



The Email Express



July / August 2010

Published by Denver City Councilman Charlie Brown

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Controversy Erupts Over Mayor's Plan to Sell Cableland



Cableland, a 19,500-square-foot mansion built by Denver philanthropist and cable TV pioneer Bill Daniels, was donated to the city as the official residence of the mayor and for nonprofit organizations to use for fund-raising.

The Denver City Council has tabled a plan to sell Cableland, the city-owned mansion donated by the late business leader Bill Daniels.

Mayor John Hickenlooper and the Daniels Fund, which administers a large share of Daniels' estate for charitable purposes, propose selling the building and giving proceeds to the Denver Scholarship Foundation, which provides college financial aid to Denver Public Schools students.

But a June 2 meeting of the City Council Finance Committee raised more questions than answers, prompting committee Chair Jeanne Faatz to table the proposed agreement.

"There's going to have to be a lot of extra work done on this before any of us feel comfortable going forward," Councilwoman Faatz said. "It seems like there are a lot of questions and not many answers."

Councilman Charlie Brown also raised several questions about the idea, including the wisdom of trying to sell the unique and expensive property in a depressed real estate market.

Saying a city staff member told him the mansion's value is listed at \$5.4 million, Brown said, "There is no way ... anyone is going to pay that much money for Cableland."

Brown noted that the Phipps Mansion in the Belcaro neighborhood of District 6 recently sold but might have "gotten \$3, \$4 even \$5 million more" in a better market.

"It's the wrong time to put this property on the market," Brown said of Cableland.

Some council members, including Brown, are leery of the timing of the proposal. "It just seems strange to me. There could be a new

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mayor; why not let the new mayor make this decision?" Brown asked.

Hickenlooper is running for governor and if elected in November, would leave city government. The mayor is a board member of the Denver Scholarship Foundation, the ultimate recipient of sale proceeds.

Brown and other members raised issues about what happens to the building after a sale, such as whether a developer might scrape it. "To me this is a Denver landmark," Brown said. Council members also questioned sale discussions, which have been going on casually for five years, recently have been accelerated.

The sprawling house and a maintenance fund (now containing about \$4 million) were given to the city in 1998 as the mayor's official residence. Neither former Mayor Wellington Webb nor Hickenlooper ever lived in the house. It's been used as a venue for meetings and charity fund raising events.

Bob Russo, a former Daniels business associate who opposes sale of the building, told the council committee that the cable magnate never expected that mayors and their families would live in Cableland. Instead, Russo said, the house was to be used by for official city functions, charity events and to be a lasting monument to Daniels, who died in 2000.

Tim David, who heads the foundation that operates Cableland, said Daniels believed the house would bring "a touch of class" to Denver.

Completed in 1987, the 19,500-square-foot home sits on Leetsdale Drive just north of East Alameda Avenue. Cableland has four kitchens, four bedrooms, 14 bathrooms, three fireplaces, 88 televisions, a 14-foot fireman's pole, an outdoor pool and a pink baby grand piano.

Russo and David said events have raised about \$18 million for charity since Cableland opened but that charitable use has dropped off in the last couple of years. Information provided to council members listed seven charitable events last year, 11 in 2008 and 11 in 2007.



"The mayor's wife hated the house . . . maybe another first spouse will like it. I think it's cool."

-- Councilman Brown
New York Times, June 12, 2010

If the plan ultimately goes through, proceeds from the sale (plus the maintenance fund) would go to the Daniels Fund, which in turn would grant it to the Denver Scholarship Foundation. That donation would be matched dollar-for-dollar by Tim and Bernadette Marquez, founders of the DSF.

The proposal has divided former Daniels associates. While Russo said, "Bill would be extremely upset" with the idea,, Daniels Fund CEO Linda Childers told council members, "We felt (the plan) fit the charitable purposes Bill Daniels gave us."

It is unclear when or if the proposed sale will come back to the Council's Finance Committee.

