



Public Amenities Committee
Meeting Summary

Wed. July 23, 2008 10:30 a.m. Conference Room 391

Members Present: Lehmann, Johnson, Madison
Members Absent: Robb
Other Council Present: Faatz

Agenda: Introductions of Parks & Recreation Staff
 Amend license agreement for Venice on the Creek
 Parks & Recreation Communications Plan
 Forestry: Rules & Regulations and Notices

1. Parks & Recreation: Introduction of Staff Members

Angela Casias, Parks & Recreation Liaison to City Council, introduced the following staff members:

- Joe Lovell, GIS analyst, who has been on the job about two months.
- Ashley DeLaup, Wildlife Ecologist, a new position which Ashley has held for a month.
- Corinna Lujan, a five-year veteran promoted to Executive Assistant in the manager's office and liaison to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.

2. Parks & Recreation: Amend license agreement for Venice on the Creek

Committee Action

The Committee approved amending the license agreement with The Greenway Foundation regarding its operation of Venice on the Creek. The proposed amendments would streamline the auditing and review process for the concessionaire.

Summary of Discussion

Jeff Shoemaker, The Greenway Foundation, said the Foundation started making improvements on Cherry Creek near Lawrence Street in 1995 in order to provide rides in punts, flat-bottomed boats. Originally, the operation was called Punt the Creek, but the name was changed later. The Foundation hires about 20 high school and college kids each summer to run the operation and steer the punts, which now can go clear down to Confluence Park. It was not intended to be, nor is it, a money-making endeavor. The Foundation actually subsidizes the venture. The idea was to enhance the creek with landscaping, trails, and ramps, and celebrate our waterway, the birthplace of Denver.

Fred Weiss, Director of Administration & Finance, described the proposed changes in the license agreement, all of which have been approved by Risk Management and the Auditor:

- Remove requirement for quarterly reports;
- Change the requirement for annual financial statements prepared by a certified public accountant to an annual statement prepared by the concessionaire if requested by the City.

- Clarify that the Concessionaire must allow access to its books at the City's request.
- Remove the subrogation requirement from the auto insurance section.
- Remove the requirement for specific watercraft coverage.

3. Parks & Recreation Communications Plan

Committee Action

The Committee was generally pleased, but noted the plan is still a work in progress.

Summary of Discussion

Jill McGranahan, Director of Marketing & Communications, outlined the communications plan. She will present the plan at InterNeighborhood Cooperation on September 12. The following table summarizes the types of outreach and notification for each level in the hierarchy of plans and actions. The planner and/or other staff determine the level through conversations with the City Council representative and the relevant neighborhood organizations.

Hierarchy Level	Outreach – Notice - Communications
Minimum Level	City Council notification through Council Liaison
	Information sheet to relevant RNOs 2 weeks prior to meeting
	Flyers to neighbors, schools, churches
	Community Calendar on DenverGov.org
	Post at nearest recreation center(s)
	Post on DPR Planning home page
	Post on YourHub under Government Listings
	Notify all city staff who need to know
Intermediate Level (i.e., full or partial park design; park master plan; minor policy change)	ALL OF THE ABOVE PLUS:
	Flyer distribution at INC meeting
	YourHub article
	RNO presentations & information distribution
	Press release to all or selected local newspapers
	Post on DenverGov home page
	Notify Office of Neighborhood Relations
Highest Level (i.e., regional park master plan; major program change; major policy change)	ALL OF THE ABOVE PLUS:
	Mailing from City to GIS-identified list, working with planner on impacted communities
	Ad in Denver Daily Journal
	Press release to all contacts
	Post on DenverGov home page
	Collect public comments through a specific date
	Laminated signs posted around project area
	Mailings to stakeholders list
	Post at nearby schools (seasonal)

	Post at nearby libraries
	Notice to other targeted groups
	Email all relevant internal staff

Councilwoman Lehmann noted that most council members have email newsletters that go out at the first of each month. Information on meetings for projects needs to be available for those newsletters. She also said that Parks & Recreation needs to develop a public service campaign ensure people know that they are responsible for the maintenance of street trees, that there are preferred street tree species, that permits are required and that licensed contractors will obtain the required permits.

4. Forestry: Rules & Regulations for Administrative Citations, and Notices

Committee Action

The Committee requested follow-up on the issues raised concerning financial assistance.

Summary of Discussion

Jude O'Connor, Director of Natural Resources/City Forester, and Jill McGranahan, Director of Marketing & Communications, briefed the Committee on the process of developing rules and regulations (R&R) for Administrative Citations. Council adopted an ordinance providing for Forestry to employ Administrative Citations, which have proven effective for other agencies in gaining compliance. The schedule for development and adoption is:

- Forestry has drafted R&R, which may be viewed after July 30 at www.denvergov.org/Forestry.
- The public may comment on the draft will be taken through at least Oct. 9.
- A comment form will be on the website.
- The Parks & Recreation Advisory Board will hold a public hearing on the R&R on Oct. 9.

Forestry is also working to create more awareness of the importance of stewardship of trees and of the ordinances. There will be a series of articles in the newspapers, and radio spots, and forestry plans to nominate a champion tree as one of Denver's 150 to be celebrated on the City's 150th birthday.

Councilwoman Faatz talked about the confusion around financial assistance, which is not available to anyone who qualifies, as was stated at Council when the ordinance providing for Forestry to employ Administrative Citations was being considered. The funds are only available within certain "Focus Neighborhoods". An interest-free payment plan is available, but only if a city contractor is used. Additionally, trees in backyards are apparently not eligible for assistance.

Pete Zoschg, Forestry, said that in order to qualify for assistance, the person must meet income requirements because it is a federal funding program. Backyard trees generally are not eligible because the tree in need of work or to be removed must be one that impacts the public right-of-way or is a threat to the health of other trees.

Councilwoman Faatz asked that the assistance program be revisited and improved. She would like a program that is citywide and not just in certain neighborhoods. She would like the City to control the eligibility, not the federal government.

Councilwoman Robb asked how many backyard trees are cited annually. She also asked how the City contractors are selected.

Ms. O'Connor explained the process by which Purchasing Dept. advertises for contractors. It is a very competitive bid process. She said Forestry also licenses tree contractors to help ensure that they use good practices, have insurance, and know the City's ordinances. There are about 125 licensed contractors.

Mr. Zoschg distributed the revised Notice of Violation forms, per Council's request. The members generally thought the new forms were marginally more user-friendly and informative.

*Gretchen Williams
Council Legislative Services
07-29-08*