



# ***National Western Center Citizens Advisory Committee***

**Thursday, February 25, 2016 – Meeting Summary**

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## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Terrance Carroll began the meeting with a brief introduction. All members introduced themselves and stated their affiliation before the meeting began.

## **2. NWC Partner Updates**

Paul Andrews gave an update on the National Western Stock Show Association. He explained there were over 686,000 visitors at the stock show in January, which was the second highest attendance in its history. It was also the highest earning stock show the NWC has ever held. Additionally, the Hispanic population was the demographic with the highest attendance, particularly on the two Bronco Sundays and at the rodeo event. The NWSSA also held four events geared toward funding its scholarship trust. The scholarship trust events included the Citizen of the West dinner, the Junior Livestock auction, Coors Western Art Show, and the Boots and Business Luncheon, which raised over \$400,000 that will be awarded in scholarships to more than 80 students seeking an education in agriculture, and rural medicine in Wyoming and Colorado.

Andrews explained the NWSS is in the process of closing on the property off the corner of 51<sup>st</sup> and Brighton Blvd. That property will temporarily be used for parking before it is utilized as part of the GES neighborhood plans. The NWSS has also closed and settled with RTD and on site rail construction will begin in the near future. Andrews also reaffirmed his commitment to prevent any new development by the marijuana industry in the area around the NWC site, which is also an issue currently being examined by the Denver City Council more broadly. He then informed CAC members that the NWSS has begun efforts to raise the final \$50 million out of a total \$125 million it has pledged to NWC redevelopment. One hurdle the NWSS faces moving forward is the process for awarding naming rights to certain aspects of the NWC which requires a great deal of time and consideration.

### Questions and Comments

- AE voiced her support for the NWSS and the thoughtful process for awarding naming rights to a company that represents the positive ideals of the NWC. She explained how important it will be to select an organization that recognizes and reflects the ideals of rural and agricultural industries of the state.

## **3. Community Representative Reports**

Drew Dutcher updated members on the most recent Executive Oversight Committee meeting. He also explained that a subcommittee of residents will be meeting once a month to collect ideas and share information on the

NWC and the interim governing committees. Dutcher also informed attendees the EOC had a day-long retreat at the Mayor's mansion where the large scope of the NWC project was put into perspective. He added that he is available to speak anytime with individuals who are interested in the EOC.

Armando Payan discussed the Capital Funding Alignment Subcommittee. He informed CAC members the CFAS was unable to meet the month prior and that its Chair, Cary Kennedy is in a process of transitioning roles with the city.

The Events Programming Advisory Subcommittee update was given by AE. She explained two prior meetings for the EPAS had to be cancelled due to scheduling conflicts. AE also expressed her concern the EPAS is not receiving adequate input required to create soft programming for events in the near future, before ground is broken on the NWC site. She noted that the EPAS is working on several great ideas with partners like CSU on their sustainability/regeneration efforts, however she would like to see more input from the community (e.g. parents, teachers, students, residents). She encouraged involvement and announced she is able to speak with individuals who are interested in getting more involved or have some ideas they would like to share in regard to events programming. AE also invited CAC members to attend the March 19<sup>th</sup> Warm Cookies of the Revolution's Stompin' Ground Games at the Swansea Park Rec Center.

Kelly Leid reviewed the public meeting schedule. He explained the NWC website is 100% up to date and explained the schedule is being updated on a weekly basis to ensure all information on upcoming events is accurate. He also explained that a work plan for the year of 2016 was presented during the event at the Mayor's mansion on February 19<sup>th</sup>. The work plan will solve issues with scheduling conflicts between committees and subcommittees. At the March CAC meeting, members will be presented with a proposed schedule of content for all meetings covering a broad range of topics. The schedule is a work in progress and Leid noted he would seek CAC member feedback in order to ensure specific topics are allotted an appropriate amount of time for discussion at their respective meetings.

#### Questions and Comments

- AE stated she was disappointed in the lack of communication and involvement between the EOC and the three other subcommittees. She felt each of the committees should work more closely together to ensure adequate cohesion. Kelly responded he is open to more communication between the EOC and the three subcommittees however the retreat on Feb 19<sup>th</sup> was specifically for the EOC and that the subcommittees did have some representation at the event.

