Tuesday, February 15, 2011

PRESENT: Meredith Campbell
        Jeff Oxenford
        Jerry Hodgden
        Emmy Dimitroff
        Jenny Ricks
        Peter Gotseff
        Stephanie Sung
        Dylan Grange

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Rod Tarullo, Director of Parks, Recreation and Golf
       Paul Burkholder, Parks, Forestry, Cemetery Manager
       Amber Speedy, Parks and Recreation Coordinator
       Mike Bestor, City Manager

PUBLIC: Jerry Ganiere
        Bob Vermeulen, City Council Ward 3
        Marjorie Sloan, City Council District 1
        Jacob Smith, Mayor

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

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
The Minutes of January 18, 2011 were approved as amended on a motion by Jerry Hodgden, seconded by Dylan Grange, and carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
Jerry Ganiere wanted to remind the Board that the Clear Creek ADA Report written by the Meet the Challenge Team still needs to be reviewed to set priorities pending the outcome of the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan. Some of the items in the report are still unfinished or may need to be completed sooner. Also, the reason the report was created was partly because of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan but also because it was considered best practice by ADA standards.

Peter Gotseff asked what areas we are focusing on. Jerry said the corridor of the Master Plan including the parks and the Clear Creek Trail. Peter asked if this includes the Colorado School of Mines side. Jerry said he doesn’t think the plan included anything with Mines.

Peter asked what the difference was in trail design if you need to meet best practice standards. Jerry said best practice is different than ADA mandatory requirements. There are other disabilities other than people in wheel chairs. Any kind of grade can be difficult. A ramp and a set of steps can also be a problem for an amputee for example. It also depends on the equipment the person uses. Sometimes they have to go sideways so the steeper the ramp the bigger the problem.

Mike Bestor said perhaps the Jackson Street Corridor is another example. It is a flat trail and we saw-cut it to
make a smoother experience. That is not required but it is best practice. Peter asked at what level you pay attention to detail. Mike said you would do that when you put it out to bid. Mike said we are going to build a trail on the south side of Clear Creek as soon as the State Health Department gives the okay. This city will work to meet best practice standards when we build the trail.

Jerry Ganiere said the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan Advisory Group has indicated they will do everything they need to do to comply. Best practice standards are most important. Jerry said another aspect is the City may have an exception such as the US 6 Trail from 19th that doesn’t meet best practice standards but that doesn’t mean you ignore the trail all together just the sections of it that cannot comply. One big example is a hump. In one part it goes to a 12 percent grade; shaving down the hump would allow it to be flat. It is a consideration that should have been made that wasn’t. A dip could have been filled in. Jerry said when you have a drop off you should have a curb along the edge to prevent wheel chairs from going off the trail.

DISCUSSION WITH CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS ON TOPICS OF MUTUAL INTEREST:
Meredith said she had a meeting in October with the Mayor regarding the way the Community Gardens had been handled within the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan. Specifically, Jerry and Jeff wanted to chat about their concerns. Meredith said we also had just become aware of the concerns of the 9th Street Neighbors. Meredith said we recognized the need back in October but we are now just getting together in February. Meredith asked Council what they wanted to focus on.

Jacob Smith said on behalf of the Council thank you for inviting us. He said on the gazebo issue in the Community Gardens, it should not have been an informal process the way it was. He said it should have gone through the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for approval and then Council. He said he doesn’t think it will make a difference in Council’s thinking regarding the permanency of the gardens. The master plan process will still work to determine the future of the space. He said we are here to listen and answer any questions so let’s get any issues on the table in the spirit of communication and collaboration. Jacob said it was great to get three Council Members at the meeting.

