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## Public Amenities Committee Summary

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Wed. April 8, 2009

10:30 a.m.

Conference Room 391

**Committee Members Present:** Lehmann, Chair; Madison, Vice-Chair; Johnson  
**Other Council Present:** Nevitt, Robb

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*Agenda:*

1. *Introduction: Colorado Symphony Orchestra Executive Director*
  2. *Briefing: Dog Park Master Plan*
  3. *Update: Civic Center Projects and Plans*
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### 1. Introduction: Colorado Symphony Orchestra Executive Director

#### Committee Discussion

Jack Finlaw, Theatres & Arenas, introduced Mr. James Palermo, new Executive Director of the Colorado Symphony. Mr. Palermo said he's been employed with the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago for the past 14 years and has lots of experience working with diverse neighborhoods, ages, and cultural experiences. Working with the Grant Park Music Festival, he learned the importance of collaborating with the City's Parks & Recreation Department and he is looking forward to coordinating the arts and symphony with many of Denver's City agencies and community events.

### 2. Briefing: Dog Park Master Plan

#### Committee Discussion

Scott Robson, Parks & Recreation, said the goals and objectives for a Dog Park Master Plan (DPMP) are to encourage healthy relationships among dog owners, non-dog owners, and all park users. The DPMP will evaluate current dog parks, consider enforcement and design options, and help to answer the tough problems and questions regarding park open spaces and how to create sustainable environments. An Internal Technical Committee and an External Stakeholder Committee are currently being formed to help with city-wide partnerships and input into the DPMP process. Councilmember Madison was asked to be on the External Stakeholder Committee and two individuals from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board were asked to participate on this committee (Noel Copeland and Alexis Holdman).

David Marquardt, Parks & Recreation, stated that a public survey is being conducted and Denver citizens can participate online through the end of April to give feedback for the DPMP. As of Monday, April 6, more than 2600 people have responded to the survey. Early statistics show that:

- 86% support the need for more dog parks;
- Over 60% support a user fee to help pay for dog parks;
- Approximately 40% admitted to running their dogs off-leash illegally;
- Nearly 1 in 4 respondents have experienced conflict with an off-leash dog; and
- Over 500 respondents expressed interest in volunteering to help with these issues.

Councilmember Robb asked if the process will acknowledge damage to the parks and the operational costs of re-seeding them. Councilmember Nevitt suggested that the statistical information should be broken down further to get to other information. Mr. Robson said they are monitoring the operational costs now and that the survey did include a comments area where more feedback could be given from the respondent. There are six dog park locations now – Berkeley Park, Barnum Park, Fuller Park, Kennedy Soccer Complex, Green Valley Ranch East, and Stapleton Dog Park (see attached map). A new dog park project will begin construction in summer 2009 near the Skate Park called Railyard Dog Park. Mr. Marquardt added that not all dog park areas are fenced and that Parks & Recreation will be partnering with Public Works and Environmental Health to begin a social marketing campaign entitled “Keep It Clean (KIC)”.

Mr. Robson said Parks Rangers continue to enforce rules and have written approximately 200 citations in 2009. Most of the problems in the parks are related to dog off-leash and owners not picking up dog waste. Park Rangers work in pairs and on bike patrol which has proven to be an effective enforcement tool. Nancy Severson, Environmental Health, stated that citations explain the fines associated with the violation and that language in the citation tells the violator that if the fine is not paid it will be turned over to collections. Councilmember Madison asked that Parks staff consider all options when addressing the dog issues, including considering specific time periods in parks for dogs off-leash. Councilmember Nevitt encouraged working with Denver Public Schools (DPS) for utilizing areas for these needs. Mr. Robson said they are working with DPS and that they have concerns as well regarding dog issues. Councilmember Robb pointed out that Council is not suggesting that DPS provide areas where children play. Mr. Robson said they are planning a public outreach event at Commons Park to educate citizens about the importance of picking up dog waste, rules and regulations, and dog-off leash enforcement.

### **3. Update: Civic Center Projects and Plans**

#### Committee Discussion

Mark Bernstein, Parks & Recreation Planning, stated that the Civic Center Design Guidelines was a public process that spanned from February 2008 to March 2009. On March 17, 2009 the Landmark Preservation Commission approved the design guidelines that include preservation and rehabilitation, new elements to the South Garden and Central Gathering spaces, and adding park kiosks in the Central Gathering and Broadway Terrace areas. Objectives of the guidelines include:

- To provide parameters for materials, park structures such as kiosks, benches and signage-mass and scale for possible new elements and guidance for the rehabilitation of historic features and other improvements so they are consistent with the Park's historic character; and
- To serve as a supplement to the 2005 Park Master Plan providing criteria to evaluate all proposed improvements to Civic Center.

Councilmember Robb questioned what the plans were for placement of kiosks and the timing for the Broadway Terrace component. Mr. Bernstein noted that the Broadway Terrace project is part of the Better Denver Bond Project, but staff is still evaluating all funding sources and has determined there will be a request for proposal (RFP) process included in the planning. He explained that nothing is set in stone and that plans for the Civic Center are conceptual at this point. The timing and the final placement of the kiosks will go through a public process to help determine those decisions. He noted that early designs show the possibility of three kiosks to be located in the Central Gathering and Broadway Terrace areas. The Greek Theater Rehabilitation project (\$5 million), Voorhies Memorial (\$2 million), and the Broadway Terrace (\$2.5 million) are all bond funded and part of \$42 million from the Better Denver Bond funding going into the Civic Center Park Improvement projects (see attachment). Amy Mueller, Mayor's Office, explained that improvements to the Civic Center will impact other festivals at the park and that timing for construction and these events are critical. Mr. Bernstein is meeting with event organizers to make sure they are aware of the City's plans. Mr. Bernstein said that Phase 1 would begin this year with obtaining a contractor for the projects.

Derek Brown, Facilities Maintenance & Planning, said the plan for the McNichols Building is to reuse the facility and to relocate the Treasury Division to the Webb Building. A request for information (RFI) was released last year to solicit input for uses of the building. Suggestions include office space and restaurants. The City is looking at sustainability and creating lively areas. Community input will be built into the final RFP and General Services will be responsible for the RFP process. Ms. Mueller said they are monitoring all funding sources including federal stimulus monies. This includes funding from the "Save America's Treasures" bill and other green and energy assistance funding possibilities.

Lindy Eichenbaum-Lent, Civic Center Conservancy, added their mission is to restore, enhance, and activate Civic Center. Their core functions include event planning, public engagement, fundraising, and design/advocacy. She noted that keeping the park activated helps to keep the park safe. There are no City funds going into the Conservancy, stated Ms. Eichenbaum-Lent, but capital fundraising campaigns will be coordinated to help with the improvements. Recently, the Downtown Denver Partnership extended their assistance by partnering with the Civic Center Conservancy to provide maintenance crews to the park which will be paid in part by the Partnership, Parks & Recreation, and other matching funding sources. She announced that a concert is planned for June 13 and the successful Farmers Market will be open from June through September. Councilmember Lehmann supports the goals for Civic Center Park and thanked everyone for their work in moving the project forward.