

Minutes of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission
City of Cherry Hills Village, Colorado
January 8, 2009
at the Village Center

Commission members in attendance: Theresa Gilpatrick, Jane Soderberg, Heidi Schmidt-Hammell, Ann Gallagher, Bill Callison, Jim Fairbairn. City staff members present: Ryan Berninzoni, Parks, Trails and Recreation Administrator, Bill Bauer, Parks Crew Chief, Heather Vigil, Horticulturist, Pamela Broyles, Administrative Assistant.

Call to Order

Ms. Theresa Gilpatrick called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Approval of December 11, 2008 Minutes

Ms. Jane Soderberg moved to approve the December 11, 2008 minutes. Ms. Heidi Schmidt Hammell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Audience Participation

No Audience Participation

Thank You Ceremony

The Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission (PTRC) wanted to thank four residents for their long term support of the PTR Commission; Catherine Anderson, Jim Muhm, Phyllis Hayutin and Merle Chambers. Unfortunately, all four residents were unable to attend tonight's meeting. The Commission believes it is important that they be thanked publicly for their contribution and will table the ceremony until February's meeting.

Public Input on Proposed Trail on Mansfield Avenue

Mr. Berninzoni reported that on November 11, 2008, the PTR Commission voted unanimously to move forward with a possible trail on Mansfield Avenue between Colorado Boulevard and Dahlia Street. He stated that the purpose of the public meeting tonight is to get an understanding from residents on the proposed trail.

In 2007 the Mansfield Trail became one of the Commission's top priorities. Over the last several months the Commission reviewed four different exhibits and chose the exhibit that is being presented tonight as the most feasible. The proposed trail is a six foot wide asphalt trail with a three to six foot planting strip that will include irrigation. The proposed trail will have a wooden bollard installed to mark a section of the trail for equestrian use. The exhibit proposes eight feet of asphalt and curb to be removed. The proposed trail would not exceed \$125,000 and a grant through Arapahoe County could supplement the cost of the trail.

Positive reasons to move forward with a new trail:

1. A new trail allows for the possibility of providing a safer route for children to walk to and from the bus stop.
2. The proposed trail will also provide a safer route for all users in the area who will no longer have to use the street and will be able to use the new off-street paved trail.
3. The new trail will access existing trails around the entire City and allow for a more continuous loop to the City's trail system.

Public Speakers**John Beggins****3900 South Cherry Street**

Mr. Beggins reported that his driveway backs out onto Mansfield Avenue. The proposal mentions that it would provide a safer route for kids to get to school; however, the children would have to cross the street twice to access the trail and get to the bus stop. He stressed that something needs to be done about the speed. The current proposal moves speeding cars closer to their property making it more unsafe. He reported that the speed study done on Mansfield Avenue provided the average speed of cars, but he has witnessed cars that speed excessively and moving them closer to their homes is a safety concern. Mr. Beggins reported that the white line has helped, but people still speed right past his driveway. He likes the idea of the trail, but there are a handful of people who live on the street that have kids and dogs, and it is already frightening to get out of the driveway. The cars speeding on Mansfield are not people in the neighborhood, but people using the street to get to University Boulevard and Happy Canyon. The planting strip would provide a buffer between the people and the speeding cars, which is a good idea, but he asked if the plan could be modified to place the planting strip where the white line is to provide a buffer between the speeding cars and their houses. Mr. Beggins also wondered why the rest of the trail system in the City has room for people and horses to walk past each other all the time and the proposed Mansfield Trail has a separate pedestrian trail and horse trail. He suggested that ideally you could move the trail over and combine the equestrian and pedestrian trail and narrow the street on the north, widen the white line on the south side, and put reflector signs to slow traffic.

Mr. Beggins also suggested that the City place intermittent signs along Mansfield Avenue that show vehicles they are speeding. Because the street is straight, cars make it a speedway and he believes the median placed at the end at Dahlia has been unsuccessful.