Jerry Hodgden said he didn’t realize that Jeff wouldn’t be here tonight. When the Community Gardens were first authorized to use the land it was stated it was a trial situation. They have been quite successful in the space. Jerry said it can be a tough topic as it is popular. The gardeners are putting money into it including the gazebo as an example. It was never originally handed over to them in that manner. It isn’t as though anyone has said we are going to put an alternative program up there such as tennis courts. There are a lot of things that could be considered in the space. Jerry said Jeff primarily had other uses in mind including places to park and camp near the creek. On the other hand, Jerry said the garden is not a 12 month per year activity, it doesn’t exist for a period of time in the winter months and there is a lot of land up there that is then unutilized. He said he wouldn’t mind it up there in growing season but could other activities be blended in that area during the remaining months of the year. Determining use of the space was a goal of the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan; however, we were told not to put any more time into the space due to the Community Gardens.

Jacob Smith asked when the gate is locked as it should be open to the public at all times. Dylan said he has been locked inside it. Jacob asked if the pedestrian access is ever cut off. He said if that is a problem we should address it. Jerry said maybe we could plant a winter situation up there maybe a sledding area.

Meredith said it is perceived as a special interest group who uses the space and it not available to the general public. A group of approximately 60 people have plots so it actually serves a small portion of the community. She said we can’t walk through and pick vegetables. They offer only a certain number of plots.

Emmy Dimitroff said at the History Park all the plots were full with the exception of one. Emmy said she had heard that the gardeners are waiting to open more plots.

Jerry Hodgden said anyone can play tennis. The land at the Community Gardens is not available to everyone. Our parks can be used by everyone except that location.

Rod said the one place that is similar is the Archery Range at Tony Grampsas. They have an agreement with the City and the range is locked. Jacob said the distinction that he is seeing is that no one is excluded. Jacob said we are not actually excluding anyone yet. He said it is open to anyone that wants to garden. Emmy said it is important to add that she has heard a couple times that in their broader long range plan they will be more inclusive offering and education piece. She said she thinks their intention had been that there would be at least part of the gardens that would give back to the community, not necessarily giving away produce but maybe
interpretive spaces. She said at the History Park gardens she pays $32 for compost she adds to the plot each season. If someone is playing in the winter on her plot her efforts to keep the soil nice could be ruined.

Bob Vermeulen asked if the land that the gardens use is park space. Rod said it is City land. Meredith said it was mentioned in the Department Master Plan. Rod said it was the former city shops area in which the parks shop building was located. We contemplated future uses down the road likely land banking it in the immediate future. The Golden Bike Park Group had hard feelings when the gardeners were given the land. Meredith said the Golden Bike Park Group didn’t feel the gardeners followed the same policies and procedures as the bike park group had to go through when they began building the Bike Park.

Rod said from a staff perspective we went through all the properties for both groups and we looked at everything. Since the Community Gardens have begun, the relationship with staff has been through the Public Works and Sustainability. We haven’t had much to do with it at all. It was to be included in the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan process from a land use perspective. Rod said one of the things he has heard from the Board is that if it is a permanent spot for the Community Gardens maybe it needs to be more official. We have required written agreements and documentation for both the Bike Park and the Archery Range. We don’t seem to have anything in place from the Community Gardens. Rod said he thinks they are waiting to see what happens after the completion of the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan.

Jacob Smith said the Council said it isn’t permanent and there is not long term decision to be made until after the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan is adopted. The Clear Creek Master Plan is the place to figure that out. Council was very clear about the plan. Meredith said there was an impression that the Community Garden space was off the table during the Master Plan process. Jenny Ricks said the consultants took it off the table and said that was the direction they heard from Council. Jerry Hodgden said he was also under that impression. He said we are still having meetings with the public for the Master Plan and we should put it to the public. Jacob said Wenk could have talked to Councilors individually and got that view. Jacob said Council has never made a ruling on the space since the original temporary discussion two years ago.

Rod said the Community Gardens Group applied for a grant to have the soils tested. Jacob asked what the process was for the Bike Park. Meredith said they have a Maintenance Agreement and Operating Agreement with the City. Rod said we don’t know when we will have a Master Plan for Tony Grampsas. We haven’t let the Bike Park Group put up permanent structures. Jenny also said that space at Tony Grampsas is less versatile.

