

Citizen Advisory Board
Parks Advisory Group (PAG) Meeting
September 9, 2014

Draft

Presented by: Lucia Correll

Attendance:

Carol Roberts, Front Porch; Ilana Corson, SDC; Amanda Schoultz, City Council District 11 Office; Dennis Piper, Former Parks Director/Resident; Jim Hannifin, Aurora Resident; Brad Dodson, City and County of Denver; Charlie Nicola, Forest City; Eric Herbst, Resident/TMA; Sean Caffrey, Resident; Paul Frohardt, Resident; Jeff Lamontagne, Bluff Lake; Mark Tabor, Denver Parks; Tia Cavender, Resident; Michael Nicks, Bryan Hyde, Park Hill resident; Kate Kramer, SCRGP; Khadija Haynes, Former CAB Chair; Lucia Correll, Stapleton Resident.

Absent: Scott Gilmore, Denver Parks and Recreation; Diane Deeter, MCA;

Approval of Minutes: August Minutes approved.

Youth Project: Mason Sukigara (age 9), Amina Mouaddine (age 11), Parker Cavender (age 7), and Chase Cavender (age 9).

Tia Cavender brought several members of the "Park Avengers," which is a group of young leaders (ages 7-11 years old) who convened over the summer to improve the safety of the soft ball field at Westerly Creek Elementary. The youth reported their interest in: helping improve local parks and ball fields, educating others about litter in Westerly Creek, and engaging youth in the public input process for local parks planning. The youth who represented the Park Avengers included kids from Aurora and Stapleton. Tia advocated for including youth and specifically the Youth Avengers Group, as Stapleton citizens with opinions about parks.

Update on Section 10 GDP Process

Forest City has responded to two rounds of comments from Denver. Most issues are resolved and one of the remaining areas of negotiation concerns the width of the streets. Forest City would like a 32 ft. width as it contributes to slower traffic movement vs. the 36 ft. width that is being advocated by the Fire Department. Trials to study whether a 32 ft. width hindered emergency movement were inconclusive. Heidi Majerik is leading the push for more narrow streets. If you want to support 32 ft. width streets, let Heidi know of your support and also contact your City Councilman, Chris Herndon. The timeline for approval of the GDP is not certain, but it could be as early as October or November. Charlie did mention that PCMD will need to start utility relocations early next year.

Land Use Map and Reconciliation:

Brad Dodson gave a short explanation of the reconciliation process. According to Charlie Nicola (Forest City) and Brad Dodson (Denver), there were two major areas in which designations were changed during the reconciliation process. One was an eleven-acre area south of I-70 and west of Central Park Blvd. That was termed General Open Space before reconciliation and Trunk Open Space (TOS) after reconciliation. This land is on the Sand Creek Regional Greenway and it makes sense that it is TOS. The other area was legally transferred to SDC as TOS so ipso facto, it is TOS.

There was a discussion of “orphan spaces” which are small tracts that have been transferred as TOS and comply with the City definition for TOS, but which are not large enough to be improved or function as park land. PAG agreed to put this on the agenda for discussion at the next PAG meeting in order to see if these “orphan” spaces meet the definition of TOS.

Sports Complex:

The reason the “orphan” spaces and reconciliation are so important now is because we need land for sports fields. Currently we are assured of two softball/baseball fields, two tennis courts and a solid surface field as part of the High Scoot complex. There is an additional 46.75 acres next to the High School, which can accommodate 8 other fields but for which there is no current plan or funding. This is short of the Master Plan recommendation. From random conversations with club leaders, we learn that sports fields in both soccer and lacrosse are needed. PAG was concerned that building anything short of a full sports complex would impede attracting private funders for the sports complex. Tia Cavender thought that might be unduly pessimistic and that grant funding might be found.

PAG recommended at the last meeting that Denver assess the need and perhaps plan for, identify and save land for a future sports complex if it is needed. Mark said that assessing community needs and field demand for the type of field improvement at the phase 2 portion of the existing Sport Complex site would be helpful and while that was a good idea, Denver staff was stretched with the task they now had of finishing WCN and the current fields adjacent to the HS. It was agreed that Mark, TIA and Lucia would work together to use a tool called mind mixer which Tia suggested and might be a way to get a community needs assessment done.

During this discussion, PAG revisited the 40 acres that was used around the Central Park Blvd /I-70 interchange. The land was transferred from DIA as TOS, and used by CDOT. No money was paid for the land, as it is TOS. Brad is going to check on the details of this land. He commented that once land is transferred as TOS the designation runs with the land. It was recommended that PAG write a letter of concern about these 40 acres. PAG has taken a position on it in the past, but there is a renewed concern now that we need additional acreage for a sports complex. Khadija and Lucia will work on this and bring it to the next meeting.

