

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

MINUTES

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

(Via Zoom Virtual Meeting)

Commissioners Present: Pat Cervera, Kathy Koniz, Nikki Larsen, Guy Nahmiach, Cambria Rolla, John Route, Chris Schilling, and Karen Stanley

Commissioners Absent: None

Guests: Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk

Staff Present: Karen O'Donnell, Director
Parks and Recreation Department

Item 1 – Determination of Quorum & Call to Order

In the absence of the Chairman, Karen O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Item 2 – Introductions – Members and Guests

Director O'Donnell welcomed the guest and commissioners to the virtual meeting. Introductions were given by each member as there were three newly elected commissioners on board.

Karen O'Donnell: She is the Director of the Parks and Recreation Center since July 2019 and enjoys her role. She is very appreciative of her staff as they continue to work hard due to the challenges they all have faced during this past year.

John Route: He represents District II for the commission. He is a manager for a technology services company in the finance industry and is in charge of a disaster recovery data center in case of disasters. He backs up about 1000 banks throughout the country in the event of weather related disasters. He has been doing this for almost a year now this month.

Nikki Larsen: She represents District I and has been on the commission for two years. She has lived in Wheat Ridge for three years and in Colorado for 13 years. She represented the

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commission at the Wheat Ridge 101 Program that the city offered. She expressed the presentation was excellent and explained how the city operates.

Kathy Koniz: O'Donnell shared that Kathy was having audio difficulties for the meeting and stated that she has been on the commission for some time now.

Chris Schilling: He represents District IV and has been part of the committee for a year.

Karen Stanley: She represents District II and has been in Wheat Ridge for nine years. She has worked as a Civil Engineer for RTD for 12 years. She is currently at home with her 11 year old and they often use the Parks and Recreation facilities, so she is interested in how things work.

Pat Cervera: She represents District IV and lived in Arvada for 45 years before moving to Wheat Ridge a year and a half ago. She attended an informative Wheat Ridge 101 presentation in the fall and learned all about the different departments in the city. One of her goals moving to the city was to be active in the community and to give back. She is looking forward to getting involved and supporting the commission. She has served on the Arvada Parks Advisory Group and is retired from the state government.

Cambria Rolla: She represents District I and moved from Salt Lake City to Wheat Ridge in June 2020. She previously lived in Washington State. She has a 13 and a 19 year old who live at home and a 22 year old who is in Portland attending a university. She works from home and enjoys visiting our parks and wanted to get involved with the commission.

Guy Nahmiach: He represents District III and has lived in Wheat Ridge for a while after moving here from New York City. He is a local real estate broker and owns the Neighborhood Gazette Newspaper. He loves being part of the commission and of the education community in Wheat Ridge and Jeffco. He is proud of our 23 parks and welcomes when someone steps up to be part of the process to make positive changes for the City of Wheat Ridge. Glad the new members have decided to join, thank you so much.

Steve Kirkpatrick: Mr. Kirkpatrick shared that he was elected as the City Clerk in November 2019 for a four-year term. He stressed the importance of being a volunteer and to be part of the services that the city offers. He stated that he was in attendance to swear in the new commissioners. After the induction, he confirmed that Commissioners Cambria Rolla, Karen Stanley, and Pat Cervera were all sworn in with congratulations to all. He specified that this oath is required by the city charter and code.

O'Donnell reported that Commissioner Sally Banghart's term on the commission expired, and shared that Kathy enjoyed her time while on the committee. She acknowledged her contributions and support of the commission.

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Chairman Nahmiach stated that Zach Lovato did an amazing job conducting last month's meeting and shared that Zach was interviewed by his newspaper reporter for articles regarding the "Disappearance of Ash Trees" and "What Kind of Trees Grow Best in Wheat Ridge." He was pleased with the interview.

Item 3 – Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Larsen made a motion to accept the minutes from February 17, 2021, as written. Commissioner Schilling seconded the motion, all accepted and approved.

Item 4 – Unfinished Business

Spring Tree Event (Zach Lovato discussed last month)

O'Donnell shared for this event, a tree challenge has been planned for April 22nd through May 22nd. An adult and a child will be chosen as winners of the tree challenge. The adult will win a tree for their own yard and the child will win a house plant. The city will plant a variety of 20 trees in Wheat Ridge with names labeled for each tree and each tree will be highlighted for the tree challenge. They will meet with businesses and neighbors to confirm participation if their tree is chosen from their front yard with promotion on social media which will include a map of the tree challenge, etc.

O'Donnell conveyed that Kara Martin, their Marketing Specialist staff person who has been with the Parks and Recreation Department for 10 years, is leaving in April and moving to Texas so her husband can pursue an aviation career. They will be hiring for that position which will be a priority and they will be adding "Instagram" to the duties for that position.

CAPRA Re-accreditation (also discussed last month)

O'Donnell reported that they are going through the re-accreditation process and have their on-line visit scheduled for April 19-23. They may want to meet with commission members, the city manager and the mayor. No dates have been scheduled as of yet to meet with those individuals. For the commission, it would entail a virtual meet and greet with questions on how the commission operates, etc.

Recreation operations update – recent changes

O'Donnell stated there has been a recent change at the Recreation Center regarding their procedures. They have discontinued the requirement for online reservations for visits to the Recreation Center effective this week. In doing so, they have not experienced any problems with exceeding space capacity and patrons are still required to wear masks. They have reopened patron memberships and those are no longer frozen due to the pandemic. The expiration date for this year will be December 2021 and those that expired last year will be honored with the same date.

