

Meeting Minutes- DRAFT

DENVER PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

April 14, 2021 – 5:30- 7:30 pm

Virtual Meeting: Via Zoom Webinar

PRAB Meeting Norms

Be respectful and presume positive intentions.
Seek first to understand and then to be understood.
Stay focused on topics at hand.
Allow space for all to have a voice.
Listen without judgement.
Live our values of equity and inclusion.

Board Members In attendance:

Audrey Carrillo, Fran Coleman, Lee Rains Thomas, Frank Rowe, Meredith Levy, Lynne Mason, Amy Razzaque, Andre McGregor, Lisa Calderon, Molly McKinley, Pam Jiner, Jack Paterson, Chandi Aldena, Marlene De La Rosa, Marla Rodriguez, Florence Navarro, Trena Marsal

Absent: Ramsey Harris, Deana Perlmutter

CALL TO ORDER

Marla calls meeting to order at 5:34, reviews board norms (above)
Lee takes roll call.

For now, the chat function will be open to all during public comment. After that, only panelists (PRAB members) will be able to chat. We will be reviewing how to manage this further. We have already collected feedback from many PRAB members on how to manage the chat during meetings.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Approve March Minutes
Fran makes a motion to approve minutes, Frank seconds.
Unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. Jill Locantore City Park Vehicular Restrictions
Exec director of Denver Streets partnership. Thanks for car free parks during the pandemic. Survey showed 91% would like to have 82% car free parks (DPR). Broad base of community support for car free parks. Very disappointed to see City Park be re-opened. 17th and 21st ave car restriction requested.
2. Mary Francis Off leash dogs
Advocate for allowing off leash dogs for 9pm- 9am. Would like to pilot program in district 1. Would like to see action and would like to engage with this topic with the department.
3. Keith Pryor City park Road Closures

Disappointed about City Park streets re-opened. Why are we opening City Park and not other regional parks? Parking has already been considered. Wonders why the park has been opened at 17th and 21st. Consider all regional parks equitably.

4. Stephen Duhon City Park Vehicular Traffic

Resident of Denver. Lives near City Park and requests that it remains car free. Encouragement of bicycles and movement of the people. Requests the reinstatement of car free zones.

5. Melissa Colonno City Park: cars/bikes/pedestrians

City Park resident and enjoyed the safety of not having cars in the park. Frequently uses the park and has been a place to bring kids to safely bike and walk. Re-opening was so sudden that it hasn't been a safe. High injury network roads. Would like to make it safer and keep roads closed to cars.

6. Katie Fisher Bison

Thanks for giving the bison to the native groups. Very good decision and thank you.

7. John Desmond City park Vehicular Traffic

Park Hill resident. Access plan for city park, has been calm, quiet and safe with the closures of the pandemic. Would like to use this to balance vehicles and people in the parks. Recognizes the need to have people drive to the park, but parking is available. Encourages department to be creative and consider how to have less cars in parks.

8. Loren Hansen Car Free Parks

Denver's perfect 10. Advocate for keeping city park and other regional parks to remain car free. Before the re-opening it was a safe haven and would like to keep the park closed to car traffic.

9. Ian Frasch City park Car access

South central Denver. Disappointed about allowing cars back to City Park and is a disservice to all park users to open it back up to cars. Denver Streets partnership on 17th and 21st. Would like to see all sections closed except access points for parking. Seems to prioritize cars in the park.

10. Carole Woodall Lake Clean up Project

Canada Geese Protection Colorado, dist 7 resident. Thanks for listening to public and would encourage further dialogue with the public. Lake clean up campaign- April 10th. Garfield park- collected trash from around the water. Thanks Tina Meyers -volunteer coord. (Jordan and Lawrence) Will have further clean ups in different regions of the city.

April 24th - Garland Park Lake

May 8th- Barnum Park Lake

May 22nd - Vanderbilt Park Lake

June 5th -Harvey park lake

11. Robbie Hobein City Park Car Access

City Park resident. Visibility is limited. Having cars in the park creates problems for the humans and animals in the park. Would like to have the parks remain for the people.

