Minutes of June 14, 2012 DPRAB meeting

In attendance: Sharp, Navarro, Ewing, Watson, Twarogowski, Pachner, April, Pryor, Coleman, Pryor, Robinson, McCoin and Copeland

Meeting called to order 5:35
May minutes approved

Public Comments: Katie Fisher from INC declined to speak at this time.

Lauri Dannemiller gave the manager’s report:

Communications policy update. Going to city council committee on Tuesday – same slides distributed at PRAB meeting will be used before council. The policy is designed to create an expectation and documentation that provides the public consistent expectation on how PNR will communicate with the public. It will include the level of outreach needed to gain public support. It will set expectations for the public regarding PNR’s ability to provide outreach. A working group will be formed with the intention of being as inclusive as necessary without being so large it will be “bogged down”. PNR is proposing a 12 member working policy group. No budgetary impact by the new policy is expected. Stacie Loucks will also be working on this.

Pryor asked: With this, obviously we have policies in place, are you incorporating these policies into the new?

Lauri: I don’t have the intention of changing any of the current policies now, but I’m willing to consider it. For instance, “public outreach” is very broadly defined. The current policies don’t clearly define expectations.

Pryor: Bob [Finch] did a great job with the rules and regulations update. Are we looking at a similar rollout plan? Are you going to do a public hearing?

Dannemiller: I fully expect a public hearing. Do you want to present it the same way as Bob’s? That’s within the purview of you as a board.

The next item to discuss was regarding Ruby Hill.

McCoin arrives.

The map distributed to PRAB regarding events within Ruby Hill is viewed.

The next item Lauri discussed was the Resources, Allocations, and Priorities Plan. They want to make sure what we’re offering is what the community needs and wants, with the intention of trying to determine how they’ll set fees for cost recovery. Do we want to see varying cost recovery for programs that have significant community benefit? Such considerations might include how much it costs
to stripe a field, etc., then considered against the community benefit. Lauri asks rhetorically, should we try to be all things to all people? Are there other organizations that offer the same things we offer, for better or for cheaper? Also, there might be other opportunities that we may not be taking advantage of due to restrictions. Are we missing potential partnerships or revenue opportunities?

Pryor: I think it’s great, it definitely needs to be looked at. Are you also considering across the board costs, like trash pickup and maintenance, or are you just looking at programming?

Lauri: We aren’t limiting it to programs. For example, other maintenance costs are weighed in; is it better to have the lawns bright green, or is a youth swimming program more important? These are the kinds of questions we need to answer to allocate our budget dollars.

Pryor: How is equality being considered? What are the parameters around the equity distribution?

Lauri: It’s a great question, I appreciate it but haven’t addressed it yet.

Lauri then went on to discuss the mayor’s office proposal regarding homeless overflow shelters. There is a meeting regarding using Glenarm and LaAlma rec centers on a rotating basis. A meeting regarding the Glenarm Rec Center is scheduled for Tuesday. Denver’s Road Home will provide cots and transportation. Zoning code requirements mean they will have to inform neighbors.

Pryor: What are the proposed rec centers?

Lauri: So far, just Glenarm and LaAlma.

Pryor: Given that those two are in ground zero for the homeless, I’m going to advise my constituents to say “no.” Those rec centers serve an already overtaxed population and are going to be taxed further. You’ll get a huge amount of pushback. I’d say we need to look at other locations. So are we going to be paid by Denver’s Road Home?

Lauri: Yes, that was a requirement, to be made whole from the costs that we will incur. My goal was to support the effort because I’d like to support more emergency shelters. Our only requirements are that they don’t impact our current operating hours. We looked at rec centers that would work given open hours, etc., so that our patrons would be impacted as little as possible.

Pryor: To me, it’s inhumane, it’s a band-aid, its not the mayor stepping up to disperse the homeless population throughout the city. There are other areas, Commons Park, Golden Triangle, and Denargo Market, which are within walking distance. To continue the concentration at Glenarm is not finding the solutions. Just
opening up our rec centers isn’t an acceptable solution. I believe you need to lessen the impact on what these neighborhoods still take on.

Lauri: I’m 99% sure that there are other city facilities being identified, and they might be in other parts of the city; I don’t know.

Noel Copeland: The inference is that there’s not something early in the morning?

Lauri and Erin Brown: Glenarm on Tuesday and Thursday has lap swim at 7 am. La Alma opens later in the day.

Navarro: When is the meeting for LaAlma?

Erin Brown: It has not been set yet.

Ewing: I agree with Keith, there are significant problems coming down the road. Is Denver’s Road Home a city entity?

Lauri: Yes.

Pachner: This was passed as an ordinance by council. I think it’s wholly appropriate we’re asking this questions. I think it’s the right thing to do. I fully support it, and I believe they should be looking at parks, senior centers.

Jay April: Since we are involved, I agree with what Keith is saying. We should do our best to reduce the number of homeless.

Jason Robinson: I’m going to second Keith. There has to be more equity. As a kid, Glenarm was the joke of youth sports. Let’s not make it more difficult for them. It’s one more thing to pull down the reputation of those two rec centers.

