

December 1, 2014

Denver City Council

Dear Council Members:

We, the undersigned individuals, residents of City Park neighborhoods, write to express our concerns regarding the Denver Zoo's animal waste reprocessing plant and our dismay at its location inside City Park.

You may wonder why we write to you now. After all, the plant's construction was completed nearly two years ago, the Zoo has received kudos and awards for their forward-thinking and energy-conscious design, Walmart has donated \$1.2M worth of micro-turbine generators. What's left to say? What's not to like?

While we commend the Zoo's determination to cut energy costs by burning animal waste products, the siting of this plant appears to us to indicate a complete lack of regard by the Denver Zoo and the City Administration (Denver Parks & Recreation) for the beautiful park that houses the Zoo and for the people who use it to unwind from the pressures of city living or to get a small taste of being at peace in a verdant landscape. Had the Zoo placed their industrial facility within the interior of the Zoo or along their 23rd Avenue border, which has nothing but fences, gates, and parking, then its impact would have been contained to the Zoo.

To our knowledge none of the RNOs and neighborhood groups who received notice of this project were told the gigantic machine to convert fuel to energy would be fronting City Park Road, just yards away and very visible from:
the historic City Park Pavilion and Band Shell
the Duck Pond where children gather to watch the birds
Ferril Lake
the Rose Garden where weddings and other events take place
the Historic Burns Garden where different groups meet to celebrate Robert Burns and his poetry and hold other events

Whereas the revamped Denver Zoning Code, enacted in 2010, sought to simplify and re-categorize private and City land in ways that would streamline their management and development, an unintended - or perhaps intended - major consequence is that, with the removal of City Council from the process, representation of the voices of Denver citizens has been summarily excised from any kind of substantive input on the use of City properties, such as this.

The "new and improved" zoning code, coupled with the City's 1998 Agreement with the Zoo, enables the Manager of Parks and Recreation to wield total control over land use in City Park. The wisdom of the citizens is never sought, their preferences and reasoning are not considered, and we are ignored through opaque "public" processes whereby City Council committees rubber-stamp their approvals of any project or policy promulgated by the City Administration.

So when the City undertakes projects truly harmful to the greater public good, Denver citizens are left with "announcements" such as this week's committee hearing on the Zoo's proposal to burn waste products to generate energy. Such an announcement, instead of streamlining a

process, guarantees that concerned citizens will rally to object strenuously. That which you assumed to be simple and efficient is in actuality autocratic.

When power generation operations inevitably begin in the Zoo's City Park industrial plant, will the animal waste mulching machine produce loud noise in these areas of parkland used extensively by park-goers? Will there be a stench created by the stored excrement or its processing that wafts into the park? The sight of the gigantic machine is already visible throughout the north-central part of the park. Anyone walking along Ferril Lake's shore sees it, even sitting on benches across the lake. And unfortunately, the Zoo has made no effort to soften or shield the huge, very ugly machine with its hardscape industrial setting using setbacks, vines or other plantings, attractive screens, or other means.

We've included some photos for those of you who aren't familiar with the view presented by the Zoo's industrial complex, which City Park visitors can't avoid. Georgia Garnsey has offered to take anyone interested on a tour of this once-beautiful part of our historic City Park. We encourage every member of City Council to accept Georgia's offer, and thereby experience what has been done to City Park, before you cast your vote to approve the commencement of electric power generation by the Zoo. It's the least effort you can make to give respect to the "Crown Jewel of the Queen City."

Hank Bootz, Park Hill
Linda Drake, Park Hill
Dave Felice, Park Hill
Nancy Francis, City Park West
Georgia Garnsey, Park Hill
JD MacFarlane, Park Hill
Tom Morris, South City Park
Louis Plachowski, Park Hill

cc: Shannon Block, CEO, Denver Zoo
Mayor Michael Hancock
Lauri Dannemiller, Executive Director, Denver Parks & Recreation
Jon Murray, Denver Post
Joe Vaccarelli, Denver Post
Alan Prendergast, Westword
Susan Barnes-Gelt
City Park Friends and Neighbors
South City Park Neighborhood Association
Whittier Neighborhood Association
Greater Park Hill Community
North City Park Civic Association
Congress Park Neighbors
President, INC