12. Tom Fagan Car Free Parks

Lives in Cherry Creek and loves to walk to City Park every day. Some people need to drive to the park, but not necessary to drive through the park. Re-frame the conversation and be creative to balance cars and people in parks- closures on certain days of the week, etc.

13. Kelly Leviker Canada Geese Task Force

Canada Geese task force. Working on analyzing documents and developing an understanding on When will the 2021 goose management plan be available?

PRAB COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee: Retreat discussion

How to we host public dialogue will be part of the retreat. We will dig into how committees function and what is the purpose and processes of PRAB. Would hope to send topics to a committee and have the committee determine next steps. Role of PRAB, committees, alignment to game plan.

Marla asks for questions/ comments.

Andre- car free parks, how can we find middle ground. Speed bumps? Lighted crossings? Encourages the public to email him with thoughts: andremdenver@gmail.com

Molly- Serves as vice chair of Denver Streets partnership. Supports closing 17th ave. Agrees that it is important to be accessible. Our city doesn't offer many safe places for walking/ biking, but parks can be this.

Lisa- finding the balance is important. Hears concerns and wants to discuss the equity. Shared doesn't mean exclusive. Equity doesn't mean equal. Tailored to the need of the people. Thinking about equity with park access. MLK Statues and special places in the park for gathering.

Andre- once we get all the ideas together, not close all roads, open all roads. Will talk more.

Pam- Reiterate that we don't want to exclude a race of people and the community functions, gatherings, not just the MLK stature, but thinking of mental health states. Freedom to have access to the City Park. Handicapped access is important. Let's be creative.

Outreach Committee- (Lisa)

Great turn out, almost 20 community members.

PRAB public meeting notices, would like consistency with other city agencies.

Adopt a flower bed program, work with Botanic Gardens to donate extra plants.

Construction projects- would like to share with all RNO's.

Car free parks was a topic.

Russell park- taller trees being removed, would like more info.

Park Hill golf course process- survey, conservation easement left out of the history. Lack of involvement of all groups. Survey was created out of Boulder. A motion to bring forward tonight to reassert PRABs recommendation that the conservation easement stays in effect.

Lisa wants to confirm that this will go forward to the Park Hill representatives.

Chandi will work with Andre to coordinate how to bring this up to the steering committee. Hopes to have a draft to share with PRAB at next meeting.

Planning, Design, Funding, Accessibility (Meredith)

Strategic acquisition plan, update on dog parks, began to identify priorities.

What are the priorities- get from Meredith

Survey is live until 4/12

Next step is the draft plan gets shared at PRAB meeting on 5/12 then final plan on 6/9.

In response to lots of public comment at last meeting 2019 is updated plan from 2010. Pilot program was community driven for adding dog parks. Due to covid, it was paused. (Jesus jumps in, due to Meredith's technical difficulties). 3 dog parks moved forward- dist 10, Rosedale, Wash Park. Now it is time for community meetings. Full program will be on hold until those 3 go through entire process.

Updated website <https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Planning-Development>

Off leash dogs are already part of the dog park master plan.

Fran- Seems like the community thinks we should be further along with this. What is the proposal?
How many dog bites have occurred in the parks? Fights?

M- reports of off- leash dogs. Laurie seems to be best contact.

Operations, Maintenance, Budget (Frank)

Working on budget recommendation
Game plan, equity, BLM statement and community voice
Have taken the criteria to check on each of the
3 topics have come up: sustainability, met with Sheila Urban,
Hopes to have a draft to share at next meeting on the 26th.

Resiliency and Sustainability (Fran)

met on 3/26
Had a presentation from the climate action office (Johnny- renewable expert)
Process to look at energy use throughout the city
What is the net zero building situation within parks and citywide?
Green building codes have been built into new buildings
Zero emissions vehicles, as city acquires new vehicles, parks will come along too
Rec centers – solar, clean energy
80% renewable by 2030, 100% by 2050
Community solar initiative- 9 projects approved in 2020
Rec centers in each district could be sites to consider battery storage

Would recommend a presentation for PRAB in a couple of months from office of sustainability.
Grid process to continue to haze the geese. (Vicki)

Park Hill Steering committee

Chandi- last meeting was postponed. Will be able to share before the next meeting. Public meeting was held on 3/25. Presentations were the same for the steering committee. Has heard the comments tonight and will bring them forward. Mention of the 303 art way – planned neighborhood loop. Comments and questions have been recorded and answered. **Will send out the link.** Seems to be a robust conversation about the easement and others who say that should not be part of the conversation.

