

**Documents to accompany this report:**

Meeting Agenda

Scott Gilmore's Presentation

W Bart Berger Letter re end of the Red Rocks Working Group dated March 24, 2016

Susan Baird's letter (read by Friends of Red Rocks) dated June 22, 2016

Sally White's letter (read by Fran Coleman) dated June 28, 2016

Wellington Webb's Letter dated March 3, 2016

**Comment on the Notes:**

I am preparing this report for INC PARC since I have been that group's representative to the Red Rocks Working Group. These notes address only the first part of the Committee's meeting, concerning the Red Rocks parcel designation. I left after that discussion. The observations are from my notes and any errors are mine. I have refrained from comment, except:

- to address an inaccuracy of statements regarding the Red Rocks Working Group (now disbanded), of which I was a part.
- to mention the context in which the Hancock Administration undertook the process of inventorying and designating the numerous park properties acquired since 1955

**Meeting Summary:**

I sat in a row with Jay Rust, Cindy Johnstone, and Maria Flora, all representing INC. I believe that I observed Fred Weiss in the room, along with the Arts & Venues, Parks & Rec, and City Attorney staff whom I note below as direct participants. There were a number of members of Friends of Red Rocks (FORR) present as well, several of whom spoke during public comment. I didn't make an effort to count or to identify all of the people in the room.

Paul Kashmann called the meeting to order. Council Committee members in attendance were Paul Kashmann, Kendra Black, Kevin Flynn, and Rafael Espinoza. Following Public Comment, Parks and Recreation Presentation, and Council Q&A, the proposed ordinance to designate the 98-acre Bradley parcel as part of Red Rocks Park was unanimously referred to full Council.

**Public Comment** regarding the Red Rocks parcel designation was first.

- First speaker was a woman who is a member of the Friends of Red Rocks board. I did not catch her name. She, and all of the members of FORR, opened with a thank you to the city - A&V, DPR - for designating the Bradley parcel. She then read the letter from Susan Baird (attached).
- Mike Ballard, member of FORR Board. He gave a statement reminding the city of the role FORR played in the acquisition of all four parcels and their desire to have them preserved as part of the park. Mike also spoke about Jeffco Open Space and Parks and their role.

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- Jeffco Parks employee whose name I did not catch. He said he was happy to see the 98 acres designated and wondered how much effort it may have taken to make it happen. He didn't mention designating the other parcels.
- Fran Coleman, resident of Denver and member of PRAB. Fran read the letter from Sally White (attached).
- Melinda Yeary, founding member of FORR. She mentioned how privileged we are to have Red Rocks, including Dinosaur Ridge. She supports designation of the Bradley parcel, along with the other 3 adjoining parcels that were acquired at the same time. Melinda quoted Wellington Webb, and she cited the National Historic Landmark status of Red Rocks.
- Fabby Hillyard, who was part of Theaters & Arenas (now Arts & Venues) during the Webb Administration and was a key player in the acquisition process. She emphasized that she was also a key player in the development of what she called the "business center" (meaning, I believe, the Visitor's Center above the amphitheater which includes the underground museum and restaurant). She stated that she considers the protections already provided by the city concerning transparency and engagement to be adequate to protect the parcels. She asserted that A&V needs flexibility for the amphitheater and cited business needs.
- W. Bart Berger, head and co-founder of the Denver Mountain Parks Foundation. He emphasized what he called the "diversity of activity" at Red Rocks and emphasized it includes Park and Business. He asserted that "not all dirt needs to be park," and that Red Rocks needs to be "vibrant, safe, and profitable." W Bart said that there is no need to fear strip malls or a car wash going into the undesignated parcels, but he wants them left to Arts and Venues to operate.

**Parks and Recreation Presentation.** Happy Haynes spoke first. She profusely thanked Arts and Venues for their generosity and assistance. She asserted that Parks and Recreation's process with regard to Red Rocks has been "deliberate and intentional." She cited the Red Rocks Working Group as an ongoing process (we original members have been told that the process was complete and the group disbanded - letter attached). She also cited the Designations Committee. She spoke at length about the CCC camp and finding ways to preserve it and make it an attraction. She mentioned plans to "activate the mountain parks."

Scott Gilmore gave the main presentation (attached). He introduced Yolanda Quesada as the Marketing & Communications Manager. She did not present or speak during the meeting. He mentioned that a number of people who had been involved in the Red Rocks Working Group were present, but he only chose to mention the names of Brad Eckert, the DPR Mountain Parks Planner, and Tad Bowman, the Arts & Venues manager of Red Rocks Amphitheater. Scott said that DPR "had to get A&V support." He announced that 5280 Magazine has published an article that shows how wonderful the Denver Parks system is and asked Yolanda to distribute complimentary copies to the Council members present.

