

INC PARC Meeting Notes, Feb. 19, 2013

INC PARC (Parks and Recreation Committee) met February 19 at 6:00 p.m. at the Heritage Club, 2020 South Monroe St. Present were co-chair Maggie Price, Kathleen Wells, Kathleen and Jay Rust, Diana Helper, Brad Cameron, Linda Wilson, Ronnie Crawford, Steve Fisher, Larry Ambrose, Marlene Johnson, Renee Lewis, Myles Tangalin, PRAB (Park and Recreation Advisory Board) chair Keith Pryor, and speakers Tim Wohlgenant of The Trust for Public Land; Chris Dropinski of Green Play; Fred Weiss, Dody Erickson, and Angela Casias from DPR.

Tim Wohlgenant gave a brief overview of The Trust for Public Land, which “preserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come.” In Colorado it is concerned with neighborhood parks and trails, green belts, wildlands, and working farms and ranches. It helps identify new park land, provides skills and solves problems, and protects \$15 million worth of Colorado land annually.

Tim distributed the Trust’s magazine *Land&People*, and information about a Denver Park Forum the Trust is sponsoring this summer, “Envisioning a Renaissance for Denver Parks.” This three-part series will present local speakers on Denver issues and guest speakers bringing ideas and successful examples from other cities. Session three is a round table discussion of “a way forward.” He pointed out that Denver is considerably falling behind in park acres per capita, and needs to educate people to effect changes to turn this trend around. PARC and INC members are urged to help promote and attend these Forums, and to convey questions and topics of concern to tim.wohlgenant@tpl.org. PARC members brought up the need to explain how our Parks and Parkways System began, to review the provisions of the Charter regarding DPR governance and powers, the history of how PRAB evolved, and to address problems in light of recent tensions between community and DPR, to include various perspectives.

Dody Erickson, Chris Dropinski, and Fred Weiss presented power points on DPR’s RAPP (Resource Allocation and Priorities Plan) and Outdoor Fee-Based Program. DPR’s Vision is stated: “To be a nationally recognized leader providing model programs and dynamic spaces.” Its mission includes “customer satisfaction and enhancing lives by providing innovative programs and safe, beautiful, sustainable places.” RAPP is about Cost Recovery Analysis, Service Assessment, and Technical and Best Practices. Its Plan draft categorizes park uses on a scale from Community Benefit (widest uses) to Individual Benefit, and has a Services Assessment Matrix to help decide the need, market, etc. for proposed uses. RAPP will finalize the draft in March, with City Council, DPR and public meetings in April and May, Public Hearing and City Council process from June to August. Kathleen Wells and Cindy Johnstone are INC reps on RAPP. PARC members had many questions about clarification of the plan, especially its categorization component. They noted that cost recovery analysis must be linked to the goals of the DPR Game Plan.

The Outdoor Fee-Based Program is a draft of commercial use policy. Its stated purpose is to manage the growing demand and uses within our parks...deal with sales in or near parks and needed contracts, permits...park activism...promote healthy communities. Denver parks are divided into tiers for various uses, and some parks have zones where activities may be allowed. DPR wants to help balance uses in parks by the new fee schedule policy it is developing. PARC members pointed to the need for supervising staff to check on legalities, permits, etc. DPR hopes citizens will help report questionable activity. Dave Felice and Cindy Johnstone are INC reps on this DPR committee.

PARC asked that RNOs be notified of park uses being allowed in various parks. DPR will have a website to assist. The proposed policy considerations seemed complicated to many PARC members,

who urged simplicity of set fee schedules, and that DPR manage efficiently the uses presently allowed, and present problems, rather than add new uses to our inadequate parkland. Kathleen Wells said that it would be advisable to restrict park activities to those traditionally consistent with the mission of the parks, such as hiking, walking, bird-watching and athletic activities. Fred Weiss, conceding that the policy is not intended to promote more commercial use but rather to control existing uses, said he would consider a caveat to this effect in the introduction to the policy.

PARC thanked all its visiting speakers for a very useful meeting, and looks forward to hearing from them at future meetings. PARC adjourned at 8:30 p.m. Next PARC meeting will be March 19.

--Diana Helper, PARC member