In addition, the Recreation Center recently became Five Star certified but expressed that there are no benefits related to that certification. Currently they are in Level Blue on the COVID dial and cannot operate in Level Green as of yet due to the numbers so the Recreation Center opted

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out of the certification. This way they do not have to follow the additional strict guidelines associated with that certification and can opt back in when they choose to. It's a matter of not going back and forth to the different levels when the numbers decrease or increase. O'Donnell will check on information that Chairman Nahmiach requested regarding the number of Wheat Ridge residents using the Recreation Center facilities.

Item 5 – New Business

Letter of support for State Historical Fund Planning Grant – Richards Hart Estate

O'Donnell stated that Brandon Altenburg is the Recreation Center's Grant and Special Project Administrator. He is applying for \$15,000 in planning grant money that will help with repairs for the estate. If successful, in August they will be able to apply for additional monies up to \$250,000 for construction repair work for the estate as they maintain the building on the property. With that in mind, a letter of support was sent to Chairman Nahmiach for review. After discussion, a motion was passed and approved by the commission for Chairman Nahmiach to sign the letter of support for return to Brandon.

Electric vehicle charging stations

The stations have been installed along the side of the Recreation Center toward the back. This made more sense in case the program is ever expanded and it was easier to connect the electrical needs for the stations. Also, it would have been too expensive to place the stations in front of the Recreation Center as there would have been asphalt and concrete repair work. As of yet, the installations are not completed.

The Future of Parks & Recreation

O'Donnell reported that Jamie Sabbach, who is an innovator in the Parks and Recreation field and also led the Recreation Center through a cost recovery effort last year, wrote a paper that is inspiring and provocative. O'Donnell asked if the commission would be willing to read and discuss the contents of the paper. The commission agreed to review and discuss the entire report at the next meeting.

Item 6 – Staff Updates

Jefferson County Open Space Partnership Program – grant update (\$466,141)

O'Donnell reported that they applied for this grant in the fall for funding for the trail and open space component for the Wadsworth Widening Project. They were successful in obtaining this grant for \$466,141.

Public Art Update

The city's Public Art Consultant, Kendall Peterson, oversees projects at Clear Creek Crossing, Wadsworth Widening, The Green at 38th and Ward Road Station. She shared that a Public Art Committee has been formed for the Clear Creek Crossing project, and they had their first meeting. Their request for qualifications has been drafted and they are limiting it to a Colorado artist only. The artist will have an opportunity to present a proposal on what kind of art should

exist in the designated space. Additional funding will become available in 2022 to support further art projects.

Facility Condition Assessment (FCA)

O'Donnell stated that they hired a Manager of Facility Operations in September who is under Karen's supervision in the Parks and Recreation Department and he is responsible for all facility maintenance in the city. In forming this new position, it has been beneficial for the Parks and Recreation Department and the city. He is working on creating assessment plans for all the facilities and putting procedures in place where they can budget for items appropriately that will need to be repaired. The present system will be updated with the addition of barcodes for each piece of equipment. The new information that will be added will determine the age of the specific asset, when it needs to be replaced, the model and serial number, etc.

Prospect Park

O'Donnell reported that they are currently working on bid documents and have received updated estimated costs for this project which is significantly higher than originally received in 2018. The project costs may have to be split for a portion to be in 2022 since the costs are so much more which they were not expecting.

The Green at 38th

O'Donnell shared that they are working with the school district regarding how they both can share costs at this point. They are also researching interactive elements that don't require a lot of space for the area. Brandon is also looking for grant opportunities to assist with funding and what options are available. Chairman Nahmiach discussed the dog poop issue and the lack of owners picking up after their dog, and homeless people that are staying overnight in the area. O'Donnell shared that the city's homeless navigator could assist with the homeless concerns and a reminder will be sent out regarding the dog problems in the area.

Item 7 – Future Agenda Items

- Prospect Lake Water Quality
- Vape Pen Exchange
- Alternate Use - Barn Building (between Kipling & Recreation Center)
- Land Acknowledgement – tentatively on the June 21st Council study session agenda

No updates were provided regarding the above topics.

Item 8 – Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Route: He mentioned that on social media, someone had posted information that on Clear Creek Trail there were inappropriate messages, hate stickers, etc. When he walked down the trail, he couldn't find anything and he shared that he almost got hit by a speeding bicyclist. The information was posted on Facebook, Wheat Ridge Neighbors. O'Donnell will follow up and expressed to let her know about anything pertinent related to the parks.

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Commissioner Larsen: No comments.

Commissioner Stanley: She has had no interactions with people at the parks.

Commissioner Cervera: She asked when the Active Adult Center was going to open and reported that her last name was incorrect on the contact list. O'Donnell stated the plan was to open at the beginning of April with reservation-based classes in Prospect Hall since it is a large enough room area (no drop-ins yet). For the contact list, she will reach out to city hall to have their Boards and Commission List corrected. An updated contact list will be sent out with next month's meeting information. Also, she would like to receive the Neighborhood Gazette paper. Chairman Nahmiach expressed that he will make sure the newspaper is sent.

Cambria Rolla: She works from home and is new to the neighborhood and shared that she doesn't get out much.

Commissioner Schilling: Reported that he has received several complaints about trash in the parks and somehow it got cleaned up; not sure if it was the city.

Chairman Nahmiach: District III is doing well. The neighbor next door has two large owls and his chickens are doing great. Thank you for joining the call and to the new members for joining us and to provide new ideas.

Chairman Nahmiach asked when the commission would have meetings in person. O'Donnell stated that City Council has decided to wait until everyone has had the opportunity to be vaccinated and when we have proceeded to Level Green on the COVID dial. He asked commissioners to give it some thought between now and the next meeting regarding meeting in person at the Recreation Center in a social distancing manner as it is more meaningful to meet in person than doing it virtually.

Item 9 – Adjournment

With no further business, Chairman Nahmiach adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.