Tuesday, September 20, 2011

PRESENT: Torston Lyon
Emmy Dimitroff
Jerry Hodgden
Stephanie Sung
Jerry Harcek
Peter Gotseff

ABSENT: Dylan Grange

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

PUBLIC: Bill Lentz
Donna Miller
Barbara Haywood
Saoirse Charis-Graves
Rick Gardner

COUNCIL: Marcia Claxton

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 Torsten Lyon, seconded by Emmy Dimitroff, and carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
The Minutes of August 16, 2011 were approved on a motion by Torsten Lyon, seconded by Stephanie Sung, and carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
None

VANOVER PARK TREE MEMORIAL:
Jerry Hodgden said he invited the Golden Landmarks Association (GLA) and the Historic Preservation Board (HPB) to this meeting to discuss the September 28th visit from Dr. Peter Brown, the dendrochronologist who will eventually add the history to the Vanover Tree slab. The slab should be finished October 6th. He will do the work in the park in order to only move the tree slab once. It will be placed under a shelter at a later time to preserve it. Tonight we will select the historic dates to add to the tree rings. Amber Thill has gathered potential dates for us to review today.

This list includes requests from HPB, GLA, and information from Rick Gardner, our local Historian. Jerry Hodgden said he also has a couple dates to add to the list. We need a framework of history to show the important points and character of Golden. We want to make this fun. Jerry said he is proposing the framework in black and possibly in red to include some fun facts about Golden.
There was discussion amongst the Board of adding the US Presidents to one side of the slab. Jerry Hodgden said we will place the stump on its side at the highest point in the park to avoid the flood plain as much as possible. Dr. Brown said he enjoys talking to people as he is working. He will teach the public about tree rings and preservation. Jerry said the tree could start approximately 260 years ago. He said Dr. Brown doubts the age and believes the tree will be much younger upon inspection. History dating further back shouldn’t go on the tree rings. Jerry suggested a plaque in readable form regarding the Indians and dinosaurs, etc. Donna Miller asked if we could have a plaque for some of the more wordy items included in our list? Torsten Lyon said he liked the idea as we wouldn’t want to cram too much information on the tree slab. Jerry suggested finding a timeline of framework first. Barbara Haywood said some of the parks are using QR Codes read by a Smartphone. Staff agreed this was a definite possibility. Jerry said this is not a museum; our mission right now is to get the job finished working on the tree slab. Donna said when we cut down the Vanover Tree one of the art pictures we used was the tree with a noose hanging from it. What if we did a tri-fold to elaborate on more information? Jerry Hodgden asked if it would be better to direct the public to the Visitor’s Center.

Jerry Hodgden said he ran into members of the Kiwanis Club. He suggested they look into sponsorship. We have a lot to maintain already in the Parks and Recreation Department. We need to be mindful of future maintenance. Jerry said we need to keep it simple and interesting. We could also encourage the Coors Bus to make a stop at the park.

Rod said he was under the understanding the dates for the tree slab was the focus of tonight’s meeting. We will spend future time planning the future of the park. He would suggest tonight we focus on the list of dates and whittle it down. Jerry said we could appoint a member from each Board to pare down this list. Jerry said, for example, 15 things happened in 1959; we will need to choose one of these. Rod said Dr. Brown’s first task is to clean the tree re-facing both sides. He has some physical labor to make the slab prepared for the timeline. We will need to have a decision on the historic dates in the not too distant future. He helps seal the wood to preserve it. The historic markings will have sealant put on as well.

Donna said Golden Landmarks Office is always open if we wanted to get together we could go through this list and turn it back in. Rod said the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board does have some oversight of this project and needs to be involved on some level as well. Their next meeting won’t be for another month. Bill Lentz asked when the final sealant will be applied. Paul Burkholder said he will finish the front, it will be covered until we build the shelter, then it will be moved to the shelter and sealed. It could potentially give us up to 6 months.

Saoirse suggested since there are so many events occurring in one year, perhaps there is another way to reference 1859 for example. 15 events will not fit on one tree ring. The National Parks Service has a group dedicated to interpretive exhibits that make them interesting. They are based in Fort Collins. She wondered if a consult might be illuminating. Jerry Hodgden said that is a good idea and why we invited HPB and GLA. Saoirse said it is not just history but also how to tell it. She said she can provide more information to staff.

Emmy Dimitroff said it seems that it would be appropriate as a Board to create a small committee who could work through this list. Jerry said we should refer to those who have knowledge of history to bring out the best selection. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board can then give approval and work on developing the park. Rod said that is fine. Torsten said it is important to give the committee a bit of guidance. He said we might decide as a Board to determine some guidelines. It might be 20 items over 200 years. Then we also need to identify more detailed items intermittingly disbursed.