Stephanie Sung asked if the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan comes back with a recommendation other than the gardens in that space who will tell them to move. The Council said Mike Bestor. Stephanie asked how permanent the structures are. She said if it is going to be a more permanent site there needs to an Operating and Maintenance Agreement in place as we are lacking fairness and equity.

Bob Vermeulen said if the consultants were under the impression that the garden was off limits that is horrifying. It was his understanding as a Councilor that everything was on the table within the corridor. We would even consider moving the kayak course if that is what the Master Plan recommended. He said the Community Gardens are a popular feature of the community and if there is a better place for it then we need to do due diligence.

Jerry Hodgden said we have had a lot of meetings with the 9th Street Neighbors due to road alignment changes. They are very interested in where parking goes. A lot of the parking is down in Lions Park; however, perhaps parking could be where the gardens are. Meredith said it is an emotional issue.

Marjorie thanked the Board for taking the heat. Jenny said her concern is she attended all the public workshops for the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan and only the first workshop discussed the Community Garden space. She said it felt as if it was never discussed what could this space be used for; rather it was always do we move the gardens or not. She said she doesn’t have a recommendation; however, it was never truly open for discussion. She said it is similar going from Google to Bing. People didn’t cognitively go there. We needed to consider it as land. It was not truly discussed as a public process.

Jacob Smith said we could do anything we want with the creek; we could even get rid of the kayak park. It is a similar situation. It is hard to imagine what we would do with the creek other than have a kayak course. Jacob said he apologizes wherever the miscommunication took place. He asked how we address this issue. We want the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to feel comfortable with your recommendations to Council. Council wants this to be as open ended as possible.
Jerry said we still have some time. Jenny said we don’t want to go back to June. Rod said he thinks the gardeners have an expectation at the adoption of this plan that they are either in or out. Rod said it needs to be a clear recommendation. Jerry Ganiere said people who have plots are very concerned about the time and effort they have put in.

Emmy said we could draw some similarities to the issues that have been brought to us by the 9th Street residents in that the idea of the whole process was to open up things to what could be. She said she could argue that the only time there ever was discussion about 10th Street was at the first public meeting. That idea disappeared later in the process. She said she doesn’t remember when the space narrowed to the gardens but she thinks that to get public input would be important but to open up the process again may not be right. She said as a member of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board she doesn’t feel we should spend more taxpayer money to redo the entire plan due to perceived inequity, we should move forward at best we can. Perhaps there are just additional expectations for the Community Gardens such as a defined agreement and ensuring a public education piece is part of the agreement. She said one of the issues that comes up is there is a lot jammed into this area of corridor that is regional so perhaps a local garden in this spot is a good fit.

Jacob said he has been on Council 5 years and never does a perfect public process exist. You cannot do it perfectly. There are always issues that come up. He said given everything we have discussed tonight, how can this Board feel good about your recommendation to Council? Jerry said he would like to go back to design. Meredith said that sets us back. Rod said Wenk Associates have made several suggestions in that area including skateboard parks, climbing wall, tennis courts, etc. One of the questions we posed was if not the garden here what would be here. Rod said he doesn’t remember anyone coming up with any recommendations that were favored enough to push the gardeners out. They did do some legwork on alternatives and did show different renditions to citizens. Rod said we had discussions. There wasn’t anything that came to the surface. Jerry said he remembered discussions on tennis courts, camping area. Jerry said early in the game it wasn’t to be used for anything other than the gardens. The gardeners made a lot of noise. He said he would like to see the gardens stay there but wishes we could add other amenities.

Mike Bestor said the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board are driving the Clear Creek Master Plan to completion. Mike said the Board doesn’t need Council’s permission to discuss options. Go do it.