Better Denver Bond Program

Here is a list of projects underway or about to start this summer in Council District 6:

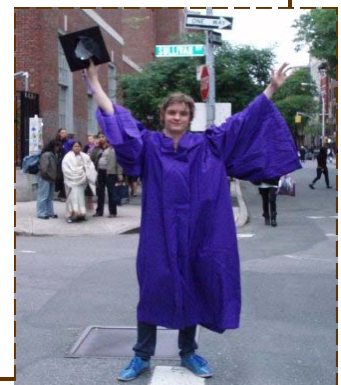
- Ash Grove Park Irrigation (to be started in January of 2011)
- Washington Park Boat House improvements
- Garland Park New Restroom
- Cherry Creek Transfer Station improvements and additions to garage
- Street reconstruction Cherry Creek Drive South- Phase 2
- TREX: Phase 2- Buchtel East of University Improvements
- Virginia Village Branch Library renovations with ADA upgrades and improvements to the library.

Cody Brown: NYU Graduate



of journalism and the internet. While at NYU, I started an online-only rival to the school newspaper and because of this, I've been fortunate enough to have some great job offers right out of college. However, I am currently pulling all of my resources together with a good friend to launch a startup. We are living off of pasta and cheap iced coffee, but we've saved enough money to last us until fall. We'll be launching Kommons.com this summer." -- Cody Brown

Graduate of the Tisch School of Arts at NYU, Cody Brown went to NYU trying to become Martin Scorsese, but came out the founder and publisher of the most trafficked news website at NYU (1.7 million hits during a single spring 2009 semester). His online newspaper was recently profiled by PBS as a next generation publication. "I grew completely obsessed with the future



Alan Simpson on fiscal responsibility: "It's been 50 years of bringing home the bacon, and now the pig is dead."

Former Wyoming Sen. Alan Simpson knows he has a very tough job, but he also knows it is a job that has to be done.

Simpson is co-chair of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, a bipartisan panel that has a December deadline to make recommendations to Congress on federal fiscal reform.

The plain-spoken Simpson talked about the work to a Denver meeting of the University of Wyoming Alumni Association in June. He and co-chair Erskine Bowles, a Democrat from North Carolina, have been taking their message to audiences around the nation.

Simpson told the UW meeting, *"There is a stunned silence when we hear from people on where we (as a nation) are going. I am doing this for our grandchildren."*

His concern, of course, is the mushrooming federal deficit and the growing future costs of such federal programs as defense spending, Social Security and Medicare.

"Lets say we don't do anything to bring down this debt. Well, great. They've got grandchildren too. In 40 years they'll be picking grit with the chickens."
-- Alan Simpson

Respected Washington Post columnist David Broder watched Simpson and Bowles in action at a recent National Governors' Association meeting, and he came away with a sense of hope that he detailed in a July 15 column.

"Together, Bowles and Simpson laid out a scenario of a growing gap between the demands on government and its available resources that 'is like a cancer,' as Bowles put it," Broder wrote.

"Simpson and Bowles have created an environment in which serious people are grappling seriously with the biggest domestic challenge facing government."

Broder later interviewed other commission members and reported that while no agreements yet have been reached, there are promising discussions about controlling non-defense federal discretionary spending, choosing a solution for control of Social Security costs, adding health-care cost controls and reforming federal tax policy.

"Before any decisions are made, an election looms, and then a series of votes testing whether a 14-vote consensus can be found. But contrary to what is thought in Washington, there is hope" Broder concluded.

In an earlier interview with Newsweek, Simpson said inaction is not an option and differed with critics who expect the commission will have no impact. If nothing is done, *"This country is just going to sink into a swamp. . . A lot of commissions don't work, but a lot of them do . . . if good people get on them,"* Simpson said.

"We suffer from a fiscal cancer. We are treating the symptoms of the deficit, but not the disease. Our obligations associated with Social Security and Medicare put us in a \$56 trillion financial hole—before the recession was officially declared," Simpson told the Newsweek writer.



