

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

MINUTES

**Wednesday, October 20, 2021
6:30 p.m.**

HYBRID MEETING

**Wheat Ridge Recreation Center – Conference Room
Or: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87383073955>**

Commissioners Present: Pat Cervera, Kathy Koniz, Nikki Larsen, Cambria Rollo, Chris Schilling & Karen Stanley

Commissioners Absent: John Route

Guests: None

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

Item 1 – Determination of Quorum & Call to Order

Chairperson Rollo called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Item 2 – Introductions – Members and Guests

Chairperson Rollo welcomed everyone to the meeting; no guests were present.

Item 3 – Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Koniz made a motion to accept the minutes from August 18, 2021, as written. Commissioner Schilling seconded the motion, all accepted and approved.

Item 4 – Unfinished Business

Land Acquisition Interest Update

Director O'Donnell shared that the City closed on the home that was discussed during the August meeting, located at 4100 Gray Street. The property is on the corner of Randall Park and staff have identified the space as an ideal location for a community garden. Commissioner Schilling asked the sale price, and Director O'Donnell shared that the purchase price was \$525,000 (the appraised amount).

National Public Lands Day Follow Up

Director O'Donnell shared the stats from the September 25th event:

- 6.2 miles of trail cleaned
- 230 volunteers
- 8 tons of crusher fine spread

- 90 pounds of native seed spread
- 660 pounds of recycling removed
- 1,620 pounds of trash removed
- 100 native plants planted
- 1,500 volunteer hours

Director O'Donnell mentioned that the department is already working with Jefferson County Open Space staff on plans for next year's event. They're planning a larger project, covering the whole watershed, with the volunteer celebration bringing all volunteers together. Director O'Donnell will be meeting with the parks & recreation director and parks manager for the City of Golden to introduce them to the project.

Item 5 – New Business

Parks & Recreation Commission Purpose Discussion

Chairperson Rollo brought up a conversation about the purpose of the Parks & Recreation Commission. It seems that this was unclear for a lot of members, so she felt that it was important for the group to develop an understanding. Chairperson Rollo shared copies of the official purpose statement, Section 2-57 of the Wheat Ridge Code of Laws (which further defines the duties of the commission), Chapter 17 of the Wheat Ridge Code of Ordinances (Parks and Recreation), and the department's vision map.

The group had a robust discussion, bringing up the importance of access and equity, as well as aligning with the department's goals. Chairperson Rollo shared her experience attending a City Council meeting and discussed ways for the Commission to participate in Council meetings, supporting projects/initiatives. Councilmember Larsen added that City Council would likely appreciate the positive feedback. Director O'Donnell suggested adding a standing agenda item, discussing upcoming Council topics, so the Commission can discuss in advance if there are any specific items that they'd like to verbally support. One Commissioner added that this agenda item could also include upcoming events, so Commission members can attend as a representative of the Commission, with the intent of engaging residents.

The group talked about hosting outreach events at parks in their districts, to connect with neighbors in the district, education, gather feedback/ideas, etc. Another suggestion was made to host a volunteer event.

Commissioner Cervera mentioned that Chapter 17 in the Wheat Ridge Code of Ordinances needs some updating (e.g., the section on weapons and the section on tennis). Chairperson Rollo suggested that everyone take time to review the document and the group will suggest edits to take to Council at a future meeting.

Ideas for Onboarding Improvement

Chairperson Rollo opened the floor for suggestions to improve the Commission onboarding process. Director O'Donnell admitted that that process has not been great and could certainly use some help. Commissioner Stanley suggested meeting with new members over coffee and sharing information. Suggested information (group discussion):

- Purpose
- What does the member want to get out of their experience on the Commission?
- What can the new member contribute?
- Basics of Robert's Rules of Order (for those unfamiliar)
- Department factual information (comprehensive presentation that has been shared before)
- Bylaws
- Annual Report
- City/Department Background/History for those who are new to Wheat Ridge

Commissioner Larsen also recommended some informal/social Commission gatherings, so the business meetings don't feel so intimidating, and the group can discuss less formal topics.

2022 Parks & Recreation Commission Goals

Initially, the Commission will focus on: (1) reviewing the code and making recommendations, and (2) connecting with individuals in their districts through outreach efforts. Additionally, Commissioner Cervera mentioned a desire to hear from youths in the community. The team brainstormed ways to make that happen (i.e., through Communities that Care participants and interns, connecting with schools, etc.). Additionally, the group will revisit goals once the department strategic plan is updated in 2022.

Item 6 – Staff Updates

Prospect Park – Phase II

Director O'Donnell shared that Farrington Construction has been awarded the contract for construction and work will begin very soon.

The Green at 38th Public Meeting / Community Input

Director O'Donnell thanked those who attended the public meeting. She shared some statistics from the engagement on the What's Up Wheat Ridge page related to this project. As of 10/11/21 (last report run), the page had over 1,100 visitors and had garnered 51 new registrations for the site. 177 visitors were considered "engaged" – meaning they took the survey about preferences, contributed an idea or asked a question. Brandon is compiling all of the feedback from the meeting and the website. This will be shared with the Commission when available.

Budget Update

Director O'Donnell shared that the 2022 budget was adopted by City Council. She encouraged Commissioners to view it online, specifically the Open Space Fund and Conservation Trust Fund. If Commissioners have any questions, they can reach out to Director O'Donnell. She shared that there was a motion to amend the budget for the Green at 38th in the Open Space Fund, but that motion failed. Therefore, the full budgeted amount will be available in 2022. She also shared that the City will move forward with the Fitness Court at Panorama Park, likely utilizing American Rescue Plan dollars. Commissioner Larsen requested that more information be sent on this project, as some of the newer Commissioners may not be familiar with the details.

Land Acknowledgement – City Council Action

Director O'Donnell gave an update on the City Council study session discussion on land acknowledgement. This initiative is being led by Mayor Pro Tem Hoppe and Councilwoman Nosler-Beck. Next steps include convening a group of interested community members to draft a land acknowledgement state for Wheat Ridge, connecting with the six Tribes associated with this area via a formal letter, then incorporating this work into parks and recreation events, activities, signage, etc. More to come! Director O'Donnell asked anyone who might be interested in participating to let her know.

New Manager of Facility Operations

Director O'Donnell shared that the City's new manager of facility operations, Kion Gibbs, started on Monday. He comes to the City from Xcel Energy. She shared that the team is very excited to have him on board and will introduce him to the Commission soon!

Board & Commission Recreation Benefit

Director O'Donnell shared information on the new recreation benefit for board and commission members, in the event that anyone didn't see the email and/or missed the Boards and Commission Dinner.

Item 7 - Future Agenda Items

- Prospect Lake Water Quality
- Vape Pen Exchange

Item 8 - Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Larsen mentioned the Sustainable Neighborhoods event that will be held at Panorama Park on 10/30/21.



Item 9 – Adjournment

Chairperson Rollo adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.