Stephanie Sung said if the recommendation is to keep the gardens where they are can we add to the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan an Operating Agreement and process that governs the maintenance and operation of the gardens. Should there be a fee? Is it a revenue generating? Mike said whatever you want to recommend. Emmy asked if it is in the plan is it now a city park? Jacob said we can decide that. Jacob said this issue of their relationship with city can be resolved. He said the Archery Range was rubberstamped, the Bike Park had more issues, and we don’t have a consistent process. He would expect a receptive response from Council with an agreement. Jerry said that is not necessarily a part of the master plan. Jacob agreed.

Rod said when we presented in front of the Library Board they were concerned about parking, we have told them that citizens want the Library to stay, there were a few concerns about general design concepts. They have their own set of issues as to whether or not they will be able to expand. We said this plan doesn’t preclude them from doing an expansion. Our Librarian, Peg, has been actively involved throughout the process.

Jacob asked if there were other issues that needed to be discussed. Meredith said the Hogback Property for open space acquisition. She said we as a Board have prioritized our open space priorities at least twice and we did not feel the Hogback was a high priority. The potential to acquire the Delong Property is of top priority. She said she had concerns that if our open space funds were used on the Hogback then we may not have funds for priority spaces. The Hogback was the lowest priority. Mike Bestor said buying that property at the right price does not preclude us from buying the Delong Property. We can figure out a way to get Delong if and when it becomes available. He recognizes that from our point of view the Hogback has no recreational value. From Council’s point of view it is very important to the feel and look of the community. Mike said it is approved for development and if we can get it for the right price we can take it off the table for future development. You need to tell Council your perspective and they will need to make that decision. It is not an either or.

Jacob said we will not let the Delong Property go if we get the opportunity to buy it. Unless the City were to suffer a real financial crisis it is unlikely we would lose out on Delong. It is interesting the question of open space. Mike said this Council has in the past asked the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to prioritize open space. Rod said this group tours open space properties often and works with Steve Glueck to prioritize the
properties. Rod said the group has prioritized with goals from passive and active use to buffering around the city. Steve also uses this information with the County to help determine their priorities for open space acquisition.

Rod said the most recent priority listing was just last fall. Rod said the Board is very interested. Meredith said the Realtor for the Hogback even pitched to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Marjorie said the Mines Surveying Field was also a high priority on the list and would be similar to this property. She said the terrain would make the difference. Meredith wondered if the Hogback was even developable. Jacob said he needs to review Steve’s Open Space Memo. Eventually the sprawl could come into city limits. The Brunel Property is another example. Meredith said we also prioritized based on cost. Mike said Council needs to balance the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board recommendations in their decision.

NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARK EVALUATION REPORT: Rod said this report was done by the Department of Interior. The three places in Golden have been given National Natural Landmark Designation including the Triceratops Trail area, the Freshman Lot at the Colorado School of Mines, and the new bird track location which is the hogback north of the city shops open space. They have done a very thorough report which we tried sending electronically, but the file was too large so we made hard copies for the Board. They are required to let the property owners (the City owns 2) to be able to look at this report for 60 days. It doesn’t really have any consequences; it is a praiseworthy title. He said he doesn’t think anyone will have an aversion to it but we want the Board to be informed. Meredith asked if they have started building the overhang to protect the Fossils yet. Rod said not yet. Jenny asked if it is on some website, how it is documented. Rod said he is not sure.

CLEAR CREEK MASTER PLAN PROCESS DISCUSSION:
Rod said we have March 1st, 90 percent plan review with Wenk Associates followed by a March 10th Council Meeting, then a March 15th Public Meeting. April the Board will once again review the plan with possible adoption by Council.

Rod said you could make a recommendation to Council at your April 5th Study Session by making it a Regular Meeting. Council will review the final plan on April 7th and potentially adopt it at their next meeting.

