

**DENVER PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

**July 12, 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, Pam Jiner, Jack Paterson, Chandi Aldena, Marlene De La Rosa, Marla Rodriguez, Florence Navarro, Trena Marsal

Absent: Ramsey Harris, Molly McKinley, Deana Perlmutter

**CALL TO ORDER**

Marla calls meeting to order at 5:41, (tech difficulty) reviews board norms (above). We can all hold each other accountable and call each out if we are not living our norms.

Lee takes roll call after public comment.

**CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

Approve June Minutes.

Frank makes a motion to approve minutes, Marlene seconds.

Unanimously approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

1. Taryn Omran Shaded Playgrounds  
Lack of sun safety, trees and other shade structures are not enough. Shared statistics about sun exposure in Colorado. Proponent of shade over play structures. Seeks local shade policy to have shade on all play structures.
2. Sylwia Niemierko Shaded Playgrounds
3. Jeffrey Hersch Trees in City Park  
Issue of 4 large trees being removed to redo a tennis court.  
Lights were interior, why do they need to be installed outside, requiring removal of trees?  
Can the design team reduce? On the north side, there are no trees, why can't we use that side? How can we save these trees?

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Executive Committee: Retreat debrief / Committee discussion

Review successes:

- Role of PRAB – All Agree!
- Role of Committees/Flow chart – All agree! – Review this

- Committee composition – only PRAB members are on PRAB committees
- Minimum number of PRAB members on a committee is 3
- Recreation Committee added
- Added opportunities for public comment/engagement – town hall 30 minute prior to PRAB meetings

Reviews Flow charts- great progress, discussion on how we work together and how issues flow through PRAB and committees.

\*Updated flow chart attached

From retreat notes and sticky notes:

### Next steps

- Create a spreadsheet of all the topics that come to PRAB and who is taking care of it, the status of that issue, etc. (Lee to work with Laura to try to figure out)
- Consider google folder of all the minutes from every committee and agenda items with status on a monthly basis.
- Define the minimum that each committee should be doing, then adding onto those depending on what is needed. Can we define what that is for each - i.e. posted agendas, public comment section, opportunity for input.
- When are agendas for committees posted? What is the rule? *Suggestion: 24 hours in advance*
- Add google doc to allow more public comment?
- Create protocol for town halls 30 min prior to PRAB meetings.
- Define and clarify outreach committee and recreation committee.

### Parking lot items – when?

- Create process for restoration when norms are broken
- Attendance tracked, how to remedy, and if 5 meetings are missed, etc.
- How do we make minutes more accessible?
- Need a new on-boarding process for new PRAB Members
- Consider amending Bylaws (Best Practices)
  - How the public participates
  - Access to recordings
- Inventory how PRAB has influenced DPR
- What strategies can PRAB employ to maximize impact/influence?
- Mountain Parks has been interacting with all of the committees—is this how it should be? *Suggestion: leave this in Planning Committee*

### Discussion of committees and topics started at retreat:

\*Updated committee summaries and roster attached

Adding more opportunity for public dialogue, tried it for the first time tonight.

Committees and Game Plan connection

Possibly using google docs

Established recreation committee

Minimum of 3 PRAB members on every committee

Lisa- Community engagement committee, not exclusive to PRAB members- open to community members

Hopes to clarify committee consistency through all committees.

Florence- Where can we put accountability? Every committee should be accountable, not just one committee. Is that a responsibility we can all share? Wondering how to address it?

Marla- potentially a task force to explore the idea of accountability. Maybe it's temporary? We can keep it in a committee until we establish processes and protocols to be more transparent and accountable.

Defining each committee- still need to define a role of the public- Leadership can lead and bring back to PRAB.

Meredith After each meeting, can send out the item/ topic

How do we make sure the public gets follow up? Google form, excel sheet to track issues (maybe use the flow chart) Keep track of the work we are doing. Circle back to public.

