

PRAB meeting January 8, 2020

Board Members In attendance: Noel Copeland, Molly McKinley, Lee Rains Thomas, David Richter, Marla Rodriguez, Leslie Twarogowski, Jack Paterson, Tony Smith, Fran Coleman, Meredith Levy, Frank Rowe, Trena Marsal, Mark Brown, Samantha Villatoro, Florence Navarro

Absent: Brande Micheau, Tamesha Mitchell

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m. by President David Richter. A quorum was established.

Consent to agenda items

Call to accept minutes by (Fran), Leslie seconded

Jack reminded us vote to approve minutes, 14 affirmative, 1 abstention

Public comments

Jeffery Hersch- (self) Here about goose culling- against, belongs to "Canada Geese Protection" unit. Lives in City Park area and has met with Mr. Gilmore (with Department of Parks and Rec) about this issue. Feels that more options should be considered besides culling- clean up machines, etc. Expressed discontent with decision to cull geese at any time without any community involvement. He hopes more of the community can get involved and inform decisions in the future.

Mary Frances Nevans- (self) Comments are presented in a document (attached). Ms. Nevans presented at our last meeting and wanted to bring additional comments. She wants to learn what led to the decision, that culling is the best option to take care of the over-population of geese in the parks. Suggests creating a coalition to involve the public, would like to volunteer for this coalition.

Happy responds- One of the upcoming meetings scheduled includes discussion of this issue.

PRAB committee reports

Mountain Parks committee

Fran Commended Noel and David, who are long time Mountain Parks committee members for their involvement in following the work of Mountain parks personnel and staff and that the progress is significant.

Business/ Admin committee

Florence stated that working with community planners and development to determine how the Game Plan would be presented to the public- game plan and Blue Print Denver. Florence suggested developing a scorecard and annual report so that it can be released to public.

David- Likely be discussion reworking the committees at upcoming PRAB retreat.

Marla- Supports the idea to involve different PRAB members at executive breakfast meeting with Parks and Recreation staff. Opportunity to set agenda and hear more about the upcoming initiatives and projects. Fran suggested that we scheduled PRAB members be scheduled to join the executive breakfast meetings by district number order and then moving to mayoral members.

Lee- Shared about taking notes at PRAB meetings and including attachments that are presented at meetings. Shared notes from mountain parks meeting, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) redevelopment project, focus of mountain parks to measure usage and monitor high traffic areas. Possibly acquiring new property for mountain parks. Thinking about how to make mountain parks more accessible to Denver kids and underserved populations.

Noel- For mountain parks presentation to PRAB, would like to see the vision and the scope of the development and future use of the parks. Usage reports requested for the PRAB presentation, hopes for a conversation about capacity, current utilization and future utilization. Perhaps considering the uses of each park, based on conservation and utilization. Primary uses are biking and hiking- usage needs to be managed.

Happy- We have both under and over utilized mountain parks, the question becomes how do we balance the various needs of the community. Wants the Mountain Parks staff/committee to help develop a plan to present to PRAB. Will ask the staff to identify who is using the park- share data about who the users are and the hot spots.

David- Uniquely, our mountain parks are in four or five other counties and users are often local residents to those counties.

Molly- Jeffco does a nice job with high demand parks, we could look to them for ideas.

Happy- Will ask to include in upcoming presentations, the relationship with other counties and other properties. Successes and challenges. Would like the outcome to be a base of understanding for this group to begin setting goals and supporting. Some is already embedded in the game plan and PRAB will be learning more.

Executive directors report

Park Hill Golf Course

Happy introduces Laura Aldrede- Community Planning and Development, Executive Director Working with Happy and other departments on Park Hill golf course and interpretation of the conservation easement by city attorney.

Learning on how to improve on community engagement. Big meetings, focus groups, accessibility (phone, email, in person, web). Lining up a series of ways for people to get involved in schools and community centers. Anticipate process to take a year. Factors of time- allowing enough time for community input- back and forth, understanding the potential uses and evaluate them- expertise and input. By the end we will know what the space could look like.

