

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
August 11, 2011
Wellington E. Webb Building

Attendees:

James T. Allen (JT)
Jay April
Scott Gilmore
Conor Holis
Florence Navarro
Keith Pryor
Bernie Sharp
Darrell Watson

Absent:

Paul Burton
Noel Copeland – excused
Mary Ewing - excused
Michelle Fenton - excused
Ellie Gray Horn - excused
Richard Ott
Ryan Ross - excused
Derek Sandos

Denver Parks and Recreation Staff in attendance:

Dody Erickson
Kathy Maloney
Angela Casias
Eleni Sarris
Gordon Robertson
Doug Woods

Introduction and Welcome – Darrell Watson

Darrell Watson called the DPRAB meeting to order. Not enough members of the DPRAB were in attendance to have a quorum so Darrell Watson suspended the voting rules so only a simple majority vote is needed to approve the July minutes.

The July minutes of the DPRAB were approved.

Public Comment

Cathy Fisher from the INC Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee reported that complaints have been received by the INC that the public process has not been followed. The issues that they have received complaints about are the Washington Park Improvements and the Northeast Denver Community Park renaming. Community members would also like to see the DPRAB website updated more frequently. It is one of the only ways that the community has to keep up to date on what is happening within the Parks Department. Agendas and minutes are either missing or not being posted in a timely manner. Darrell Watson mentioned that we will work on getting the monthly DPRAB minutes posted as soon as possible after the meeting. We

will note on the website that the minutes are unapproved until they are approved at the next board meeting.

Dave Felice (gelato321@aol.com) - Dave Felice opposes Admission Based Events in parks. He would like Mayor Michael Hancock to rescind the Admission Based Event Policy. He has heard that at least 100 people are opposed to the renaming of the NE Denver. He reiterated that the DPRAB website needs to be updated in a timely manner.

Managers Report – Dody Erickson

Denver Parks and Recreation has hired Kathy Maloney as the Director of Marketing. She has worked in various Divisions within the city handling communication issues. Legislative duties are also included.

The renaming of the NE Denver Community Park will have a public hearing in front of City Council on Monday, August 15th. After the public hearing the Council will vote on the proposed name change. The DPRAB received a letter from the North City Park Civic Association opposing the name change of the NE Denver park. During the Board discussion about the issue, we determined that the naming policy should be revisited to have groups that apply to change a name a park provide additional information to DPR and the DPRAB. Prior to any future votes on renaming of parks, the DPRAB will require a letter from the City Council representative where the park resides and from all effected RNO's in the community showing level of support for the proposed renaming.

Saturday, August 6 was quite a busy day within DPR. There was the Grand Opening of the Trestle Bike Park at 6th Avenue and Knox. Winter Park and DPR have partnered to create the 3 acre bike park with varying skill levels. Winter Park and DPR also partner on winter ski program and the Railyard at Ruby Hill. There was also the Citywide Swim Meet at Cook Park that was attended by over 1,000 swimmers and the Third Annual Peace March from Manual High School to St. Charles Recreation Center.

Fee updates go into effect September 1, 2011.

On August 14th, Dogapalooza will be held at Berkley, Cook, and Harvey Park swimming pools. Individuals are charged \$5 per dog for one of 2 sessions held that day.

DPR has been working with a private donor to provide funding for several projects within Washington Park. These include trees that needed trimming, work on the Boathouse which includes the bathrooms and changing room, and realignment of the jogging trail. The private donor would like these projects completed asap. There are some concerns by the community about the realignment of the jogging trail. There are on-going maintenance issues with the trail. At various locations around the park, particularly the corners, there are erosion issues with the trail. DPR would like to move the trail by cutting the corners to minimize the erosion. On the northern edge of the park, DPR would like to adjust the trail around the fire station. There is also an area on the trail that snow accumulates. In the area where snow accumulates DPR would like to move the trail to the top of a hill that parallels the existing trail. There are some concerns about some of the realignments of the existing trail especially on the northern end of

the park, so decisions on these portions will be put off till more discussions with the community are conducted.

