PRAB Minutes
July 12, 2012

5:36 Meeting called to order by Darrell Watson.

5:39 June minutes approved.

Board members in attendance: Picaso, Coleman, April, Hollis, Twarogowski, Watson, Pryor, Ewing, Navarro, Green, Smink.

Public comments: Katie Fisher, INC wants to publicly thank Lauri for her response regarding mining on the Platte River.

Lauri: I want to pass that thanks on to Scott, who did a lot of work on this project.

Jay with Parks and Rec: List of public meetings. Asks that we come to the History Colorado museum Thursday, July 26.

Watson: When will the first meeting of the communications meeting occur?

Jay: Lauri will touch on this but we’re thinking of something in late August.

Lauri: We’ve kicked off the internal working group, we’ll kick off the external working group in late August.

We’ve received a number of grants in the last month or two. The Grant Park grant requires us to finish the project within three years. Our first meeting for that project is Thursday, July 19th. Urban Drainage, Trout Unlimited and the city (out of the CIP project funds) will all work together with us on this project.

The Westwood Park Project is 1.55 million dollar project. The majority of the meetings have kids suggesting what they’d like to see in the park. Hopefully they’ll finish up by the end of next year.

Colorado Health Foundation and Trust for Public Land

Scott: Gordon Robertson, Scott met with Tim Wohlgenant. Their grant is regional. We’re talking about Grant requirements 2.84 million they’ll match with 10 million. Areas might include Fitness Zones. We’ll do six over the next year. They have to purchase eight properties. Six activations of parks that could include Fitness Zones, new playgrounds. It might help us speed our playground transitions. These projects have to be done in low-income or disadvantaged communities. They’re hiring a project manager, with landscape background.
Lauri: The last item on my list is giving your more detail on what the Fitness Zones are. There was a news segment on MSNBC.

Navarro: Is the Children's Museum Land a revisiting of an earlier project?

Lauri: Yes, that project stalled. We're trying to ask the community for their feedback.

Navarro: It had to do with selling project and parcels of land. It would be expanding to areas in the south “ski” area that isn’t used.

Ewing: Is it still Tom Downey in charge?

Lauri: I believe it’s Yonkowski.

Picaso: Westwood - the water feature is TBD?

Scott: Water feature - they’ll have to see how it fits into the design. Lots of concerns with water recycling.

Watson: Recreation for kids for the GoCo grant When will it be communicated as who can qualify?

Lauri: You mean TPL?

Watson: Yes.

Lauri: They have a lot of statistics regarding which neighborhoods have high obesity rates, and we’ll be able to locate those. They also do a lot of follow-up analysis.

Smink arrives.

Watson: Match for playgrounds for refurbishing in older communities. Is that process developed yet? We’ve been talking about playgrounds in Whittier.

Scott: We have a replacement list. Maybe we can do twice as many playgrounds. Their target for their playgrounds

Watson: One more question for Scott. I received an email that made me go hmmm. A rugby team was doing something regarding the AIDS walk. They were told that rugby tears up the field more than other sports.

Scott: I talked to Stu about that. Specific fields are permitted for specific sports. Stu's suggestion was that they use the rugby fields. We’re trying to make sure they were How will we be selecting some of the parks? They also did the parks score.

Pryor: What’s with the fountain at Cherry Creek Trail near Larimer?
Scott: It's broken.

Smink: Can you describe briefly the field permitting process?

Lauri: When we take registrations, there's two factors. We start Nov 1st, there are certain fields identified for certain uses. Historical use of the field, a user who has used them for over two years, they get first right of refusal. Some fields for general use, adult use. You can apply anytime, but it opens up in November.

Pryor: If the rugby people want to change which field is permitted for which use, how do they do that? Talk to Stu?

Twarogowski commented that TPL might benefit from a clear communications/outreach policy to follow.

Erin Brown: I'm going to turn the microphone over to Benny Milliner, Exec Director of Denver's Road Home.

Benny: Hello. We are just beginning our eighth year. I sat on the parks board many years ago, in another life. Let me start with a little bit of background. When the unauthorized camping ordinance passed, we knew we had a deficit in capacity among the shelters. We thought that there would be an opportunity for protest. Anybody who wants shelter in this city, we will find shelter for them. We thought we'd have a couple hundred people we'd have to be able to move them. This idea is in two phases. We contracted with DPS for two buses. We looked at then where we'd be able to place them. Rec centers have gyms, showers. We looked logistically at moving people efficiently and quickly. We looked at Glenarm, Twentieth Street, Rude, Hiawatha Davis. When the implementation date came, we had the buses ready to go, and nothing happened. We did this for four days, and nothing happened. There's a requirement in the zoning code to notify neighborhood organizations. So in the process what we did was find faith-based communities who would be willing to offer their facilities in case it was needed. We eventually called this "extraordinary shelter services". Extreme weather conditions, we're still trying to define what would be an extraordinary shelter service.

