

Minutes of the Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission  
City of Cherry Hills Village, Colorado  
Thursday, February 13, 2014  
at the Village Center

Commission members in attendance: Bill Lucas, Jeff Ferrell, Karen Barsch, Robert Eber, Joshua DiCarlo, Colleen Dougherty, Mike Gallagher. Employees present: Ryan Berninzoni, Parks, Trails and Recreation Administrator, Jay Goldie, Deputy City Manager, Director of Public Works, Rob Zuccaro, Director of Community Development, Matt Krebsbach, Parks Crew Chief, Pamela Broyles, Administrative Assistant, also present was City Attorney Linda Michow.

Excused: Councilor Katy Brown

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Bill Lucas called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 9, 2014 MINUTES**

Mr. Robert Eber moved to approve the January 9, 2014 minutes as amended. Ms. Karen Barsch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Klasina VanderWerf  
5250 E. Chenango Avenue  
Cherry Hills Village, CO

Councilor VanderWerf spoke on behalf of the Cherry Hills Village Land Preserve and encouraged the PTRC and members of the audience to attend the City Council meeting on February 18, 2014 for a public forum to show their support for the acquisition of open space.

**APPLICATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF PLAY EQUIPMENT AT DAHLIA HOLLOW PARK – PUBLIC HEARING**

Mr. Berninzoni reported that the application before the Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission (PTRC) is for the installation of two play boulders and six wooden play stumps along with the installation of 9 to 12 inches of mulch with wood edging in Dahlia Hollow Park. Mr. Berninzoni provided a sample from the manufacturer of the synthetic material that would be used for the proposed play boulders in Dahlia Hollow Park. The proposed site for the play structure is 50 feet long by 20 feet wide. The total cost for the project is estimated at \$9,500.00.

Mr. Zuccaro gave a power point presentation on the proposed application. He reviewed the process for installing climbing boulders and play stumps in the City's parks that are zoned O-1 including the required expanded use permit review process. The City's code was recently amended so the PTRC will hold public hearings on these types of facilities instead of the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission. The PTRC will then make a recommendation to City Council for final review.

Mr. Zuccaro reviewed the requirements and the site plan for the proposed project. The first step is the public hearing being held this evening to determine if the project meets the zoning requirements. The PTRC can recommend approval, approval with conditions or denial of the application to City Council. If the application moves forward to City Council they will have a public hearing as well with all of the same notice requirements that went out for this meeting. Mr. Zuccaro noted that certified letters were mailed to all adjacent homeowners and staff mailed approximately 280 additional letters to surrounding residents to solicit input. He confirmed that the proposed project does meet the required setbacks for this structure. City staff has reviewed all of the requirements

and the City Engineer provided a letter defining grading requirements. Staff's analysis confirms that the proposed project does meet all of the zoning requirements and conforms to the Parks, Trails and Recreation section of the master plan. Based on the master plan analysis and conformance with the zoning code, staff is recommending approval of the proposed project if the Commission thinks that this is an appropriate amenity for the Village.

### **Public Hearing**

Jim Manning  
4193 South Dahlia  
Cherry Hills Village

Mr. Manning reported that he lives just south of Dahlia Hollow Park. He is opposed to the climbing rocks and requested that the Commission leave the Park alone.

Bill Manning  
Golden, Colorado

Mr. Manning provided a letter opposing the proposed climbing rocks in Dahlia Hollow Park. Mr. Manning now lives in Golden Colorado, but grew up near the Park and he still uses it. He thanked the Commission for the maintenance and upgrade work they did in the Park and on the trail. He believes playground equipment will detract from the natural character and open space of the Park. He does not want the Park to become a destination attraction. He stated that previous surveys and elections in the City have established that a majority of residents value natural open spaces.

Julia Donnelly  
3920 South Birch Street  
Cherry Hills Village

Ms. Donnelly reported that she grew up in the Village and moved back here to raise her children with a sense of community as well as open space. She is strongly in favor of the play boulders. She stated there are currently 19 children under the age of 10 on Birch Street alone and they see each other at Three Pond Park almost every day. She believes the boulders are natural and compliment the High Line Canal and she does not believe it will be a destination park that people will drive to. She said families in her neighborhood consist mainly of two working parents and the last thing they want to do after work is to go to the playground across Colorado Boulevard or across Hampden. Dahlia Hollow Park would be a nice addition to the Community where families can walk and have a safe play area for kids.