DPRAB Annual Meeting and Board Elections – Darrell Watson

Annual Meeting

The board will need to determine a date for the meeting. The recommendation is to have it on the 2nd Thursday within October which will be the 13th. The annual meeting can be scheduled for the evening or move to another time and place during the day.

1. The meeting is for 2 hours and could exceed based on the agenda
2. DPRAB members interested in participating in the nominating committee (5) to identify candidates for officers (President, Vice-President, and Secretary) should notify the current executive members of their intent prior to August 25th.
3. Nominating committee members will be charged at the September DPRAB meeting to begin collecting names to place in nomination for the 3 officer positions.
4. Nominees must be in good standing (specifically attendance)
5. Nominees will be asked to present their rationale for their candidacy at the Annual Meeting.
6. The board will vote and the officers will serve a term of 1 year.

Bylaws Committee

1. A committee will be selected at the September 2011 DPRAB meeting to review and gather amendments to the bylaws. The amendments will be submitted to the board for a vote at the annual meeting.

DPRAB Reports

2. The executive committee will provide a year in review report at the annual meeting. The chairs of the game plan committees will provide a year in review of their committee at the annual meeting.

Denver Parks and Recreation

1. DPR staff will provide a year in review update as well as facilitate a discussion of upcoming and current fees.

Park Operations – Doug Woods

Doug Woods, Director of Park Operations discussed the task of maintaining the large park system within Denver. At this time there are 4 maintenance districts. That is reduced from the original 11 to 9 to 6 districts over the past few years. There is a large amount of upkeep for the # of parks that are within the system. Twenty-five percent to thirty-five percent of staff time is dedicated to trash pickup and vandalism issues (graffiti). In 2010 there were over 4,000 information or request calls through Denver's information line (311). In 2011, more than 2,000 calls have been received with a lot more of them complimentary calls about the condition of the parks in Denver. Doug stated that maintenance standards have been adjusted to create cost savings.

Jay April questioned “How do we minimize trash and graffiti?” We need to get the message out that the public can make a difference, provide an optimal level of trash cans in the parks, and community members applying peer pressure to others in the park to keep our parks clean.

Darrell Watson and Keith Pryor commended the Parks Operations staff for all the dedication and hard work. They also stated that the parks look great.

Park Maintenance Facilities Study Presentation - Gordon Robertson

Gordon Robertson introduced Chris Castalick and Gordon Carruth to present the Facilities Study results. Basic issues that they covered were that there are 4 maintenance districts that are comprised of 28 maintenance facilities. Individual facilities are in a wide range of conditions from workable to very rundown. There are numerous safety issues and concerns and systematic improvements (ie; bathrooms needed) that need to be made. Included in the minutes is the complete Parks Maintenance Building Study Background and Rationale provided to the PRAB during the August meeting.

Parks Maintenance Building Study Background and Rationale

“Change and Reorganization” has been the hallmark of Parks maintenance operations over the past ten years. Originally there were 11 maintenance districts primarily organized around the largest parks in the system. Beginning in 2000, several reorganizations have been implemented with a final consolidation in 2009 to four Park Districts. This consolidation was intended to increase the efficiency of the organization by eliminating seven district Superintendent positions and shifting more responsibility to field based Operations Supervisors. These Operation Supervisors are responsible for the day to day operations in specific geographic sections of the four maintenance districts.

The consolidation to four districts has substantially changed the operational requirements of the existing 25 maintenance facilities that support park operations. Many of the existing maintenance facilities came into use as surplus structures and are situated in locations or buildings ill suited to optimal operation efficiency. Due to budget limitations and age, some structures are in very poor condition and many do not meet current operational standards. Present and future budget constraints make it imperative that operational facilities and their locations are planned to optimize maintenance an operational efficiency and effectiveness as well as providing for the basic support and retention of valued maintenance staff.

