

Minutes of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission
City of Cherry Hills Village, Colorado
Thursday, August 11, 2011
at the Village Center

Commission members in attendance: Jane Soderberg, Katy Brown, Jeff Ferrell, Jim Fairbairn, 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: Bill Lucas, Bill Callison

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Jane Soderberg called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 9, 2011 MINUTES

Mr. Jim Fairbairn moved to approve the June 9, 2011 minutes with the approved changes to Mr. Ferrell and Ms. Soderberg's report. Ms. Katy Brown seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Mr. Jim Manning
4193 South Dahlia
Cherry Hills Village, CO

Mr. Manning reported that he has lived in the Village for the past 48 years. He indicated that he is here tonight to share with the Commission his experience in talking with the eight homeowners about Dahlia Hollow Park. He stated that he talked with Mr. Berninzoni about the work that was planned there and he took those items to the eight individual homeowners. The items he presented to the homeowners are:

1. The fence that extends from his fence to Dahlia Street itself.
2. Water extension to trees in the park.
3. Staircase improvement from the Park to Cherry Street.

He also asked about the possibility of art work in Dahlia Hollow Park.

Mr. Manning reported that the results of his personal discussions with homeowners was that one family objected to the improvement of the staircase up to Cherry Street because they didn't see any reason to spend the money. He also indicated that no one was keen on placing art work in Dahlia Hollow Park because it is very controversial and what is art to one person might not be art to another. Mr. Manning concluded by stating that the families are in favor of the proposal by Mr. Berninzoni, but they are not in favor of the art in the park concept.

Ms. Brown asked Mr. Manning to clarify if only one of the eight families contacted was not in favor of the staircase proposal and if in general the group was responsive to the concept.

Mr. Manning replied that the others didn't object, but the person who is opposed lives right next door to the staircase.

Ms. Soderberg stated for clarification that the Art Commission falls under City Council's jurisdiction not the Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission.

Mr. Craig Sands
4740 East Oxford Avenue
Cherry Hills Village, CO

Mr. Sands asked if there are any plans to clean up Dahlia Hollow Park at the corner of Oxford and Dahlia. He stated that there has been some work over the past few years to redirect the ditch so it flows better and more recently there were some dead trees trimmed as a result of the ditch work. He indicated that his main concern is if there are any plans to reclaim some of the ditch and landscape so noxious weeds can be choked out.

Mr. Berninzoni responded that the ditch work was a concept driven by Jay Goldie and Urban Drainage. He said there may be some minor long term goals as far as the ditch itself.

Mr. Sands stated that he would like to go on record stating that it is his opinion that the corner of the park is looking very rough and overgrown and weeds have taken over. He stated that there is not a lot of native species and his biggest concern is if there are any plans to address this and improve the look of the natural area.

Mr. Ferrell asked Mr. Berninzoni to explain who Urban Drainage is and what their responsibility is and to determine if the area he is referring to is actually the City's responsibility.

Mr. Berninzoni responded that the location is the City's property and the maintenance is the City's responsibility. He stated that if there is a safety hazard or a huge concern in that area then staff will take care of it. He stated that work in the ditch would fall under Jay Goldie and the trees and weeds would fall under him, but he doesn't see any weed problems in that area at this time.

Mr. Ferrell commented that the boundaries in this area are undetermined and it would be beneficial to define the boundary of the utility easement and what property is the City's responsibility outside of those boundaries.

SUBCOMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS

a. Summary Sheet

Trail Enhancement Update

Mr. Ferrell reported that following the last meeting the PTRC decided to move forward and again ask the McQuaid family if they are interested in granting the City an easement on the old Stanford Avenue roadway. Mr. Ferrell stated that he talked to Mr. and Mrs. McQuaid in July and they both enthusiastically supported the idea of moving forward and generously offered to grant the City an easement on their property. He indicated that Mr. Berninzoni followed up with a phone call to inform them that the City would move forward with a survey.

Mr. Ferrell presented some photos of the area to the PTRC. Mr. Ferrell stated that based on the photos he believes the survey will show that the boundary is right down the middle of the street. If this is the case, most of the open area lies on the McQuaid side of the Old Stanford Avenue. He said this indicates that the Commission's objective to preserve public access, restrict vehicle access and possibly enhance the appearance of this piece of ground, which is heavily used by the public as an informal trail, can be accomplished with the McQuaid easement.

Mr. Ferrell also pointed out that the Barnard family built a new cedar fence for privacy.

Mr. Ferrell concluded that the Commission has done everything they can in that area in terms of accomplishing their objective and he is pleased to say they can move forward.