Bill Klingensmith  
4720 S. Hudson Way  
Cherry Hills Village

Mr. Klingensmith reported that he lives adjacent to Dahlia Hollow Park. He commended the PTRC for the addition of the trees and irrigation system to the Park and said they significantly enhance the appearance of the Park. He said there are two competing views with respect to adding manmade objects to the City's historically natural parks. There are those who think the Parks should be kept natural, which is the national parks approach and there are those who think we should construct manmade objects such as playgrounds, including the proposed climbing rocks. This view pertains mainly to parents with small children. He said it could be argued that the opinions of those who live near or adjacent to the Parks should be given extra weight and the opinions of Village residents as a whole are also important. There have been two City wide assessments on this issue including the Blue Ribbon Panel survey in 2004 and the Village wide vote in 2012. Mr. Klingensmith reviewed the survey results and concluded that the preservation, acquisition and rural atmosphere received the majority vote with greater than 90 percent of residents voting against developing the Parks.

Georgeanna Klingensmith  
4720 S. Hudson Way  
Cherry Hills Village

Ms. Klingensmith stated that she is a Pediatrician and she raised her two children in the Village. She said she echoes Mr. Klingensmith's thoughts and the question whether to maintain the semi-rural nature that most residents moved here for or go to a more urban character in the Village spaces. She believes it should be kept natural and every child and adult should have access to natural open space to enjoy and explore. She quoted Peter Roosevelt regarding attempts to develop the Grand Canyon, "Leave it as it is you cannot improve upon it." She said the Village Parks provide an escape from the local environment. Dahlia Hollow Park is a small Park and it is hard for most people to envision a 50 x 20 foot area being excavated. She is also concerned that a retaining wall will be needed because of the slope of the property. She said the visual impact that people will see walking through the Park is an excavated area with a retaining wall and climbing rocks. She concluded that she would like to keep the Parks natural and that is what the majority of the citizens want.

Ruth Herman  
4070 S. Hudson Way  
Cherry Hills Village

Ms. Herman reported that she lives across the street from the entrance to Dahlia Hollow Park. She said they moved here because they love the Park and they did not pick this area by accident. They enjoy the open space when their children and grandchildren visit. She said she is frustrated that the subject keeps resurfacing after a majority voted it down in the past.

Jan Lucas  
42 Sedgwick Drive  
Cherry Hills Village

Ms. Lucas reported that she is here in favor of the proposal. She said the Village has great open space, great trails and great parks. She hears people talking about open space, but this is about a park. She said the demographics have changed in Cherry Hills Village and we need to change with them. She reported that 23.4% of the population of Cherry Hills Village is under 14 years of age and 67% of the population is under 54 years of age. The City has three equestrian parks, but only one swing. She said parents would like to come home and spend time with their kids and get to know their neighbors to form a community. She said the boulders are innocuous and one-third of the people will acknowledge the boulders, one-third of the people will think it is landscaping and one-third won't even know they are there. It is not like Wash Park or Denver where people will drive, but is a place for the community to gather.

John Prescott  
4450 E. Oxford Place  
Cherry Hills Village

Mr. Prescott reported that he lives west of Dahlia Hollow Park. He commended City staff and the PTRC for the communication they provided on the proposed project including the pictures and layout of the area. Mr. Prescott reported that he grew up in the neighborhood when Dahlia Hollow Park was only a thicket. The neighborhood kids played in the Park and had a great time in the area as it was. He said he agrees that the Village is developing and he appreciates that the proposal is consistent with the master plan and a natural environment, but is this something that the collective want. He understands that addressing a cross section of the Village residents is a challenge with young parents with kids. He asked that the Commission listen primarily to residents in the immediate area. He said putting something in your back yard is different than the community at large.

PTRC DiscussionJeff Ferrell

Mr. Ferrell stated that it is fair to say that the majority of the letters received are opposed to this project. He agreed that looking at Dahlia Hollow Park as a Park versus open space is important to consider. Mr. Ferrell stated that his decision is based on whether the improvements to the Park are for a public or common good. The project should be available to all and everyone should benefit from its presence in some way. The problem he has is that the proposed amenity would not be used by everyone based on age or disabilities and those people would have no benefit from it. Although it is a nice amenity the question is whether it could be situated in a better location. He said the consensus of the community has been very clear and he does not have any expertise in going against the consensus of the community on how this space should be used. He will vote against the proposal.

Colleen Dougherty

Ms. Dougherty stated that the job of this Commission is to support the voice of the community and the community has been very clear that they are against this proposal. She believes the charter and mission of the PTRC is to preserve the character of the Village and open space. Based on what she has read she is also opposed to the proposal.

Mike Gallager

Mr. Gallager stated that when you look at the letters and public comment the majority is in opposition to this project. He believes the Commission's job is to listen to the public and he is not in support of the proposal.

