CITY OF GOLDEN
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2011
7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Jerry Hodgden
Torsten Lyon
Peter Gotseff
Emmy Dimitroff
Laura Weinberg

ABSENT: Dylan Grange
Stephanie Sung
Jerry Harcek

STAFF: Rod Tarullo, Director of Parks, Recreation and Golf
Amber Thill, Parks and Recreation Coordinator
Paul Burkholder, Parks, Cemetery, Forestry Manager
Brandon Vail, Aquatics Coordinator

ROLL CALL:
Jerry Hodgden, Chair of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:
The Agenda was approved on a motion by Torston Lyon, seconded by Emmy Dimitroff, and carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
The Minutes of October 18, 2011 were approved on a motion by Torston Lyon, seconded by Emmy Dimitroff, and carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
None

BOARD INTRODUCTIONS:
Laura Weinberg introduced herself as the newest member of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. She lives in Canyon Point right next to Mitchell Elementary; she has two children, one in first grade and a four-year-old in preschool. She ran a consulting business until last year. The board members and staff introduced themselves.
VANOVER PARK DISCUSSION:
Jerry Hodgden said Vanover Park is off of 10th and Ford Streets and was well known for its large tree touted to be the oldest in Jefferson County. It was said at that time to be 260 years old. There is a lot of history behind the tree. Jerry said it was his idea to use the tree to showcase the history of the town. He said staff had a dendrochronologist come out from CSU who discovered the tree based on its tree rings was only 100 years old. Jerry said we felt the tree was dangerous a couple years back and had to cut it down. We held a ceremony for the tree with a couple hundred people in attendance.

Last year we received $80,000 in a joint venture grant with Jefferson County Open Space to redesign Vanover Park and to preserve the tree and its history. Vanover Park is right downtown and the end of the linear park of Clear Creek. We are attuned to the idea that Golden is not a modern town though progressive. Natural and historical elements enhance our community. We had some ideas and felt that the tree is a member of nature. There are several other large cottonwoods nearby. Trees and forestry are celebrated in parks generally. Looking around Vanover Park there is so much nature. We thought nature might become the focus of the tree. The view from the east side of the walkway that crosses that park is underdeveloped and beautiful. That area was very attractive to us at the park that day. It also has a lot of nice natural shade. We have had many children come to the Board and speak about parks that they have enjoyed including natural elements. The idea came to build a playground that was natural with rock, wood and natural elements. It could be a place to educate children and the community also providing interpretation about the Vanover Tree and other plant species in the park. Jerry said he would like to ask if Paul Burkholder would give some additional information.

Paul said there are several different options for Vanover Park; the tree slab needs to be protected and needs a shelter. If we do an interpretation we will get professionals to do it and provide education. First we need to get the tree off the ground.

Jerry said the City of Golden became a downtown living environment. There will be more and more people living down here and places to eat and interact with nature would be great to activate the park. Jerry asked the Board if they had any ideas.

Laura said she liked the idea of a natural park; we don’t currently have anything like that in Golden. She said she likes the idea of an actually natural park, not a play structure that looks natural. Interactive based on treasure hunts, climbing elements and using your imagination. Jerry asked what she felt about the educational aspects of a playground. Jerry said we have had people visit to talk about providing interpretation elements including video and education via QR Codes. She said she enjoys the Brail Trail in Genesse. Each element along the trail has an educational piece.

Emmy Dimitroff said her first question would be do we need to use the money for the dendrochronologist? Perhaps we could use the money for other elements such as play features. Jerry said we can still use the tree but the money for that park can be used
anyway that we please. Emmy said she would want the money put towards play features rather than the tree and be aimed at children of other ages and the ability to use your imagination. QR Codes might be long-term but not necessary at this moment.

Brandon Vail said with it being the first introduction to the City, it is a bit off the beaten path. The park should be attractive to both adults and children. We could incorporate with existing city programming.

Jerry Hodgden said there is also a landing area for kayaks in the park that most people are unaware of. There should be a lot of river traffic as Golden continues to grow. A walkway under the bridge cantilevered along the Gold Apartments and connected to Parfet Park will create a continuous loop which would also activate the park.

Torston Lyon agreed with Emmy’s comments. During his time on the Board, he feels the tree is cool and should be preserved and provide some information, but it should be deemphasized and not be the focus of the park. We should do our best to put the funds towards other elements. Jerry said the stump and the slab are still there. Torston likes the natural elements such as big rocks, etc. Jerry said he saw an outdoor climbing wall in Buena Vista which could be really fun.

Peter Gotseff said we do have a climbing wall in Discovery Park. Peter said there should be some contemplative spaces with things to look at. On Pearl Street Mall as a kid, you could play all over large boulders and it was awesome. Native grasses and crusher fine make it quiet but also a place for kids to play. If you go any further down the corridor it becomes overly active. In Aspen there are the John Denver contemplative garden areas. You have to be careful not to make it too private but not allow any volleyball or soccer. Part of being a resident in Golden is to know where the parks are. It should not be a programmed park.

Rod Tarullo said there are a couple of options for consideration. That area is actually one of the most urban parks in our system. To a large degree it is natural, just by location it is probably our most urban. It functions today as a place to find peace and quiet. Another point to that location is the families in the downtown urban area are not necessarily families. What we do in that park may not be as geared toward kids as other parks in town. There is a parking lot there and it could be a good place to play. It isn’t the most prime location for smaller tykes. If you decide to push away from the tree, there are several other directions you could go. From a skate park to a natural area, there are many options. $80,000 is not a lot of money for a playground. An average park today is $200,000 to $250,000 an acre. It is just a start. This is likely something to phase overtime. Jerry said he likes the idea of phasing. He wouldn’t begin to think of trying to build a huge playground, just small features. We need to determine a theme and direction.

