopes to coordinate a regional model. The rationale for increasing fees was based on cost comparisons. Keith Pryor requested a “roadmap” for groups like the Squid to navigate the system. Dan Smink questioned whether the goal was to increase utilization and revenue, or to maximize use? Dody said the goal was to maximize use. Anne Green asked whether the city can make money based on number of attendees (as, for instance, in a Zumba class), and whether that would perhaps be a more equitable way to charge? Dolores reiterated the special permit application and how it is more beneficial to the department. Jay April pointed out that special consideration allows the department to deviate from the policy when necessary or give discounts but not get into long term (over three month) relationships, and that this might be detrimental to the citizens. Paul Burton asked whether special consideration would allow influence over specific rec centers, and whether the deputy manager would have the ability to strongly recommend something to a re center supervisor.

Twarogowski moved to accept the new policy, and it was seconded by Dan Smink. A friendly amendment was suggested by Jay April regarding further investigation of long term agreements with groups such as the Squids. Watson communicated that he would not be supportive of an amendment to add long term agreements since the City Attorney stated that it would not be feasible. Watson suggested that “There should be centralized communication and coordination for recreation center availability.” Jay added that “The special consideration should provide flexibility for non-profits to use

Recreation Center facilities for extended periods.” Another friendly amendment requiring an annual review of this policy (next review to take place in Nov 2012) was suggested by Jay April. These friendly amendments were approved, and the policy was approved by the board with members Gilmore, Pryor, Green, April, Twarogowski, Watson, Ewing, Smink, Burton, Robinson, all voting in favor and two members voting to oppose (Copeland, Navarro) and zero abstentions.

Fred Weiss gave an update regarding the online permitting software that may be used to reserve facilities (picnic areas, athletic fields, assembly and special occasion permits, etc.), which went “live” on Nov. 1st. Athletic fields are in high demand but require some rest. The department is trying to formalize the scheduling process. Fred agreed to give Darrell Watson written information regarding athletic field scheduling. Paul Burton asked Fred who he should speak to about permitting, and Fred said to talk to himself (Fred) or Stu. Keith asked whether decisions are made centrally, but Fred said that it is all up to the individual rec center. There was a short discussion on Rocky Mountain Lake Park, and Keith asked whether the water lilies (which Keith said are of a specific and rare variety) were being properly cared for.

At 8:03, the meeting was adjourned.