Bill Lentz asked if the heart of the tree still exists or if there was a hole in the middle? Rod said we will lose some of the years. Donna asked if they could look at the slab. Jerry Hodgden said yes.
Jerry asked who would like to serve on the committee. Donna said we need to set the guidelines. Donna said the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board could set up the guidelines and then we could meet as a committee.

Marcia Claxton asked about a budget for this project. Rod said it started at $80,000 and we received a joint venture grant for $60,000 from Jefferson County Open Space. $5,000 goes to the dendrochronologist. Rod said it was contemplated this would be a phased project. The first priority is preservation of the tree, overtime we could then phase other aspects including shelters, etc.

Stephanie Sung said she is going through the timeline list highlighting items she finds interesting. It might be good for all of us to do that. Torsten said that might be a good first blush. Amber Thill said she will send out our comprehensive list for each Board member to choose dates. Send your dates back to Amber. She will compile a new list. Peter Gotseff asked Rick Gardner where he does his research. Rick said several newspapers and others. Photos are also available. Peter said he would be interested in having a QR Code which when scanned with your phone pulls up more information such as images or newspaper clippings. Rod said he will make contact with the Parks Service to get more information on what possibilities are there.

EXCESS PARKLAND DISCUSSION:

Rod Tarullo said at the last meeting there was some brief discussion about potential parcels of land which may no longer add value to the city. We have brought maps to review tonight and we can also take a field trip to the locations. There isn’t a timeline or priority, if you remember it has come up due to some discussion with Jefferson County relative to the Heritage Square parking lots. These parcels may not have much value, if we chose to take them to a vote of the people we would no longer need to maintain them. Jerry asked about the Heritage Square lot. Rod said that is the area Mr. Glueck said could be sold to LaFarge. Jerry said Mesa Meadows was a trailhead parking lot at one time. Rod said now Jefferson County has created the North Table Mountain Trailhead so we have closed off the social trail and can retain an easement to free up all that other land which has the potential to be a buildable lot. It could possibly even be two lots. We need to retain 30 to 50 feet on the western edge. Peter Gotseff said this is one the few items on the Agenda he has a comment about. He said Highway 93 is congested every weekday. If you leave Golden from the new trailhead after work you cannot leave and go left back to Golden. If we take this social trail away, you will have people parking in the neighborhoods. This is the only enjoyable access to Open Space. Rod said there is a trail for people coming out of this neighborhood. Rod said it is designed and built with the new trail to access N. Table.

Torsten said it is great to have this discussion but it would be helpful to understand the expenses with having these parcels in our system. If they don’t cost us anything, perhaps we keep them. It would be good to know the costs associated. Rod said, for example, on Lakota Hills, the Track C we do almost zero maintenance. On Track D there is a manicured blue grass lawn that we water, fertilize and mow. It doesn’t really serve a use. It was a piece we discussed as a potential community garden. There is real maintenance expense. Our transportation costs also add up. Marcia Claxton asked which subdivision. Rod said it is at the corner of Eagle Ridge.

Emmy Dimitroff asked if we want to make money or eliminate maintenance. Rod said this began with Steve Glueck and Heritage Square. There could be some potential to give it to Jeffco or LaFarge. In order to get rid of any city property you need it on the ballot and a vote of the people. If we wanted to include this in an election we should review all excess property and determine if anything else needed to be included. If we come to the decision to take excess property to a vote of the people what lands should or should not be included? Emmy asked if Mesa Meadows or Lakota Hills would want to take care of the land and make it a community garden, etc. Rod said that doesn’t necessarily mean that there is a willing buyer or acceptor. Jerry Hodgden said there is some property likely worthless to anyone such as Rimrock which is used for drainage. Rod said they could create value for citizens and reduce maintenance costs. Rod said if gardens are an alternative, do we need to provide water, etc. Rod said the parcels have been around for about 5 years. The Mesa
lot Outlet D is a corner lot and the resident has called twice a year for the last 5 years asking if we would be open to selling the lot.

Peter Gotseff said he would like to hear if staff dislikes taking care of these parcels. Paul Burkholder said we have clear thinking staff and they like to think what they has a sense of purpose. So yes, they feel these small areas are somewhat tedious. Rod said he would suggest the Board take a look at each parcel on their own time. Staff will work up expenses and provide them to you at our next regular meeting. Peter said staff perspective is also very influential.

