

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

MINUTES

**Wednesday, August 18, 2021
6:30 p.m.**

HYBRID MEETING

Wheat Ridge Recreation Center – Conference Room

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

Commissioners Present: Pat Cervera, Kathy Koniz, Nikki Larsen, Cambria Rollo,
John Route, & Chris Schilling

Commissioners Absent: Karen Stanley

Guests: None

Staff Present: Karen O'Donnell, Director of Parks & Recreation

Item 1 – Determination of Quorum & Call to Order

Director Karen O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. in the absence of a Chair and Vice Chairperson.

Item 2 – Introductions – Members and Guests

Director O'Donnell welcomed everyone to the meeting; no guests were present.

Item 3 – Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Koniz made a motion to accept the minutes from June 19, 2021, as written. Commissioner Schilling seconded the motion, all accepted and approved.

Item 4 – Unfinished Business

Congratulations Vice Chair, Cambria Rollo

Wheat Ridge Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes
August 18, 2021

Director O'Donnell reported that Commissioner Rollo had previously been selected as Vice Chairperson and expressed she is excited to have her onboard in a leadership role. She further stated that she received a letter of resignation today from the Parks and Recreation Commission's Chairperson Guy Nahmiach. His letter stated that his real estate business is growing and that he needed to free up some commitments. The Vice Chair position (Commissioner Rollo) will now take on the responsibilities of the Chair. The group discussed any interest in the Vice Chair role. After discussion, it was approved that Commissioner Larsen will be the new Vice Chair.

Any feedback on the park tours?

Director O'Donnell asked for feedback regarding last month's park tour which was held in place of the monthly meeting. A suggestion was made for future park tours to include a schedule of what would be viewed on the tour. Especially for new members, this was a great idea to add items of interest for the next tour.

Item 5 – New Business

Jefferson County Open Space Trails Partnership grant application – letter of support

Director O'Donnell reported that she put together a letter of support pertaining to a Jefferson County Open Space grant application for the commissioners' review. The grant will assist with trail improvements for Clear Creek Trail. This would include adding some concrete to sections that are still asphalt, which would add safety and overall trail maintenance to have it all be concrete; adding wayfinding signage; addressing drainage issues; and doing other renovations that would create a safer trail experience for users. She provided the letter of support for the commission's review/signature. All were in agreement with the letter and it will be signed by the new Chairperson.

Land acquisition interest

Director O'Donnell explained there is an available property near Randall Park, with the rest of the property on the square block owned and managed by the City of Wheat Ridge. The commission was asked if there was any interest in purchasing this property. The purchase would require funding (combination of City funds, likely from the Open Space Fund, and possible grant funds). City staff would propose utilizing the acquired space for a community garden, but would ultimately like to see if that would resonate with the community. It is being offered to the city to purchase before putting it on the market. If interested, they could look for land acquisition grants to see how much funding could be acquired as they don't have the budget to purchase this property. If successful with grant funding, they would discuss with City Council for support but that would not happen until October 4th, which is after the grant application due date. If that were to happen, they could always back out if funding were received and City Council was not interested in going forward. The lot size is 7,100 sq. ft. and the house is 951 sq. ft., which was constructed in 1951. After discussion, the commissioners were in agreement that it would be a good idea to pursue acquiring this available house property.

Tree Grant Program / Tree Sales

Director O'Donnell discussed this topic previously and shared that some City Council members advocated for this program. They want to have a Tree Grant Program that could be implemented and facilitated where if people have hazardous trees, it could be addressed. City Council has put forward a budget supplemental of \$30,000 for the Parks and Recreation Department to implement this program this year, and then moving into next year, they would budget for \$60,000, but that amount has not been confirmed. So if a homeowner has a tree that needs to be addressed, the city's Forestry Department would come out and provide an assessment to see if the homeowner qualifies for the program. If so, they could receive 50% of the cost of the work up to \$1,500 through the city, but the homeowner would have to use a city-approved contractor. For next year, the program would be expanded. Also, funds have been set aside for \$25,000 to have a Tree Sale Program for next year where people could apply for purchasing trees, making it cheaper for them to buy through the program than going to a nursery.