Concentration in council districts 8 and 9 – we hear share the burden. We could talk about weather, and emergencies, or whatever. When I walk in the room, all people think about is homelessness, and so that's what people want to talk about. 12 to 15 rotating places in the city that would be the facility that would be called upon. We started that conversation at Glenarm. People were polite. We then worked with the mayor office of emergency management and wonder if there are gaps in that situation as well. We decided to take a step back. Right now, there's no immediate plans to have more meetings because we're being prudent to develop the plan a little more fully. Because of the concentration of homeless in the districts 8 and 9, there's a lot of sensitivity.
April: I’m ignorant regarding the details of what you’ve been doing. Let’s say you have a crystal ball, and there’s another extraordinary circumstance on August 15th. You’re putting the plan together...what are the obstacles that are holding you back by the end of July. What’s in the way?

Milliner: The requirement of having neighborhood outreach and meetings. You have to go around, introduce the idea into the communities. As a city, we’re required to do this to move forward. We believe it has to be shared around the city. We would have a staging area downtown, they’d be going to the facility, then be out by 5:30.

The first six looked at were: Glenarm, Central Park, Wash Park, Rude, Montbello, Castro, Potter’s House. We’re still looking to add six to nine facilities.

Ewing: If you want to be successful, something’s got to be done about the blight at the Rescue Mission. My husband has a building on Park Avenue. I cannot understand why it’s not the responsibility of the Rescue Mission to clean that park. And I’m reading that there could be 10,000 homeless in Denver. Those two areas are problems. You will be blamed for problems. There are several initiatives right now to help solve that issue. The rescue mission wants to build a new facility. To use a courtyard, the drug dealers and predators have a dividing line. When I came to this job in February, this is one of the first things that was brought to my attention. Everybody’s working very hard on this issue. The optics of homeless really hurt how you get into neighborhoods and communities.

Coleman: when you consider locations, are you limited to city limits?

Milliner: We don’t have our own shelters, we give money to providers. If there will be a development of any new shelter, it will be through the providers. In Denver, we have about 5100 homeless. The metro area has a shade over 12,000. It’s very difficult for Denver to lead regional discussions. We’d like to take a more regional approach. The homeless don’t have borders; the concern with the camping ordinance that we’re pushing people outside of Denver.

Coleman: I thought Potter’s House was in Aurora. But it’s in Denver?

Milliner: It’s in Denver.

Pryor: October will be just around the corner. We need an emergency plan now. Time is of the essence, and I just want to convey that to you. But something needs to be in place so that you’re prepared when these emergency situations occur. Other community meetings need to be held. It’s going to be October, and we’re not going to have enough beds. The needs are already there. We need a response yesterday. Not tomorrow, not October. The need is there, and we need a response. I think we need to be doing better. To ask people [referring to the homeless using rec centers] to get
up and move at 5:30 am is awful. I have had to wake up for plane trips at 5:30 in the morning, and it’s ungodly!

I’ve been there since the inception of district 8. This is directed at the city for not stepping up to the plate for not addressing the situation humanistically and holistically. I challenge you to step up to the plate and give us better solutions.

Milliner: let me clarify a few misinterpretations. We have an emergency plan that is in place every year. We reach capacity only four nights this year. The overflow plan is where we add 100 beds and crossroads is open (council district 9). This is for extraordinary circumstances. We know that we need to add 300 shelter beds. As far as the treatment, I don’t think you’ll find that people are treated badly in shelters. The city doesn’t want to be in the business of running shelters. We are stepping up to the plate. Currently, every church in this city could shelter eight people a night without community approval.

Watson: Thank you and I understand you’re working with the communications team with PNR. We look forward to that being implemented.

Milliner: Thank you, and I’m sure I’ll be back.

Watson: Erin, you had a general rec center updates.

Brown: It’s been a busy, good safe summer. Some partnerships have been formed to benefit youth Mayor’s office of education to provide to free summer lunches. Curtis park Revolution Foods serves fresh prepped meals at Athmar, Harvard Gulch, Cook and Scheitler.

Watson: Uptick over years prior?

Brown: We haven’t done this to the same extent. I hope we’re able to continue this in the fall.