STUDY FOCUS

In light of fiscal and park management challenges, the Department recognized the need to evaluate the operational characteristics of existing maintenance facilities in relation to current industry standards. This analysis provides a basis to develop a plan for providing and improving park operational facilities for the next 25 years. The consulting firm Sink Combs Dethlefs was hired in the spring of 2010 to conduct an assessment and develop recommendations for practical changes to our existing system of Park Maintenance Buildings. The primary goal of the study is to guide implementation of changes over time that will provide basic work environment amenities and optimize maintenance operations for the next 25 – 50 years.

The consultant was instructed to consider numerous challenges that influence possible solutions:

- 1) Maintenance facilities have historically been low on the priority list of capital projects
- 2) Maintenance facilities require special consideration for placement in parks
- 3) Some existing maintenance locations are severely constricted – Congress, Stapleton
- 4) Provide safe/secure facilities: M/W rest rooms, safety equipment, equipment storage
- 5) Optimize use and efficiency of existing locations
- 6) Shift Sloan Lake operations to free up Bathhouse for Community Center
- 7) Maintenance operation located in regional parks are inherently efficient

- 8) Green Valley Ranch and Montbello have no maintenance facility and are rapidly expanding park acreage and amenities
- 9) Maintenance operations often conflict with neighboring uses
- 10) Locations away from residential land use is preferred
- 11) Consolidate maintenance locations when possible
- 12) Configure site plan for efficiency and low impact
- 13) Eliminate locations if possible by consolidation
- 14) Optimize cost/benefit for each recommended improvement

BACKGROUND

Each district Superintendent now oversees approximately 1500 acres of parkland, 60 parks, 25 permanent employees and 50 seasonal employees, and innumerable buildings and amenities from benches to athletic complexes. Each Superintendent is responsible for communications with the public, coordination with contractors and planners for new projects, response to daily emergencies and requests, and allocation of human and material resources to manage the health and well being of the park living and material elements. In addition, the number and complexity of park locations and facilities continues to expand as more parks are added throughout the system. Most of the new park growth has been in the northeast district of the city toward Lowry, Stapleton and Green Valley. Complexity has increased as existing amenities are upgraded: interactive fountains, high tech irrigation systems, natural area management, and sophisticated playground elements.

Park maintenance facilities supporting Superintendents and Op Sups are located in parks throughout the city. Historically, when there were 11 Superintendents, each had a large building with significant office space and materials storage capacity. The new configuration with 4 Superintendents requires a different facility configuration with more centralized operations and meeting space to accommodate staff coordination needs. The flip side of this need is that the satellite facilities to support Op Sup daily operations can be tailored to the actual needs of the park acreage (more natural area, athletic fields, or general park use) and configured to meet those needs.

The Park Superintendent is stationed at the District Headquarters facility. Generally, the HQ is located near the center of the district and has larger administrative, meeting, material storage, and equipment storage space than the “satellite” facilities.

Satellite facilities serve the needs of the twelve Operation Supervisors and their staffs. Some satellite facilities are used strictly for storage of materials and equipment that are accessed by maintenance staff after assignments are made each morning. Examples of storage only facilities are at Barnum South and Cherry Creek Transfer Station.

The Park Maintenance Building Study hopes to reduce the number of locations, optimize the locations for efficiency and quick access to park assets, reorganize each site to provide required functional needs (bulk storage, equipment storage, gas tanks, rest rooms, parts and materials storage, meeting space, etc.), and limit the impact on park users and the public.

DECISION PROCESS AND RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Sink Combs visited all 25 maintenance sites and assessed the facilities for current conditions, efficiency of layout, and adequacy of essential maintenance elements.

Preliminary analysis of all elements and conditions led to individual first cut recommendations on each site that were presented to the Parks Director and all the Park Superintendents. The consultants developed a matrix of Site and Building Issues to show all the elements needed at each maintenance shop location. In addition, new developments such as the acquisition of the old Animal Shelter on South

Jason Street influenced the decision making process. Meetings and site visits to discuss long term options and efficiency standards resulted in the following recommendations.

