

Meeting Minutes
DENVER PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
July 8, 2020 – 5:30- 7:30 pm
Virtual Meeting: Via Webex

Board Members In attendance:

Fran Coleman, Lee Rains Thomas, Frank Rowe, Meredith Levy, Lynn Mason, Amy Razzaque, Leslie Twarogowski, Lisa Calderon, Molly McKinley, Jack Paterson, Marla Rodriguez, Florence Navarro, Trena Marsal (arrived late)

Absent: Noel Copeland, Tashmesia Mitchell (Tash), Samantha Villatoro, Pam Jiner

From Parks and Rec staff- Happy, Fred, Arthur, Jesus

CALL TO ORDER

Marla calls to order at 5:34, not a quorum yet, but will have at least one more member.

Asks for questions or additions to the agenda for the meeting.

Public comment to last for more time, extend to 45 minutes or less to allow for all to speakers.

Fran makes motion to adapt agenda. Lynn seconds.

Marla- will need to shorten to 2 minutes, but will extend the time.

Welcome to Dr. Nita Mosby Tyler

The PRAB wants to engage in work around equity and diversity and how we work together as a group.

Dr. Mosby Tyler will share what this work might look like for the PRAB.

DISCUSSION: FUTURE PRAB WORK (Dr. Mosby Tyler)

Share the conversation, what do we do in a time like this, equity inclusion and diversity. Honoring the fact that we have had some tough issues right here on the board. Wants to work with the board to resolve these issues.

Possibly 2 additional sessions with the PRAB to address:

1. What was it like as board member at the meeting in June? Time to process and determine what that moment represented.
2. Equity- determine a shared understanding, what does it mean in the context of this board. Level set and then create strategies.
3. What is our equity blueprint as a board? A platform of equity for this work- identify some strategic areas. Initialized equity.

Suggestion that this is an executive session, not including the public.

Marla- another thing we want to know is how we know we are successful, setting up outcomes and measures.

Dr. Mosby Tyler- the work is happening all over because we have never had a system of equity across the country.

Marla checks for questions/comments.

Leslie- looking forward to this. Acknowledges Lisa for this recommendation.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Approve June 2020 Minutes

Fran makes motion to approve as written, Leslie seconds.

Unanimously approved with 2 abstentions (Amy, Jack)

Introduction of new PRAB member- Amy Razzaque- (Reina) Represents District 7. Works in Jeffco schools as an equity specialist. Overland neighborhood park association co-chair. Wants to contribute to PRAB and be a liaison for the people in district 7.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

General Public Comment

How do we capture written comments/ emails to board?

1. Courtney DeWinter
Outcry- 2020 killing of geese, loaded on crates, violently killed and butchered. Not humane, as a citizen and taxpayer, an insult to the democratic process, City of Denver is federal designated city for bird sanctuary. Asking the board to answer the question: Why is Denver orchestrating the killing of geese in parks and signed a treaty to protect wild birds, mis-use of funds?
2. Ellen Kessler- Colorado Geese Protection Colorado (CGPC)
Budget focus- \$250 million shortfall, due to many factors, including Covid, lawsuits. How is that a good use to money? People have lost it and are highly emotional. Geese culling needs to stop.
3. Elizabeth Holland, CGPC-
Vet tech, and Denver resident, Denver is addressing inequities. Including the systems to control wildlife. Deeming geese as nuisances, brings great harm. Actions and electing to feed the geese will further injustices. Racism, sexism, animalism. Could we provide better resources for underserved people?
4. Carole Woodall- CGPC
PRAB bylaws- action verbs from mission statement. Bring the voice and concerns and opinions to the department. Our right as taxpayers, constituents we only have 2-3 minutes. 50 plus strong at the meeting tonight. Collective and individual lessons. Has had to fight for invisible presence at Sustainability and Resiliency committee meeting. Consider transparency- charge- Demonstrate the transparent process- go to metro-caring and get it tested. Demand to know the contract.
5. Erin Sturga- Founding member- CGPC
Photographer, daily, family of geese she followed cannot see or attend the park. The family was violently taken. Parks should be a safe space for all beings, not a killing zone.
6. Merrimon Crawford-
Urban wildlife photographer and artist. Geese are lifeline of physical, spiritual and mental health. Motivate to go beyond the physical, now takes insulin. Each goose has a story, intelligent, curious, personality, now they are dead. The parks are for the entire community, our urban wildlife is what makes Denver special. Think outside of the box and hire. Wants to work outside these meetings to come up with solutions.
7. Ruth Crampton-
Moved to Colorado because it is unique city. Let's show that we still love our nature even through we are growing. We can be a model.
8. Kenyon Moon- Resident in Aurora, but works in nature centers.