Laurie Hoffmann**3921 South Dahlia**

Ms. Hoffmann reported that she would first like to thank the PTR Commission and she is excited about the project. Mansfield Avenue can be a lovely, quiet street, but during commute hours it can be quite scary, and that is when the children are trying to get to the bus stop in the morning and afternoon. Ms. Hoffmann stressed that safety is the most important thing to consider with the proposed trail and not to create any unforeseen consequences. Although they have not yet had any problems, if the street is narrowed and safety is not considered then there could be a problem. She has two children who both ride the school bus and there are 15-16 elementary school children that live on the south side of Mansfield that would have to cross the street. She questions whether it would increase their safety by having them cross the street to get to the trail and to the bus stop. Ms. Hoffmann also stated that the intersection at Dahlia and Mansfield is very confusing and people are unsure whether it is a 4-way or 3-way stop. It would be unsafe for children to cross the street to get to the trail at this intersection. Ms. Hoffmann again thanked the Commission and stated that the work on Mansfield Avenue is worth it and it can be done.

Harry Hollines**3901 South Clermont**

Mr. Hollines reported that the bus stop is right in front of his house and if traffic is moved closer to the south side it would be more dangerous. Even with kids standing at the bus stop the cars still speed and he has even witnessed cars speed past the bus. Mansfield is a dangerous street because it is such a long stretch-way the cars can pick up speed and people don't pay attention. Mr. Hollines would like to understand what issues the proposed trail is addressing and if the Commission's focus is on safety or aesthetics. He proposed that something be put in place that will be safer for the kids. He believes the proposed trail that includes a walking path and equestrian path is great, but if safety is a number one concern he does not think this addresses that issue.

Diane Mayer
4021 South Clermont

Ms. Mayer reported that she is in favor of the trail, but is concerned that narrowing the street would create more problems.

Diana Koin
14 Cherry Lane Drive

Ms. Koin asked if the plan incorporated some of the changes that are anticipated with the Cherry Hills Water District.

Mr. Goldie responded he has been in contact with the water and sewer district and they are aware of the project.

Ms. Koin also added that a good chunk of the land in her area does not allow horses per the covenant.

Kathleen Nisbet
3920 South Ash Street

Ms. Nisbet reported that she echoes the concerns of her neighbors. She likes the idea of narrowing the street and believes it may slow traffic, but she is also concerned that having the trail on the north side forces kids to cross the street to get to the bus stop. The white stripe that was painted on the south side has made a big difference for her family. They started riding bikes on the street and taking walks to visit friends. If that access is taken away she will not allow her children to cross Mansfield.

Doug Nicoll
3901 South Cherry Street

Mr. Nicoll reported that he believes there is opportunity to solve a couple of problems. First is to slow the speeds on Mansfield, and second to allow access to tie into other trails and form connectivity. He recommends separating the issues and looking at this from a Parks and Trails aspect and a Public Works aspect where the two departments can work together on budgets and grants. He also believes the equestrian trail is a great idea. He lives on the south side and stated the parking lane has been a godsend, but still does not address the speed issue. If the Commission looks at keeping the 8' walkway and builds the trail on the north side, it still does not address the problems and concerns that the community has, which is the straightness of Mansfield and the speed issue. Mr. Nicoll met with Heidi Schmidt Hammell, Jay Goldie, Ryan Berninzoni and Harriet LaMair and understands that changing the north side is a big ticket item. Narrowing the street is still not enough because people are driving down the street looking at the mountains, not paying attention, and going downhill at excessive speeds, or speeding to get up the hill. The other alternative to slowing traffic is to add center island medians. Mr. Nicoll suggested widening the white stripe, adding center island medians in the middle, and building the equestrian trail on the north side. He recommends that the Commission do work studies that include community involvement. He also added that there will be more traffic with the new Belleview Station that is coming.

Stacey Hicks
3940 South Bellaire Street

Ms. Hicks reported that she is here to represent several people on her street that have children that walk to the bus stop. She stated she does not necessarily see the need for a paved trail and recreational trail and does not personally see a lot of activity on the street right now. Her biggest concern is the safety issue. Not only are people speeding, but they are on their cell phones and blackberries being inattentive. Though it would be nice to have a trail, she would like to go on record stating that she and her neighbors are concerned about pushing the traffic to the south side of the street.

Doug Thompson**3900 South Colorado Boulevard**

I applaud the effort to improve the neighborhood, but the issue is speeding. The street is wide and wide open for vehicles to speed. My question to you is would it not be better to deal with the speed issue first and then do the rest. Mr. Thompson also asked that the committee consider that a lot of people cycle on Mansfield.

