

Minutes of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission
City of Cherry Hills Village, Colorado
Thursday, March 10, 2011
at the Village Center

Commission members in attendance: Jane Soderberg, Ann Gallagher, Katy Brown, Jim Fairbairn, Jeff Ferrell, Karen Barsch, Councilmember Klasina VanderWerf. Employees present: Ryan Berninzoni, Parks, Trails and Recreation Administrator, Bill Bauer, Parks Crew Chief and Pamela Broyles, Administrative Assistant.

Absent: William Callison

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Jane Soderberg called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 10, 2011 MINUTES

Mr. Jeff Ferrell moved to approve the February 10, 2011 minutes. Mr. Jim Fairbairn seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Jim Manning

4193 South Dahlia

Cherry Hills Village, CO

Mr. Manning reported that he came to the meeting to listen to the discussion on Dahlia Hollow Park and indicated that there are overwhelming numbers of people who are not in favor of the proposal. Mr. Manning noted that the bench that is already located at Dahlia Hollow Park is seldom used and there is no reason to place another bench in that location. He suggested that the bench could be relocated, but it is in need of paint and repair before anyone can sit on it.

PARKS DIVISION 2011 MAINTENANCE PRESENTATION

BILL BAUER - PARKS CREW CHIEF

Mr. Bauer presented the Parks maintenance priorities and goals for 2011. Mr. Bauer reported that staff is currently installing new bollard sleeves and locks at the entrances to the trails and with weather permitting this project should be complete within a couple of weeks. Staff has also started the process of updating and fixing the inlet to the ponds at Three Pond Park from the High Line. He indicated that staff will be using a clay bednite liner that will make the inlet more efficient. Staff will also repair the horse jumps at Three Pond Park that are falling apart because of age.

Mr. Bauer reported that upcoming projects in 2011 include the installation of new stone benches to replace the old donated benches that are in need of repair. Staff will also continue to restore bridle trails that need maintenance. This process will include adding crusher fines and soil to the trails in need of restoration. Staff will continue to focus on replacing split rail fence along the City's right-of-way, parks and bridle trails. This fall staff is planning to improve two more entry features at the island on Colorado Boulevard and Hampden Avenue and the island at Happy Canyon and Quincy. Parks staff will start routine maintenance work to include mowing, tree trimming, and weed control. Staff will also be planting new perennials and annuals at the entry features and islands on Dahlia Street. Staff is currently working with the Buell Mansion on Phase 4 of their tree planting plan. Mr. Bauer provided Commissioners with a 2011 maintenance priority list.

Mr. Bauer indicated that some questions were raised about the tree maintenance and watering procedures and he reported that newly planted trees and bushes are watered a minimum of twice a month in the winter and three times a month in the summer. The established trees are generally watered once a month. He indicated that watering is adjusted as needed when it rains or snows. He stated that staff follows the industry standards on tree care.

Ms. Soderberg asked how many benches are expected to be replaced in 2011.

Mr. Bauer reported that seven new benches were purchased this year, but staff will also be doing maintenance on benches that are in need of repair.

Mr. Fairbairn commented that cedar mulch is consistently used around the City and if possible he would like to see the City consistently use cedar mulch for future projects. He also noted that he was pleased with the information on tree maintenance that will be added to the website in the near future.

Mr. Fairbairn asked who determines what type of trees to plant in areas that are being improved.

Mr. Bauer reported that they rely heavily on Davey Tree Company who the City contracts with to do tree maintenance.

SUBCOMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS

a. Summary Sheet

Trail Enhancement Update

Mr. Fairbairn reported that a productive meeting was held with the homeowner on the north side of Stanford Trail who seemed receptive to an easement. He stated that a letter needs to be sent to the homeowner in the near future to provide updates.

Mr. Ferrell reported that he heard from the party that owns the former St. Clair property along Stanford Avenue and they responded to Ryan Berninzoni by phone stating that they will not give consent to grant any easements along the Stanford Avenue right-of-way.

Mr. Ferrell reported that the group still feels that this is the time to make a formal proposal and proceed with the idea. He indicated that a trail could still be placed along Stanford if an easement is granted by the property owner across from the St. Clair Property and if the other property owners are in agreement with the idea. He noted that if the Commission agrees with the idea then they can ask staff to proceed with the next steps.