Scott said that he had to amend his usual designations talk to address unique specifics of Red Rocks. The beginning of the presentation gives background and talks about the Designations effort that began in 2013 and has resulted in 850 acres of parkland "designated by ordinance," without explaining why this effort was initiated. (It was

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initiated to effectively close the legal loophole created by the Hancock Administration when it traded parkland from Hentzell Park to DPS for a building downtown without a vote of the citizens; this precedent affected the hundreds of acres of unprotected - i.e. “undesigned” by ordinance - parks throughout the city.) He stressed how much effort has been required to complete all of these designations and mentioned difficulties such as ensuring that no non-park uses have already been planned and that there are no encumbrances of the city’s ownership for each candidate parcel.

Regarding the Red Rocks designation, Scott described a process of working with Tad Bowman, together walking the Bradley parcel (98 acre candidate for designation) and deciding that “they could use this one.” Scott emphasized that only through the generosity of Arts and Venues is this designation happening.

Scott then made a lot of statements about the plans for the Mountain Parks. He said that “the Working Group came up with a plan” and proceeded to describe a plan to update the Master Plan for the entire Mountain Park system and include a chapter specific to Red Rocks.

*Note: Since I was a member of the Working Group and present at both of its two meetings before it was disbanded, I can attest to what took place at those meetings. The plan Scott described was presented to the Working Group by Brad Eckert at its second (and final) meeting. The city brought a third party moderator, Mr. Effley Brooks, who ran the meeting. After Brad Eckert presented the city’s plan, we were offered the opportunity to comment in the form of “pros and cons” which were recorded on a large white tablet. Suggestions that did not pertain specifically to the plan presented were not allowed. Since the city’s proposal did **not** include designating the entire park a Denver Landmark Historic District and it did **not** include “designating by ordinance” the four parcels, we were not allowed to discuss these proposals, favored by FORR and of interest to INC PARC. So I must dispute the statements made by Happy Haynes and Scott Gilmore that the Working Group is ongoing and that it was given a role in determining plans for Red Rocks Park.*

Scott proceeded to discuss the 3 parcels that are not being considered for designation and gave reasons not to include them. The 5th slide of his presentation includes the following noteworthy bullets:

- *Red Rocks Park Addition*
  - *Approximately 98 acres added to Red Rocks will become designated*
  - *This will complete the designation of the Mountain Park System*

Scott stated that one of the remaining 3 parcels has a life estate and another is “too hard” to reach. However, he brought up the Colorado Music Hall of Fame and stated that parcel 3 may be suitable for it. A statement was made (I believe by Fabby Hillyard, though my notes don’t say so) that the land was acquired by Theaters & Arenas (now Arts & Venues) during the Webb Administration to allow them (A&V) to do “what they need.”

**Council Questions and Discussion.** At this point Council members asked questions. The time was limited, and my notes are not inclusive. Those with detailed interest will undoubtedly be better served to watch the recorded meeting.

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### General observations:

- Only Kevin Flynn and Rafael Espinoza asked questions.
- Kevin Flynn mentioned that he had a long list of questions that he would submit by email. It would be of interest to obtain that correspondence from Council Member Flynn.
- The matter was referred to Full Council unanimously by the 4 members present.

### Specific discussion items that I noted:

- The matter of whether the existence of a Life Estate would preclude designation by ordinance, since the ownership would revert upon the estate holder's death, was discussed. Mr. Broadwell of the City Attorney's office was present, but stated that he was not directly involved in this area and could not speak to it with authority.
- The point was made that the Bradley parcel was acquired in a swap for land on Table Mountain.
- The point was made that the intent was to preserve the valley. I believe that the letter from Wellington Webb (March 3) urging designation of all 4 parcels was mentioned.
- The question was raised as to what can be done on "undesignated" vs. "designated" parcels. Scott said that designated or not, the land must be used for a "park purpose." So is the only goal of designation to prevent sale without a vote of the people?
- Does A&V have plans for these parcels? Tad Bowman said no plans at this time other than overflow parking.
- Council Member Espinoza asked for confirmation that the Director of Parks & Rec has zoning authority over parks and could choose to do something with the parcels. Scott said that Parks defers to Arts & Venues for these parcels.
- Espinoza noted that the access to these areas is limited and includes Dinosaur Ridge area (which is protected from vehicle access). He said that many would prefer to see the Colorado Music Hall of Fame placed somewhere more accessible to families, school trips, transit, etc. Scott said that the CMHOF is "temporarily" housed in the Trading Post and that parcel 3 "leaves open opportunities."