

## RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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Minutes of the  
Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission of the  
City of Cherry Hills Village, Colorado  
Held on Thursday, May 11, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

### **PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**

Chair Wolfe called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

### **ROLL CALL**

Chair Fred Wolfe, Vice Chair Grodinsky, and Commissioners Tory Leviton, Stephanie Dahl, and Mary Presecan. Also present were Emily Black, Parks Project & Operations Manager, Jeff Roberts, Parks Operations Supervisor and Monica Castillo, Parks Clerk

Commissioners Chelsea Scott and Kate Murphy were absent.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The PTRC conducted the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

None

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Presecan moved, seconded by Commissioner Leviton to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- a. Approval of Minutes – April 13, 2023

The motion passed unanimously.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Tree Adoption Request and b. Tree & Bench Donation Presentation

The Commission elected to review these items first out of respect to the presenters.

Manager Black introduced Harriet LaMair and Jen Purdum of the High Line Canal Conservancy.

Executive Director Harriet LaMair said the High Line Canal is doing well and additional protection for the High Line Canal will be forthcoming; Denver Water has always encouraged the Conservancy to use the High Line Canal in ways that align with the plans for the High Line to enhance the tree canopy and to enhance the environment for users along the Canal.

Ms. LaMair presented the request of the tree adoption on the High Line Canal for Torin Thorsgard of Fort Collins, who passed away in September in a tragic accident. She explained that his mother, Kyja Thorsgard, reached out to see if there was a way to organize a tree adoption along the High Line Canal; Torin and his mother Kyja would walk the High Line Canal ever since he was a baby; Kyja is a runner so she would run miles and miles of the High Line Canal; she also has many close friends in Cherry Hills Village, and she lives at University Hills.

Ms. LaMair said she had the pleasure of walking the High Line Canal with Kyja when she was talking about tree adoption; Kyja instantly gravitated to the area where the owls

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nested, and she remembered looking at all the trees over the years with her son. Ms. LaMair explained the Conservancy has a tree adoption program that the Commission will hear more about, but it does not include that tree. The Conservancy reached out to Parks Operations Supervisor Jeff Roberts, who said the tree is in decent shape; it is in the corridor owned by Denver Water, and the Conservancy is asking the Commission to consider this tree adoption prior to the launching of the program. She stated she hoped that the Commission will respect Kyja's wishes and the Conservancy's effort to have this tree adopted in Torin's memory. She described the plaque that will be placed on the tree.

Chair Wolfe asked Ms. LaMair if this is an existing tree.

Harriet LaMair replied yes, it is an Austrian Pine. She said she is not sure when the trees were planted. She recalled an incident where gentleman had removed trees along the High Line Canal, but he was not authorized to do so; he was required to plant several trees to replace the trees his arborist removed from the property; Denver Water filed a lawsuit against him, and she believes this is one of the trees that was planted at that time.

Chair Wolfe said the plaque in memory of Torin cannot be on the trunk of the tree because people cannot see it. He asked if it will be on a free-standing poster against the tree.

Harriet LaMair asked Jen Purdum, Development Manager of the tree adoption program, to describe the program to the Commissioners.

Ms. Purdum explained the Conservancy decided to place a small hanging wooden heart with natural twine on the tree and it will hang on the tree for six months. She said the way the Conservancy will continue to honor people is by having a QR code that will link them back to a tribute page on the Conservancy's website, which will include all the stories about why the trees were adopted by different people. She noted it is up to the donor if they want to share their story or not; some of the trees will not have a story with them, it may just say honored to and from.

Chair Wolfe stated the Commission had recently reviewed the criteria for bench and tree donations within the Village to make sure donors have a connection to the Village.

Ms. Purdum explained when the Conservancy created the Mile Marker program (which is also a tribute program), they were very deliberate in expressing to people that the High Line Canal is the original trail and owned by Denver Water; the Conservancy does not want people to say they want their Mile Marker only if it is in Cherry Hills Village. She stated that is appropriate for PTRC, but for the High Line Canal the Conservancy will be doing commemorations for different people regardless of residency; it will be on a first come, first served basis.

