MINUTES OF MAY 10, 2012 BOARD MEETING  **DRAFT**

Board members present: Sharp, Sandos, Green, Twarogowski, McCoin, Hollis, Pryor, Ewing, Coleman, Watson, Robinson, Picasso, Allen, April, Pachner, Smink.

5:35 Meeting called to order

April meeting minutes approved

Lauri Dannemiller gives the Manager’s Report. She reports that $4 million will need to be cut from the Parks & Rec budget for the upcoming year, which amounts to a 10% reduction. Lauri said that it seems difficult to achieve the reduction through “a thousand cuts,” and suggests that increasing revenues and “vacancy savings” (not hiring for open jobs) will help. The Economic Committee of PRAB will meet with the department in the coming weeks and will return to the June board meeting to discuss various proposals. The new budget won’t be officially adopted until the fall of 2012.

The Trust for Public Land is spearheading a project to name the park that they will donate at 13th & Xenia.

On June 2nd, city pools will open.

Due to the impending drought, Denver Water has asked that PNR reduce the amount of water used in parks, from 30” of water per acre to 27” of water per acre. PNR will save approx. $150,000 per inch of water.

Pryor asked if there has been any further discussion on a more secure funding source for PNR.

Lauri responded that the Mayor has not decided and/or has not made that information available. The budget gets adopted on the 1st Monday in November; if a question re: funding source makes it on the November ballot, then PNR might be able to reverse cutbacks.

Watson noted that he would like a letter from the 13th & Xenia neighborhood association regarding the naming. He wants evidence of a documented public process.

Pryor noted that one of his “champion” causes is the plight of the fountains. He wanted to know what plans, if any, they had to turn the fountains on/off.

Lauri responded that they have no plans to alter the current fountain schedule, and noted that some had already been turned on.

President Watson opened the floor to public comments.

Jay Rust, President of the Neighbors and Friends of Cheesman Park, wanted to thank Scott Gilmore, Juan Marsh, and Gil Torres for their meetings and ongoing work within the park. They have some irrigation problems, but all in all Jay believes that PNR is doing a great job in the park. He also wanted to thank the board for their public engagement process. He noted some inconsistencies in the rules and regulations updates (16.5.3, 16.1.1, 16.1.5) re: bikes not being allowed anywhere but roads.
Walter Young, a neighbor of Cheesman, spoke next regarding his concern about homeless people within parks and the commercialization of public parks. He notes that public parks are the last public spaces left. He’s also concerned about the alcohol policy being discriminatory; individuals cannot bring beer into parks, but they can be sold beer in parks.

Leland Critt spoke next. He said that he owns a key location near Arkins Court, and is concerned because his property will lose significant street frontage with the Denargo market plan, but hopes to upgrade and help the park.

Watson concluded public comments.

Bob Finch presented next, and Watson asked that he address the concerns previously voiced during the public comments section. Bob noted that bicycles are allowed on some trails, unless specifically prohibited as they are in Cheesman. Finch also noted that ordinances trump regulations, so if there is an ordinance banning camping or something else, that would override park regulations. Other changes, should they be necessary, to the rules and regulations can be made by PRAB recommendation and Lauri’s approval.

April asked if we are also voting on fees. Finch replied that yes, they are in Attachment B, and also city council would need to approve the fees.

Watson asked about the timeline of the rules and regulations update. Finch replied that next, the changes will go back to the lawyers, then to Lauri for adoption. Ordinance change must go before city council. The new rules will get adopted hopefully within the July/August timeframe.

April asked if there will be another chance to talk about the changes, and Watson replied that after tonight’s vote, there will be no more discussion.

April then asked about specific fines and fines for concealed weapons. He stated that he was trying to make a point, that the fees for carrying an illegal, say, chicken into the park is the same fine as carrying a concealed weapon into the park.

Watson asked for a vote to be called. Ewing moved that the vote take place, and that move was seconded by Robinson. Watson opened the board discussion.

Pryor noted that he sees April’s point about the fines. He suggested that we use these proposed fees as a baseline and then adjust as necessary.

Ewing said that she begs to differ with Keith; she’s happy with the fees as they’ve been discussed, and that it’s time to vote “straight up.”

Hollis added that these fines were meant as a deterrent, not the be-all, end-all punishment for the crime.
Jason Robinson said that some of these more egregious violations have other (criminal) repercussions.

April responded that his point wasn’t to say we should go over each and every fine. He feels we’re not making the proper statements.

Watson called for a vote on the matter, and there were 15 voting for the adoption of the new rules and regulations, one person opposed.

With the changes passed, Watson opened the floor to discussion on alcohol in Ruby Hill and Fleming Mansion.