Sen. Simpson pictured with Councilman Brown and his wife, Suzanne

Members of the Commission

Co-Chairmen:

- Sen. Alan Simpson. Former Republican Sen. from Wyoming.
- Erskine Bowles, Former Chief of Staff to President Clinton (NC)

Executive Director:

- Bruce Reed, Chief Domestic Policy Adviser to President Clinton

Commissioners:

- Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT)
- Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA 31)
- Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI 4)
- Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK)
- Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND)
- David Cote, chairman and CEO, Honeywell International
- Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID)
- Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL)
- Ann Fudge, former CEO, Young & Rubicam Brands
- Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH)
- Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX 5)
- Alice Rivlin, senior fellow, Brookings Institute and former director, office of management & budget
- Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI 1)
- Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL 9)
- Rep. John Spratt (D-SC 5)
- Andrew Stern, president, Service Employees International Union

Colleague Profile: Paula Sandoval



Council Service: Paula is in her sixth week of service on Denver City Council. She was elected in May in a special election to fill the vacancy created when former Council member Rick Garcia resigned to take a position with HUD. Her district covers Northwest Denver and parts of West Denver. She is not new to elective office, having spent the past eight years in the Colorado State Senate.

Bio: Paula is a lifelong resident of Colorado. Her mother was born in

Morley, Colorado, a former coal mining town near Trinidad. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from CU-Boulder in Communications and a Masters of Public Administration from CU-Denver.

Policy Interests: As a state senator, Paula initiated legislation to benefit children and seniors. She worked to provide additional dollars for school breakfasts and lunches. She sponsored legislation that allowed foster children to remain on Medicaid until age 21. As a council member she is interested in maintaining core services and the revitalization of West Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard.

She currently sits on the General Government, FasTracks and Neighborhood Revitalization committees.

Family: She is married to Paul Sandoval. She has five step-children and nine grandchildren.

Constituent Priorities: As with other council districts, maintaining the character of the neighborhood, safety and public amenities are among the priorities voiced by constituents.

What do you hope to accomplish: "To continue making Denver an economically viable and vibrant city." Accomplishments: Paula earned a legislator of the year award or other recognition every year she was in office as a state senator. In 2010, she received her final award as a senator. She received the Legislator of the Year Award from United Way.

Favorite Things: Paula's favorite restaurant is Tamales by La Casita, owned by her and her husband.

Are you a good cook? "I'm a good cook if you can get me to cook."

Currently Reading: *The Hotel at the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* She hopes a movie is made out of this book as it is really outstanding.

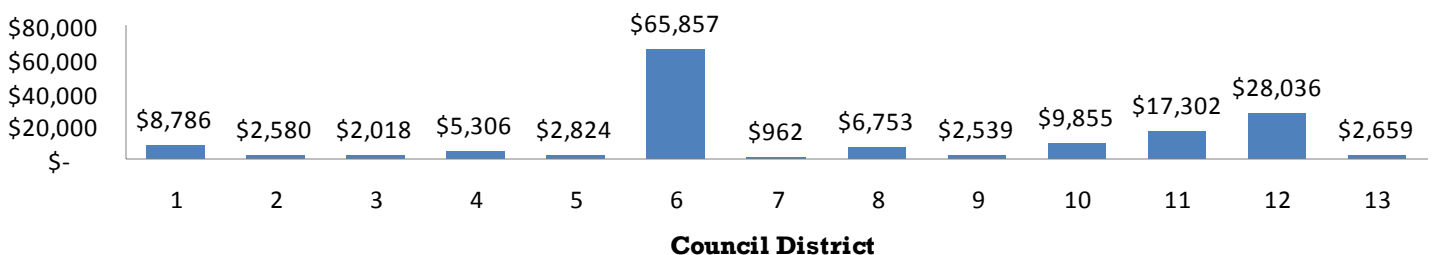
Denver City Budget Gap Widens to \$100 Million