Commissioner Dahl asked once the wooden heart is removed if the information stays up on the website.

Ms. Purdum said yes, that is key because this is very meaningful to the person who is adopting the tree or bench; another key component of the program is having a GIS map link to the website; she explained the information that appears on the website and a certificate that the donor receives. She explained the heart will hang on the tree for six months and the benches will be permanently placed.

Commissioner Dahl asked when the Conservancy takes the heart down can someone else adopt that tree.

Ms. Purdum explained they could not, it will show on the website as unavailable; the trees are permanent adoptions, and the benches are for only ten years.

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Chair Wolfe expressed a preference for a permanent sign next to the tree, so people walking the canal can see who Torin was and remember him rather than having to go to a website.

Ms. Purdum said the Conservancy would like to do that but has had pushback from local governments. She stated that Kyja would very much like to have a rock below the tree.

Chair Wolfe said he would take care of it for her.

Jen Purdum said thank you and if the Commission can approve this adoption that would be so wonderful.

Commissioner Leviton asked what Ms. Purdum meant by the tree request falling outside of the tree adoption.

Ms. Purdum said the Conservancy has not formally presented the tree and bench program; PTRC is the first Commission and local government the Conservancy is bringing the program to.

Commissioner Dahl asked how many trees will be allowed to be adopted every year.

Ms. Purdum said the Conservancy would like to have quite a few trees available; they have a lot of capacity for trees, but do not have as much capacity for benches; in Cherry Hills Village, there are some benches that were installed by South Suburban Parks and Recreation that are now ready for replacement. She explained that South Suburban Parks and Recreation does not maintain the benches anymore and does not have a record of the donors; the Conservancy will not be ripping out those benches without trying extremely hard to track down the donor to see if they would like to contribute to having the new bench with their name on it first; if not, those would be the sites for new benches.

Ms. LaMair also noted the benches are a six-month process from start to installation; the Conservancy's hope would be to build fifteen benches a year. She continued that for the trees with Mother's Day coming up this weekend, there is a huge interest and people want to give a gift like this; the Conservancy has about one hundred and thirty-eight trees and had to make a contingency plan in case a tree does not make it; most of the trees have been around for about two years and the Conservancy is going to reserve 30% of the trees so as a tree gets adopted if one does not make it, another one can be offered.

Chair Wolfe said the Commission wants more trees; the Commission had a tree experience with the property at Quincy and Franklin, so the Commission wants more trees.

Commissioner Presecan said this absolutely warms her heart; the story and the program are so great. She does remember that one of the considerations for the tree program was making sure that there was sufficient irrigation or water supply so the tree could survive. She asked if there is sufficient irrigation or will the City need to be looking for a way to get additional irrigation.

Ms. Purdum said in addition to the trees that are being planted within the Village by staff, the Conservancy has plans for fifty trees per mile that will have five years of truck irrigation, but some of the jurisdictions are planning irrigation along the canal. She stated this tree is in good health according to the arborist.

Parks Supervisor Roberts stated that tree does not have any irrigation and has never been watered.

Commissioner Presecan said it is her understanding that the High Line Canal is supposed to run two times a year given the studies that were done back in the eighties, so it is possible that it is sufficiently established.

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Chair Wolfe asked the Commission if they had any other comments.

Vice Chair Grodinsky read the statement of support: “The Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission supports the adoption of an existing Austrian Pine by the High Line Canal Conservancy in memory of Torin Thorsgard.”

Harriet LaMair and Jen Purdum thanked the Commission. Ms. Purdum encouraged the Commission to visit the Conservancy’s website, since they might have constituents that would like to participate.

Chair Wolfe thanked Executive Director LaMair, stating if not for her, the High Line Canal would not be where it is today.

Ms. LaMair said the High Line Canal is in a good place now, and the Commission will be hearing more soon.