## **4. NWC Project Updates**

Environmental Project Manager for the NDCC, Celia Vanderloop, presented the Site Environmental Assessment Update. She explained the motive behind conducting the environmental assessment was to determine whether there are any human health concerns and also to improve the environmental redevelopment planning and cost estimations. She also noted that because the site is in a historically industrial area, there might be significant costs to the land remediation process. The NDCC researched the entire NWC site and conducted a records review process to determine what sort of activity occurred there years prior. The general area of the NWC site served industrial purposes for over 100 years, which means there will likely be a residual that must be addressed prior to NWC construction. In the investigation process, the NDCC examined insurance records, aerial photos, historical phone books, interviewed site managers and conducted in-field investigations.

For the in-field investigations, the NDCC set up monitoring wells to gather data on groundwater and potential soil contamination. The results from the soil analysis showed the majority of the soil on the NWC site had very low, safe levels of contamination as was expected. Vanderloop showed a map of the site with a few yellow areas that had slightly higher levels of contamination. The contamination in those areas is higher than

residential regulations allow but still below the level prohibited by contamination regulations for industrial areas. There was one small spot on the map marked in red in which contaminant levels tested higher than what industrial regulations allow. Vanderloop also explained the data collected in the early sampling process covered a large area and moving forward, the NDCC will do more localized sampling in order to capture a more accurate picture NWC site contamination.

In addition to the soil testing process, the NDCC implemented ground investigations to determine where past buildings may have stood and conducted tests to determine whether the old sites contained hazardous materials. For this portion of the investigation, tests were only done in areas where the NDCC found buried debris. Vanderloop informed the CAC that no asbestos had been found the ground where any old buildings used to stand. She also explained that although determining the contamination levels of debris is important, the investigation of debris serves more as an informing factor in the building/construction process.

Vanderloop informed the CAC that the groundwater study did uncover some issues. Tests on the groundwater found varying levels of Perchloroethylene, a carcinogenic substance used in dry cleaning. Further investigation showed the groundwater contamination came from an off-site source before entering the groundwater and flowing through the site. The greatest concern after finding the contamination was whether any people had been drinking contaminated water, however the NDCC found no evidence to suggest that was the case. Vanderloop then showed CAC members a map, which showed areas where drinking water was found to be safe based on nitrate levels, and where it had contamination levels that exceeded the regulatory limit for drinking but fell below the limit for agricultural use.

One area of particular interest was atmospheric and soil water vapors. In instances of ground contamination, there is the risk of contaminants exiting the soil through evaporation and entering the atmosphere or buildings atop contaminated soil. In its initial tests, the NDCC found the levels of vapor captured in their monitoring wells were low and of no concern. In order to be thorough, the NDCC doubled its efforts to capture soil water vapors and again found no risky contamination levels. Additionally, the NDCC wanted to be sure methane migration was not occurring on site. In the investigation, three locations on site were found to have varying levels of methane. One spot in particular revealed a natural gas leak to which Excel Energy was notified and promptly fixed. Another one of the methane contamination leak sites was owned by Denver Public Schools and after being notified, they installed a ventilation system that effectively reduced atmospheric contamination and migration.

Deputy Chief Financial Officer of Denver, Gretchen Hollrah presented on the NWC Economic Study Scope. She explained the economic study is in its initial stages and will continue to be developed over time. The purpose of the study will be to ensure the NWC site is as economically viable as possible. Hollrah noted her team had formed a Technical Advisory Committee, which will produce a series of technical memos that will be relayed back to the CAC for comment. She added the economic study will play off of the study conducted by CSU which she passed around and encouraged all members to read for its informative value especially in regard to the agricultural industry in Colorado. While CSU's study puts a major focus on the educational aspects of the NWC, the economic study will seek to explore industry growth based around the NWC.

Chris Brewer, an economist with experience in real estate consulting came to assist Hollrah in her presentation. His expertise is in evaluating how land use changes over time and what hurdles there may be to the transition processes similar to the one the NWC site will undergo. Brewer explained the economic study will have a core emphasis on key industries within the state as well as the sort of competition the Denver, and Colorado in general face. Moving into the next 5-10 years, the study will seek to determine which sectors become the strongest and the sort of role they play in the state economy. One major goal for the NWC is that it acts as a forum where creative and business oriented minds can meet and interact and the study will explore how to drive the sort of traffic on site that is conducive to collaboration.