Disc Golf

Director O'Donnell shared that an individual contacted her and thought it would be great to have a disc golf course here in Wheat Ridge. She stated that the department currently doesn't have any funding set aside for this but will keep it for future consideration. This individual is potentially interested in funding the project. More information to come in the future.

Item 6 – Staff Updates

Grant Updates

Director O'Donnell stated that the grant for the Richards Hart Estate was successful and the work will begin soon. They also applied for a State Historical Fund grant for the sod house which is in need of some repairs.

National Public Lands Day

Director O'Donnell reported that this will be on September 25th and they are coordinating an event along Clear Creek Trail in collaboration with Jefferson County Open Space staff. The event will be from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. with food, beverages, and sponsors sharing lots of information.

Communities That Care (Teen Programming)

Director O'Donnell stated that City Council had discussed Teen Programming as a priority since it has been difficult to get teenagers involved in events in our community. Parks and Recreation Center supervisor, Stephen Clyde, is on this committee and they are proposing to have middle school events on Fridays and High School events on Saturdays at Anderson Building once a month. It would be a nice opportunity for teens to just hang out, have activities and food to enjoy social time. There are grants available to assist with the costs for this type of program since it will be provided free of charge to the community.

Prospect Park – Phase II

Director O'Donnell reminded the team that they had a tour of Prospect Park and discussed what the project is going to look like. Bid solicitations have been sent out and they are due back by September 7th. Hopefully they can move forward with that project by October or November.

The Green at 38th

Director O'Donnell shared that she met with the project team at the site as well as with the architect and they have proposed two different design ideas for public space at this site. The next step in the process would be to have a public meeting on September 15th.

Would you support canceling the September meeting & participating in a public meeting for this project instead?

Director O'Donnell proposed for the next Parks and Recreation meeting to be cancelled and instead meet on September 15th for a public meeting. The commissioners could participate in the public meeting for The Green at 38th which would be really beneficial.

Miscellaneous

Director O'Donnell stated that Regenerate Wheat Ridge brought folks together to provide a workshop to learn about beekeeping. The Pollinators Program was at Happiness Gardens and Regenerate Wheat Ridge is provided by grant funding. About 50 jars of honey were obtained from the bees which was really great. So much rich history in agriculture which makes the program a success.

Item 7 – Future Agenda Items

- Prospect Lake Water Quality
We are hoping to get some funding for 2022 and will seek grant funding.
- Vape Pen Exchange
- Land Acknowledgement
This will be discussed at a City Council Study Session on October 4th if interested in listening or participating in person.

Item 8 – Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Route: Thought the Carnation Festival was awesome and the bands were great but you should probably bring your own chairs since there were very few.

Commissioner Schilling: It was nice to have the Carnation Festival back. Also, if you have a problem with speed bumps, who do we contact for that? Director O'Donnell said it would be Public Works.

Commissioner Cervera: In my district, Fruitdale Park seems to be looking better regarding the homeless situation.

Wheat Ridge Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes
August 18, 2021

Commissioner Larsen: There is a memorial area at Founder's Park with a little bench and a tree, but the tree has dried up. Everything else looks good. Director O'Donnell will check on the area that needs to be addressed.

Chairperson Rollo: A single parent with four kids commented to her that she did not feel comfortable going to the park because of people experiencing homelessness and has observed needles in the park as well. Also where Rollo lives, some of the sidewalks don't provide continuous coverage and you can't walk safely down the street all the way. Director O'Donnell will check into the park and sidewalk situations.

Commissioner Koniz: She departed the meeting before it concluded.

Item 9 – Adjournment

With no further business, Chair Rollo adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.