Ms. Theresa Gilpatrick**Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission**

Ms. Theresa Gilpatrick responded that since we are the PTR Commission we do focus on trails. She apologized and stated that she should have said at the beginning of the meeting that this idea came from a couple of your neighbors who came to us over a year ago asking for help. One neighbor reported they have a child in a wheelchair and they have to push the child on the street and asked the PTR Commission to do something. Another neighbor asked if we could do something about the speeding. Ms. Gilpatrick reported that she runs on Mansfield almost every day and is aware of the speeding issues. She stated that she personally does not like the white line because it is obscured by ice and snow and it pushes you further out into the street. For that reason she runs on the north side. Ms. Gilpatrick stated that she is sympathetic to the speeding issue and children crossing the street. She stressed that this trail idea was never born on an aesthetic wish to have a pretty trail, but was in response to neighbors who said please help us; we need to walk along Mansfield safely. She reported that the Commission did run into issues and had to start somewhere. The utilities all run on the south side of Mansfield so it became a cost issue. If the Commission decided to do something on Mansfield Avenue they had to consider what would be the most cost effective side of the street to build on. Mr. Gilpatrick stated the proposed trail is not a finished piece, but it has been invaluable tonight to hear from all of you.

Robert Julander**4625 E Mansfield Avenue**

Mr. Julander reported that it looks to him like the Commission has overdone the proposed trail. What about improving the walking on the south side since most the people here want to keep the kids on the south side. Why not put the money in the south side and make it a community neighborhood street and try to give it that concept instead of a highway. Mr. Julander also suggested the idea of putting signs that tell people when they are speeding because they can be very effective. He believes that flashing signs will send the message and would like to see the signs placed immediately.

Derek Burnett**3920 S Birch Street**

Mr. Burnett asked Jay Goldie to help them understand how far this new white line would be. Jay Goldie reviewed the measurements. Mr. Burnett stated that he believes narrowing the street is a valid option. He believes the Commission could possibly achieve both things if you look at speeding and safe walking for the kids. He stated he likes the trail idea, but he is also concerned about pushing the traffic to the south side. Mr. Burnett thanked the Commission and requested that they move forward, but look at some different options. He added that the current speed limit is 30 mph, he suggested slowing the speed down to make it more of a neighborhood street.

Wendy Brown**4747 E Mansfield Avenue**

Ms. Brown asked who would be responsible for clearing the snow and ice and maintaining the trail.

Ms. Gilpatrick responded that it would be the Parks and Trails Department and that the proposed trail includes room for necessary equipment to maintain the trail.

Ms. Brown asked what the procedure is to determine if the comments tonight have been taken into consideration.

Ms. Gilpatrick responded that all comments are taken into consideration, and the comments tonight are recorded and a matter of public record. Any letters and emails will also be noted in this discussion.

Theresa Gilpatrick

Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission

Ms. Gilpatrick thanked everyone for coming and stressed how much the PTR Commission appreciates everyone's input. She stated that although nothing was decided, and there was no vote, the information received tonight is invaluable and all comments and opinions will be considered. The Commission will move forward on a work session with the Public Works Department to discuss how to proceed and may also schedule another public meeting. Ms. Gilpatrick assured residents that they will be notified and signs will be posted.

Mr. Berninzoni reported that no decisions will be made until the proper public hearings are held.

Councilmember Harriet LaMair thanked the PTR Commission and neighbors for coming and speaking tonight. She reported that this trail idea has been floating around for a while and she appreciates everyone's input.

Ms. LaMair commented on some reasons why the trail is being considered. Providing a trail connection is a top priority for the PTR Commission. Ms. LaMair stressed that safety and concern for a safe path on Mansfield Avenue where people can walk is also a top priority. All of the problems that residents talked about tonight are the reasons the Commission brought this issue forward and it was not based on aesthetic reasons. Ms. LaMair encouraged residents to contact her to answer questions and talk about these issues.

Subcommittee Discussions

Parks, Trails and Recreation Enhancement

Staff Update on Maintenance: Tree Care, General Maintenance – Heather Vigil

Heather Vigil, the City's Horticulturist, gave a PowerPoint presentation on tree inventory and tree maintenance in the City of Cherry Hills Village. Ms. Vigil informed Commission members about a new GPS system that is used to monitor the history of each tree making it easier and more reliable to track and update records. The GPS system can also track benches and trash cans in the City.

