



Public Amenities Committee
Meeting Summary

Date: Aug. 8, 2007

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Location: Room 391

Members Present: Lehmann, Madison, Robb

Members Absent: Johnson

Other Council Present: None

- Greenway Foundation update
 - Parks & Recreation on-call contracts
 - Creative Space Online Survey
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1. Greenway Foundation update

Jeff Shoemaker, Chairman and Executive Director of the Greenway Foundation, and the Committee discussed the Foundation and its activities:

- The Greenway Foundation (GWF) was founded in 1974 as the Platte River Development Committee by Mayor McNichols, Joe Shoemaker and other citizens determined to clean up the S. Platte River and make it an asset to the community.
- GWF works in partnership with Denver and Adams and Arapahoe counties.
- Accomplishments include:
 - elimination of 250 piped sources of contamination
 - construction of 150 miles of trails on the S. Platte River and Cherry Creek
 - construction of 20 park and open space areas
- GWF's most recent project is construction Phase I of the Downtown Children's Playground in cooperation with the Lower Downtown Neighborhood Association at Speer and Wewatta. Additional funding came from the Opus Foundation, Denver, Great Outdoors Colorado, and the residents and businesses in the LoDo community. Phase II fundraising is underway.
- For 11 years, GWF has sponsored Venice on the Creek (formerly Punt the Creek) in the summer, and is now offering candlelit rides in the evenings.
- GWF sponsors the S. Platte River Environment Education program, SPREE, which brings 5,000 kids to the river annually, offering different experiences coordinated with classroom curriculum for each grade level.
- GWF is partnering with Denver and Urban Drainage & Flood Control District on construction of the 1.25 mile stretch of Cherry Creek Trail from Place Middle School at Oneida to the new Holly bridge. Project includes a 10-foot concrete trail on the south bank with safe passage under Monaco under Holly.
- Brighton and Colorado Springs have engaged GWF in planning efforts to help the communities protect and optimize the value their waterways.

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- GWF's 25-year vision includes extension of the S. Platte trail 200 miles to Julesburg.
- Jurisdictions and groups of people around the country seek out GWF for help in forming similar local partnerships.

Kim Bailey, Manager, Denver Parks & Recreation, said the GWF is an excellent model for public-private partnerships. Parks & Recreation has several other valuable partnerships, as described in the attached table. Ideally, she said, every park would have an advocacy group, such as the City Park Alliance, Civic Center Conservancy, Friends & Neighbors of Washington Park, and the Cheesman Park Advocacy group.

Councilwoman Robb asked if there are any groups that give money for on-going maintenance of a specific park. Mr. Shoemaker replied that GWF does not for two reasons: 1) it is the public's land; and 2) it is difficult to raise funds from individuals and foundations for maintenance of public property. Ms. Bailey agreed, adding that these partnerships are not always about money. Some partnerships are about sweat equity, with more hands-on involvement in the park maintenance. The department is also encouraging endowments for on-going maintenance of a specific parks or parks in general.

Mr. Shoemaker indicated he is available to talk to anyone trying to create a partnership. He can be reached at www.GreenwayFoundation.org or 303-455-7109.

2. Parks & Recreation on-call contracts

Kim Bailey, Tom Hawkey, and Kelly Marlin of the Department of Parks & Recreation discussed how on-call contracts work and how the department uses them.

The usual contract process takes 4-6 months to get a contractor on the job. On-call contracts, which are put out to bid, provide a mechanism to have contractors ready to work as needed on smaller projects without having to go through the full contracting process. An on-call contractor can have a number of sub-contractors under its "umbrella", and a number of these can be working at any one time. If the umbrella contract expires, any active sub-contractors continue their work.

The department currently has three construction on-call contracts and several design on-calls, and these contracts overlap so that not all expire at the same time. Individual projects under on-call construction contracts are limited to \$200,000. On-call design projects are generally smaller.

One design contract recently expired, as planned in order to re-bid it, involve more contractors and spread the work among more companies. Sub-contractors are continuing to work on their projects, and there is no break in service due to the expiration. Some projects have been impacted by organizational changes and loss of staff, but the department is now close to being fully staffed. All Parks & Recreation Department contracts are monitored by BeeGee Brem.

The list of capital projects includes about 400 projects. Each year, about 15 to 20 are added to the list. Each project takes at least 18 months start to finish, so projects are added faster than they can be completed.

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3. Creative Space survey: www.artspacedenver.org

Ginger White, Economic Specialist with the Denver Office of Cultural Affairs (DOCA) and Harriett Hogue, Denver County Cultural Council (DCCC), discussed the Creative Space survey, which is a follow-up to the Space Matters Report from the Mayor's Task Force on Creative Spaces.

As some areas of town become more popular, artists are priced out of their spaces; displaced by redevelopment; or conflict with new residents. Finding affordable space is a large problem for artists and arts-related businesses. DOCA and DCCC developed the survey instrument to obtain a better understanding and more qualitative data about the types of spaces needed by various types of artists and arts-related businesses, such as galleries, and what would be affordable to them.

This is a "smart survey" designed to be taken on-line. The questions that come up are based on the prior responses. It is also available in hardcopy. The survey went live on-line on July 25 and closes September 18. As of August 3, responses had been received from 214 artists and 162 arts/culture organizations and businesses. Final results will be available in October and will be made available to realtors and developers.

The Space Matters process also identified a problem for Denver's Tier III (DCCC) organizations. The ordinance requires that to be eligible for DCCC funding, at least 51% of an organization's performances must be in Denver. Many of these groups are having a problem finding suitable, affordable performance space in Denver. This provision of the ordinance should be re-evaluated.

Ms. Hogue said that the redevelopment plans for the larger reuse projects, such as Stapleton, Gates, and Health Sciences Center, included an arts and culture component that consisted of at least a sentence or two about the need for this type of space. The survey will help gather the data needed to better define the need, and future plans can include more specific information.

Councilwoman Lehmann suggested the following:

- Distribute the information to all chambers of commerce and developer organizations.
- Organize a tour to show developers and others the kinds of spaces that do work.
- Many of our new "mixed-use" developments have empty spaces on the ground floor where retail is supposed to be. Artists, galleries or performance groups might be an interim use.
- DOCA should work with Community Planning & Development on neighborhood plans.
- Schools that are closed have performance and other spaces that could be utilized.

Ms. White is working with the Office of Economic Development on a neighborhood business development plan.

Councilwoman Madison said it is most essential that the local artists complete the survey. She noted that even artists and businesses that bought their property can not afford to keep it

Ms. Hogue said that council members often receive information or hear about buildings, such as schools, churches, commercial space, that might be available. This information should be passed on to DOCA.

Gretchen Williams, Council Legislative Services, 08-11-07