Picaso: Will you expand to other facilities?

Brown: Yes, we hope to expand in the future. Also, the traditional summer in the park programs at Congress, Fred Thomas, Sloan’s lake. Age 6-12. Aquatics to date we’ve had 28,000 swimmers not including swim lessons. We also launched a swimming pool promotion. Starting July 1st, free swimming for youth at all pools. And we’re in full swing with baseball and softball. Membership sales year to date 21972 at this time last year 29.000 last year, we’re 1.3 million per period ending in may. We believe this has to do with tiering. We’re doing some promotions and open houses throughout the city. We’re trying to attract the new user for open houses. We’re giving out single visit passes.
In the spirit of the Olympics, we have an adaptive rec program. Our special Olympic soccer team was invited to play against the special Olympic team in Seattle. I’m sorry to say that we didn’t win. ColoradoRapids.com/blog/specialolympics has a blog all expenses paid.

Watson: I’d love to have that publicized.

Brown: They just got back, so we’ll have pictures and we’ll publicize them.

Watson: A drive question. Any problems with computer automation or is the system working the way you expected.

Brown: We can function, but no, definitely, there are still some gaps. One was to communicate in real time. That’s not happening yet. There are weekly meetings, lists of bugs. But the tech services team has been great and very aggressive to get this up and running.

Pryor: So on the 8000 less passes, are we able to see if they’re youth, etc?

Brown: Most are adult.

Pryor: The 6-12 year old camps…are those fee-based?

Brown: They’re $75/week.

Pryor: Those free lunches, they’re critical. Anything about keeping youth engaged in the rec centers, any late-night programming?

Brown: we haven’t launched anything late night like that, but we hope to be able to have a bigger announcement regarding how to engage youth at all levels.

Lauri: One of the things we found out was that we’re not communicating well with other agencies that we have programs. Erin worked hard to work with police, community and rec centers. It doesn’t take a whole lot of money, it just takes communication.

Ronald: are we still working with the personalities dealing with the gang activities? I haven’t seen as much as I’ve seen in the past, but the kids are not dressing like gangsters anymore either. Are we working with Francisco and the Rev?

Brown: Right now we are not, but we are working with Chief White and Safe Cities. Not just a kid approach, but as a family.

Ronald: Since we lost Walt, I haven’t seen or heard much from Safe City. Is Charlotte still running Safe City? I’d like to help any way I could.
Brown: We will be doing this month travelling youth zones. An intervention piece.

Pryor: Can we put this on the website, take it to INC?

Brown: Yes.

Watson: Lauri is sitting between us and dinner.

Lauri: We have been asked for permission for vending in Parkfield Park. Councilperson Chris Herndon has no objection. Letter from Montbello 20/20. These are for push carts, non-mobilized food vending parks. Not food trucks. I'd like feedback about this request.

Coleman: Scott and I would like food and drink after our pickup basketball games.

Pryor: you guys are good with the location?

Lauri: I believe it was decided between the vendor and the park’s superintendent.

Watson: Does anyone have any concerns?

Picaso: Will this open up a can of worms for other Parks?

Navarro: These haven’t been an issue at all, right?

Pryor: Last year at Wash Park, they felt it was a carnival scene?

Pryor: have we had an issues with nonpermitted carts?

Lauri: Other issues.

Connor: I think having foods and vendors is a great amenity really activates the park.

Picaso: I thought having vendors at the fishing derby was awesome.

Lauri: Food trucks are allowed at special events.

Watson: Do you need something from us? This is in your purview.

Smink: Our role is a policy board?

Lauri: It’s more to get your feedback.

Watson: I think we’ll have this in the minutes, that there were no concerns from the board.
Pryor: I have a concern about where they are.

Fisher: As citizens, there are some concerns about health, etc., but we’ll take those before Lauri.

Watson: For the board, we’re comfortable and look forward to using the vendor.

Pryor: The Platte Confluence park had a meeting. It was ok attended. There are good conceptual plans coming out of that. The other piece is that I’m going to the National Parks Alliance in New York. There’ll be lots of cool stuff.

Watson: Paid for by Lauri?

[laughter]

Lauri: I’d like to look next year to establish some kind of line items so that there’s a little money for board members who have desires to do stuff like that.

Picaso: We have our entity at Chief Hosa.

Lauri: You mean for retreats?

Watson: Jay has asked for the the board to get on the communications planning. We’re seeking folks from the engagement committee, but everyone seems to be travelling in August. Twarogowski and McCoin have expressed interest, so they’ll be our representatives on the working group.

7:13 Meeting adjourned