Mayor Hancock and Happy have expressed that there will be park space.

PRAB comments and discussion with Laura:

Members asked about make-up of stakeholder group and how the city would ensure a broad representation in community groups. Additionally, members asked what might happen if community desires something different from developer, like open space? Many concerns were stated by PRAB members about the need for honoring the open space history of Park Hill golf course.

Some discussion of the NPI (neighborhood planning initiative), brought up the recent transportation plan for 40th Avenue- NE- Montbello, Green Valley Ranch. New large developments require minimum of 10% park.

Laura- Explained as planners, we work to convene and find places for collaboration and find the right place to be- even though it doesn't make everybody happy. We work for the people of Denver and are guided by the comprehensive 2040 plan which discussed where the city might be in 20 years, including planned use and transportation- blueprint Denver is a subset of this. Health, equity, authenticity- want to consider, what are the aspirations of the people of the city for what this land will be used for?

Happy- the broader question is engaging the community and looking at this in a broader context. Consider how it is involved in the bigger context of the city.

Board members brought up concerns about spending money to engage the community even before we know the conservation easement is not enforceable. Expressed that some assumptions were to keep area as open space. Clarified that if the consortium of the community wants that, then we will go down that path, it is a risk the developer has taken. Process will determine. Need to consider the entities and organizations that have contributed to the community historically. Make sure stakeholder group is not driven by government and is inclusive.

Discussion about resources needed to undertake this planning, when it seems somewhat predetermined to some board members. Questions on why moving forward with conservation easement in place.

Happy- The conservation easement is currently valid. The question is, what does the community want? The process of community engagement will determine the answer. The property owner has rights to be heard, as well the city council and community desires.

Laura- all community engagement will be open to everyone across the city of Denver. Encourages PRAB members to get involved, attend meetings and engage with community.

Skyline park redevelopment- Arapahoe street between 14th and 17th (Happy)

- Bond included funding (elevate), but not enough for entire project.
- Seeking input from public for a design for entire park, not just small improvements, but design concepts for entire park
- \$300,000 concept design, about a year, community engagement, stakeholder group, project team will develop plan for next block (16th to 17th), includes multi use space-beer garden, ice rink.
- Phase 2- north half of block funding is TBD (2.2M) estimated completion 2023. Various entities in the city are working on this project- Mayor, arts/venues department, Department of transportation infrastructure (DOTI). Parks and Rec department will take the lead with other agencies. Likely to have first public meeting in March.

16th street mall- scope of project is to replicate historic and iconic- from 80's. Objectives include- improve pedestrian safety and mobility, enhance overall mall experience, encourage people to stay and visit more, elevate bond (13M).

Urban forest Initiative- (Happy)

- Existing trees remain until project begins, procurement and maintenance of new trees- contract for \$2M, separate contract for procurement.
- Department has been scoping out trees, getting them into nursery and grow them to be stronger. Will lose some trees in development, so want to plan for it. Sizeable root balls- variety of trees. Honey locusts are currently predominant, however planning for wider variety.

Other items

Partnership policy- Christine Adams, Partnership manager for Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR)

- Bringing consistency and equity for partnerships with DPR- current or future.
- Categories and activities are considered in partnerships. Guidelines must be met before moving forward with partnerships.
- Some board discussion to clarify partnerships and focus on equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Fred Weiss (Director of finance), explained that they struggled with the definition of a partner. Partner or service provider? Christine serves as concierge of incoming partnerships or development, or business. Have hundreds of partners currently.
- Happy- definitions and high priority considerations covers access issues. Does it benefit the citizens? Does it adversely affect the park? Some changes for groups to adjust rental agreements, instead of partnerships.
- Frank- will we be reaching out to ask for new partners?
- Christine- likely will be developing RFPs.
- Happy- reaching out to see if there are groups that can fill a gap. Recreation- working with programs and centers to be more proactive, asking if there is something, we are missing within serving different communities.

Happy shared about using rec centers for emergency shelters, overflow homeless population in extreme weather. Wants PRAB to consider how we think through city services for homeless population.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00.