Mr. Berninzoni outlined what the next steps would include:

1. Contact the affected homeowners and get a consensus of what they would like the trail to look like.
2. Conduct a survey of the entire area.
3. Have the City Attorney draft an informal agreement that will be shown to the residents and if they agree, make a recommendation to City Council.

MS. KATY BROWN MOVED TO PROCEED WITH THE STEPS AS DEFINED BY RYAN BERNINZONI TO CONTACT THE HOMEOWNERS ALONG STANFORD AVENUE TRAIL FOR A CONSENSUS, CONDUCT A SURVEY AND HAVE THE CITY ATTORNEY DRAFT AN INFORMAL AGREEMENT FOR THE HOMEOWNERS TO REVIEW. MR. JEFF FERRELL SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Special Events Update

Ms. Brown reported that the Summer Roundup is scheduled for June 11, 2011 and she encouraged everyone to attend the event.

Ms. Brown also reported that the City received approval to use the lot on the corner of Quincy and University for the proposed exotic car show event this fall. She will meet with Jane Soderberg and Theresa Gilpatrick in the near future to determine the best location and make a final determination on the event.

Website and Signage

There was nothing to report on this subject.

Communications/Crier Article - Ann Gallagher

There was nothing to report on this subject.

General Updates

Mr. Berninzoni reported that a separate commission has been formed for the Arts Committee.

b. Parks, Trails and Recreation EnhancementDiscussion on Park Improvement at Dahlia Hollow Park

Mr. Berninzoni reported that six residents were present at the public input meeting and he also received some letters and emails. The final count was thirteen against the park improvements and six in favor of the park improvements. Mr. Berninzoni reported that staff feels there is not enough support to move forward with a recommendation, but he added that the Commission can still go before City Council without staff's recommendation. Mr. Berninzoni stated that with the lack of support and the cost of the structure in this economy it would be a tough thing to sell to City Council

Ms. Brown made the following comments regarding the proposed park improvements at Dahlia Hollow Park:

She stated that the City of Cherry Hills Village is changing and it is changing to meet the needs of future suburban living. These changes are documented in the Residential Development Standard Committee's final report, which identifies trends such as larger homes. These changes are also visible in the construction sites you see around the community from complete scrapes, additions, and large new construction. Times have changed and the way people live has changed and our residents are changing our community by the way they choose to utilize their property and our parks and open space. In 2006 a study by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources characterizes a nation wide decline in per capita participation in nature based outdoor recreation. To quote from the study the primary driving factor behind these trends is a decline in nature based outdoor recreation among young adults ages 20-40 and their children. In 1989 the United Nations ratified the convention on the rights of a child recognizing the needs of children and defining play as a child's right rather than just a need. The City of Denver has recognized this right through a comprehensive city wide system of play. Their master plan acknowledges the importance of play and play areas in determining our health, well being, creativity and intelligence. The most relevant is the importance of variety, diversity and balance in public play areas. Our parks and trails system provides more than 82 acres of open natural space, but very few play areas with extremely limited diversity of play opportunities. These are the reasons that I feel that the improvements at Dahlia Hollow Park are both needed and in the best interests of the community and our parks and trails systems, but not all residents share this opinion. It is important to remember that this is not a referendum where every individual gets a vote and a simple