People from Denver are disturbed by this. 2 simple questions- catch a lot of geese with injuries (fish-hook, line) Are the geese inspected to make sure they do not have fish hooks. Does the city keep data on the geese? At Sloan's lake, they have moved to that area. Walk around the lake, you can see where the landscape is modified, does the city have data to gather data after altering landscapes?

9. Eric Rooney

Thanks the board for giving Dr. Taylor an opportunity to speak. If equity means anything, our future relies on our example of city and county leaders not in line. Asked Scott Gilmore why department won't demand all non-lethal options are exhausted. (Kendra from USDA- killed from human hands). Wants department to lead with truth, honesty, clarify and the willingness to be better.

10. Justin Aragon- District 2

Thank you to PRAB for hosting event, keeping this a virtual meeting for accessibility. Habitat modification, egg oiling, why have we not made changes? Money for culling should be used for humane and non-lethal methods.

11. Pfeifer Bee

Thanks to Lisa for working on outreach. Scott, Vicki, Hancock, in 2019 you were willing to risk lives. Used unsheltered population to feed animals to. Geese were killed with human hands. Senseless man-made, the toxicity of the meat. Should not be a topic anymore. Focus on the slain persons of color, not worry about wildlife.

12. Robert Hurst

Strong opposition to the culling plan. Gilmore has not made the case.

13. Helene Orr

Express support for equity and solidarity, opposition to the geese culling. Health concerns have been cited, but not clear. Pesticides? Wastewater? Learn more about the goose meat.

14. Kelly Leviker

Look forward to equity work, seems that what we are discussing public spaces as spaces of democracy. In a democracy, the public space belongs to the people and the people should be involved in the process. The culling only meets the desires of some and is morally wrong for many. In fact, Scott Gilmore hung up the phone yesterday.

15. Mary Francis Nevans

Thank you for Dr. Tyler's comments to the board. No personal attacks. Resident of dist 9, speak on own behalf. With important events Denver's use of Public engagement and communication policy. Concerned that the comments are falling on deaf ears.

16. Jeffrey Hersch

Thank you for listening, but nothing more. This is more like a venting board and it seems like that is going to continue. Rescued a goose with fishing line. Saw intelligence and sensitivity. Encourages us to see what is actually happening. Would like for action to be taken. This seems to be an exercise in futility.

17. Zac Ryder

Parks are slaughterhouses, roundup was used, geese were eaten. Challenge to eat the geese, riddled with chemicals and fertilizers. Lazy biology. Board is letting the department do what they want and not making any changes.

Board comments:

Lisa- Thanks the people, reflects on comments that were made. People care about Denver parks and animals, equity. Does not want people to be discouraged from participating. Through renewed leadership, hopeful that board will be more effective.

Lynne- Thank you for coming and commenting, we do care and are trying to figure this complex issue out.

Fran- All the comments and feelings matter. This is important and complex. This topic seems to be a bigger issue for the PRAB. Very complex issue.

Molly- Looking forward to how our board operations evolve. We need to be able to address the process in which we engage with the public. Look forward to having space in meetings to address this.

Marla- Thank you, a lot to think about.

Lisa- Would like to know our action, public engagement, dialogue and discussion. My recommendation is standardized across all committees. Advisory boards are the closest thing we have to get real public input.

