

**CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

**Wednesday, February 17, 2021  
6:30 p.m.**

**(Via Zoom Virtual Meeting)**

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Commissioners Present: Kathy Koniz, Nikki Larsen, Guy Nahmiach, and John Route

Commissioners Absent: Chris Schilling

Guests: None

Staff Present: Zach Lovato, Parks, Forestry & Open Space Manager  
Parks and Recreation Department

**Item 1 – Determination of Quorum & Call to Order**

Chairman Guy Nahmiach called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

**Item 2 – Introductions – Members and Guests**

Chairman Guy Nahmiach welcomed the commissioners to the virtual meeting.

**Item 3 – Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Larsen made a motion to accept the minutes from January 20, 2021, as written. Commissioner Banghart seconded the motion, all accepted and approved.

**Item 4 – Unfinished Business**

**Memorial Garden Program**

Manager Zach Lovato reported that they have received a lot of tree requests for the Memorial Tree Program and unfortunately right now their record keeping has not been very well organized. They have had staff leave and the data has not been kept up to date and adequate records have not been maintained pertaining to where the memorial trees were planted. His division recommended to create an area where space is currently available on the west side of Prospect Park and establish a memorial garden in that area. It would be similar to a garden habitat with some beautiful trees, nice landscaping, and plants to memorialize loved ones and enjoy the

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gardens. The area would also be better managed and maintained since it would be in a centralized location. They would also initiate some in-house design work to help out with this undertaking. He explained that there are a lot of grants and funding opportunities available to assist with this venture that would commence within the next five years.

Lovato stated in addition, they have a grant with Great Outdoors of Colorado and they are partnering with Mile High Youth Corps this summer. The grant would provide funding for Mile High Youth Corps to provide the labor to treat up to 800 ash trees in the city that would need treatment for the emerald ash borer which would be great since it is labor intensive and very expensive. Chairman Nahmiach asked if this could also be available for residents that have ash trees on their properties. Lovato indicated that he would have to look into it as it would be difficult to find out how many ash trees are located on people's properties and reiterated that the program is for city trees at this time.

### **New Year's Resolution Collaboration with the Neighborhood Gazette – Participation Update**

Chairman Nahmiach explained that his newspaper, the Neighborhood Gazette, previously advertised information for people to go out as a family to join in as an adventure, similar to a scavenger hunt, to visit our parks and identify every single part of the city that was visited. According to Lovato, there were 285 people that participated in this venture where people went out to explore, visit, and discovered our parks. The turnout was more than they expected and very happy with the outcome.

### **5 Star Certification**

Lovato shared that the Parks and Recreation Department became certified and they are operating at Level Yellow and can move on to the next level when approved. When they are at Level Blue, the Active Adult Center will be able to open. The Active Adult Center has been really creative during the closure and doing classes virtually. They are looking forward to welcoming patrons back again and for them to feel comfortable as well.

### **Spring Tree Event**

Lovato announced with Arbor Day coming up, they are hoping to have something planned within the next week or so for this event but due to the implications of COVID, they can only have small events with not a lot of people in one place, so they are still working on a campaign. Arbor Day is on April 17<sup>th</sup> but there has been no date attached for this event by the city as of yet. Chairman Nahmiach made a suggestion as part of a challenge where residents could post pictures of their trees that they have planted as an outdoor adventure. Also, for the city to do the same, display photos of trees they have planted and post their recommendations as far as tree planting and care information. The idea is to get people on board to plant more trees on their properties and the city would also have more trees. Nahmiach suggested that it would be helpful if the city could provide information and resources on how to care for trees to help property owners maintain their own trees and landscaping. The city could share this as a mission and provide ideas and recommendations that would be helpful for proper tree care and post on the city

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website. Nahmiach indicated that he could add an article in his newspaper as well. He expressed how proud he is of this commission compared to other commissions and what they represent. Another question was what if a homeowner enjoys planting trees but does not need or want a tree to plant on their own property, how can they participate. Lovato stated that he will look into other volunteer events that the public can participate in.

## **Item 5 – New Business**

### **Bayou Ditch**

Lovato reported that the City of Wheat Ridge has an easement over the Bayou Ditch near Coors. The pipeline and head gate are failing and are being replaced through a replacement project. This entails the replacement of a culvert pipe, a new ditch head gate, and repair/replace of the concrete trail. He stated that they will try to provide updates of their ongoing projects via the Parks and Recreation website in the future.

### **Anderson Park Pavilion Railing**

Lovato explained that installation of a custom railing was constructed and added all around the Anderson Park pavilion, where a drop off existed to the ground level

### **Bucket Truck for Forestry Team (budgeted in 2021)**

Lovato shared that the city will purchase a new bucket truck for the Parks, Forestry & Open Space division that will cost \$85,000. The new vehicle will assist with the Forestry's work platform to care for any forestry/tree-related issues and landscaping projects. The truck will provide access for heights up to 75 feet which cannot be reached with a ladder. With the purchase of this new vehicle, the Forestry division will have more capabilities and would result in budget savings by eliminating budget(s) need for contract services. The new truck should arrive within a few months.

### **National Public Lands Day Collaboration with Jeffco Open Space (9/25/21)**

Lovato announced that they didn't have this event last year due to the COVID pandemic and they are hoping to have it this year. If the event takes place, Jeffco will provide subject-matter experts on hand to assist with questions/information pertaining to tree care and planting, weed control, etc., and the city can provide volunteers for trash pickup, etc. Stations will be set up along the creek for different types of work that will need to be done. Once the plans have been established, they will pass on that information.

## **Item 6 – Staff Updates**

### **Grant updates:**

- **CPW Planning Grant – Tabor Lake**

Lovato reported that this grant is for \$40,000 for improvements to complete a trail around Tabor Lake. There were a large number of applications this cycle, and unfortunately, they did not receive the grant, but will try again during the next cycle.

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- **Safe Routes to Parks**

This is an effort coordinated by LocalWorks with our assistance for grant funds to help improve the routes to our parks such as painting and maintenance of the pavement, providing signage, etc., but unfortunately they did not receive the grant.

- **CAPRA Re-accreditation**

Lovato stated that they are positive that the department will be reaccruited. They have been taking on a lot of initiatives over the past five years, since the initial accreditation.

### **Item 7 – Future Agenda Items**

- **Prospect Park Updates**

- **Green at 38<sup>th</sup> Updates**

Lovato reported that he will attend a meeting next week related to the Green at 38<sup>th</sup>.

- **Prospect Lake Water Quality**

- **Vape Pen Exchange**

- **Alternate Use - Barn Building (between Kipling & Recreation Center)**

### **Item 8 – Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Route: Comments were not audible on the recording.

Commissioner Banghart: No comments, but shared that she has been walking the Greenbelt.

Commissioner Larsen: She stated that she has seen an increase in the amount of unpicked dog poop in different areas due to the cold weather.

Chairman Nahmiach: Expressed that it was a good meeting. Thank you to Zach for hosting the meeting and providing all the relevant information.

Zach Lovato: He stated to please let him know if there are any concerns and he will take the appropriate action to address it.

### **Item 9 – Adjournment**

With no further business, Chairman Nahmiach adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.