Significant recommended changes to current locations:

- 1) The Sunken Gardens satellite will be removed from the park as addressed in the park master plan. This facility is very old, is not located efficiently to support District maintenance operations, is an eyesore and in conflict with the adjacent playground and residential uses. In addition, it does not have water service, a restroom, or personnel support services. The trucks, equipment and personal vehicles are stored in public view surrounded by a chain link fence with access by gravel driveway. There is no way to make this facility park friendly.
- 2) Sloan Lake Boathouse Satellite/HQ will be vacated of all maintenance operations as detailed in the Sloan Lake Master Plan. This site has been the HQ for the NW District for many years. The primary HQ personnel operations have been transferred to the Park Avenue location which will become the NW District HQ. The Park Avenue building was previously the HQ for our Rivers and Trails District which has been folded into other districts. The Park Avenue building is the most modern and efficient facility in the system and is centrally located geographically in the district.
- 3) The remaining satellite operations at Sloan Lake Boathouse will be transferred to the Sloan Lake Bathhouse on the southwest corner of the park. Preliminary design concepts reduce the size of the yard, move the yard behind the building and screen the maintenance operations with planting and fencing. An assessment of private land holdings in close proximity to Sloan Lake was performed by City Asset Management and no suitable properties were identified for use as a maintenance facility to service Sloan Lake needs.
- 4) Rosedale Park will become the new HQ for the SW District, replacing the current HQ at Washington Park. Rosedale offers a larger yard, a more central location in the district, and the opportunity to construct a building to house all the district meeting and personnel needs.
- 5) The NE District HQ at Smith Road will be expanded to accommodate the greatly increased maintenance needs in the rapidly growing Stapleton, Montbello and Green Valley communities. Smith Road also supports some of the maintenance needs of Stapleton community because the new Stapleton satellite is too small and cannot be expanded due to community opposition. The existing building will be renovated to accommodate indoor storage for district equipment when a new office building is constructed to the SE of the storage structure. District administrative, personnel and meeting needs will be housed in the new building.
- 6) A new satellite will be located and constructed somewhere along Pena Blvd to serve the Montbello and GVR parks and recreation facilities. Park land and maintenance responsibilities have exploded here with no facility to efficiently address the work required. This new facility would accommodate equipment, personnel and storage needs for current and future growth of Montbello and Green Valley Ranch parks maintenance requirements.
- 7) The old Denver Animal Shelter on South Jason Street has been acquired by Parks. Citywide Operations, (Athletic Field Maintenance, Parks inspections, Irrigation Crew), and Trails Crew will be located in this building. Design and construction of building and site modifications will begin in 2011 and be completed in 2012.
- 8) NW satellite personnel operations at the Berkeley Park bathhouse will continue until a new satellite facility is constructed in the same location as the existing equipment storage facility at Berkeley.

Minor Modifications to Existing Maintenance Facilities and Locations:

- 1) Many existing maintenance facilities lack personnel support amenities such as single sex rest rooms, kitchen facilities, flammable material lockers, staff lockers and meeting areas. Many do not have electrical and climate control systems to meet both the needs and code requirements.

Designs for the upgrades will begin in 2011, with construction of upgraded amenities beginning in 2012.

- 2) Equipment storage for mowers, aerators, trucks, agricultural equipment is out in the elements at most locations. Beginning in 2011 equipment sheds will be constructed at several locations to house this valuable equipment. The sheds will provide essential systems to protect equipment from the elements with roofs, walls and lighting/electrical systems. Equipment will be protected from winter weather and should have an extended life that will reduce capital purchase expenses and reduce equipment requirements.
- 3) Maintenance support elements such as fuel tanks, bulk storage bins, service bays and wash bays have are not available where needed at the present time. Individual support elements will be developed at select locations in each district. These support elements greatly reduce travel time (fuel needs) and increase the efficiency (wash bays, bulk storage) for daily operations.

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting:

When: September 8, 2011

Time: 5:30pm – 7:30pm

**Where: Wellington Webb Building
201 West Colfax
Conference Room 4G2**

Enter: Security Entrance on Court Street and 15th Street