PRAB WORK

PRAB Statement on Racial Equity and Solidarity

- Survey Results

Initial PRAB Process Discussion

Lee begins discussion of creating a statement. Reviews examples from other cities and survey results.

PRAB discussed what might need to be done in order to create a statement like this. Several members expressed the need to do the work around equity in order to fully realize any statement that might be made. Wonder if Dr. Mosby Tyler could help us with this? Reminder that the creation of a PRAB statement would be board business and need to be at a regular meeting. Suggestion to create an ad-hoc group to come up with some possible statements before next meeting. Suggestion to utilize Game Plan as a resource for creating this statement and identifying equity goals for the PRAB. Question about intent of statement- philosophical, action oriented?

Questions came up about how the department uses resources to promote equity. What is ranger training like? What is the relationship with DPD?

Creating an ad-hoc group to come up with draft statement of solidarity to present at August PRAB meeting. Hope to utilize Dr. Mosby Tyler if available. Use Game Plan, PRAB mission as resources. Work to align mission with actions, consider how we change to become more impactful. Recognize the moment and how PRAB has an opportunity to align work and lead for equity in this time.

Ad- hoc committee to create statement:

Lisa- chair, Fran, Amy, Trena, Molly, Meredith, Lee

Will be scheduling emergency meetings to do equity work with Dr. Mosby Tyler. Weekday evenings are best, will work to schedule that. Hope that you can do your best to make both the sessions. Thanks to the department for supporting this work.

It would be helpful for our work moving forward for us to get a report on the relationship between DPR and DPD, the role of rangers in the park and the interactions they have with folks in our parks.

OTHER ITEMS

Board Announcements

Leslie- parks naming is coming- first on deck District 1- Columbus park, DPR has removed sign and C. Sandoval willing to sign petition- rename as La Raza park. The issue is, right now, our policy requires written signatures on a petition. Need to revisit our policy on naming and re-naming. State and local issues. Talk about adjusting our parks naming policy to include obtaining signatures in other ways.

Molly- District 10 collecting signatures for dog park. Wonders about collecting signatures in general.

Florence- is this a place where we can research with city attorneys- beginning research

Happy- might be ways within current policy to accept petitions without physical petitions. If the petition is electronic, people can sign and or mail signatures. Thinking about changing policy and considering access, digital access. Take time to review, but think about what other avenues could be used.

Lisa- action items:

Committee for re-naming parks

For example- honoring the life of Isabella Thallas by naming a park for her. Currently no name park.

Wants PRAB to review the process, broader issue of naming parks

It is easier to get a park named after you if you donate land, than if you were tragically killed.

Lisa- Scott has done a nice job assisting the family in their grief.

Geese issue- the community is asking what are we going to do as a board?

Fran- alarming if people can still buy park land to name it.

Lee- Shares that the geese issue is for the whole PRAB. The issue is much larger than a sub-committee. The amount of people speaking up against the culling of geese is deserves to be addressed at PRAB meetings. Should be on agenda next month for a discussion at PRAB.

Meredith- Clarify general renaming parks and rec centers- what/ who is the committee?

Updates from Happy:

Renaming committee refers to city wide community/ human rights and CP group to review all statues, monuments, facilities, etc.- make recommendations on what could be moved or changed. Will collaborate and then use the policy for renaming.

Working with committee on renaming.

City wide recovery efforts- plan for re-opening. Plans have to be approved by public health agency.

July 10- limited re-opening summer camps for kids, outdoor athletics- baseball, pool closure through the end of July, will determine if pools can open on a limited basis. Hope for a handful of openings. Want them to be equitably distributed. Safely staff and operate them. Indoor rec- may start with limited access

Will send the updates to PRAB on openings as they happen.

Leslie- last few days have had several shootings. Could opening rec centers give teens something to do? Hopes we can cautiously open and be thoughtful for northeast and far northeast and youth across the city.

ADJOURNMENT

7:51