The Commission thanked the presenters for their presentation.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### a. Special Events Review

Manager Black recalled at the last meeting the Commission was beginning to review special events for next year; the Commission is on track to hold the normal events for this year which will be Movie Night on August 19<sup>th</sup> and Winter Celebration in December. She reviewed that at the April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Commission asked staff to review the community surveys from the Master Plan to gather any responses related to special events; staff also looked for dog park responses since that had been another request; there was one response regarding dog parks in the hundreds of responses received, and there was not very much feedback related to special events; people said they appreciate the community events, and others asked for more events. She explained that a page from the third community survey ranking goals for parks, trails, and open space was included in packets; the goals were more focused on open space rather than special events.

Manager Black asked if the Commission is interested in having some kind of community outreach related to special events; there is time to plan through the end of this year if needed and begin again in January to have a spring event.

Commissioner Dahl described a past event involving tables on a bridle path, and people would stop at the table, and people stopped at the High Line Conservancy table as well.

Manager Black said that was the Cherry Hills Land Preserve’s Trail Walk.

Commissioner Dahl said it was a well-attended event.

Manager Black said she thinks the trail scavenger hunt will fill that niche; the Trail Walk event is now held at Quincy Farm rather than on the bridle trails.

Commissioner Leviton asked if the barn party will be held next spring.

Manager Black said it is typically in the fall, but she was not sure if it would be held at Quincy Farm.

Manager Black said if the scavenger hunt is still the most appealing option, the Commission can go forward with planning that for next spring.

Vice Chair Grodinsky said he still likes the idea of a fun run/walk that will begin and end at Quincy Farm.

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Manager Black asked Vice Chair Grodinsky if that was something he wanted PTRC to hold, or would he like to suggest the idea to the Cherry Hills Land Preserve since they are programming Quincy Farm. She clarified that this is not to say that PTRC cannot also hold programs at Quincy Farm.

Chair Wolfe said as time goes on, there are going to be more activities that involve Quincy Farm; there is a lot of planning, brainstorming, and fundraising behind the scenes right now for Quincy Farm; he is optimistic about the direction it is going right now.

Commissioner Presecan asked about entry into Quincy Farm; the only entrance she is aware of is directly off the High Line Canal. She asked if there were other access or entry points into Quincy Farm. She said one of the items they talked about in respect to the trail scavenger hunt was trying to stay off the High Line Canal and experience the other trails; if there was another way to get to Quincy Farm utilizing the Cherry Hills trail system that did not involve the High Line Canal, that would be fun.

Chair Wolfe described access to the east side of Quincy Farm and noted there are different rules for the part of the farm that is on the west side of the High Line Canal; it is more restricted and more protected.

Manager Black clarified about gates and access. She explained the east side of the farm is open and has set hours listed at both the main entrance of Quincy Farm and at the bridge off the High Line Canal; the west side is closed to public access.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### b. Dahlia Hollow Play Rock Replacement

Chair Wolfe said the first rocks the Village installed did not hold up very long, and now the Village would like to replace them to the tune of \$25,000 with more rocks.

Commissioner Leviton expressed disbelief that two fake rocks would cost \$25,000.

Manager Black explained that the city received a grant of \$25,000 from the Metropolitan Football Stadium District from the sale of the Denver Broncos; all local municipalities in the Denver Metro area and Boulder also received grants proportionate to the size of the municipalities; the money needs to be used for a youth activity program, but the city does not offer youth activity programs; Metropolitan Stadium District did confirm that play equipment for kids was acceptable.

She noted that staff considered different options; John Meade Park is recently finished, so Dahlia Hollow was the next option. Manager Black said the play rocks started shedding fiberglass fibers back in 2018; Parks staff was able to find a coating to keep them from shedding; the rocks did not have a good warranty and the coating is eventually going to wear off. She explained the proposal before PTRC is to replace the rocks with something with a better warranty or something that did not contain fiberglass at all; when the rocks were closed for repair, staff received a lot of phone calls from people directly in the neighborhood; the school bus stops there so kids would play on the rocks while they waited for the bus, and again when they got off the bus after school; the city does have positive feedback from 2018 that the rocks do get used.