Karen Barsch

Ms. Barsch stated that that she has seen this proposal change from a playground to something that would attract kids into nature. She believes the improvements will meet the cross section of the community that is demanded in the master plan. She heard the Mom who is in favor of the proposal and she comes from that perspective. She said she is looking at what the Commission has been directed to do through the master plan to address a cross section of Village residents. The Village provides great areas for runners, walkers and people who want to enjoy open space with hundreds of acres of open space available for people. She is a proponent of open space and natural play, but kids and families are not sitting and enjoying Dahlia Hollow Park, they are running through it as an entry way to the High Line Canal. She addressed the concerns of increased traffic and cited that in the application the City stated that its engineering consultant determined that the proposed play area would not generate additional traffic. She said the boulders look like natural rocks that will fit into the natural environment and questioned why people are not opposing all of the manmade horse jumps in the City's Parks. She believes it is important to address families in the community and the City has three horse parks, but kids have not been addressed. The boulders would provide a safe place for kids and will attract families to the Park. She believes the immediate landowners should be listened to, but she disagrees that their voice is more important than other people in the community adding that the Park is public property not someone's backyard. She believes we need to give kids and families a place to go to form a community and she is in favor of the proposal.

Robert Eber

Mr. Eber reported that his focus is whether this proposal is in keeping with the City's open space guide. He read the interpretation of the 2004 Blue Ribbon Panel report and he is not sure that the questions and opinions that were raised pertain to the boulder proposal or that the natural looking boulders are not consistent with natural space. The Community will not have less open space because of the boulders. He believes that

people wanted to articulate that they do not want the Village developed in a way that eliminates the opportunity for open space in the 2004 and 2012 studies. He looks at this proposal as an activity that is largely reflective of the need for open space. This will not put a big scar on open space through excavation and will not need erosion control. He said while public input is important, he does not believe that the person who speaks the loudest necessarily speaks the strongest. The Commission has a job to articulate more than what is evoked and must choose what is best for the Village. He sees the proposal as an addition that allows people to make use of the Park and is in keeping with past practices that people want to get out and make use of their neighborhood. He said he understands that people who live next to the Park have enjoyed 50 years of quiet and they want to continue to have it, but by nature of living near a public space it is public and is to be used in a manner that the public can take advantage of. This proposal is designed to get people out and build community spirit. He said he appreciates the comment that people should put play sets in their backyards, but it is not in keeping with one of the Commission's goals to encourage people to make use of public space and build community. Getting people into parks and open spaces is consistent with the Commission's goals and strategies.

Ms. Dougherty responded that she struggles with such a small minority who want the boulders. She believes the reason people want to volunteer on the PTRC is that they love open space and natural space. She sees no advantage in debating what is considered natural versus synthetic play structures and at the end of the day it is manmade materials that are being put in the Park. The Commission's job is to support the voice of the majority in the community.

Bill Lucas

Mr. Lucas stated that he believes the opposition is the minority on this issue. He believes the subject will continue to surface in future PTRC boards and will eventually pass because the community wants it. He said he looks at the demographics of the people against it and they do not include the 70% of residents under the age of 54. He believes the community has changed and it is a sad day when communities cannot be promoted. The City has three parks dedicated to horses, but there is not one baby swing in the entire Village. He said the rocks are innocuous and many people will not notice them. He said he is discouraged that more people are not present, but people are not going to come out to promote rocks. He believes this proposal is good for the community and is an opportunity to foster community. He believes if the proposal does not pass it is because of a minority who spoke loud and clear.

Mr. Gallagher responded that Mr. Lucas's assessment of the silent majority is wrong. He believes the majority of people moved to the Village for open space and a quiet environment. He said we are not Denver or Greenwood Village and he hopes the Village never becomes that. He said he raised three kids in the Village and if they wanted to go to a playground they drove their kids to Westlands Park. He said inviting people over to your backyard is what creates community. The natural environment is the genesis and why the community is the way it is and he does not want to lose track of that.

Ms. Dougherty also disagreed with Mr. Lucas's opinion on the silent majority.

Ms. Barsch asked Mr. Berninzoni to confirm whether a retaining wall would be needed.

Mr. Berninzoni responded that there would be some excavation to the surface to accommodate the mulch. He confirmed that there would be no retaining wall needed and the color of the mulch would blend with the environment.

Mr. Eber reviewed the PTRC goals and strategies in the master plan. He said he does not believe this addition is not in keeping with what is appropriate for open space and parks. The proposal includes two natural looking boulders and six wooden circles that provide a place for the community to enjoy the City's open spaces and parks. It does not change the atmosphere of the park.

