



Public Amenities Committee Summary

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

10:30 a.m.

Conference Room 391

Committee Members Present: Lehmann, Chair; Madison, Vice-Chair; Johnson

Agenda:

- 1) *Appointments to Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs*
 - 2) *Denver Public Library – branch renovation schedule*
 - 3) *Parks & Recreation – River North Park Plan, Phase I*
 - 4) *Parks & Recreation – Project Database on Denvergov.org*
 - 5) **ADDED ITEM:** *Parks & Recreation – Human Resource Division reorganization*
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1. **Appointments to Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs**

Committee Action

The Committee approved the appointments of Gwinavere Johnston; Sandra Reichborn-Kjennerud; Gillian Silverman; Kent Talmage-Bowers; and Steve Sander, ex-officio member representing Denver Office of Economic Development, to the Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs for terms expiring January 31, 2012.

Committee Discussion

Erin Trapp, Denver Office of Cultural Affairs, commented that each art project has a public art process with a selection committee who evaluates the artwork for each location. Ms. Sandra Reichborn-Kjennerud, a candidate for the commission, said she was excited to work on the commission and that her background in interior design and art work will benefit her on this board.

2. **Denver Public Library - Branch Renovation Schedule**

Committee Discussion

Shirley Amore, Denver Public Library (DPL), stated the total bond package for the Central and branch library system is \$52 million which includes renovations at most libraries and construction of three new branch libraries. The funding is separate from the library's operating budget. Seven libraries are scheduled for major renovations – Decker, Hampden, Park Hill,

Ross-Cherry Creek, Woodbury, Bear Valley and Montbello. The branch closures are tentatively scheduled as follows:

- Decker, Hampden, Park Hill – February 16 to June 14, 2009
- Ross-Cherry Creek, Woodbury – June 15 to October 18, 2009
- Bear Valley, Montbello – October 19 to February 16, 2010

Susan Kotarba, DPL, stated that staff will be re-deployed to other locations which will allow the library to increase vacancy savings to meet the City's budget reduction requirements. Already vacant positions will be held and employees from the closed branches will be back-filled into some of the vacant positions. Replacements, repairs, and upgrades to buildings and life safety systems will occur at all locations which includes self-check equipment, automated handling sorter systems, fire protection and alarms, painting, carpet, furniture, etc. The citizens serviced by the closed libraries will be re-directed to nearby libraries where staffing will be increased to meet the higher demand.

Councilmember Lehmann asked the library staff to send information to the appropriate Council District representative where libraries are closing so that they could inform their constituents through newsletters. Ms. Amore said the information is on the city website at www.denverlibrary.org/bond, where citizens can find information on the list of improvements at the various library locations. For information on the entire list of citywide bond projects the public can visit www.denvergov.org/bondprojects. In addition, the libraries are selling green environmental bags for \$1 and their special programs such as "Fashion Night" and "Knitting for our Troops" have been very successful.

3. Parks & Recreation – River North Parks Plan, Phase I

Committee Discussion

Scott Robson, Parks & Recreation, said it has been a public process to create the vision for the South Platte River Greenway. A Steering Committee comprised of various city agency staff, developers, community representatives, Theaters & Arenas, RTD, National Western and the Greenway Foundation, have held two public meetings where 150 stakeholders attended. The meetings captured ideas about planning for the future that would include the urban nature of the greenway, water quality, pedestrian connections, and possibilities for connecting Globeville and Elyria-Swansea neighborhoods. The envisioning of the area also includes considerations on how to redevelop the Coliseum. This could mean building an outdoor theater, a retention pond that looks like an amenity, and a parking structure. Mike Anderson, Public Works, said there is an acre of land that could be developed as a retention pond and it would not be a problem in building since it would have to meet detention requirements. A similar development is the Denargo Market where pipes were moved and a wetland was created.

Jeff Shoemaker, Greenway Foundation, stated that landowners are committed to maximizing the potential of the water-way and they have every intention on respecting the environment at the same time they are building an enhanced greenway. Steve Gordon, Community, Planning & Development, said the planning for the South Platte River is the Greenway Master Plan and key recommendations are conceptual at this point because there is no funding attached to the planning. Mr. Robson said the goal is to be awarded a GOCO grant in March 2009 and

Legacy monies in 2010. Mr. Shoemaker said the Foundation is working with the Army US Corp of Engineers to seek other philanthropic avenues to get this work done. Mr. Robson outlined the key plan recommendations as follows:

- River Health: lay back existing bank slopes where feasible, increase riparian buffers for habitat and water quality, improve stormwater detention facility design.
- Parks & Open Spaces: improve and add activities to Globeville and Northside Parks; complete missing trails segments on east and west sides of the river, ensure a public river edge with streets and pedestrian promenades.
- Transportation & Roadways: relocate portions of Arkins Court and Ringsby Court, improve local streets with enhanced pedestrian connections and gateway features (pedestrian bridge).
- Regulatory & Funding Options: voluntary conservation easements and zoning setbacks, grants, land donations, and public-private partnerships, form a Greenway Development District to assess fees for open space acquisition and development.

Kevin Patterson, Parks & Recreation, said the agency is committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders for the revitalization of the South Platte River and that final recommendations would not proceed until Council has been briefed on the river planning and has had opportunity to comment. Councilmember Lehmann said she is happy to see future planning for this corridor and asked that these plans not be placed on a shelf and end up nowhere. She encouraged this planning process to be integrated with other planning taking place throughout the city.

4. Parks & Recreation – Project Database on DenverGov.org

Committee Discussion

Scott Robson and Gordon Robertson, Parks & Recreation, conducted an on-line demonstration for Denver citizens to view all the bond project planning and timeline for Parks & Recreation. The link can be found by going to www.denvergov.org, selecting the Parks & Recreation site, then selecting the link that says “planning and development”. The public will see a link on this page that says “view a current list of all planning projects here”. Mr. Robson stressed that this information does not reflect all bond projects of other departments’ only Parks & Recreation. The information shows who the contractor is, the scope of the project, and start and anticipated end dates. Councilmember Lehmann noted that Chantal Unfug from Parks & Recreation would be glad to meet with any Councilmembers regarding specific district questions. The Councilwoman suggested that this information could be scheduled to the Council Operations meeting.

5. ADDED ITEM: Parks & Recreation – Human Resource Division reorganization

Committee Discussion

Kevin Patterson, Parks & Recreation, reported that Career Service Authority (CSA) has worked with the agency to strategically evaluate how their administrative functions were operating and what they could do to be more cost effective and efficient. He met with the agency staff earlier this morning to announce that the section would be re-organized. There are currently 12 positions in this section. Under the new structure there will only be nine

positions, but ten are funded. The staff in these positions must re-apply for them. CSA will be posting the positions. Mr. Patterson stated that the positions will be funded by CSA and will be reporting to CSA directly in addition to being accountable on site to Parks & Recreation management. He stated that the decisions were not easy, but the Mayor and Cabinet supported these measures in an effort to prepare Parks & Recreation for the future in meeting its budget and demands for enhanced services. The restructuring and application processes will begin now through June 2009.

*Debra Bartleson
Legislative Services*