

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

**MINUTES**

**Wednesday, May 19, 2021  
6:30 p.m.**

**HYBRID MEETING**

**Wheat Ridge Recreation Center – Conference Room**

**Or: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82788409555>**

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Commissioners Present: Pat Cervera, Nikki Larsen, Guy Nahmiach, Cambria Rollo,  
John Route, Karen Stanley & Kathy Koniz

Commissioners Absent: Chris Schilling

Guests: Kayla Betzold, Danny Turlap, Amy DePierre  
Sustainable Wheat Ridge

Staff Present: Karen O'Donnell, Director of Parks & Recreation  
Brandon Altenburg, Grant & Special Project Administrator

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

Chairman Nahmiach called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

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

Brief introductions were made by commissioners and guests.

Director O'Donnell took a photo of the commissioners to post information on social media to assist with recruitment in the future and to showcase the great things that they are doing for the city.

**Item 3 – Approval of Minutes**

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Commissioner Rollo made a motion to accept the minutes from April 21, 2021, as written. Commissioner Stanley seconded the motion, all accepted and approved.

**Item 4 – New Business** (*typically happens after unfinished business, but we switched to honor our guests' time*)

**Improving Bicycling in Wheat Ridge (15 min.) – Sustainable Wheat Ridge**

Danny Turlap leading presentation from Sustainable Wheat Ridge. Background on Sustainable Wheat Ridge - citizen volunteer committee focused on sustainability (water, renewable, transportation, trash, energy efficiency, urban ag, etc.). Members spearhead tasks (Danny- transportation and bicycles).

Looking at improving bike transportation, wayfinding, signage, routes. Specifically, wayfinding: signage, directions. Benefits for citizens and businesses.

Opportunity for Wheat Ridge to help trail users to get around more easily. Clear Creek Trail, Pierce Street, 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 26<sup>th</sup> Street and Crown Hill Park are good routes, but just have people passing through Wheat Ridge primarily. Want people to stop in Wheat Ridge, not just ride through. G-Line opening improves potential with greater access to Wheat Ridge. Get more customers to local businesses, align transportation routes, less cars more bikes, more exercise.

COVID has pushed many people to look for new outdoor activities – walking, running, rollerblading, and cycling along Clear Creek Trail.

Wheat Ridge Cyclery - renowned bike shop, excellent biking routes in Wheat Ridge. Wayfinding signage priorities: direct people to business districts, alert people about local parks, help RTD riders navigate Wheat Ridge with bikes. Examples of Jeffco, Denver signage were provided.

Discussion of biking for exercise and transportation, e-bikes for transportation. Example of Clear Creek Trail offshoot at Otis Street going towards 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue business district, but no signage.

Wheat Ridge Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan has a recent update, details on wayfinding, Sustainable Wheat Ridge plan aligns with this Master Plan.

Project relates to multiple transportation goals:

1. Encourage use of trip planning tools
2. Work with regional partners and local businesses to encourage multimodal travel
3. Enhance Wheat Ridge standing for “Bicycle Friendly Community” status via the League of American Bicyclists
4. Increase traveler safety and environmental quality by getting people to ride bikes

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Project Pathway: Identify regional examples - gather input from city/advocacy organizations - design signage, identify and prioritize locations-installation.

Timeline: Project feasible in 2021?

Approvals: Who needs to support this, next steps, types of signs?

Partnering organizations?

Discussed with Todd Sullivan (Parks Operations Supervisor) and will be discussing with Mark Westberg (Public Works Civil Engineer) tomorrow (Thursday 5/20). Discussed partnership with Wheat Ridge Active Transportation Advisory Team (ATAT) Localworks, City Council Representative Rachel Hultin, Let's Talk Wheat Ridge. Heavy cycling on 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Harlan, looking to add bike lanes on Harlan and other traffic calming measures. Bike streets program in Denver is developing technology tie-ins to show bikers better routes.

Discussion of negative impact of too many signs. 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue is bike route in Denver, but not Wheat Ridge, 32<sup>nd</sup> is the main bike route through Wheat Ridge, 38<sup>th</sup> does not have a good biking option.

Funding Discussion: Sustainable Wheat Ridge, Localworks, Wheat Ridge AT-ATs combination. Can P&R install signs? (Probably)

Recommendation to under-prescribe and start smaller. Permitting can be handled by the City. Discussion on sign pollution, maps, types of signs, working with Wheat Ridge Chamber of Commerce and Business Association, current signage. What messaging to include beyond maps/directions/wayfinding?

Discussion: Yellow/white dividing line on trail (Clear Creek Trail). Wayfinding signage on Kipling and Clear Creek Trail.

Park/Trail Ranger Discussion: Currently have seasonal park rangers through Wheat Ridge Police Department. Arvada has a volunteer program.