LIONS POND UPDATE:
Rod Tarullo said he believes the Board is aware that City Council has had a couple more discussions regarding Lions Pond and it has been requested of staff to present information on filing in the pond including a budget and timeline. Council received that information in their packet this week. Consideration will be given this Thursday at their meeting and there will be opportunity for public comment. Potentially they could take action to have staff fill in the pond.

Jerry Hodgden asked about the costs. Rod said our estimate was $128,000. That could vary a little and it includes some contingency. It includes free dirt, trucking costs, dewatering, dock removal, final grade and top soil. In the spring we will install an irrigation system and sod.

Jerry asked Marcia Claxton what the hurry is. Marcia said she emailed her support of filling in Lion's Pond to the Board some time ago. Other Councilors raised their opinion that Council had agreed to move forward. The feeling is that it isn't useable space. It takes up a good part of Lions Park and it is covered in goose poop. She said we don't often see people using the pond. It would be more used if it was grass. Jerry said there are uses at the present time. The kayakers use it. Jerry said it isn't timely. We just put together the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan and stated we wanted a water feature. When money becomes available we could then install a water feature. He said when we discussed the Master Plan there was an awful lot of concern voiced from citizens. We said we would have plenty of public process. Jerry said he doesn't understand why we want to tear up the pond without a replacement water feature. This is money we don't have right now. Jerry said the lake has outgrown its useful life, but we should wait until we have funds to build something new. Marcia said it could be quite some time before a new water feature could be added. The pond has deteriorated. It is unsanitary and takes up too much room. We could have so much more useable space for recreation. Marcia asked how others felt.

Torsten said we really should have more public process and make it known to the public. Torsten said this Board recommended to Council we should wait and have a public process. Then Council decided they want it done right now. Torsten said personally he feels Council having latitude to do something like this without public input is wrong. Torsten said he doesn't feel this is good support of the City. Marcia said another option was to discuss it as part of the Capital Improvement Process which would require public comment and then two more opportunities in November and December for more feedback.

Torsten said that is what this Board concluded and recommended. He said if we need to start in fall 2012 that is fine after a public process. Marcia said she understands and Council received a few responses from the community today who were opposed. We can see what happens Thursday. There is definitely a split of Councilors who want to move forward and others who are concerned about having some additional opportunity for public comment.

Emmy Dimitroff said she would echo Torston and Jerry. When we did the Master Plan we wanted to make sure the public input was there. We made that promise to various groups who had concerns. She would also add that her kids and other neighborhood kids play in that pond. It has its own ecosystem which makes it unique. She said it seems as if instead of writing a plan, we have written a ticket to make changes without input from the public. $128,000 could go towards many other
projects listed in the Master Plan. With the little money we have available for CIP it also doesn’t seem economically the wisest choice. A lady at New Loveland Mine Park mentioned small changes to the park that happen every year. We won’t have money to do some of these things.

Torston added that he is not necessarily opposed to filing in the pond. We need to adhere to the process that we owe the public a time to give public comment. A last minute Agenda item at a City Council Meeting does not fit that bill.

Stephanie Sung said she would like the pond filled in, she does not enjoy it. She would much rather have more green space. However, there is a process in place for a reason. We are opposed as a Board to filling in the pond without a public process. Marcia said we have the option to have several hearings during the CIP approval process. More people could then be aware. We wouldn’t start the work until November because of the Church Ditch anyway.

Marcia asked what other capital projects we might use the money toward instead. Rod said if the funds were directed towards the Master Plan we could make modifications to the Clear Creek Trail, Lions Ball Fields to create better festival space, or the 8th Street Connection. That would be big money. Marcia said she is hearing a concern about the public process and other capital needs that may be a higher priority.

Torston said he has spoken to 20 or 30 people and there is a feeling of throwing away funds on a temporary fix. Peter said we made a statement that public process is important. Peter said it would be great for the pond to be gone and have other opportunities available for the space. We do need due process though. Saoirse said she has heard concerns and she encouraged them to attend the Council Meeting. We need to be transparent and accountable to citizens. We need to error on the side of ensuring people are heard.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:
None

BOARD MEMBERS’ COMMENTS:
Jerry Hodgden said he was at the kayak course in Buena Vista and was impressed with the outdoor climbing area. He brought a photo and said it was very cool and draws a lot of people. It could be a potential replacement for where the pond currently sits in Lions Park.

Torston said he didn’t have an exact date the US Fish and Wildlife Report will come out this week, it will be open to public comment. Rod asked Torston to pass on any information as he is notified.

ADJOURN:
A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Stephanie Sung, seconded by Jerry Harcek, and carried unanimously.