



Public Amenities Committee Summary

Wed. April 22, 2009

10:30 a.m.

Conference Room 391

Committee Members Present: Lehmann, Madison, Johnson

Other Council Present: Hancock, Lopez, Nevitt

Agenda: Recreation Center Task Force Recommendations

1. Recreation Center Task Force Recommendations

Kevin Patterson, Manager, Denver Parks & Recreation (DPR); Dody Erikson, Deputy Manager for Recreation and Facility; Chantal Unfug, Policy Adviser to the Manager; and Chris Dropinski, Green Play Consulting; and Dr. Urbana, member of the Task Force; presented the recommendations of the Recreation Center Task Force.

Summary of Core Recommendations:

- Establish a tiered system of centers (see list at end of summary):
 - Neighborhood – serves primarily immediate area with basic amenities
 - Local – serves a slightly larger geographic area with a broader array of amenities
 - Regional – serves city-wide with larger facilities and more amenities (indoor pool, state of the art fitness equipment, etc.); goal of being open 7 days a week.
- Engage local communities to guide transition to the new model and on-going programming
- Embrace partners and other service providers as part of the DPR system.
- Set fees based on the amenities available at each center.

Key points in presentation:

- Current system is not sustainable into the future.
- Need to establish targets for all centers and for all partners (non-profits or others working with DPR) for consistent baseline programming.
- Need to develop City-wide strategic programming for youth, seniors, and people with disabilities.
- Three pilot sites will be established before the end of this year.
- Local Community Advisory Committees (CAC) will work with DPR to tailor the programming focus for each center to meet the unique and diverse needs of each center.
- Transportation options need to be arranged, working with the Denver Safe Routes to Schools initiative; this might include shuttles, bus routes, bike and pedestrian trails.

- Fees at the various tiers will reflect the level of amenities and programming; today fees are consistent across the system, no matter the services at an individual center.
- Youth will have a \$5 annual membership; fees for seniors and special needs will be increased but remain lower than adult fees; adults fees will increase.
- A variety of payment options and tighter controls will be developed.
- All fee types to include income-based assistance; need to develop a less intrusive method of administering this assistance.
- Need to seek new revenue generating activities, i.e., vending, concessions, room rentals, and create structure to retain that revenue in DPR for recreation services.
- Need to better utilize partners to enhance services rather than duplicating, and formalize agreements with them.

Key points in Committee discussion

Councilman Nevitt was concerned that certain centers do not fit neatly into the hierarchy and need to be treated differently. While small physically, the Martin Luther King Center, with its therapy pool, and the Platte Park Senior Center actually function as regional facilities, and that must be maintained. These are both listed as neighborhood centers. Mr. Patterson agreed, and said DPR will always be asking questions about the users.

Councilwoman Johnson talked about the community meetings (21 meetings; 1600 people attending; hundreds of comments submitted) and asked what was changed in the recommendations as a result. Mr. Patterson replied:

- Reduced the number of categories of centers to three.
- Expanded the partnership option to any center rather than certain ones.
- Allowed for partners to provide a range of services from whole center management to offering one class at a center.

Councilman Hancock stressed the importance of formalizing an oversight structure to ensure equity and the growth or change of amenities at a center as the surrounding population changes. He also said the privatization versus partnership issue must be addressed. Dr. Urbana agreed, and said it was made clear to the Task Force that people do not want to privatize their recreation system. Partnerships are necessary, but with clear controls. Mr. Patterson added that we don't want to duplicate services but instead provide more services to more people. Ms. Unfug asked Council members to let DPR know if there are any potential partners in their districts. These could be non-profit organizations or foundations or other entities that might want to partner with DPR to provide a program.

Councilman Lopez said there is a huge gap in recreation services in the west part of town. The Westwood area has no recreation center. One of the neighborhoods' goals is to have a real city recreation center and not depend totally on non-profits to provide services.

Councilwoman Johnson said that not all seniors need a discount rate. There should be a campaign stressing that when seniors buy a full-priced (adult) membership, they help provide membership to a disadvantaged child.

Councilwoman Madison expressed concern that if non-profits run a center, the focus might change, making some users, like seniors or children, uncomfortable. Mr. Patterson responded that DPR would still be in charge in programming and coordinating all of the services.

Councilman Hancock asked if the department had run an analysis by applying the recommendations to an actual recreation center to determine what the savings could be. He said there needs to be an economic model that this works by an analysis of the bottom line. Mr. Patterson said if the recommendations are implemented, DPR could add 20% more hours across the system. He said they would try to do the analysis Councilman Hancock suggested.

Councilwoman Lehmann stressed that this is a new way of thinking, and that the department would start with a pilot program. DPR should update the Committee regularly.

Neighborhood Centers	Local Centers	Regional Centers
Ashland	Ashland Pool	Athmar
Aztlan	Central Denver (future)	Montbello
Barnum	Cook Park	Montclair
College View	Eisenhower	Rude
Globeville	Glenarm	Scheitler
Highland Senior Center	Green Valley Ranch	Stapleton (future)
Johnson	Harvard Gulch	Swansea (w/ enhancements)
La Alma	Harvey Park	Washington Park
Martin Luther King	Hiawatha Davis	
Platt Park Senior Center	La Familia	
St. Charles	Southwest	
Stapleton	20 th Street Gym	