Board discussion- reiterated PRAB recommendation from 2020 white paper
Seems that people want one of the following: Open space, Part developed, Stay a golf course
Interpretation of attorney of the easement is subjective.
Lisa- broader interpretation needed of the conservation easement. False choices offered- golf course or development. Very development oriented. Opposed to not having a true opportunity to engage with the public.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**Executive Director's Report
PRAB April 14, 2021**

Update on Broyhill Trash Program

Last month, Jill Coffman, Assistant Director of Park Operations, presented to PRAB regarding the relatively new Broyhill Trash program that we've started to implement over the past three years.

This month, Parks Operations will be looking at routes for Cheesman, City Park and Congress with full implementation in May. The program started as a pilot in the Southwest Maintenance District and has already been in effect in all parks in that district. We will eventually expand this method of waste collection to all Denver Parks.

The new program utilizes a load and pack truck to empty trash cans, rather than hand removal by staff. This reduces the number of maintenance hours spent by staff on waste collection, which can be reallocated to other park maintenance tasks. It also prevents staff injury from lifting heavy trash bags and exposure to sharp or hazardous objects. These are the types of injuries that are most common with our employees.

As part of the expansion process, trash can locations will be adjusted to accommodate for truck maneuverability. Park users will notice that trash cans may no longer be in the locations they are used to, and we understand that this may cause some initial frustration. DPR staff kindly requests the cooperation of the public as we transition to this new waste collection method. We hope that park users will see the many benefits of this type of waste collection system, and how it supports efforts to create a safe, efficient, and sustainable trash collection process within Denver Parks.

The program directly supports goals from DPR's "Game Plan for a Healthy City" as it relates to energy, resource management, and increased user responsibility (pack it in and pack it out).

Ruby Hill Incident

In March, during the big snow storm, while roads were closed, several vehicles were driven around the barriers and through areas that were not roads causing considerable damage to the park with potentially serious environmental concerns. We are currently evaluating the damage and the costs for restoration which may require significant sections of the park to remain closed for a period of time. As far as we can tell, these drivers may have been frustrated by not having car access to the hill that many people have traditionally used for sledding. In the future the parking facilities at the top will remain open during park hours.

After Hours Off Leash Dogs

Laurie Tabachnick presented the updated dog park master plan to the Planning and Design Committee and information about the dog park pilot program which provides for a community-driven process to identify potential sites and to obtain community support for the development of a dog park in those locations. Next, the department will be sharing current policies, rules and regulations relating to off leash dogs and park curfew, along with data relating to these issues from Park Rangers and Denver Department of Public Health and Environment's Animal Control Division. Then the department will be looking for guidance from PRAB as to whether to proceed with making changes to any of these policies. The process for changing policies and rules and regulations can be an extensive and time-consuming process (recall recent efforts regarding public events, wheeled devices).

OTHER ITEMS

Game Plan Presentation from Mark Bernstein

*PPT attached

Interdepartmentally developed. Part of Denverite larger planning.

Driven by equity, goal of a healthy city.

Near the end of the first 3 years and internally the department is reviewing and setting new goals for the next 3 years.

Game plan implementation strategies- this would be good to dig into at the retreat.

Priorities built into action plan.

Link to Game Plan:

<https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/denveright/parks-recreation.html>

Board discussion about diversity of community input.

New Business/Announcements

Lee- Westwood rec center is gathering community feedback. Had a little ceremony to see the space and begin the planning process.

Pam- Would love to see more senior playgrounds throughout the city.

Bike pump track coming in Montebello-

Contact- Deak Brown, Bike Park Operations Supervisor

Lisa- Wants to move forward with naming "no name" park to Isabella Thallas. Wants to know what committee is working on this and how to move forward.

Shares that there is a congressional act to make it a crime to not to report a stolen gun.

Noel will come to a meeting when we are back in person.

ADJOURNMENT