Rod said we are going to the Planning Commission tomorrow to share what our plan process has been and let the Commission determine how we have followed the Vision 2030 process. If you would like us to direct Wenk Associates in a different way we would be happy to do that. We will discuss with them what happened tonight tomorrow. Jerry said he would like to see Wenk mention the alternatives to the garden space in the Master Plan document. Stephanie agreed that would be smart. Emmy asked if that means the gardens are not permanent. Rod said they need to word it in a way that the recommendation is that the Community Gardens stay and then list other alternatives presented. Stephanie asked if in the future there then becomes a formal process. Rod said if the recommendation is that the Community Gardens stay then that formalizes the gardens in that space. You could make a recommendation independent of the Master Plan that there is an Agreement with the City in place for the space. Rod said if the recommendation in the Master Plan is the gardens stay, they will likely move forward to develop the site. There would also be an opportunity to solidify the relationship and spell out parameters for the space. There might be funds involved. All that could be detailed out independent of the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan.

Jenny said her thought is that if the Community Gardens become a park it needs to be open as a park. Jenny said we have talked a lot about natural areas, can we tie in a recreation component into the future orchard, etc. Stephanie said if we formalize the process and provide direction then we can direct that would happen. Rod said if you want to do this side recommendation that addresses use of the Community Garden space, we should also make a recommendation on who would administer it. Stephanie asked how we accomplish this. Rod said one of the things that we have heard from the gardeners is talk about turning the operation over to a nonprofit and have them administer it.

Jerry said he envisions we teach gardening in the space. Stephanie said there needs to be an educational component. Rod said the plan itself will move forward and the operational agreement or recommendation to Council regarding oversight and education of the gardens can be a separate piece. That Community Gardens has annual plans and a master plan for the space. They have been waiting for what their future holds. Stephanie asked how much funding they have received. Marjorie said staff supported fencing, soil, water to the site, etc. She said what she is hearing is an equity issue of use of city land. We need to get together and get an
agreement in place.

Marjorie said another example is there has been a request for a Community Solar Garden that you buy shares into. The electricity goes into the grid. Jerry said it could be at Grampsas. Marjorie said it’s a fantastic concept but we have nothing in place to evaluate it.

Jenny said the Community Gardens don’t seem to have a connection from the Golden Community Center as far as access in the Master Plan. Rod said we are pursuing taking the blue building and making it into office space. There would be a little work done for public access that could include walkways to the gardens. Rod said it is already in the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan drawing.

Stephanie asked about the plots Emmy uses at the History Park. Who governs them? Rod said they are two different groups of people. Rod said the history volunteers may also need formalization. Emmy said they currently have some restrictions.

Rod said he will look into having the first meeting in April as the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board’s regular meeting.

Meredith asked how the Board wanted to approach the possible recommendation to Council on the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan. Jenny said we should wait until the March 15th Public Meeting to decide if we want to make a decision that night and if not, we can consider until April. Rod said we will continue to get feedback on the plan as time goes on.

Jenny asked for green space numbers from Wenk Associates. Rod said he will follow-up.

Meredith asked if Wenk will provide a presentation at the public meeting. Rod said we can put it on the website as well. Peter asked how we are talking to groups that provide feedback late in the process. Rod said we gave the Lions Club a personal audience. Most of what they have commented on is contrary to the citizen’s requests as a part of the public process.

Jenny said we need numbers and data. Amber said Wenk Associates has parking data. Green space numbers and loss of asphalt should be included.

**DIRECTORS REPORT:**

Rod said he didn’t have anything to report tonight.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:**

Peter Gotseff asked if we have ordered the benches. Paul said he has not yet, he is working on colors. Jenny said she would suggest natural colors. Meredith said we need to get them ordered.

Peter Gotseff said he rode the Jackson Street Corridor on a road bike. It is smooth and straight. The 19th Street to the new bridge is not so nice. The rest of the C-470 Trail is pretty great as far as the flat concrete. Peter said it is all in the details. Peter suggested Dylan try it on his long board and report back. Peter said it is a slight difference but it is important.

Meredith asked about Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Interviews. Rod said they will move it to April. It is on the website with a new date and application. Rod said the new Board would be seated in May.

**ADJOURN:**

A motion to adjourn was made by Jenny Ricks, seconded by Dylan Grange, and carried unanimously.