Valerie Kerns, legislative aide reported on the public process that has occurred prior to the vote. She notes that Council President Nevitt, or a member of his staff, have been present at the February, March, and April meetings. They also hosted a neighborhood meeting at Godsman Elementary in March. They conducted outreach to the Platte Park People’s Association, the Wash Park Neighbors Association, and the College View Neighborhood Association.

Dave Felice, resident living near City Park, gave a statement regarding living next to a park that allows for alcohol sales, and the problems he’s had with intoxicated concertgoers.

Tom Sharf, President of Swallow Hill Music, gave a statement that he respectfully disagrees with Mr. Felice, and in addition would like to point out that you can enjoy the music without paying admission.

Larry Ambrose, President of INC, VP of Sloane’s Lake Neighborhood Association, gave a statement expressing his concern over the commercialization of Denver’s parks. He stated that they aren’t convinced that allowing alcohol sales is the best way to activate Ruby Hill Park.

Chris Gibson, a Ruby Hill resident (not speaking on behalf of the neighborhood association) suggested that perhaps the INC’s concept of a “festival park” might be Ruby Hill. He said that the INC hadn’t communicated with his neighborhood association and don’t speak on their behalf.

Scott Bolt, representing the President of the Godsman Neighborhood Association, asked whether there might be a probationary period during which the pros/cons of alcohol sales would become evident.

Sharona Thompson, a resident of Ruby Hill, stated her support of the change and hopes that Ruby Hill will gain the vibrancy of Washington Park.

Brandi Moe-Quivas gave a statement that she came simply to learn more.

Jeff Shoemaker, Greenway Foundation, underscored that they are not planning on programming the park every night of the week, and that the schedule is determined by PNR.

Lauri Dannemiller added that it is at the manager’s discretion how many events will happen in the park in response to Scott Bolt’s concerns.
Jay Rust of Cheesman Park Neighbors said that they support the comments Larry Ambrose made. He said that they are gravely concerned about adding alcohol to parks, though he noted that the Fleming House is a different situation, and they’ll support that measure.

Kathleen Rust declined to speak.

Scott Bolt pointed out that alcohol is already in the park; people bring it in.

Allen asked whether there is a point where we can stop/reverse the policy if it isn’t working.

Watson replied that the manager (Lauri) can review the policy.

Lauri added that if the change doesn’t seem to be going well, she would consider repealing the change, taking directions from the neighborhood.

April said that he’d like to know Conor Hollis’ thoughts.

Hollis stated that he’s been a resident of Overland Park for over six years and supports the change. He notes that if there are more venue options, then perhaps well-used parks like City and Washington might get a reprieve. To make amenities available to each neighborhood is important.

Sandos asked how many admission based events were permitted events.

Lauri replied none.

Sandos asked whether arrest records are kept, especially as they relate to alcohol.

Lauri replied that she didn’t know

Twarogowski asked if it is possible to have rangers assigned to these large events.

Lauri said that PNR would consider that.

Smink noted that concerts at the Denver Botanic Gardens didn’t always run smoothly and encouraged active involvement from the neighborhood to determine how many events are held, their capacity, etc.

Picaso asked Swallow Hill folks about a past event when musical instruments were provided to children. Who received those instruments?

Tom Sharf replied that the children who received instruments are the ones who signed up for classes at Swallow Hill.

Picaso noted to Jeff Shoemaker that Picaso used to work with Jeff’s father. He asked, why is alcohol necessary in a park, and why Ruby Hill?

Shoemaker replied that Ruby Hill is ideal because of its location and size. He estimated that with alcohol sales at a 1,200 person concert, the promoter might profit over $1000 in alcohol sales.
Pryor noted that he hadn’t seen a copy of Ruby Hill and where admission based events would occur.

Lauri replied that when the application for permitting process occurs, the manager must approve the site, and that the park has a “natural” amphitheater area.

Watson noted that each vendor must show an identified area.

Stu Bader, PNR, noted that there are identified sites within parks

Pryor asked if a map might be created to help allay the public’s concerns.

Bader said that he thought the amphitheater is on the park’s map.

Ewing thanked those who have come repeatedly to testify on this subject. She notes that Jan Bell is concerned about festival parking, but looks forward to the success of the events. She notes to the neighbors that if it is not going well, then they need to let PNR know.

Pachner spoke in strong support of the proposed change.

Picaso spoke in support of the proposed change, but voiced concern about the mix of alcohol with snowboarders at the Ruby Hill Rail Yard.

Lauri said that she has the power to deny such a mix, and believes that alcohol, snowboarding, and kids should not mix.

Pryor said that he agrees that all uses should be spread amongst parks, and encourages the permitting department to “push” Ruby Hill as a venue and perhaps lessen the impact on overused areas.

Watson called for a vote, and the measure passed unanimously.

Conor Hollis reports that the Thatcher Memorial and Pioneer Fountain work is moving ahead.

Meeting adjourned.