Watson: I use Glenarm, I know it’s going to be tough, Erin. My focus would be a more structural piece. I think it’s a great discussion about communication. Even though this is coming from the mayor’s office, I think that if there’s a collaboration that has impact, then communication to our folks through parks is necessary. Should we not have a more aggressive participation? I’m going to be out of town on the 19th. I hope that we can move it to Central Park at Stapleton.

Gordon Robertson: Britta Herwig is ill, I’ll give the City Park Playground presentation in her stead. Two [conceptual drawing] boards per consultant team have been submitted. Eight firms have submitted RFPs. It needs to be a multi-seasonal, multi-generational space. The boards have been displayed at many places throughout the city for community feedback.

Twarogowski: Is there a kitty for repairing the custom pieces on a playground, or objects that have more than general maintenance needs?
Robertson: Not now, but that reserve may be part of our asset study.

Watson: As far as planning for public discussion, is it possible for the three architects to come before the board, perhaps next month? If you think that’s possible, no need to answer now.

Lauri: We’ll see if that is possible. Some of the proposals came from out of the country.

Watson: I’m sure there’s going to be a stakeholder group?

Robertson: There will be a stakeholder group.

Watson: I thought it would be great if Angela were involved in the stakeholder piece.

Lauri: Angela has been involved, and Gordon, could you please mention who is on the advisory team?

Robertson: myself, Britta, a Professor from UCD, Albus Brooks, Bridget Coughlin, and a Denver City Park Alliance member.

Robertson: Now I’ll talk about capital improvement planning (slide show was distributed). The CIP process happens throughout the year, with the planners also stopping in and talking to council aides to make sure they’re taking input all year long. The department council and the mayor’s office make a recommendation to council. Citywide maintenance vs. discretionary budget was discussed. We want to reenergize some of our teen rooms and try to attract more youth.

Regarding the first on the list, the South Platte River is one is the first commitment of three years. We’re leveraging it more than two to one, which is why we’re able to compete for such dollars from GOCO. We’re working on making Weir Gulch an example of how beautiful a Gulch can be.

Ewing: I’ll never be sold on the artwork in Burns Park.

Lauri: Regarding the “Capital Improvement Planning” slide; in 2007, there was a vote to increase the mill levy. The way the number is determined: the bond infrastructure task force looked at all maintenance needs across the city, and we get a percentage of the mill.

April: I wanted to thank Gordon and Scott for giving this presentation to the Economics Committee.

Watson: Thank you for the work you do, is there any help you need from us?
Ewing had further concerns about Burns Park.

Robertson: We want to fix irrigation today, but we can’t design the irrigation when we don’t know what artwork will be there. Once we nail down where the art will be, we’ll do the new irrigation system. We’re doing some things in the short term. We are making improvements.

Jill Wuertz: I’m here to do the flowerbed update. We got our beds in early, but we had hail damage in the southwest part of the city. Thefts have happened throughout the city. We increase our numbers of flowers needed in anticipation of thefts. About 320 plants have been stolen. Four or five year old peony plants have been stolen.

Adopt-a-flowerbed program is being run by Tina Meyers. They’ve worked out a plant ordering and organization spreadsheets. We’ve also been working on the inventory of annuals, perennials, combination and shrub beds. We’ve been using social media and the website.

Navarro: On one particular slide, you have a “northern” district; can you explain?

Jill: those are maintenance subdistricts.

Lauri: There isn’t a whole lot of equity regarding the volunteers. We need to make an effort to really bring in more volunteers; we’re going to try to expand that capacity.

Pachner: Are the councilmembers mentioning this at their community meetings?

Lauri: That is a good idea, but right now we’re not quite ready to put volunteers to work.

Scott: We need people to help maintain the beds, put them to sleep. Plenty of people offer to plant the beds, but aren’t interested in upkeep which is a major cost. Also, we have eight interns throughout the city. Two more (unpaid) interns will start next week.

Pachner: I’d love to have a copy of the planting guide as well.

Jill: One of the things we’d like to do is make the plans more accessible to the public, educate them on design, native plant material, etc.

April: The status of the golf strategic plan?

Lauri: We’re working through all of the action items. We’ll bring it back to the board in maybe two months. It’s not just sitting there: we’re working through it. I can safely say that we’ll be discussing it before the board in August.
Scott spoke of a great golf program on Sundays. Details are on the second page of golf website.

Pryor: I wanted to give kudos to the opening of LaAlma, great pool. Also, a great park app.

Angela: Park Beat is the name of the app, it's one of our “likes”.

Lauri: This didn’t cost us anything, the developer is doing a lot of data. He came to us, and there was no upfront cost to us.

Watson: Quick one for Scott: We’ve had a lot of gang activity this summer. Updating Frederic Douglass Park, other parks, and I appreciate you, Scott, for moving quickly on giving attention to this park. You’ve been very responsive.

Scott: That’s our job!

Twarogowski: Any involvement with DPR on the Rocky Mountain Greenway Project?

Scott: Yes, Gordon Robertson just got appointed to that committee.

Meeting adjourned