At the end of April, an estimated \$80 million gap existed between expected revenues and expenditures for 2011. In July, the gap was expanded to \$100 million. The drop in expected revenue forced deeper cuts in the 2011 budget. Both the federal government and state government have lowered their growth projections for 2010. Mayor John Hickenlooper has encouraged city employees to continue to provide help and ideas as to how to better manage the budget. With the sentiment that Sen. Simpson has provided, if we stand here and do nothing, the dead pig will not rise, the debt will continue to grow, and our grandchildren will be picking grit with the chickens.

Council Returns Money to General Fund

More than \$155,000 has been returned to the general fund by City Council since 2007. Councilman Brown is setting the bar high when it comes to fiscal responsibility. He has made it a policy to return unused funds back to the city and last year returned more than \$40,000. Since 2007, Councilman Brown has returned a total of \$65,857, which is more than 42% of the total funds returned by all members of council.

Total Returns to General Fund from 2007-2009



2010 Regional Emmy

The Heartland Chapter of the 2010 Regional Emmy Awards recently nominated the Colorado State of Mind program titled, "Medical Marijuana Blooms with Controversy." (11/13/2009).

Appearing as panelist on the 30-minute program with Councilman Brown were John Suthers, Colorado Attorney General; Vera Ortega, Pueblo City Councilwoman, and Chuck Plunkett, Denver Post editorial writer. Cynthia Hessin hosted the show.

The winners will be announced in July.



Vacancy on Denver County Cultural Council

There are three to four vacancies on the Denver County Cultural Council (DCCC).



In filling these vacancies, City Council is looking for an individual with active community involvement at the neighborhood level and professional, volunteer or advocacy experience in an art, cultural, scientific or historical organization, and be willing to commit at least 15 to 20 hours per month. The vacant positions are for a 2 to 4-year term, beginning October 1, 2010, renewable for an additional term for a total of six years by mutual agreement.

Applicants must be City and County of Denver residents, at least 21 years of age, not currently a board member or paid staff of any organization applying for Tier III funding, and willing to disclose

any conflict of interest.

Duties of DCCC members and the application form are available at denvergov.org. Applications may also be obtained by calling Jane Potts at 303-860-0360 or in person at the Denver City Council Office, City & County Building Room 451, 1437 Bannock St.

Completed applications should be submitted to gretchen.williams@denvergov.org; to Gretchen Williams, Denver City Council, Room 451, City & County Building, Denver, CO 80202; or faxed to 720-865-9540 by 5:00 p.m. on August 6, 2010.

Denver Community Forester Training



In a coordinated effort to enhance and preserve Denver's urban tree canopy, last February The Park People and Denver Parks and Recreation launched the revamped community forester training program that empowers individuals to lead tree planting and tree

care activities within the community. All 50 seats for the first round of trainings were snatched up quickly by early registrants.

well as activities for The Park People, Denver's forestry division, and the Mile High Million Tree Planting initiative. Participants will help ensure that Denver's prized urban environment does not decline despite the economic challenges faced by many cities.

Schedule:

- Tree Pruning Sat. July 24, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
- Tree Planting & Health Sat. Aug 28, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
- Tree Identification Sat. Sept 25, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
- Volunteer Leadership Sat. Oct 9, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Contact:

Kim Yuam-Farrel (303) 722-6262
Sara Davis, DPR (720) 913-0631

care activities within the community. All 50 seats for the first round of trainings were snatched up quickly by early registrants.

With an extensive waiting list, The Park People and the city decided to offer a second round of training this summer running into the fall. The program prepares citizens to become stewards of our urban trees by educating participants in tree biology, planting, health, identification, pruning and more.