majority prevails. We could do it that way, but we don't because the City realizes that input must be combined with research, data and an appreciation for the parks and trails system as a whole. This is the reason the PTRC exists, to consider all of the information from the perspective of the community as a whole and to make a recommendation to City Council who will ultimately decide whether it is in the best interest of the community. With that said, when I review the resident input and the notes that I took I look overall at households and not specifically individuals because again it is not a referendum. I determined that there are six households in favor and six opposed and that was not including the information that Ryan received after the meeting, but more importantly 12 households is not a significant majority of households in the village or even in that general area to sway the decision either way. As has been identified by some residents the Blue Ribbon Panel report and the Master Plan speak of the importance of open space in our community. The Master Plan defines open space as those land areas that are formally protected from future development either by landowner consent, public acquisition or both. While development is not specifically defined I do not interpret two climbing rocks and a bench as development. In fact, all of our surrounding communities include their parks with or without play equipment in their inventory of open space. With or without the park improvements Dahlia Hollow Park is and will continue to be open space. Some residents have used the concept of open space preservation as rationale for opposing the proposed improvements at Dahlia Hollow Park, but the concept should not be taken out of context. While the Master Plan strongly emphasizes preservation of open space it does not forbid or even discourage the addition of recreational amenities in our public parks. The Master Plan specifically states that parks are an important amenity in Cherry Hills Village and should be preserved, maintained and enhanced where enhanced can take on many meanings. The 2007 PTRC Master Plan Position Statement document includes several references to the PTRC's role and encourages the use of our parks and resources and providing opportunity for citizens to gather. By creating a reason to linger at Dahlia Hollow Park rather than simply pass through to the High Line Canal, the proposed improvements of Dahlia Hollow Park encourage the use of the park and are in keeping with the objective statement in the Master Plan and the PTRC's position. Even though a recreational structure at Dahlia Hollow Park does not jeopardize its status as open space the preservation of scenic vistas is a separate and important consideration. While Dahlia Hollow Park is not identified in the Master Plan as a scenic treasure we must be respectful of how our efforts enhance the landscape of our community. Of the 52 plus acres of open space and 25 miles of trails in our community the area at Dahlia Hollow Park represents 6% and the area of the proposed play structure represents only .05 percent. There will still be more than 80 acres of space in which to walk, bike, enjoy the scenery, see wildlife and quietly contemplate nature. The PTRC and surrounding residents were also concerned about the aesthetic impact of the park. The area surrounding Dahlia Hollow Park is arguably the most suburban park in the Village with the densest population and smallest setbacks. Despite the fact that a traditional play structure with swings and slides would have been in keeping with the neighborhood, the PTRC wanted natural looking boulders to emphasize the semi-rural, natural character of our community in keeping with the Master Plan. Careful consideration was given to the types of recreational amenities nearby to make sure we were creating new recreational opportunities. Understandably the most vocal opponents are those who have benefited from the park as extensions of their yards and who would see the rocks from their windows and views. I don't necessarily like the plastic playhouse in my neighbor's back yard, but that doesn't mean he doesn't have the right to put it there for the enjoyment of his family. It can not be forgotten that Dahlia Hollow Park is a public park. Just as we respect the rights of private property owners to use their residence to the greatest benefit it is the City's responsibility to use public lands for the greatest benefit of the community at large. This proposal solidly addresses the objectives of the City as expressed in the Master Plan, the objectives of the PTRC, the preservation of character of the Village and

the neighborhood and even self imposed design standards while still offering enhanced recreational opportunities for the residents of Cherry Hills Village. I do however have one reservation and that is that Dahlia Hollow Park is in a floodplain. The Master Plan specifically discourages new structures and improvements in a floodplain. However, if we are to move forward this proposal will have to go before the Planning and Zoning Commission who can better determine if the proposal meets the guidelines.

Ms. Barsch commented that she has similar thoughts. She indicated that the City has two very expensive structures that attract people with horses and play structures for horses to jump over, yet the City doesn't want to attract kids and families to enter our parks and she finds that very disturbing. She stated that she doesn't know if it was the time of year that caused families not to come to the meeting or the time of day because it was at a time when families were eating dinner, but the families she talked to very much like the idea of the park improvements and having a sense of community. Ms. Barsch said she feels like the Village isolates people rather than bringing people together. She added that if kids are familiar with the adults in the neighborhood and the adults are familiar with the kids it creates a safer environment. Ms. Barsch expressed that the PTRC worked very hard to keep the improvements natural as that was the one thing that was clearly heard and she believes that the park can still be a natural area with something that attracts kids. Ms. Barsch concluded that she believes the park improvements would be very positive by bringing families and kids together and it would also enhance the park.

Mr. Ferrell commented that he is looking at the difference between the conceptual aspects and the practical aspects. He believes the Commission agrees with the conceptual idea, but he does not believe that Dahlia Hollow Park is a suitable site for a number of reasons including the small space. He indicated that he is not convinced that neighbors in the immediate area expressed or showed enough interest for the Commission to move forward with a recommendation to City Council. He stated that it is fair to say that the Commission has never seen the majority of neighbors in the area come forward and support the idea and in the meantime long time residents in the area have been quite vocal in their opposition. Mr. Ferrell concluded that he supports staff's recommendation not to forward the proposal on to City Council in part because he does not believe the prospects of it proceeding out of City Council are very good.

