

# CPFAN Board Meeting

## January 6, 2015

### **Board members attending**

Louis Plachowski  
Bridget Walsh  
Hank Bootz  
John Van Sciver  
Georgia Garnsey  
LaMone Noles  
Tom Korson

17 Guests

Guest Speaker: District 11 City Councilman Chris Herndon, City Council President

### **Business:**

Last month's minutes unanimously approved.

### **Updates:**

Georgia Garnsey: Landmark Exploratory Committee report - Georgia provided some background on the fact that landmarking City Park was recommended in past park master plans and in April 2014, CPFAN passed a resolution to protect City Park. Historic Denver organized the current exploratory committee to pursue landmark designation. Local designation offers the most protection. The committee laid out their goals and steps to pursue this. Among the committee members are representatives of Denver Parks and Recreation, Historic Denver, City Park Alliance, CPFAN and Councilman Albus Brooks' office. The resulting guidelines from landmarking could serve as a framework for discussion and a hedge against more development. Brooks supports the process and is a member of the exploratory committee.

John Van Sciver: Dustin Redd Playground report - South City Park Neighborhood Association passed a resolution in support of rebuilding the Dustin Redd playground in its current location with new materials. The hope is that the new structure could be built by 2018. It was moved that CPFAN also adopt the Dustin Redd playground resolution. The motion carried unanimously.

Hank Bootz: Treasurer's report - CPFAN has \$254 in the bank. We received an invoice from INC to renew our membership. The minimum membership fee is \$40. Hank proposed we show our support for INC, which has helped CPFAN, by upping the membership to \$75. The motion passed unanimously. Susan Barnes-Gelt advises forming a neighborhood advisory committee (NAC) for City Park. This involves the City and related institutions having a seat. CPFAN should have a couple of people working on an NAC. Louis and Hank can work on it. The NAC could offer some oversight that landmarking the park does not, such as input about parking for Zoo Lights events, closing of 17th Avenue for races, admission-based events and trash issues.

- Bridget Walsh: Zoo Biomass Gasification Plant - There are plans to build it in the elephant facility. Promotion centers around the plant being a green facility, recycling, generating heat

with waste. The Zoo is promising that all zoo energy needs can be taken care of by this plant in the future. But this is new technology that brings risks of explosions, toxic gas, sludge, water pollution and toxic ash. Walsh is not confident this is going to be a successful project. The Zoo told City Council they will just accept poop from the zoo and park, but Zoo documents indicate the plan is to accept trash from outside sources, delivering it in dump trucks to Gate 15. A plan already exists for accepting outside trash. The Zoo will test for toxic air by monitoring air quality in the elephant habitat. Walsh found a report on risk assessment on small biomass gasification projects. The Zoo has not done a risk assessment, they are thinking about it. Walsh has sent information to City Councilman Albus Brooks and others with the City. The City Council already has approved some parts of the project, but the Zoo will need to get permits from the State. That is where CPFAN may need to focus next, to let state health officials and the Environmental Protection Agency know of our concerns. There is much concern about safety. The plan also creates transportation issue with dump trucks traveling through city park six days a week. CPFAN should have Brooks and his opponents speak on record about these issues during the upcoming City Council campaign for District 9. The election is May 5.

### **Guest Speaker:**

Chris Herndon - Changes to Denver council districts mean that Herndon will be running for District 8, not District 11, in the next election. Herndon's background includes military service, and employment at United Airlines, and Walmart. He always has volunteered a lot and found he missed public service, so he ran for City Council. Herndon promised to advocate for City Park, but is not yet decided on if he supports landmarking. First, he wants to know what it takes, and what it costs. He wants to explore if the goals can be achieved in a different way? Landmarking limits what you can do. Herndon's vision for City Park is same as it is for other major parks: appreciate open space, find balance with those who visit and those who live nearby, protect the park with so many people coming, determine the right number of events. Herndon agrees the City could have done a better job regulating Chive Fest. He wants to know how can we prevent the issues of last year and how do we do it better?

#### *Questions from the audience:*

- How does the new office of special events intend to deal better with permitting?

Herndon: He is impressed with what is done now.

Audience: In the past 30 years, citizens have prevented some things in the park. There has been lots of arguing. Landmarking would define what is appropriate for the park and would trigger a response and dialogue. This would be a way of establishing a vision instead of putting out fires.

- City management and city council has grown distant from the neighborhoods and what they want and what council decides. The City should try to be more responsive to neighborhoods.

- Will an event park take the pressure off the neighborhood parks?

● Herndon: Yes, it's an opportunity.

- A festival site would be easier for events, toilets, police, parking. Is this being considered?

Herndon: He is not aware of any talk about a designated festival park, but there could be discussions.

Audience: There needs to be more dialog with citizens on what happens in the parks.

- Herndon asked to change the topic to marijuana. There used to be a lot of fighting drug dealers, but medical marijuana has caused them to disappear. The industry wants to extend hours of sales from 9 pm to midnight.

Audience: There are enough dispensaries. 9 pm is fine for closing.

- Regarding fee-based events, the money goes to the City's general fund. It should go to park maintenance.
- The Zoo and the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (DMNS) are gobbling up more and more of the park. Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR) has done a lousy job of being the guardian. Most egregious is the fence and structures on the south side of the zoo. DPR could have imposed restrictions, but did not. The same is true for the south side of DMNS. Can Herndon advocate to have more effective regulation of those institutions?
- Herndon: The Denver Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (DPRAB) does a good job with that.
- DPRAB is a rubber stamp for DPR. If board members don't agree with the City officials, they are removed. It is not the most effective way to communicate. There are other ways we can have more of a respectful collaboration.

Herndon: He thinks people want to be heard. If he disagrees with you, he will tell you why. The Zoo and DMNS have to get bond issues and it's a good time for the City to negotiate.

- In 2010, City Council was taken out of the loop on decisions about parks. This was a mistake. Can this be changed?

Herndon: We control the budget so we do have a strong voice.

- Public Works asked to use Ferril Lake for storm retention. There have been traffic concerns. The road by the zoo is ruined. DPR had no spine with those projects and this happened right when city council was no longer involved.

### **Final comments:**

Jim Hannifin, President of the newly formed East High Neighbors and resident of the Pinnacle tower to the south of City Park, addressed the CPFAN board and asked for a motion at the next CPFAN meeting to support the Pinnacle's attempt to stop a new project planned for a lot across the street from the Pinnacle. The lot is zoned for five stories, but the lot owner has gone to the City and has a request for a 20-story building. The City is pushing density everywhere and residential neighborhoods are being impacted by developers asking for rezoning at higher density than existing zoning. This increased density creates gridlock and parking issues. Hannifin also circulated a petition against the rezoning, which was signed by several attending.

**Next month - A representative of the Zoo will be our guest speaker.**