Meeting Minutes
DENVER PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
March 8, 2023 – 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:
Jill Mullen, Fran Coleman, Lee Rains Thomas, Frank Rowe, Meredith Levy, Lynne Mason, Andre McGregor, Jessica Zender, Jill Coffman, Jack Paterson, Chandi Aldena, Marlene De la Rosa, Brooke Badon, Trena Marshall

Absent: Florence Navarro, Deana Perlmutter, Amy Razzaque, Kate Fritz

CALL TO ORDER
Meeting called to Order @ 5:35pm

Land Acknowledgement and Board Norms read by Chandi. As we become aware of more ways to embody this we will provide updates and info.

Bison transfer event at Genesee park (get statement) next week, RSVP by 3/9, gifting bison to native tribes in the area.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS
Approve February Minutes
Comments: Pam moves to approve as written, Meredith second, all passes

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Scott- irrigation pump has been a big issue and trying to resolve it. Hoping to do some work to restore the field.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Budget: We are starting to put together initial budget requests from each of the divisions. We encourage PRAB’s input as soon as possible so that we can consider it early in the process. Our request is to receive at least a preliminary draft of the White Paper by April 4th, recognizing that the full PRAB may not approve the final document until the following week.

Park Naming: We will soon be submitting the Whitsell Park naming recommendation to City Council and will bring a new proposal to PRAB as well for a trail located in our mountain parks in honor of the late Winston Walker, an avid outdoorsman and one of the co-founders of the Beckwourth Club, an African American organization dedicated to promoting outdoor activities in the African American community. We anticipate bringing this proposal to PRAB for a public hearing at the April meeting if everything is in order, but we can push it to the May meeting.

Renaming Update: The RFP for the consultant to help lead this process has been released and we anticipate selecting the consultant and starting with briefings for City Council in the April to May time frame to kickoff the process. We anticipate that lessons learned from this process will help inform future updates to the Naming Policy. As we have described before, there will be an active role for PRAB members in this process.

Transition: The department is creating a transition document to assist the next administration, including Mayor, his cabinet, City Council and new DPR executive director in understanding the department’s mission and goals, operations, current priorities as well as key challenges and opportunities. The role of PRAB will be featured in this document too and we are inviting the PRAB to provide suggestions about what should be included in the document. What is important for the new administration and Council to know about the PRAB from your perspective? Please send your thoughts to Arthur and Laura by April 1st.

PRESENTATIONS:
Round 14 Park Designations- Scott Gilmore
Attachments include: Presentation, Designation list/ map, Acquisition list

Highlights:
● Working on this process for the last 12 years
● First parks board created in 1893, oldest serving board in city of Denver
● 1910 mountain parks system was created, before national parks service
● 1956 department of parks and rec on the city charter, all parks were designated at the time
● Some properties are managed as a park, but are not owned by DPR
● Have been able to add area to the system, but not designate it all
● Big difference in amount of park designations from 1956-2012 and 2013-2023
- Designated park land cannot be sold or changed without voter approval
- Cuernavaca park will increase and be HQ for maintenance shop
- Kenucky and Irving Park acquisition- basketball, skating park
- Westwood recreation center development
- Northfield athletic complex, developed in partnership with developers, don’t own yet
- Sand Creek Trunk open space, connects to trails, Aurora, Bluff Lake
- 47th and Telluride, master plan process, includes maintenance shop
- First Creek open space at NE edge of Denver

Questions:
Andre: Affordable housing, would we ever be able to put housing on park space?
A: Once it’s designated park land it cannot be used for any other purpose.
Meredith: City park and zoo land?
A: Zoo, museum and botanic gardens are all designated parks and are leased to the organizations from DPR.
Lynne: Denver Post article about Pena boulevard- will we be keeping it as open space
A: Partnership with Rocky Mountain Arsenal, the open space is a joint effort, envisioning a trail from Arsenal across the city and from the airport to the mountains
Pam: Many people are interested in riding from airport to light rail station and not need to drive. A: Arsenal has changed fencing to be more welcoming and moved it from the road.
Pam: Excited to hear presentation and see changes since last time. Could community gardens be a park purpose?
A: Yes, urban gardens is one partner to manage gardens in parks- like at Commons Park. Working on other areas as well. Gardens and a food forest with DUG.
Email mark.bernstein@denvergov.org about starting a garden through a volunteer agreement with clear expectations.

PRAB COMMITTEE REPORTS
Operations, Maintenance, Budget
Frank: Lots of high fives for submitting budget recommendations, if you didn’t hear your name, go onto the form and get it done. Consider: small scale, high impact- Include information from the CIP meeting with council members and parks planners. Next meeting is in one week and will review comments and put together a draft to take to the mayor for a recommendation for priorities: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Gp2EHYjZcayclbWtm0SdyyAJ3TkAB1S3CsFpWLoqE9I/viewform?edit_requested=true

Planning, Design, Funding, Accessibility
Pam Jiner: Went over the presentation that Scott presented tonight about designations. Provided feedback and to the department on the designations presentation.
Sustainability & Resiliency

Jack Paterson: Urban forest plan review, inventory and development. Had the first meeting of working group. Creating a document key subjects in sustainability and resilience by Saturday. Trail naming group, no need for new meetings, very impactful Black leader. Beckworth hiking club legacy. Need to have 300 Denver signatures and work with Jeffco about this new trail naming. *Make sure to notify the neighborhood RNO’s, perhaps send it to all the RNO’s in Denver and areas nearby, including consulting with Jeffco.

Jack brings motion forward to recommend that DPR contact RNOs throughout the city as well as work with Jefferson County on the trail naming. Pam seconds motion.

Passes unanimously.

Recreation

Pam: February 16 Pam and Jill Mullen
Ski and ride program review, barriers to accessing outdoor sports, outdoor rec, 36 programs this year, Winter Park partnership, can apply for discount programs, beginner ski/snowboard at rec centers. 45 average participants. DPS partnership, $10 per student, lots of partners- why just in a few neighborhoods- because of GOCO partnership. Winter park ski and ride school, urban riders program. Parent rec night to learn about programming.

OTHER ITEMS

Chandi: Reminder about retreat and beginning at 9:00-2:00. Review the agenda and let Arthur know if you have dietary restrictions.
Budget form for operations committee budget recommendations

Meredith: Make sure to get involved with the CIP planning process with your council person. This is where you hear about projects in your district and have the ability to weigh in on issues for your district.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: Marlene brings motion to adjourn, Florence seconds. 7:20 pm