Laura- Can possibly help with creating a google sheet

Accountability could be part of all of ours, wondering about it

Entry point for public outreach

Potentially if we have a tracker, we have open issues and closed issues- this is a way to keep track of ourselves.

Amy- not needing to be mutually exclusive, filling gaps in other ways, maybe we keep it on the community outreach committee.

Discussion on keeping community engagement committee with accountability under the topics in order to build in processes and protocols for tracking to then remove it.

Making a commitment- regardless of where issue comes in, we have equal responsibility to deal with issues.

Lisa- when public did not feel heard, helped the public voice concerns. Problem solving process. Address issues and work with staff. Not feeling heard from the board.

### Community Engagement Committee

Thanks to Lisa for service and leadership, BLM statement

Reflecting on successes of time on the board, council office support

Recs- For the Prak Hill group review public participation, better visualization on platform, Introduces Angela Garcia- new dist. 9 rep.

### Planning, Design, Funding, Accessibility

Met June 15- Meredith, Molly, Pam, Florence

### **\*Letter attached**

Sent letter today to Director Haynes with recommendation to not proceed with dogs off leash proposal

- Reviewed current policies
- Reviewed the petition presented to PRAB
- Contacted rangers, gathered data
- Reviewed other off leash dog plans in cities
- Reviewed dog master plan

Recommendation- no action to be taken now.

Recognize the need for more open space, changing leash policy is not the solution.

Will be meeting on Tuesday if there are any other questions/comments.

Lynne- When do we vote? Clarify when we will be asked to vote as PRAB members.

Happy- PRAB can accept the discussion, department will respond, may provide further suggestions.

In general PRAB will take one month to make sense of an issue before voting.

### Operations, Maintenance, Budget

Amy, Andre, Trena, (Frank)

Discussed park renaming policy and meeting recordings

Park renaming- ask for documents with audits, how they are named, to understand where we currently are with all park areas, including un-named parks and parks designations.

Availability of recorded meetings online, add a note to PRAB website- to access recordings, email Arthur.

Consider alignment with similar groups across Denver. Larger conversation about what meetings will look like when emergency meeting is ended. Hybrid will be a challenge.

### Resiliency and Sustainability

Met June 25- Fran, Lee, Jack Deana (Jesus)

Community: Ellen Kessler, Kenyon Moon, Tess Dougherty, Joyce Kennedy

Will try to begin meeting with public input 15 minutes before meeting. (didn't work today)

Public Comments:

Ellen- some areas have begun banding geese to keep track of residents vs migrators

Helped with coyote decoy, all were stolen. Ended up costing money. Wondering how we can keep better track of them and deter thefts?

Joyce- people and pollinators action network, pollinator month in Colorado, meeting Sanderson gulch, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 8 am- offshoot of metro Denver pollinator group- providing input about new garden, understanding the project. (Florida and Zuni)

Today's agenda is the game plan, focusing on pages 78 and 79.

Game Plan was developed with the long term in mind

What we have worked on and what is beyond

Section on pollinators elsewhere within the Game Plan

\* Indicates follow up needed

\*1.2- geese mitigation- changing landscape- ask Scott

1.3 more or less the how of 1.2

1.4- Have seen some progress at City park

\*1.5- Sloan's Lake health, fresh water intake/ flow

\*1.6-1.8 Right of way trees, urban, loss of trees in Loretta heights and other

1.9 Emerald Ash Bore, Japanese Beetle, etc. We have learned a lot about pesticide program, etc. (What species are considered

- 1.11- Park acquisition- part of strategic acquisition, Axton ranch, (Park Hill) Some concern of over use at Wash Park
- 1.12- Best practices for mountain park fire mitigation, Axton ranch is planned to be an open space easement, good partnerships with other counties.
- 1.13- energy use reduction- underway
- 1.14- foster responsibility (vehicles)
- 1.15- Reduce waste, increase recycling availability – how can we help move forward with the trash program and increasing recycling, Identify which parks have recycling and identify areas to improve and expand.

