



Public Amenities Committee
Meeting Summary

Wed. April 9, 2008 10:30 a.m. Conference Room 391

Members Present: **Lehmann, Madison, Robb**
Members Absent: **Johnson**
Other Council Present: **López**

- Appointments to Commission on Cultural Affairs
 - DCCC 2008 Grants Applications Report
 - WheelFun Concession Agreement
 - Playground Master Plan Update
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1. **Appointments to the Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs**

Committee Action

The Committee approved the Mayor's nomination of Lori Fox and Yolanda Ortega to the Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs for terms expiring 8-30-10.

Summary of Discussion

Anthony Aragon, Mayor's Director of Boards and Commissions, introduced the Mayor's nominees for appointment to the Commission on Cultural Affairs. This commission is responsible for providing advice and input to the Director of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs issues relating to arts and cultural affairs.

Lori Fox is Director of Government and Public Affairs for United Airlines. She said it is fitting that UAL have a position on the Commission. UAL is a long-time sponsor and official carrier for the Denver Center for Performing Arts; has a new relationship with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra; and was the first corporate sponsor of the Clyfford Still Museum. Ms. Fox said she is personally very involved in the arts, as is her family. She and her husband met doing theatre work; their children, 3 and 6 year olds, are into contrasting and complimentary colors. She is looking forward to serving.

Yolanda Ortega currently works on student judicial affairs at Metro State College, where she started the Latino Poetry Club. Her resume includes musician, performance artist, La Raza, Clínica Tepeyac, Su Teatro, Colorado Council on the Arts, and many other pursuits. She is excited to see Denver emerging as an arts center, and her main concern is creating access for different communities and emerging artists. She is excited about serving on the Commission.

Councilwoman Robb mentioned the idea of creating a Denver Cultural Center in Civic Center and said she hopes both Ms. Fox and Ms. Ortega become involved in that discussion.

Councilwoman Madison said these are two wonderful candidates, noting of Ms. Fox that anyone who can set high tea should be on the Commission on Cultural Affairs, a reference to UAL's high tea for Council earlier this week.

Councilwoman Lehmann said these are outstanding people, and she is proud that Denver has such people willing to serve the community.

2. DCCC 2008 Grants Applications Report

Jane Potts, Program Manager for the 11-member Denver County Cultural Council (DCCC), the body created by City Council to administer Denver's Tier III funds from the Scientific & Cultural Facilities District, told the Committee that the grant application deadline was February 28, as it is every year. DCCC received 92 valid applications (two of the 94 received were disqualified because the organizations did not meet the requirement that a majority of the activity be in Denver). Other information included:

- 6 of the 92 are first-time applicants
- 15 organizations that applied in 2007 did not apply in 2008
 - some missed the deadline
 - some smaller ones thought the application too extensive for the amount of grant money
 - some had a change on the board or in the office and were not aware of the opportunity
 - two thought they wouldn't do enough in Denver in 2008 and were unaware of the 24-month rule
 - one totally moved to another county
- 2007 grant funds = \$1,617,313
- 2008 grant funds = \$1,805,887
- DCCC's remaining schedule for grant review is
 - Interviews April 15, April 29, and May 6
 - Final review May 13
 - Final decisions on awards May 20
- This was first year of on-line grant application; it was well received.
- DCCC sets aside funds each year for technical assistance

3. Parks & Recreation – Wheelfun Concession Agreement

Committee Action

The Committee approved filing the concession agreement with Wheelfun to provide paddle boats, bikes and food & beverage at Washington Park, City Park (no bikes until approval by the neighborhoods), and Berkeley (boats only), with the caveat that the agreement actually contains language requiring neighborhood support before the Manager of Parks & Recreation allows expansion into other parks.

Summary of Discussion

Fred Weiss, Finance & Administration Director, said that during 2007, Wheelfun did a pilot project in Washington Park. Sloan's Lake Park was originally included, but the neighborhood objected and the proposal was withdrawn. Based on the success at Washington, the Department and the vendor decided to expand in 2008.

The proposed 3-year agreement includes two 2-year options at the Manager's discretion. The City is

guaranteed 12% of the gross receipts or a minimum of \$2,500 per site per season.

Councilman López asked how parks are chosen. Mr. Weiss said that the concessionaire will look at the level of activity in the park, since he is not providing a destination activity. This is a business. If he thinks he can make it work financially, he might request to expand into other parks. The agreement states that the Manager can add locations. This language was included because it might make sense to add Stapleton Central Park once the City takes ownership. Other parks might also be added as a result of requests from the concessionaire and agreement of the neighborhood.

Councilwoman Robb asked if the contract actually states that neighborhoods must agree. Mr. Weiss will check with the attorneys about adding that language before the bill is filed. If not, Committee may reconsider its support.

Councilwoman Madison asked if the swan boats at City Park Lake will remain. Mr. Weiss replied that those belong to KM Concessions, which is talking to Wheelfun about buying the swan boats.

4. Playground Master Plan Update

Summary of Discussion

Pam Schooley, Parks & Recreation (P&R) Planner, presented an overview of the master plan process and findings. The plan should be completed by the end of May.

The last round of playground updates was in 1993. Several things have changed since that time, including a growing population; adoption of the Game; advent of Denver Public Schools' Learning Landscape program; and changing expectations. P&R has traditionally planned and funded playgrounds in a "one size fits all" method, which is generally no longer accepted.

The purposes of undertaking the Playground Master Plan were to:

- evaluate the existing playground system;
- set a community vision consistent with Game Plan;
- identify the need within Denver;
- set design guidance;
- describe typology of play spaces; and
- suggest strategies for implementation.

Councilwoman Lehmann is a member of the advisory council that was created. An inventory of playgrounds was compiled. A neighborhood needs survey was conducted. Focus groups consisting of residents and staff were utilized.

Denver has 139 playgrounds, and the system is growing. The typical life of a playground is 12 -15 years. Denver's oldest playground is 25; 38% are over 15 years old. P&R is able to renovate 2-4 playgrounds per year at a cost of about \$200,000 each with its Capital Improvement Program.

The survey, with 650 responses, revealed that people take their kids to playgrounds at least once per week; most kids up to 12 years of age are accompanied by an adult; and most people walk to the playground.

The vision of a successful playground created through the process is:

- Home of the Free Range Kid!
- Lots of people – of all ages – having a great time.
- THE place to go in the community.
- Changeable, attractive, interesting spaces full of color, music and sounds.
- Play spaces full of choices and unpredictability.

Policies regarding Denver's play areas are:

- The right to play.
- Accessibility and walkability; some play space within 6 blocks of every home.
- Connected parks and open space.
- Variety of usable play areas and compelling destinations.
- Access to Nature and urban wildlife, protection of natural resources.
- Sustainability/Ecologically appropriate; maintain/respect natural features.
- Activity is the basis for design; play settings reflect community needs.
- Site specific and context sensitive design, including art.
- Determined by community involvement.
- Maintenance standards; involve maintenance personnel in design
- Adequate funding and resources.
- Provide for change over time.

The discussion included that supplemental funding is needed, perhaps some from the healthcare industry. The bond program includes \$200,000 for playgrounds. This master plan can serve as a guide for the budget process.

Denver wants to move beyond “one size fits all” and look at different types of playgrounds. There are more types of play equipment than the manufactured play equipment that has been in use for several years. Important features include things other than the actual equipment, such as inviting entrances, pathways, water, sand, and features for manipulative play.

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4-15-08