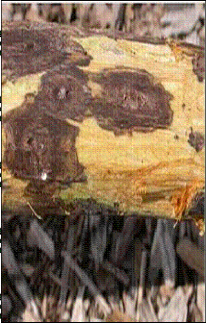
Once trained, community foresters can lead and participate in tree planting and care projects in their neighborhoods as

Colorado Center Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge Public Meeting

Wednesday, July 28, 5:30p.m., at the Dave & Buster's Banquet Room a public meeting about the bicycle/pedestrian bridge over I-25 will be held. Dave & Buster's is located at 2000 So. Colorado Blvd.

Black Walnut Trees Invaded by Canker Disease

Successful Tomato Stimulus



Since last summer the city Parks and Recreation Department has stepped up its efforts to combat the thousand canker fungal disease that attacks and kills black walnut trees. More than 100 trees have been removed and more than 250 other trees with the disease have been identified.

There is no preventative treatment or cure for the disease. The department is encouraging residents who have black walnut trees to call the City Forester at (311) to slow and halt the spread.

Typical signs of the disease: First the leaves yellow, dry, and remain on the tree for an extended period. Usually the upper branches are the first to decline, and the disease spreads downward. Although the fungus creates cankers within the bark, they are only occasionally visible as a dark stain on the trunk.

When diseased trees are found, the trees must be removed. Residents typically have about 15 days to provide plans for removal and are responsible for removal and the associated costs.

While the disease started in north Denver, it is quickly spreading southward, and is now 5 blocks from Washington Park.

For many years Councilman Brown has planted hundreds of tomato seeds and nurtured the plants to distribute free to constituents at numerous neighborhood meetings and friends in the spring. This year he handed out a record 500 plants, in 12 varieties.



Linda Zschoche who lives in East Washington Park, shows off her 4 foot tall tomato plants from Councilman Brown's tomato stimulus program. Councilman Brown encourages constituents who received plants to send tomato recipes and photos for publication in the September newsletter.

Denver Compost Collection Program



For just under \$10 a month, Denver residents can begin to have their compost collected. Denver has already

shown a strong interest in recycling, and composting is just another form of recycling.

One may ask, what is compost? Organic materials like leftover foods, including meats and bones, paper plates, cups, cartons, and tissues, weeds, and leaves are among an extensive list of the items that can be put into a compost.

What does composting do?

Composting reduces our carbon foot print, and can reduce your

household waste to almost nothing. It reduces the amount of waste being sent to landfills by 58 percent and reduces the amount of methane produced when organic material is sent to landfills where it is buried with no access to oxygen. Methane is 21 times more powerful than carbon dioxide in trapping heat.

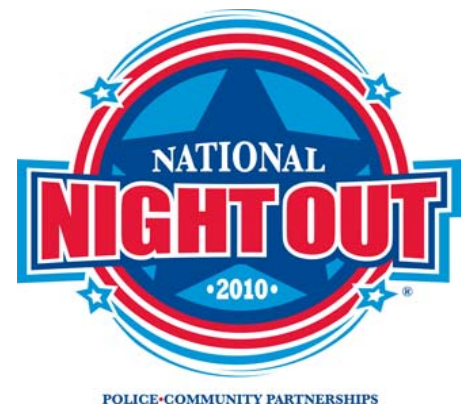
Signing up is easy at: Denvergov.org/DenverRecycles or by calling 3-1-1.

After calling to reserve a compost cart and 2-gallon kitchen pail (for more temporary and convenient collection inside your home), you will receive more information in the mail about submitting payment.

You can pay online, with a credit card, or by check. An entire year's service is only \$58.50, or \$9.75/mo.

National Night Out

Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2010 from 6-8:30 p.m. at Cook Park (east of Monaco between Mexico and Cherry Creek Drive) is National Night Out. National Night Out is designed to strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships, heighten crime and drug prevention, generate support for and participate in local anticrime efforts, and send a message to criminals letting them know neighborhoods are organized and fighting back. People are welcome to have a picnic and there will be free ice cream and a concert by Denver Municipal Jazz Band, starting at 7:30 p.m.



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