Ms. Vigil outlined her goals for 2009 and answered any questions from the PTR Commission.

Ms. Gilpatrick asked if there is a plan in place to remove certain trees that are invasive such as Russian Olives.

Ms. Vigil reported that the department has discussed tree removal and removing Russian Olives is on the list. There is a process to go through to make certain suckers don't come back up.

Ms. Gilpatrick asked if the GPS system was in the budget for this year.

Ms. Vigil stated not this year, but the department is considering a purchase within the next couple of years.

Ms. Gilpatrick asked if there is a grant available for the GPS system, and if not, are there extra funds in the budget to purchase the GPS system.

Mr. Berninzoni said he could review the budget towards the middle of the year to see if a purchase is feasible.

Mr. Goldie reported that the cost for a GPS system is \$3,000 to \$5,000, but the City also needs to look at available staff time and the possibility of hiring an intern.

Mr. Fairbairn thanked Ms. Vigil for her presentation and for doing a great job on the trees in the City. He asked that the City consider removing some of the Siberian Elms along with the Russian Olives. He stressed how important it is to water the trees and asked Ms. Vigil if she needed additional help to keep up with watering.

Ms. Vigil reported that the City addressed and solved the watering issue last year by hiring seasonal help during the summer months. Ms. Vigil also responded to Mr. Fairbairn's request to remove Siberian Elms. She reported that she agrees with removing the trees but they need to consider that there are areas where Siberian Elms are the only trees planted. The Siberian Elms do not require much water and provide shade.

Ms. Callison asked how the City is doing on planting a larger variety of trees.

Ms. Vigil said that the City did well last year and will continue to plant a variety of trees each year, but it does take time.

Mr. Fairbairn reported that he would like to see an increase in trees in 2009.

Ms. VanderWerf reported that a lot of Cottonwood trees on the High Line Canal look like they are nearing the end of their lifecycle and Denver Water does not seem keen on replacing them. The trees provide shade and keep the High Line cooler and more beautiful. She stressed the importance of planting smaller trees where larger trees are dying.

Ms. Vigil reported that Denver Water has provided the City with a list of trees that can be planted on the High Line Canal, but the City must get approval from Denver Water first. Ms. Vigil agrees that the canopy of trees in the High Line Canal is dying and the City has definitely discussed the importance of new plantings.

Staff Update – Bill Bauer, Parks and Trails Crew Chief

Mr. Bauer reported that the first priority of the Parks Department is to maintain what we already have. Maintenance includes tree trimming, mowing, repairing split rail fence, irrigation repairs, weed control, trash pickup, and dragging the arenas twice a week.

Mr. Bauer reviewed some of the accomplishments for the Parks Department in 2008.

- The Parks Division purchased two new water taps at Happy Canyon and Quincy and Dahlia Hollow Park.
- The Parks Department completed the first phase of landscaping on Holly and Quincy, which included demolition and new landscaping.
- New tunnel lights were installed under Belleview Avenue.
- Staff completed the Rady property trail relocation.
- Staff completed City wide trimming on all trails.
- Installation of the new John Meade Horse Arena was completed.

Mr. Bauer reported on the projected jobs for the Parks Department in 2009

- New trail bollard markers.
- Replace wooden pillars as needed.
- The Parks staff will begin demolition of the Woodie Hollow shelter in the next couple of weeks to prepare for the construction of the new shelter.

- Redo entry features at Holly and Belleview and Colorado and Hampden and update all irrigation.
- Complete a City bench donation inventory.
- Build a possible trail on Mansfield Avenue.
- Install a new horse arena at Woodie Hollow Park.
- Work on replacing large sections of split rail fence.

The PTR Commission thanked Bill Bauer and the Parks Department for doing a fabulous job.

Summary Sheet Review

Ms. Gilpatrick reported that the Summary Sheet report has been updated through the December 2008 meeting. Ms. Gilpatrick asked that each PTR Commission member come back to the February meeting with three items from the "Future Plans" section that they would like to work on and contribute to. She asked that each member provide ideas, a timetable and possible costs to get started. The Summary Sheet Review will be updated every month and included in the meeting packets.

Recreation and Events Subcommittee

Ms. Gilpatrick reported that the Events Subcommittee is meeting with Pamela Broyles on Thursday, January 15th at 8:15 a.m. to set the special events and recreation calendar for 2009. Ms. Gilpatrick invited anyone who would like to contribute, or provide new ideas to attend the meeting that is being held at the Village Center.