Mr. Berninzoni reported that the survey should be complete within the next two weeks and he will probably bring it back to the Commission at the next meeting.

Mr. Fairbairn suggested that the remaining homeowners be contacted every 2-3 years by writing a letter to determine if their status on granting an easement has changed.

Radcliff Update

Mr. Berninzoni reported that certified letters were mailed to four property owners in July 2011 regarding the low water crossing at the bottom of Radcliff. He will report back with any response.

Special Events Update

Ms. Brown reported that the 2011 Movie Night is moving forward and is scheduled for August 27, 2011. She indicated that the Committee is still working on organizing the proposed car show and the next step is to secure participants. She noted that she has started working on the application and flyer.

Website and Signage

There was nothing to report.

Communications/Crier Article

Ms. Soderberg reported that she will organize a meeting with Bill Callison and Martha Welborn to discuss writing future articles for the Crier.

General Updates

Ms. Barsch discussed the upcoming Barn Tour and indicated that the Land Preserve needs volunteers to staff the barns. She asked that if any Commission members are interested to contact her. She also asked that people contact her if they want to buy or sell tickets for the Barn Tour fundraiser on September 17th.

Ms. Barsch suggested that the Inventory Committee should meet with the High Line Canal Working group to determine if there are properties that could be added to the inventory list. Ms. Barsch also indicated that Jay Goldie has been working with Harriet LaMair on funding and suggested that Jay Goldie give a report to the PTRC at the next meeting.

Ms. Barsch referred to the portable restroom presentation before City Council and suggested that when staff is not in support of the PTRC's proposal then the PTRC needs to have a separate presentation with someone there to represent the Commission's views as there is a conflict of interest.

Ms. Barsch reported that she was asked to look into a Conservation Easement for the Parks and she met with a friend who is a conservation easement lawyer to discuss the options. She indicated that after looking at all the possibilities she concluded that the best way to achieve preservation of our Parks in the future is to make it more difficult to change the Code. She stated that currently if City Council would ever want to sell or develop a property they could change the language that is currently in the City Code. She indicated that the Commission could make it more difficult by drafting the language in the City Charter, which would require a resident vote before changes could be made. Ms. Barsch recommended that the Commission have the City Attorney draft a provision that the PTRC can recommend to City Council to put on the November ballot.

Councilmember VanderWerf noted that when there are public funds available to purchase property along the High Line Canal they do require a Conservation Easement.

Mr. Berninzoni stated that he would talk with Jay Goldie on how best to proceed.

Ms. Barsch stated that the issue is time sensitive because of the November election.

b. Parks, Trails and Recreation Enhancement

Dahlia Hollow Park Improvements

Mr. Ferrell provided a map and several photos of Dahlia Hollow Park for Commission members to review. Mr. Ferrell indicated that he has been talking with Ryan Berninzoni about the infrastructure at Dahlia Hollow Park for several months and they both feel that elements of the infrastructure are in need of renovation. In addition, there are improvements to the infrastructure that can be made today, which will improve the character and quality of the Park for all residents and users now and in the future. He stated that some of these ideas were already in the planning stages by staff, and others had been previously suggested in the PTRC meetings. After much discussion, they felt that it was appropriate to bundle these items into a complete infrastructure improvement project and put it on the PTRC agenda. All of the work that will be done does not require any approval, as it is categorized as customary work for the City's staff and will be performed by them. He noted that neighbors were consulted, in particular Jim Manning, who graciously offered to contact those homeowners adjacent to the park and notify them of his thoughts. Mr. Manning also provided valuable input to the plans. The inclusion of this work as an improvement project will: 1) enable the PTRC to track the effort over time 2) recommend or suggest additional items in the future, and 3) encourage staff in the timely completion of the work which will minimize the disruption to park users.

Mr. Ferrell referred to the photos to provide a visual tour of the Park so that everyone could see its current state, unique features, and get an appreciation for the improvements that are planned.

Mr. Ferrell gave the following presentation:

As you can see Dahlia Hollow Park is an access point to the High Line Canal Trail. It serves the most densely populated neighborhoods in Cherry Hills Village, with approximately 300 households in the immediate area. In addition, it also provides access for innumerable residents in Denver's large Cherry Point neighborhood, which starts a mere two blocks away at Dahlia and Mansfield. The Park has two access points, from the east, just below the intersection of Dahlia Street and E. Oxford Avenue, and from the north, at the bottom of Cherry Street, which appears on the map as a narrow strip of the Parks northwestern edge. It is bisected by Dahlia Creek, which runs diagonally from the Oxford and Dahlia intersection into the High Line Canal right where it makes a 90 degree turn heading west.

