

Meeting Minutes
DENVER PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
November 10, 2021 – 5:30- 7:30 pm
Virtual Meeting: Via Zoom Webinar

PRAB Meeting Norms

Be respectful and presume positive intentions.
Seek first to understand and then to be understood.
Stay focused on topics at hand.
Allow space for all to have a voice.
Listen without judgement.
Live our values of equity and inclusion.

Board Members In attendance:

Audrey Carrillo, Fran Coleman, Lee Rains Thomas, Frank Rowe, Meredith Levy, Amy Razzaque, Andre McGregor, Angela Garcia, Molly McKinley, Pam Jiner, Jack Paterson, Chandi Aldena, Marlene De La Rosa, Marla Rodriguez, Florence Navarro, Deana Perlmutter, Trena Marsal

Absent: Ramsey Harris, Lynne Mason

CALL TO ORDER

Marla calls meeting to order at 5:32.
Lee takes roll call.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Approve October Minutes.
Andre makes a motion to approve minutes, Fran seconds.
Fran- Capitalize proper names- Verbena Park
Unanimously approved.
Molly Abstains, was not present in October.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments

OTHER ITEMS

Stewardship Update: Tina Myers

***Presentation attached**

- 300 parks and trails. Lots of volunteers, mulching, painting, debris removal and more.
- Each year, gets a list of projects and helps organize volunteers for projects. Helps prioritize projects and connect with volunteers. Youth volunteers, planting trees, mulching, being outdoors, socializing. Good benefits for the parks and the youth. Big time savers, hundreds of

coordinated volunteers. Partnership with Starbucks for 18 years with over 600 volunteers in one day. Many other partnerships exist.

- Adopt a park, trail, flower bed- friends of the park (which park?)
- Parks staff is on site when there are more than 25 or so volunteers.
- Over 300 partners, 305 projects
- Working with Yolanda in marketing- no parks stewardship dinner, but a presentation to share accomplishments of partners and volunteers.
- Large impact, Florence and Jordan and Tina are the staff.

Discussion:

We are all volunteers, so we can all help out

Do you have information on the demographics of the volunteers, youth?

Partnership with DPS? High school service hours?

Some schools reach out, but only on a school by school basis.

Anyone can contact the department to volunteer- fill out form, and get connected with a project.

Link to form [here](#).

RNOs- we can help get the word out for even more volunteers.

Happy- PRAB can play an important role for communities, especially youth to become involved.

Ways to engage different communities?

Meredith- share list of projects, could get buy in from districts

Marla- Committee to take this on- Recreation.

Marlene- There are a lot of volunteers in recreation, would like to see how these hours help out in addition to the volunteers in parks.

Would like a list of opportunities to share periodically at PRAB meetings.

Amy- would love to include community opportunities as well, community organized, like the Barnum Lake clean up.

Tina.myers@denvergov.org

Leah.huffer@denvergov.org

PRAB Elections

Frank, Meredith, Andre on nominations committee

Lee, Florence, Fran- the slate of nominations.

Marla presents slate, Amy seconds motion.

Unanimously approved.

Fran Coleman- Chairperson, Florence Navarro- Vice Chairperson, Lee Rains Thomas- Secretary

Thanks to Marla for leadership during challenging times.

PRAB COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee

Consider the many accomplishments of PRAB over the past year:

- Community engagement throughout PRAB, committees
- Process of going through a topic and providing a recommendation to DPR- (off leash dog parks)
- Creating the flow chart- using it
- Public comment form, budgeting process, engaged and thoughtful about communities that we represent and advocate for issues, great list of priorities
- We have a recreation committee
- Using the Game Plan, geese resolution, community engagement

Consider what is left to do? Role of PRAB, onboarding process

Committees share what accomplishments have been, then share with council people, RNOs.

Consider committee membership and bring to discussion in January.

At this time community engagement is not a functioning committee, there is no chairperson or 3 PRAB members on it. Community engagement has become much more a part of all the committees and we have built in many opportunities for engagement within PRAB.

Planning, Design, Funding, Accessibility (Meredith)

Kathy LeVeque and Mallory Roybal - inclusive play strategy, 8 month long process, kicked off this month, goal is to increase accessibility and inclusivity in parks and open space. Will be listening sessions, stakeholder groups, etc.

DPR considers this at forefront of new play areas, but this provides more structure for all parks. 3 new playgrounds with inclusive play- City Park, Robinson, McNichols.

Operations, Maintenance, Budget (Frank 10/24)

High level discussion on updating/ modifying rules and regulations for a wide variety of issues. 3.2 beer, wheeled devices, pit bulls, more. Some was cleaning language, other more public safety issues. Will be working on in the future and will share more as the committee learns more. Andre- enthusiasm to bring more technology to engage younger, would love to see an app to see dynamic information, QR codes on signs, etc.

Recreation

Recovery- all rec centers are open at full hours, staffing is almost completely staffed. In November- 45% discount for memberships, my Denver cards (office of children's affairs). Outdoor rec survey 2,800 responses at that time. Winter sports activity guide is live and going well.

Sign up and take advantage of our many opportunities in Denver.
Good turn outs for open houses, outdoor rec and fun for kids.

Resiliency and Sustainability

Reviewed information from Scott about alternative fuel usage with parks equipment and small motors. Discussed efforts to reduce climate change by going from gas powered to electric.
Report from Scott:

DPR has made a huge step since 2018 to purchase alternative fueled equipment, replacing over 60% of our aging, small equipment (blowers, trimmers, chain saws) with battery operated units, purchasing one (1) electric utility cart for each district, and replacing zero-turn propane mowers (1 per district). The next steps will be to discuss charging stations for additional electric equipment - mainly utility carts at the maintenance shops. It will need to be determined which locations can support the footprint needed for storage (ideally inside a building) and then the electrical support of the "station" to the facility. Based on industry information, I believe that solar can be considered to support the charging effort as well (but I'm not an electrician).