Communications/PR

Ms. Gallagher asked if the O'Neal bench dedication was approved so she can contact the family for an interview.

Mr. Berninzoni reported that the bench dedication was approved.

Reports

Trails Expansion Committee

Ms. Schmidt Hammell reported that there was no subcommittee meeting scheduled regarding the John Meade horse arena. Ms. Schmidt Hammell shared her thoughts regarding some of the comments made at the December meeting and shared some pictures she took of Three Pond Park in reference to the fencing concerns. One photo shows a two rail fence and Ms. Schmidt Hammell suggested making the fence three rails to keep consistent with other fencing in the Village and to add a little more height for safety.

Ms. Schmidt Hammell noticed there were signs to leash and cleanup after your dog and she asked Mr. Berninzoni if the signs were new and recently installed.

Mr. Berninzoni reported that the signs are new and they were installed the afternoon of December 11, 2008.

Mr. Schmidt Hammell suggested narrowing the width of the pedestrian entry way to make it difficult for a horse to run through.

Ms. Schmidt Hammell reported that the gate is missing from the main entrance.

Mr. Berninzoni reported that the City installed a new gate approximately six months ago and shortly after it was installed a vehicle smashed into it. The gate has not been replaced yet.

Ms. Schmidt Hammell also suggested narrowing the pedestrian entrance next to the gate and replacing the gate with a lock for security purposes.

Ms. Schmidt Hammell asked if staff would provide a report to the PTR Commission at the February meeting listing everything that has been done to address the resident's concerns with regard to the John Meade horse arena. The report will help keep Commission members informed and perhaps a work session or subcommittee could be established if it would be helpful for staff.

Update on Land Donation % Change

Mr. Berninzoni reported that the City attorney gave an update on the proposed land donation increase at the City Council meeting. The Council requested an amended ordinance brought before them and Mr. Berninzoni will prepare this document.

Councilmember VanderWerf reported that there was not a lot of support for a 10% dedication on 2 1/2 to 5 acres properties. City Council asked that the ordinance be written to include all properties to start with and then the topic will be open for public comment. The City Council seems more supportive of a 10% land donation on larger properties.

Ms. Gilpatrick reported that when Attorney David Foster attended the PTR meeting he informed members that a blanket 10% increase could avoid legal challenges. At his recommendation the Commission decided to apply a standard number so they did not single people out.

Ms. VanderWerf stated that City Council would hear more from the attorney on this subject.

Ms. Gallagher suggested that the PTR Commission request the support of the Planning and Zoning Commission at the City Council meeting.

Ms. Soderberg asked Mr. Berninzoni to remind City Council that the citizens supported the proposed increase in the master plan as a way to get more land without using tax money.

Maintenance Log Update

Mr. Berninzoni reported that the Parks staff has installed nearly 20 new bollards on the west side of the City.

City Council Report

There was nothing to report

Nancy McGrath Resignation

Ms. Gilpatrick reported that it is with regret that the PTR Commission accepts the resignation of Ms. Nancy McGrath. Ms. McGrath has some tremendous opportunities in the future that will involve a lot of travel.

Arapahoe County Open Space Grant for 2009

Ms. Gilpatrick reported that the PTR Commission needs to discuss how to move forward with the Mansfield Trail as the deadline to apply for the Arapahoe County grant is February 8, 2009, and the next PTRC meeting is February 12th.

Ms. Gilpatrick suggested that the PTR Commission schedule a work session to discuss how to move forward.

Mr. Berninzoni recommended not rushing the Mansfield project because of the grant deadline. He stated that even if the Commission waits until 2010 to apply for the grant it is important to take the time to do it right.

PTR Commission members were in agreement that a work session needs to be scheduled in the near future to honor the citizens concerns.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2009.

Adjournment

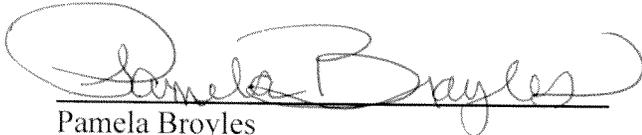
The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.



Theresa Gilpatrick
Committee Chair



Ryan Bernizom
Interim PTR Administrator



Pamela Broyles
Administrative Clerk