Mr. Ferrell referred to a picture that shows the Dahlia Street entrance to the Park. He noted the irrigation tap that currently provides water to the landscaping on the traffic islands that were installed for the nearby traffic calming project. Staff has determined and planned that this water source can be used to provide irrigation to the trees in the Park, including the pines in the middle of the picture, some of which have nearly died in recent years.

Mr. Ferrell referred to a picture that shows a view looking into the park at the southern boundary of the park that appears to have no identifiable boundary between it and the raw land to the south owned by the Manning Family Partnership. The split rail fence surrounding the home of Jim and Harriet Manning is visible in the background. The plans include installation of a matching split rail fence in 10 foot sections along this property line.

Another photo shows a view looking back to the trail with a new stone bench along the side of the trail. This bench is the replacement for the deteriorated wooden bench that formerly sat unused. This is a nice setting and neighbors do not appear to have any objection to this location.

Mr. Ferrell noted that while walking in the Park after the recent downpours he noticed that the creek overflowed its bank and came close to where the bench now sits.

The next photo shows the bridge that crosses the High Line Canal allowing people to join the High Line Canal Trail. Mr. Ferrell noted that the photo was taken after a recent rainstorm and the Dahlia Hollow Trail is worn down to the dirt in some areas and becomes muddy after it rains.

Mr. Ferrell referred to a photo alongside the low water crossing in the backyard of the home at 4700 E Oxford. There is a nicely maintained lawn and the boundary of the park is indeterminate in this area and it appears that the homeowners have been maintaining the park property for quite some time and making it look nice. This is not uncommon in this area as other residents including Mr. Manning have looked after the Park in various ways.

Ms. Soderberg asked if the City was also considering putting a fence here with the confusion of the boundary.

Mr. Ferrell responded that they are not considering a fence in this location because there is not a lot of traffic on that side and he would hate to spoil the view and cause another maintenance responsibility for the City.

Ms. Brown recommended that the Commission discuss putting a fence in that location at another time because she believes that the reason there isn't much traffic there is because people think it is private property.

The last picture shows the steps leading up to Cherry Street. Mr. Ferrell believes these steps are used by people throughout the day, but he noted from the picture that the wooden beams are sinking downhill, are no longer level and erosion has become a serious problem. With loose gravel and overgrown weeds, the steps have become a public safety concern and become slippery when wet. The split rail fence is rotted at the base and falling down. All of this will be replaced as part of the Dahlia Hollow Infrastructure Project.

Mr. Berninzoni reported that during the month of September the Parks staff will conduct maintenance at Dahlia Hollow Park. Staff will install irrigation that will be used to irrigate the trees that currently reside within the park. Staff will also install a split rail fence on the southern border of the park and repair the staircase. The last phase will be the installation of four new trees along the fence line. The project will take approximately two weeks to complete and if funds are available staff will consider putting crusher fine on the trail.

Mr. Sands asked what the justification for the fence is.

Mr. Berninzoni responded that the biggest reason is to help the City determine the boundary and prevent users from crossing over Mr. Manning's property.

Mr. Ferrell indicated that he proposed the fence for aesthetic reasons to enhance the feel of the Park for the users and create a more defined space with trees to create a park atmosphere.

Ms. Barsch asked if the irrigation will also be used to water the grass in the Park.

Mr. Berninzoni responded that the water will only be used to water the trees.

Mr. Soderberg recommended that the Commission meet and walk through the proposed Park improvements.

Ms. Brown suggested that based on the pictures it looks like the trail ends on the north side of the low water crossing and suggested adding crusher fine to make it clear that the trail continues on to Cherry Street.

REPORTS

Update on Tree Watering

Mr. Berninzoni updated the Commission on tree watering. He stated that watering is always at the top of the Parks priority list and they need to find ways to make it better. Mr. Berninzoni presented a Parks Division Tree Watering Guideline for use by City staff. He indicated that Mr. Fairbairn assisted with getting the guidelines on paper to be used now and in the future. These guidelines can be expanded and changed. Mr. Berninzoni also presented a draft of the Village website's tree watering recommendations that he can refer people to if they have questions about tree watering.

Ms. Barsch asked if there is a way to design a system that will alert residents on water monitoring.

Mr. Berninzoni stated that he could put something on the website and send email alerts.

Mr. Fairbairn praised the Parks Department tree watering program and said the only thing he would change is to add that when deep root watering to water no deeper than 6-8 inches.