#### Park Hill Golf Course Update

Andre- will bring forward feedback from community engagement comm.  
Some discussion: Who actually received the survey? Length of process, next steps  
Chandi met with Councilwoman Kniech- survey concerns  
Distance around area for surveys was the confusion of why not everyone did not receive it.  
Lynne- high interest across the city. Lots of support to keep it as a park.

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

##### **Executive Director's Report PRAB July 14, 2021**

**Game Plan Annual Report:** As part of the Game Plan implementation and Park Legacy Fund (2A) requirements, DPR will release its second consecutive Game Plan Annual Report later this month.

**Recreation Reopening Status:** Most of our 16 outdoor pools are open and operating at full capacity. Because of demand beyond capacity limits at several of the pools, they have instituted a morning and afternoon session giving those that couldn't get in in the morning to have priority for the afternoon session. Some have complained about this practice, but most understand the necessity and the fairness of it. There have been concerns at some of our pools where parents have dropped very young children off for the entire day that may or may not be supervised by older siblings. We have had some maintenance challenges with a few of the pools that caused them to be closed temporarily. This is not surprising especially with older pools and mechanical systems that haven't been in operation for essentially two years. Our youth sports programs, summer camps and My Denver program are also thriving and at full capacity and we continue to provide the meal program. Indoor pools are slated to open on August 16<sup>th</sup> along with almost all the remaining recreation centers depending on staffing availability.

**Staffing Challenges:** Recent recovery efforts have been significantly impacted by staffing shortages recruitment challenges far more than health restrictions, which have been lifted for the most part. The pace of our pool and recreation re-openings has been dictated by the slow pace of recruitment, hiring and training of staff, especially our pools. A very competitive market for entry level jobs created a very difficult summer hiring season. Even with restoration of some of our budget for recovery efforts, our recruitment and hiring challenges remain. We currently have nearly 90 positions in various stages of recruitment. Staff turnover during the pandemic, especially for on-call positions has been higher than normal. People are staying at home, moving back home and changing their job interests as they reflect on new priorities in their lives. As a result of these challenges, we are requesting to convert a number of our on-call positions, which have been hard to fill, to full time positions in our 2022 budget request. This will result in more consistent and reliable staffing for programs and recreation centers, particularly in our highest equity needs areas of the city.

**Algae in City Lakes:** Due to the excessive heat, algae have begun to form in a few of our lakes. At Sloan's Lake in particular, warnings were posted of a potentially deadly blue-green algae that can be harmful to both pets and humans. In other lakes, the algae are not dangerous and presents only an aesthetic concern. We are also doing regular algae treatments using an algaecide but none of it is dangerous to the fish, birds, pets, or people. Our lake management staff continues to work with Denver Department of Public Health and Environment and diligently tests water to ensure normal levels of nutrients, oxygen and vegetation are creating the healthiest possible ecosystem. The algae will remain in the lakes for at least another month or until temperatures start to cool.

**Small and WMBE Business Workshop:** In June, we hosted the first semi-annual workshop for small and WMBE businesses to learn about contracting opportunities with DPR and meet the staff managing projects. We presented the DPR Small Business Utilization Plan and Representatives from the Division of Small Business Opportunities joined us to explain the certification and goals process along with implementation of the Prompt Pay Ordinance.

My Denver card is free access to all kids who live in Denver. Don't turn kids away, send them home with paperwork to get a my Denver card. Can send process again. Scholarships available for families who need assistance.

Procedural/ operational issue- needs to be resolved. Clarify for staff and make sure we are not turning any kids away.

Recreation will look at pool policies.

Fall program guide- dependent on staffing

#### **OTHER ITEMS**

Board Announcements

Happy Hour on Monday, check email for details from Arthur

Fran and/or Amy will take notes in August, Lee will not be able to attend the PRAB meeting to take notes.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**