Rod said if you look at parks in downtown mountain towns there are often natural rock features, water, etc. You can make an urban setting feel fun without using plastic
equipment. Jerry said he has spent a lot of time in mountain towns and found nice features. Jerry said he was in San Antonio yesterday and the park he went to had a giant concrete pad with a structure over it like a picnic shelter. They had parties, dances, basketball, etc. It was $250,000. Jerry asked the Board to think about it so we can discuss it in the future.

Paul said the clock is ticking on the slab. We need to make a decision about whether to preserve it or not. We could get another decade out of it, but it needs to be preserved to last longer than that. It would include a shelter for about $20,000 to start. Emmy asked if we could make it a table, Paul said yes, but we need to preserve it. Rod said it could be fun to climb on. Emmy asked if we had the two slabs plus the stump and brought in rocks it could be fun. Paul said we can put it up against the railing to try to preserve it and slow the process down. Emmy said again there is too much emphasis on the tree, at an art museum you see art painted by dead people. If we can go to the park and play on it that makes it attractive. Emmy said the signs by the History Park that are interpretive could be how we preserve the tree, with a sign rather than preserving the tree. Paul said he will get it back on its edge. Jerry said lets discuss this at future meetings. Jerry said we had a drawing an architect made for the park; we can also send an aerial from Google Earth for the Board to contemplate the space.

Peter said this comes back to park design and we should put the slab somewhere based on the future design of the park. Jerry said Rod could also come up with ideas for the space and bring it to the next meeting. Jerry would advise the board visit Vanover Park and look at the slab and the southwest meadow.

LIONS POND UPDATE:
Jerry Hodgden said the pond in Lions Park is not in the best shape. It is a lake in the middle of a park. People are used to having the pond there. It prevents the road on 10th Street from being moved and providing new access to the Community Center. We completed the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan early this year and talked about bringing the road away from the creek and giving the flow of Lions as one park all the way to the creek. The Master Plan specified the lake would someday be closed as there are a lot of geese. The Master Plan calls for an eventual water feature in this area. Jerry said just let the lake be, when the time comes, we can replace it if we have the funding. The Council has decided they want to fill it in at the cost of about $145,000.

Rod said we began draining the pond last Friday. The Public Works Department is taking the lead on this project. The water that is in there can’t just go into the creek; it is put into the sewer and being treated. The line is only so big and we can only pump so much at a time. So our rate of pumping is not as great as we would like for it to be. We are more than half way. The dirt to fill it will come from the new water tank site. We will be leaving it low in the winter and let it settle. About a week ago we discussed that area is in the flood plain, anything above that we will need to accommodate in some other way. Our area of disturbance will be greater than we had originally determined. We will be putting the
finishing touches on it with sod and top soil.

Peter asked how old the pond is. Jerry said approximately 50 years.

Laura said it will remain grass? Rod said yes.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

- Mark your calendar for Wed, Feb 29th. It is the tentative date for the next Boards and Commissions Appreciation Dinner

- We did proceed after your last meeting and turned in your Joint Venture Grant Application for Splash Aquatic Park Improvements. We will give an oral presentation to Jeffco the first week in December

- You took action last month and will have a regular meeting December 6th and no meeting the third week in December. You also have a Study Session January 3rd, if you have enough items on the agenda. The alternative is just holding your regular meeting the third week in January.

- The City Council had a discussion at their meeting regarding completing some projects in the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan. There wasn’t a lot of conclusion. Rod said he would guess at some point he will want the Board to refine the priorities of the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan.

- Our department was the first accredited department in the State. It looks like Jefferson County Open Space, Erie, Lafayette and Douglas County are all cuing up to tackle accreditation. The Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies provides the program and self assessment to ensure we are meeting best practice standards. Our Public Works Department and Police Department are accredited and this puts us on an equal playing field. The Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) modified the standards right after we achieved accreditation. One of our priorities for our half-way point next year is to put us in a place for reaccreditation.

- Rod said we had a resident on the eastern edge of North Table Mountain report a fairly good sized boulder rolled down the mountain and into their home. It came right through a sliding glass door. No one was hurt. That is one of the risks you take living in that location.

- Rod said we had a couple young kids who got trapped in a mine opening on city open space. Rod said he didn’t know we had open mines in that area. Rod said it was on the hog back on the north end of town. Rod said they are on our property, not easily sealed. We have been working with the State to seal off the abandoned mines. We have requested assistance. They anticipate a couple hundred thousand
to seal the mine. Their funding cycle will provide this in 2013. We will install cautionary signs and barb wire fence until the time it could be sealed.

BOARD MEMBERS’ COMMENTS:

Peter Gotseff asked if the mines were clay. Rod said yes. Peter said before they made the golf course they were all vertical side clay pits.

Torston welcomed Laura to the Board

Emmy said it would be really cool if during the kids swim time at the Golden Community Center there were more lanes available for kids to swim. There are four lap lanes at Splash not leaving enough space for the kids. Brandon said they can look into the schedule.

Emmy also asked what was covered in plastic on the trail Clear Creek Trail right before Jefferson County Open Space on the north side of the creek. Paul said he will look into it and report back to the Board.

Jerry Hodgden said he received a call from a resident near Norman D Park who is still interested in improving the park. He suggested they attend a future meeting.

Peter said in Norman D there is a playground and they have a right as residents to request more play features for a growing youth population.

Rod said he suggested Public Works allow for a sledding hill at Beverly Heights Park. Peter said that would be great and the Board agreed.

ADJOURN:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Torston Lyon, seconded by Peter Gotseff, and carried unanimously.