### **Introducing Brandon Altenburg – Grant & Special Project Administrator, brief update**

Brandon Altenburg has been in this position since October 2019 and previously was the Athletics and Fitness Coordinator for P&R. Lived and worked in Wisconsin and Washington States. His work involves grant research, applications, and management administration for special projects. Discussed and reviewed spreadsheet regarding available grants that have been applied for the department.

**Item 5 – Unfinished Business** (*typically happens before new business, but we switched to honor our guests' time*)

**Discussion: The Future of Public Parks & Recreation (P&R)...crisis or prosperity?**  
***Chapters 5 & 6 (and anything that didn't get covered during the last meeting)***

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### **Chapter 5 Discussion:**

Responding to community needs - what has P&R done recently? Anderson Park community engagement is a recent example. P&R Master Plan - heavy community engagement focus (every 10 years). Strategic Plan, Open Space Management Plan, and What's Up Wheat Ridge platform for feedback.

Hopper Hollow example - neighborhood vs. regional parks. Public art discussion, needs assessments. Metal detector, bocce ball group examples. P&R Commission can fill the role of listening for community needs. Understand needs vs. wants.

Accessibility, equity important to get unheard voices heard. Increase Commission visibility by setting up tables in parks on a regular basis? Localworks free events could be a good opportunity for this. Localworks is looking to provide more community information/content. Gazette highlighting local parks, could include a survey about community needs/wants in local parks. Facebook, other social media can help with this. Promote police non-emergency number to residents for things like graffiti.

### **Chapter 6 Discussion:**

Public health #1 priority. Health competition for residents could help here (park/facility visitations, fitness challenges). Jeffco Public Health has data on health trends. Offer incentives, create gamification for public health. Example of Canadian and U.S. presidential fitness challenges, consider leaderboard in Wheat Ridge Recreation Center.

Could look at combining libraries and other public facilities with recreation to lower overhead and provide centralized resources (SLC example). Capability of requesting book pick-up at Wheat Ridge Recreation Center from Jeffco Library? Barn usage?

Senior Resource Center and Active Adult Center overlap? Savings on overhead, benefit from similar programming and user base/interest groups.

Discussion of building new vs. maintaining existing amenities. Educating constituents via marketing beyond promoting programs.

Lutheran Hospital move - opportunity to offer public exercise options at old/new campus? UC Health at Anschutz has a public fitness facility.

Discussion of "Ability to Pay" and "Willingness to Pay" specifically related to seniors. More recently, seniors often have ability to pay but less likely to have willingness to pay. Silver Sneakers and similar programs cover lots of recreation cost for seniors. Historically, U.S. has offered senior rates for lots of public amenities. Should this continue at the expense of other users who may have less disposable income? Colorado's lower property taxes, among other factors, have made it a popular choice for seniors.

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**Would you like to select a meeting date for a future meeting in a park?  
(Chairman Nahmiach brought this up at the last meeting)**

All were in agreement for the July meeting, starting at 5:30 p.m., using Active Adult Center bus to shuttle to a few parks and have dinner. Also, include Richards-Hart Estate in the itinerary.

**Item 6 – Staff Updates**

**Annual Report**

Director O'Donnell stated that this report was sent electronically to commissioners for review. Compare with 2019, and previous years for COVID differences.

Discussion of Town Center Park: Potential exchange for Green at 38<sup>th</sup> with Jeffco Open Space.

**Seasonal Recruitment Efforts**

Director O'Donnell detailed current pay raise, referral, and incentive programs for lifeguards and other seasonal staff. Peach Jar outreach through local high schools. Efforts resulted in 10 new lifeguards, but still need more. Will result in a limited schedule at Wheat Ridge Recreation Center and Anderson Pools. Reservations generally required at Anderson to start summer. Discussion of similar efforts at other nearby agencies.

Just hired last week a new Marketing Specialist, Danielle Moore, to replace Kara who left in April.

Commissioners were invited to an upcoming ribbon-cutting for the Wheat Ridge Community Fridge at City Hall on 5/26.

**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 21<sup>st</sup> Council study session agenda  
O'Donnell explained the land acknowledgment concept, application in Wheat Ridge. Signage and recognition in Wheat Ridge parks and city lands, could include educational programs as well.

Question on potential Prospect Valley 5k (no permit application yet).

**Item 8 – Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Larsen: Lots of activity at Panorama Park.

Commissioner Stanley: No comments.

Commissioner Rollo: No comments.

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Commissioner Route: Took niece to Hopper Hollow and Discovery Park recently, enjoyed both.

Commissioner Cervera: Lots of use at the Fruitdale dog park, also lots of people experiencing homelessness at pavilions.

Chairman Nahmiach: Lots of owls near where he lives.

Next meeting on Wednesday, June 16th at 6:30 p.m. - hybrid (Wheat Ridge Recreation Center Conference Room and Zoom).

**Item 9 – Adjournment**

With no further business, Chairman Nahmiach adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.