Manager Black explained while this is the proposal the staff has produced for the funds, since at some point these rocks will need to be replaced, staff is open to diverse types of play equipment that PTRC may be more interested in. She added that staff does plan to do community outreach to the neighbors in that neighborhood following PTRC's input; if the Commission has a different idea or different play equipment suggestions, then that can be presented to the community and then to City Council.

Chair Wolfe said he would hope that the city would consider something else; he is against this.

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Manager Black said she is happy to take other suggestions.

Chair Wolfe said he does not know what the other alternatives are, and it is unfortunate that the \$25,000 is limited to youth play equipment.

Commissioner Leviton asked Chair Wolfe what exactly he is against.

Chair Wolfe said he has a problem with the city feeling like they must provide all these play areas when people have play areas in their backyards; the city does not need all these little playgrounds in our parks, which should be left as open space.

Manager Black said she is happy to take other suggestions.

Commissioner Leviton asked if there are only two playgrounds in the city.

Manager Black confirmed.

Vice Chair Grodinsky said he does not have an issue with the use of play equipment in that location, but he has an issue with the idea of purchasing two fake rocks for \$25,000, and said he was sure there must be a better solution. He stated even if it costs \$50,000 and the Commission agrees to commit to the additional funds for something that has better functions and does not seem like a waste of money. He said he likes the idea of a climbing wall which is a big rock that is larger in proportion and has climbing features.

Commissioner Dahl asked Manager Black will the rocks be replaced with another fiberglass rock.

Manager Black said the city is looking at different options; glass-fiber reinforced concrete is the most common material; there are some that have a twenty-year warranty; there are also options that are poly-fiber reinforced. She said she has just researched initial pricing and whether there are different options for materials or warranties that would protect the city better.

Commissioner Dahl said she would like to echo Vice Chair Grodinsky's comment that \$25,000 seems like an excessive amount, but to be fair she has not priced playground equipment; she would like to see if there is a better use for the \$25,000; she has no problem using the funds and loves the idea because she has two little boys who would climb on anything. She continued the community has kids moving in, so she loves the idea and thinks it would be wonderful. She said she knows the city has more of a natural landscape versus the bright green, bright yellow playground equipment colors; she would also like to keep things more natural and would also like to know if people would enjoy something else in the park.

Commissioner Presecan said as a resident of this district, this park is used all the time; it is a community meeting point; when her family moved in four years ago, they met other families there. She stated she would highly support something in this area just knowing how it is a place of bringing people together. She said she cannot speak of the costs of the rocks, but she does know they have limited amounts of climbing features that allow kids to go up different angles. She has two boys as well and they look for unusual ways to make it more challenging, so it satisfies a need, and it is a central meeting place. She said to Chair Wolfe if he walked over there any Saturday or Sunday he will see families gathering there.

Commissioner Presecan asked about the timeline to spend the funds based on the letter included in the packet.

Manager Black explained there is no specific deadline for spending the funds; the Metro District will ask all the municipalities in September what the plan is for the funds.

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Manager Black also provided some context for play equipment cost, explaining the sideways tree climber in John Meade Park cost \$21,000.

Commissioner Grodinsky said he just Googled commercial rock-climbing play equipment for parks and a large climbing boulder costs \$22,999.

Manager Black noted that shipping is also a factor as is the cost of disposing of the old rocks. She clarified that the play surfacing area would be a limit for new equipment, to avoid the expense of expanding the play surfacing area.

Commissioner Presecan said there are two rocks in the park, a small one and a larger one. She noted the two options provide opportunity for a range of ages for utilization of the two different structures.

Commissioner Leviton asked whatever happened to actual boulders and rocks that have been around for millions of years.

Manager Black explained if something is on playground surfacing and is being presented as a playground, then everything in the playground, including the play surfacing, must comply with playground safety regulations. She explained real boulders do not meet that standard and the city would not be protected in the event of a lawsuit; as a municipality it must follow playground standards.

Commissioner Dahl said her thought is to reach out to residents to see what they want to see in that area. She suggested getting feedback and seeing if that is what the residents want within the confines of the area without tearing anything out; she thinks the city can accomplish it with the budget given.

