MINUTES OF MARCH 2012 PRAB MEETING

Present: Navarro, Ewing, Twarogowski, Watson, Pryor, Picaso, Green, Hollis, Smink, Copeland,

Absent: Allen, April, Burton, Pachner

February minutes approved

First speaker, Dave Felice, stated his continued and vehement opposition to the policy on admission based events in public parks. Mr. Felice also submitted a typed public statement which will be added to the record. Mr. Felice stated, “...your chairperson has stated that the Advisory Board accepts the policy as written and that there would be no further discussion about policy. This is erroneous. In fact, this is precisely the forum, the time, and the body to re-examine this policy...” Mr. Felice called upon the board to rescind the current policy.

Second speaker, Jay Rust, of North Gilpin Street in Denver, voiced his concern regarding the proposed location of the new B-Cycle station at Washington Park and hopes that the planned station at Marion Parkway and Virginia Street perhaps be moved to an area with less traffic/activity.

Darrell Watson stated that he was misquoted by Dave Felice, and that the process and discussions regarding admission based events is open for public and board discussions, and went on to point out that amendments to the policy will be brought before the board on two occasions in the near future.

Lauri Dannemiller, Manager, introduced Jay Clark, the new Sales and Marketing director. He has been on the job for thirteen days, and has a background in professional sports organizations, nonprofits, and in the ski industry. He stated that he is happy to be here.

The flower bed planting plans for summer 2012 were distributed to members of the board. Discussion followed regarding beds that will not be planted, which may be maintained in their bare state due to budget restrictions. The department prioritized sites and funds. One change will include the discontinuation of the planting of “annuals” around building signage.

The department is looking for interns, perhaps horticulture or similar majors, who might want to help out during the summer. Also, Grow Local will help maintain seven beds. A department employee, Tina Meyers, is trying to ramp up a volunteer program to help maintain beds on an equitable and consistent basis.

Dan Smink asked if the city ever partners with nurseries, and Lauri responded that they’d consider all kinds of partnerships, but that the parks are restricted in allowing advertising, etc. which is often what partners look for.

Keith Pryor and Anne Green had questions about specific flower bed reductions in their districts. Lauri responded that the department tried to be as equitable as possible when reducing the number of flower beds across the districts. Anne asked what happens to the flowers at the greenhouse that won’t get
planted? Jill Wuertz, a department employee, replied that they have adjusted their planting and ordered a lighter supply of flowers in January.

Bob Finch gave an update on the outreach process for the Rules and Regulations updates and passed out the March 8th draft of the rules and regulations changes. He noted that starting Monday, the 30 day notice period before the next public meeting will start counting down. There are specific changes based on feedback from the subcommittee; these changes have to do with bicycle speed limits and length-of-leash laws. He’s meeting with Patrick Wheeler of the City Attorney’s office to discuss how enforceable such a leash law would be. Also, the bike speed limit could possibly be a city-wide rule and therefore not require signage everywhere.

Another concern is whether “do not sled” signs should be posted in areas where sledding is prohibited (staircases, parking lots, golf courses, etc.), or designate areas as “sledding ok”? Lauri said that she doesn’t foresee ticketing sledding children, but she concedes that the issue is more complex than anyone really expected.

Two areas of concern from city council regarding the new rules and regs; the council would like to see a significant outreach/education effort, especially regarding topics like feeding the wildlife. Another concern is whether the administration of citations won’t cost the department a significant amount of money.

Dan Smink noted that the 1993 version had a nice reference-able index, and he had hoped to see something similar in this version. Smink then asked if there was a major driving issue to this rules and regs update. Bob responded that the city attorney’s office found the organization of the document to be problematic. They purposely didn’t take on all issues at the present time, and saved some issues, such as commercial use and permitting, for a future update.

Noel Copeland asked about signage within parks that would have to change based on this update. Lauri responded that even if the regs are changed, they might not have the budget to update all the system’s signage right away.

Mary Ewing complimented the department on outreach, and wished them the best of luck in their future efforts. She voiced her request for a six foot leash limit.

Watson asked whether in section 4.4.3, we were creating a new standard. He was told that the goal of this exercise was to simply clean up the language and be more consistent with language use across policies.

Pryor also complimented the department on outreach and asked a point of clarification regarding the 45-day waiting period for public meetings. He also brought up the point that sled regulations might also impact cross-country skiers.

Bob Finch noted that one more subcommittee working group meeting would be necessary before fines and fees and other regulation changes are brought before the PRAB board in April.
Noel asked whether it was the department’s intent to stop sledding and cross-country skiing “and if so, are you nuts? That doesn’t compute.” Lauri responded that she has no intention of enforcing the rules in anywhere but the most dangerous areas.

Anne Green sought clarification on the size of signage and whether the definition of a sledding device could also include other human powered devices, such as snowboards, skateboards, Segways, etc.

Picaso noted that in the past, Ruby Hill was a designated sledding facility, and wondered if there was a chance the department would go back to having designated parks for sledding? Lauri responded that she’d have to learn more about that situation before responding. Ron Picaso also asked whether park rangers would be getting involved with intoxicated park guests, and Lauri responded that rangers would do the “little” enforcements that police don’t want to get involved with, but that police would likely be called in a situation like the one Picaso had described.

Hollis asked whether this project was driven by the city attorney’s office. Bob responded that the changes were being driven by Parks and Rec.

Valerie Kerns, senior legislative aide for Councilperson Nevitt related the story of a Denver Urban Gardens event that took place at Ruby Hill park approximately two years ago. She noted that despite over 3,000 people in attendance, the park was able to adequately accommodate heavy vehicle traffic. At that event, only one side of the available parking was used. Public Works estimates that approximately 800 cars could be parked on both sides of the road, plus another 100 cars in the central lot and another 60-70 cars in the Pavilion lot.

Navarro asked whether the playing fields could be used as parking lots, but Valerie said that this wasn’t possible. Picaso inquired as to whether the traffic impact to Santa Fe and Federal had been discussed. Valerie explained that an upcoming neighborhood meeting on March 20th at Godsman Elementary would likely bring up those traffic and other concerns as well.

Mary Ewing stated that she remembered the DUG event quite differently, and that she indeed had trouble with parking. Ewing said that she was concerned because that was only a fraction of the traffic they will be expecting if the alcohol policy passes.

Eleni Sarris spoke regarding Denver’s B-Cycle program. She introduced Peri Barnett, CEO of Denver Bike Sharing, the nonprofit organization that runs the B-Cycle stations. Their mission is to replace the “last mile” of transit with a bicycle. Their hope is that bicycles will replace cars as the transportation method of choice for those travelling less than five miles. The program will begin its third season this month. The nonprofit has benefitted greatly from grants from Piton, Ken Gart, and the Walton Family Foundation.

Much board discussion followed concerning the proposed B-Cycle station at Marion Parkway and Virginia (the same spot that Jay Rust had expressed concerns about during the public comments section of this meeting). The board agreed that this placement needs to be revisited, as that is an extremely busy intersection already. Also, the board was very concerned about B-Cycle taking a chunk of “green” and paving over it; Darrell Watson suggested that Washington Park has plenty of existing hard scape
where a station might fit. This would also be a concern for B-Cycle’s proposed station at the Hungarian Freedom Park.

It was noted that while Denver Bike Sharing is a nonprofit, the B-Cycle company that operates the bike stations is a for-profit enterprise.

Dan Smink leaves.

Keith Pryor stated that he appreciates the program and wants to see it continue and flourish.

Due to the late hour, Darrell Watson chose to not have a presentation on the City Park Playground.

The meeting was adjourned.