FYI as a reminder> Below is what the Parks Master Plan recommends for the Sport Complex.

A 2001 needs assessment recommended one athletic/multi-use complex, that would

include multiple facilities:

- Ten full-sized soccer/football/multi-use lighted fields with moveable goals designed for conversion to smaller fields when necessary. The fields could be programmed for other sports, including grass volleyball, rugby, lacrosse, Frisbee® golf, etc., and designed to accommodate festivals or large events (approximately 26 acres);
- Hard surface pads on the perimeter of specific fields for bleachers, temporary staging or temporary restrooms for festivals, with utilities;
- Six skinned and lighted softball/youth fields (approximately 12 acres);
- Two lighted, baseball/softball multi-use fields with moveable backlines (approximately four acres);
- One outdoor 85' x 185' in-line hockey rink (approximately two acres);
- One outdoor 12-14,000 sq. foot skate park (approximately two acres);
- Two regulation-sized, lighted, sand volleyball courts (approximately 8,000 sq. ft.);
- One large children's play area (approximately .85 acre);
- An enclosed pavilion, possibly including an 300-1,200 seat auditorium for sports presentations, cultural programming and/or a banquet hall; and:
- A centrally located concessions building,
- A game room,
- Locker rooms and restrooms including showers and a family locker room,
- Offices and storage space and
- Parking.

Total Space required: approximately 60 – 80 acres

With the sports fields and amenities that are currently planned and can fit near the high school, we would be short of the following fields recommended in the Master Plan:

- 4 full-sized soccer/football/multi-use lighted fields with moveable goals designed for conversion to smaller fields when necessary. The fields could be programmed for other sports, including grass volleyball, rugby, lacrosse, Frisbee® golf, etc., and designed to accommodate festivals or large events;
- Hard surface pads on the perimeter of specific fields for bleachers, temporary staging or temporary restrooms for festivals, with utilities;
- Two lighted, baseball/softball multi-use fields with moveable backlines
- One outdoor 85' x 185' in-line hockey rink
- One outdoor 12-14,000 sq. foot skate park
- Two regulation-sized, lighted, sand volleyball courts
- An enclosed pavilion, possibly including an 300-1,200 seat auditorium for sports presentations, cultural programming and/or a banquet hall; and:
- A centrally located concessions building,
- A game room,
- Locker rooms and restrooms including showers and a family locker room,
- Offices and storage space

Bluff Lake: Jeff Lamontaign

Bluff Lake is the recipient of a million dollar grant to restore the Lake to a year round lake and to repair the dam which contains the lake. The repairs to the lake have been needed for a long time and are becoming more urgent. In order to obtain the grant, Bluff Lake must contribute a \$300000 match. Bluff Lake is launching a capitol campaign and urges the community to support this wonderful resource. Contributions are not only deductible on your federal income taxes but on your state taxes as well.

Park Designations: Brad Cameron

Brad is a member of Inter Neighborhood Cooperation (INC) a coalition of neighborhood associations. Brad is a member of the Parks Sub committee of INC and focuses on getting parks designated. During the Hentzel Park controversy, this issue came to the fore. If parks are designated, they cannot be sold or leased without an ordinance passed by City Council. INC pushed for parks designation and provided a list of all the parks and their various stages of designation. In Stapleton, Fred Thomas, Greenway Park and Central Park are designated. Northfield Ponds and Westerly Creek have not been designated and we need to follow this process to ensure that they are designated. We will ask Scott to fill us in on what the glitches are that are preventing Westerly Creek South and Northfields Ponds from being designated.

Westerly Creek North and the Uplands

Forest City /PCMD are going through the value engineering process with Denver for the WCN/Uplands project. With the current V.E suggestions the revised cost is estimated at \$10M and the budgeted amount is \$9M (excludes any grant funds). Minimum design standards and wetland configuration is an on-going discussion with the design team. Kate Kramer is disappointed that there will not be a signature wetland feature with open water at the confluence. She accepts the changes because of several issues including water rights, hydrology, flood impacts if Sand Creek floods, and maintenance. Irrigation is a big cost item, and Kate Kramer stated that if the irrigation is not installed to get the native grassland established,, the plantings may have to be replaced in several years when weeds proliferate instead of native grasses. Paul Frohardt warned that things needed to move forward with planning and decisions so that construction can begin in early 2015 and before the wet season. Charlie said quick IFDA and insurance approvals will be needed in order for the earthwork to begin this winter.

Other Updates:

- Brian Hyde reported that the City of Aurora & Urban Drainage project to install a bridge over Westerly Creek on Montview Boulevard is moving forward. Brian will invite Aurora to the Oct. PAG meeting for an update.

10:05 am: Meeting adjourned.