Mr. Ferrell responded that he does not think it is a question of aesthetics, but a question of uses. He said without question Dahlia Hollow Park is the most heavily used park in Cherry Hills Village because it is an access point to the High Line Canal in the most densely populated area of the City. A lot of concern is about the increased activity.

Mr. Eber responded that if there is already heavy traffic and we are not making the Park busier then what is the opposition to having people stop and make use of the open space versus just going through it.

Joshua Dicarlo

Mr. DiCarlo reported that he also lives close to Dahlia Hollow Park and said staff has done a great job improving the Park. He uses the Park every day to access the High Line Canal and although he thinks the Village needs a gathering spot he is not sure Dahlia Hollow Park is the right location. He said his family has met great friends from outside the Village by going to other parks. He has an issue with putting any manmade objects in open space and he does not see synthetic boulders as adding to the beauty of the Park. He is also concerned about the traffic around the Park that could pose a danger to children.

Mr. Eber responded that the idea is that this is the closest open space Park to serve the Cherry Hills North neighborhood without encouraging people to jump into cars. He said if we do not want to send kids to Dahlia Hollow Park then we will not send them to John Meade Park or Greenwood Village Parks. We are trying to accommodate our own needs in our own parks with our own community.

The Commission closed the discussion on Dahlia Hollow Park.

Ms. Karen Barsch moved to make a recommendation to City Council to install two climbing rocks and six wooden stumps to be placed in Dahlia Hollow Park. Mr. Robert Eber seconded the motion:

Mike Gallagher	nay
Robert Eber	aye
Jeff Ferrell	nay
Bill Lucas	aye
Karen Barsch	aye
Colleen Dougherty	nay
Joshua Dicarlo	nay

The motion failed with four nays and three ayes.

**SUBCOMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS**

**a. Summary Sheet**

Trail Enhancement Update

Mr. Ferrell reported that the Trail Enhancement Subcommittee continues to work on several items. They are continuing discussions on Trail #3452 and its permanence where it meets Trail #5145. He asked that Commission members not familiar with the site and landscape to walk the area so the Commission can hold discussions at the next PTRC meeting in March.

Special Events Update

Ms. Dougherty reported that the Committee will meet on February 19th to plan the 2014 events schedule. The Cherry Hills Living magazine has been very supportive in giving the City nice publicity on special events. The 2014 events are the outdoor movie night, car show, and holiday tree lighting.

Communications/Crier Article

Mr. Eber will write a Crier article including information about the Dahlia Hollow Park public hearing and the 2014 special events. He asked Mr. Berninzoni to provide information on upcoming trail maintenance and the tree program. He encouraged members to contact him with any other ideas.

The Commission suggested writing an article about the tree program on the High Line Canal and the new irrigation system.

General Updates

Ms. Barsch reported that the P&Z Commission will consider the Calkins subdivision on February 25<sup>th</sup>. She also encouraged people to voice their support of open space at the City Council meeting.

The Commission discussed the Calkins subdivision plan that will be presented at the P&Z meeting.

Mr. Berninzoni will confirm with the City Attorney whether Commission members can speak as a PTRC member or a member of the Community.

The Commission also discussed potential changes to the plan that is being submitted and agreed that they should attend the meeting to answer any questions or to clarify their recommendation.

**b. Parks, Trails and Recreation Enhancement**

There was nothing to report on this subject.

**QUINCY FARM VISIONING COMMITTEE (QFVC) UPDATE**

Mr. Ferrell reported that the QFVC is working with the consultant to develop the final version of its report to present to City Council including a power point presentation that can be used to illustrate the ideas in the report. QFVC will present the final version to the PTRC at the March 13, 2014 meeting.

**PTRC REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL – CHAIR BILL LUCAS**

There was nothing to report on this subject.

**REPORTS****a. Parks Division Maintenance Log**

There was nothing to report on this subject.

**b. City Council Report**

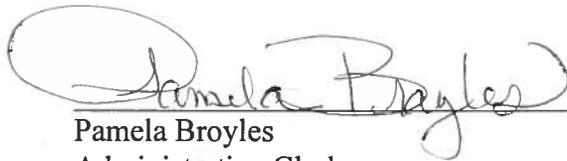
There was nothing to report on this subject.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.  
The next scheduled PTRC meeting is March 13, 2014.

  
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Bill Lucas  
Committee Chair

  
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Ryan Berninzoni  
Parks, Trails and Recreation Administrator

  
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Pamela Broyles  
Administrative Clerk