I believe that as we continue to replace and make new equipment purchases that these options be considered, but only if our equipment technicians can support maintenance, that it performs equivalent to the fueled unit, and that our maintenance shops can support the fuel source. I welcome further discussion on the department's leadership view and direction that the messaging will take with both internal employees (primarily maintenance and operations staff) and external customers to promote the initiative from the Office of Sustainability. I like using other funding (as we did when we started the battery equipment) and am willing to see what is available to continue to replace aging small equipment or other pieces in our inventory.

Recently, our equipment technicians and operators participated in providing feedback on an all-electric, zero-turn mower prototype. I believe that we are making strides in the alternative fuel sources without sacrificing performance and maintenance standards, with the replacement pieces we have invested in. Could more be done, yes, but it has to be the correct equipment for the "job." I welcome further discussion between us, and others as needed. The landscape and maintenance industry are moving that direction and more options are available, but like with most purchases/ investments, performance and having the invested infrastructure to support sustained maintenance and equipment, for the years ahead, needs to be considered.

Lastly, I think we need to do more to champion the investment we have made over the last 3.5 years, as well as the vision for the future.

Began to dig into the Every Drop aspect of the Game plan as it relates to sustainability. Jessica presented. Discussed urban forestry and how to promote boulevard trees in low canopy neighborhoods? Using the equity map. Focus for sustainability (5.3, 1.6, 1.8)

Want to learn more about youth involvement and forestry.

***PPT attached.**

Highlights- game plan, geese resolution, community engagement, Scott's presentation about climate change and what the department is doing, urban canopy, created email list

Park Hill Golf Course Update -None at this time

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Report – PRAB

November 10, 2021

- **Recreation** – The fall season kicked off this Monday with many classes, especially aquatics filling up very quickly. As a reminder, Recreation does hold 10 percent of the class slots to provide equitable access to families that don't have the same digital access as others. Many of the Recreation Centers have been hosting fall open houses and celebrations to welcome the community back. The discounted memberships campaign has been very successful, generating close to half a million dollars in revenue.
- **Civic Center Park** – Parks staff has worked feverishly for several weeks to clean the park, repair damaged features, trim trees and upgrade and restore lighting. The plan is to re-open the western portion of the park this week. The remaining areas will remain closed to enable additional restoration work.
- **Renaming process** – We met with the at-large Council members and the Human Rights and Partnership Office regarding the proposed community engagement strategy and received positive feedback and support for moving forward starting with the parks that will be identified in the soon to be released Renaming Commission report. We agreed that we would seek to conduct only one or two of these community engagement processes at a time to ensure that they are done thoughtfully and well. We would likely launch the effort during the first quarter of next year once resources and staffing are identified and in place. We will plan to bring the final draft plan back to PRAB again before the launch.
- **Budget and Rise Bond** – The Mayor's budget was adopted by City Council last week with all of the items previously shared with you included in the budget for Parks and Recreation. The RISE Bond was also passed by the voters by a large margin meaning that we will have an additional \$52 million in parks improvements to move forward.
- **Quality Hill Park** – This park has also been temporarily closed to clean and repair at the urging of the community surrounding the park because of concerns about safety and cleanliness issues impacting park users. Since we have been working with this community for a couple of years regarding a proposal to locate a dog park in this location and we think there may be an opportunity to move forward with a pop up version when the park reopens.
- **Special Event Permits** – The number of requested permits at the annual November 1st kickoff was significantly larger than last year, not yet back to 2019 levels, but getting very close to those previous numbers.
- **Legacy Fund Audit** – The Audit was completed and the report has been published. The department agreed to most of the recommendations and provided a timeline for completing them over the next few months. The press release and some of the language in the audit itself tended to dramatically overstate the severity of the issues identified in the report. The Auditor's findings reflected a one time snapshot of some conditions in several parks and concluded from that limited information that overall parks maintenance was inadequate. We respectfully disagree with their characterizations, but again we did agree to remedy each of the items that were identified, which are a small fraction of all of the maintenance tasks that are accomplished in each of our parks every week and every year.
- **First Tee Annual Celebration** – The First Tee program, Denver's junior golf program, celebrated a successful year of serving thousands of young people from as young as age four to college-aged students serving as junior coaches and counselors for the program. A representative of each age

group shared their explanation of the character values such as perseverance and integrity, that are the heart of First Tee program. The room erupted in applause when a four-year old boy shyly shared his description of the word, "confidence" and then shouted at the end that he was CONFIDENT! The keynote was a young woman who shared her amazing story of trials and challenges and triumph. Contributions poured out of the pockets of the lunch guests in response to the inspiring work of the kids and an equally amazing staff member who shared his own story of overcoming adversity and physical challenges to contribute his talents to the game of golf and the First Tee Program. It was announced that the First Tee of Denver will consolidate with other programs to form the Rocky Mountain First Tee program. Everyone left with big smiles and empty pockets.

OTHER ITEMS

Board Announcements

Lee- Has been working with Arthur and Laura on the cadence of meetings, trying to problem solve some calendar issues. May be adjusting committee meeting dates coming in January. Also working on the onboarding process, may reach out to see if some veteran PRAB members would like to mentor newer PRAB mentors.

Molly- Accessibility for all, moving forward from the pandemic. Need to be thoughtful about how we transition back to in person or hybrid. This format has allowed for a lot of participation from the public.

Meredith- Electric charging stations available at rec centers? Not a DPR issue.

ADJOURNMENT