Ms. Gallagher commented that looking back at the process with the portable restroom she believes the Commission needs to be selective on what they forward to City Council. Ms. Gallagher indicated that she doesn't agree that the Village isolates, but the people within it do and the PTRC is not going to change people by putting play structures in parks. Ms. Gallagher commented that we shouldn't look to the City to provide recreation for our children. She suggested that the City should look at larger spaces like John Meade Park and possibly enhance what is already there.

Ms. Soderberg commented that her personal view is that the silent majority often does not appear and City Council does make their decisions based on the amount of support. She suggested that there is no time limit on this proposal and the Commission does not have to vote for or against it tonight. She indicated that the Commission could reintroduce the proposal in the summer and give people time to show their support if the support is there. She concluded that she does not want to forward a recommendation to City Council when they do not have a room full of people cheering for it.

Ms. Brown agreed that the Commission does not necessarily have to move on anything tonight, but she suggested that the next step should be to proceed with the survey that was previously discussed once the weather is nicer. She believes that the survey is a valid way to gain feedback from people who use the park. She stated that although she agrees with the concept that City Council may not approve the proposal, in her opinion that is not a reason not to do what the Commission thinks is right.

Mr. Fairbairn commented that he also thinks the survey is a great idea. He indicated that he believes placing a couple of boulders in that park would be fine. He expressed that the Commission has done their best to listen to the people and to create an environment that fits in with Cherry Hills Village.

Mr. Berninzoni responded that the City could conduct a survey in the area, but noted that they have spent over a year on this subject.

MS. BARSCH MOVED TO TABLE THE DAHLIA HOLLOW PARK IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL UNTIL THE COMMISSION HEARS MORE FEEDBACK AND RECEIVES MORE SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY. MR. FERRELL SECONDED THE MOTION.

Ann Gallagher	aye
Katy Brown	nay
Jane Soderberg	aye
Jim Fairbairn	aye
Jeff Ferrell	aye
Karen Barsch	aye

The motion carried with 5 ayes and 1 nay.

Ms. Soderberg concluded that the issue will be discussed in the future and more public input will be needed before the Commission will proceed.

REPORTS

City Council Report

Councilmember VanderWerf expressed that she appreciates all the work that is being done on the bollards.

Councilmember VanderWerf reported that a study session is scheduled for City Council to discuss the High Line Canal working group and she asked members of the PTRC to attend. She stated that there will be representatives from Arapahoe County and a slide show presentation to talk about the group's purpose. She also reported that the City applied for a Planning Grant through Arapahoe County to gain background information on the Cat Anderson property.

Councilmember VanderWerf indicated that she along with the Mayor and Ann Polumbus of the Art's Committee met with an art collector who is interested in placing art in a municipality. Ms. Polumbus asked the art collector to consider the City of Cherry Hills Village.

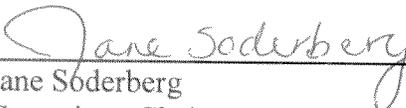
Councilmember VanderWerf commented on the proposed Dahlia Hollow Park improvement and noted that there are tough decisions to be made, but the decisions we make as public servants are sometimes based on what is in the public's best interest and this doesn't always correspond to what the majority wants.

Councilmember VanderWerf provided an update on the Joint Public Safety Facility stating that the next step will be to select an architect.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

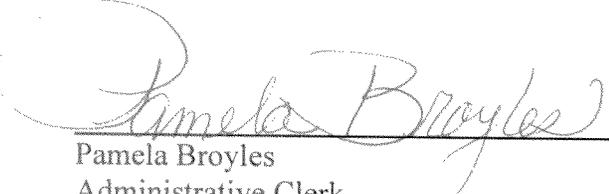
The next scheduled PTRC meeting is April 14, 2011.



Jane Soderberg
Committee Chairperson



Ryan Berninzoni
Parks, Trails and Recreation Administrator



Pamela Broyles
Administrative Clerk