Manager Black said just to be clear she will research other options. She has listed other items like play mushrooms where kids can hop back and forth, which is good for smaller kids. She asked the Commission their preferred next steps for research and outreach.

Chair Wolfe told Manager Black she should plan a meeting in that neighborhood.

Commissioner Presecan suggested going to the bus stop in the morning with pictures of options to get feedback from families; it would provide a wealth of information.

Manager Black said she loved that idea.

Commissioner Dahl said she liked the idea of producing predefined ideas that fit within the budget because she is certain that if asked an open-ended question as to what they want to see it may not fit in the available budget.

Manager Black said she will research other options and bring them to PTRC for the June meeting.

### **REPORTS**

#### a. Chair

Chair Wolfe said this is his last meeting; he has been on the Commission for six and a half years and it has been extremely rewarding for him. He thanked Jeff Roberts for his cooperation on the trails and said thank you to everybody.

Vice Chair Grodinsky said as a citizen and a member of this Commission and on behalf of the other Commissions thank you for all your hard work and efforts especially as it pertains to the trail markers.

Manager Black thanked Chair Wolfe for his service. She noted he left a great legacy with his trail markers, which have been an excellent change to the trails, and it is going to

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make a difference. She said she is sad that Commissioner Murphy could not be here tonight because this is also her last meeting; she thanked both Chair Wolfe and Commissioner Murphy for all of their time.

Commissioner Presecan said please share the Commission's thanks to Commissioner Murphy as well.

### b. Commissioners

Commissioner Presecan said she knows she has only been here a brief time, but it is evident that Chair Wolfe not only has the vision but the ability to execute; the community has benefited and will benefit hugely with the trail markers; she looks forward to getting to know Chair Wolfe better as she sees him around on the trails.

Commissioner Leviton stated he did go to the City Council meeting last month to protest the sale of 90 Meade Lane; he thinks it would be a much better idea to just integrate those two acres by the tree nursery and maybe add a second component to get more community support such as a community garden although many can garden at their homes.

Commissioner Leviton also stated he is doing a concert in the park on June 4<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm weather permitting and noted the Commission was welcome to attend.

Vice Chair Grodinsky said now that spring has arrived, the city is likely to see more cyclists out on the trails and he would like to reiterate the fact that he feels like the city missed an opportunity to regulate electric bicycles and similar vehicles on the trails. He suggested this is a subject the Commission should revisit.

### c. Staff

#### i. Quincy Farm

Manager Black reported the City received a letter from Colorado Open Lands, the holder of the conservation easement at Quincy Farm, about management of the west side (which is closed to the public). She explained that the Cherry Hills Land Preserve is still doing their annual plan for Quincy Farm for next year; they are focusing on the east side and the pond. She explained that if PTRC would still like a presentation from Cherry Hills Land Preserve, she can have them visit after they present to City Council. She noted CHLP has many events coming up at Quincy Farm which are listed on the [www.quincyfarm.org](http://www.quincyfarm.org) website.

#### ii. Upcoming Events in the Parks

Manager Black said in addition to Commissioner Leviton's event, the elementary school has reserved John Meade Park and Alan Hutto Memorial Commons for a week in May; each class will have their own celebration and the fifth grade will have their continuation ceremony.

Manager Black also asked PTRC for suggestions for a kids' movie for Outdoor Movie Night.

Chair Wolfe said he would like to recognize a new member to the Commission, Laurie O'Brien. He noted she has been exceptionally good at coming to meetings before her term officially begins and he welcomed her to the Commission.

Laurie O'Brien thanked the Commission and said she looks forward to it.

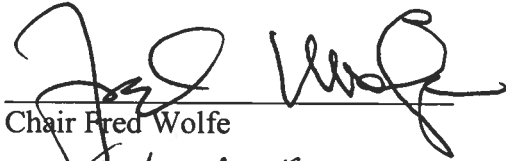


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**ADJOURNMENT**

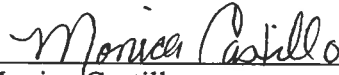
The meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for June 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.



Chair Fred Wolfe



Emily Black  
Parks Project and Operations Manager



Monica Castillo  
Parks Clerk