2012 Projects and Priorities

Mr. Berninzoni reported that it is time to start planning projects and priorities for the upcoming year. He provided the Commission with a list of the projects and priorities for 2011 and a form to complete on the projects and priorities for 2012. He stated that his goal is to have everyone complete the form and bring it to the September PTRC meeting for discussion. Mr. Berninzoni said he will report back to the Commission in October with the findings and if everyone agrees he will move forward with presenting it to City Council.

Ms. Soderberg asked what the status is of the Little Dry Creek Study.

Mr. Berninzoni responded that he is working with Jay Goldie to put together packets for residents to pick up at the City if they have questions and concerns. The goal is to have the packets available within the next six months.

Ms. Soderberg asked if they considered having a small neighborhood meeting for all of the abutting property owners to present the packet and have an explanation by Bob Searns so he can answer any questions.

Mr. Berninzoni indicated that they would prefer that the people who are concerned come to the City.

Old Business

Ms. Barsch asked Mr. Berninzoni what the status is of contacting Kent Denver regarding the portable restroom.

Mr. Berninzoni responded that he is working with Jerry Walker and they are considering one site, but he has not officially heard back.

Parks Division Maintenance Log

Mr. Berninzoni presented the Parks Maintenance Log so the Commission could see what the Parks crew does outside of the normal watering, mowing, fencing, and other daily activities. He indicated that the maintenance log will include the non-obvious things that the Parks Department attends to.

Ms. Brown asked where the items on the list come from, whether it is from staff being in the area or people calling in with requests.

Mr. Berninzoni responded that the items come both from staff and calls from residents. Mr. Berninzoni stated that every Tuesday morning staff drives around the City to identify things that need to be done and he also receives 10-15 calls a week from residents.

Mr. Fairbairn asked about removing dead trees at Woodie Hollow Park and what the City's policy is on removing dead trees with relation to wildlife and protecting wildlife habitat.

Mr. Berninzoni responded that the removal of dead trees in Woodie Hollow Park was the result of a resident's concerns. Mr. Berninzoni stated that the City keeps a lot of dead trees, but they leave the determination up to the City's tree expert. If a resident calls with a concern they send Davey Tree to the site to determine if it is a safety issue.

New Business

Mr. Berninzoni reported that the Annex Wall on Hampden is moving forward and they have received two final bids. He also noted that Council has approved the wall and staff will potentially move forward with construction next month.

Mr. Berninzoni also reported that City Council approved concrete work on the sidewalk along Belleview. That work will start in the next couple of weeks along Holly Street west to University.

Mr. Berninzoni reported that he has been working with Councilman Russell Stewart to bring his Boy Scout troop to the City to help the Parks Department on a Saturday for 4-5 hours. Mr. Berninzoni stated that he is hoping to make this an annual event.

City Council Report

Councilmember VanderWerf reported that while the Art Commission was touring potential art sites in the City they were amazed with how good everything looks and complimented the Parks Department. She indicated that the Art Commission has been offered two sculptures on loan, and they will make a recommendation to Council on whether to accept the art pieces and where they should be placed. One piece is a pioneer woman pushing a plow and the other is a sculpture of a grandfather and a child on a bench.

Councilmember VanderWerf reported that Jay Goldie, Harriet LaMair and herself met with some members of the Arapahoe County Open Space and the Arapahoe County Open Space Fund is coming up for renewal in 2013. She encouraged members to support the fund when it comes up for re-election. She indicated that one of the changes they are looking at is to encourage grants to help pay for maintenance projects and not just new projects.

Mr. VanderWerf indicated that City Council is still exploring locations for a portable restroom that would have the least impact on neighbors.

Mr. VanderWerf provided an update on the new Public Safety Building. She stated that the plans include a lot of trees for screening and the design of the building looks great. She indicated that City Council has approved funding for the design phase.

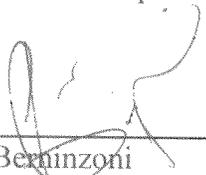
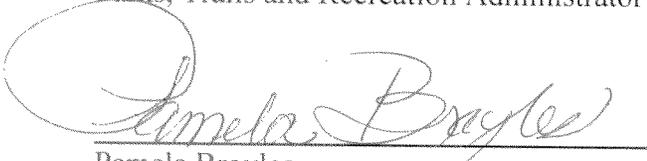
ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

The next scheduled PTRC meeting is September 8, 2011.



Jane Soderberg
Committee Chairperson


Ryan Beninzoni
Parks, Trails and Recreation Administrator
Pamela Broyles
Administrative Clerk