## Questions and Comments

- Lilliana Amaro Flores asked what the difference was between levels of ground contamination considered safe for residential areas versus levels of contamination in industrial areas. Celia Vanderloop explained the contamination regulations are federally mandated and are based on a risk analysis of how varying levels of contamination may affect health. In residential areas, ground contamination may not exceed 400 parts per million (ppm) while industrial areas may not exceed 800 ppm.
- Mickey Zeppelin asked whether the NDCC environmental investigation involved floodwaters in the area. Celia Vanderloop explained that in the investigation, no direct tests were taken however they had examined flooding models north of the highway and how it will be affected by various projects. However, the quality of floodwaters had not been tested.
- Mickey Zeppelin noted the high levels of contamination in Heron Pond and asked whether the city had made any efforts to resolve the issue. Vanderloop explained the city has been made aware of the contamination and is exploring how to resolve the issue.
- John Zapien asked how soil would be dealt with if future tests show it is highly contaminated in some areas. Vanderloop responded that it would be taken off site.
- Several neighborhood members expressed interest in the economic study. One recurring concern was that the study adequately explores the several avenues available to ensure NWC attracts visitors from both in state and out of state and that it incorporates businesses from the surrounding community as well.

## **5. CAC Organizational Issues**

CAC attendees were each given a copy of the proposed membership policy drafted by Liz Adams. It was explained that the draft is not a final product, but serves as a preliminary guide for membership policy. Some of the major points on the draft include membership criteria that includes limitations based on geographic representation as well as business/organization representation. The proposal also stipulates incoming members must attend at least two meetings and express interest through a letter of intent prior to their induction, after which the CAC will approve or deny the interested individual by popular vote. After a brief discussion on the membership process, the CAC voted unanimously induct Candi CdeBaca to the committee. Once Liz Adams has been able to meet with each of the CAC members individually, she will expand the scope of the policy draft presented Feb 25<sup>th</sup>.

## Questions and Comments

- Maria Garcia Berry suggested members be given a maximum of 3 consecutive absences. After which, they will receive a formal notice of inquiry as to whether they would like to remain a part of the committee. She also suggested the vacancy on the CAC should be advertised more aggressively in order to spread the word more effectively and attract the most qualified pool of applicants.
- Anne Hayes suggested the membership policy document include a clause stating the need for a balance of residents to businesses in order to help frame expectations for prospective members.
- AE stated she felt it was premature to begin making decisions about the process of adding or removing members from the CAC. She felt that topic should be postponed until members are able to define more clearly some of the other logistics of the committee.
- Lilliana Amaro Flores suggested the committee gather information about the different strengths of members in order to determine what sort of qualities it is perhaps lacking. That information can then be used to determine whether new members should be added and what sort of skills the committee may be looking for.

## 6. NDCC Updates

Barb Frommell gave a brief update on the historic preservation work. She notified attendees the landmark designation application for the Stadium Arena had been submitted. It can be found online for public review at [www.denvergov.org](http://www.denvergov.org). Additionally, the public hearing for the Stadium Arena will be held on Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 1pm in the Webb Municipal Building. She encouraged as much CAC attendance as possible and informed members she would reach out to them individually requesting letters of support to present to the Landmark Preservation Commission in addition to the grant application with the State Historical Fund.

Kelly Leid brought the CAC up to speed on the remaining NDCC updates. He reminded members RTD is opening new commuter rail lines. The A-line, the first of three new rail lines, will run from Denver to DIA and is on schedule to open in April. Additionally, construction is set to begin on Brighton Blvd in the near future. Leid also explained that efforts were underway to find his replacement at the NDCC. A team operating under Mayor Hancock and his Chief of Staff is currently exploring replacement options.

## 7. Open Discussion, Announcements & Public Comments

Armando Payan thanked everyone for their participation in the fundraiser the prior Tuesday, which raised over \$40,000. He highlighted the fact that the fundraiser demonstrated the involvement and commitment by the community to make a difference. Nola Miguel gave a brief update on the hearing for Starbuds Dispensary on the corner of Brighton Blvd and 47<sup>th</sup> St. The Hearing will be held on March 23 at 6pm. She explained she would request signatures from residents within five blocks of the dispensary to prevent the grow center for the dispensary from being allowed at that location. Lilliana Amaro Flores extended an invitation to all members for the annual Growhaus Seed Swap, which will be held on March 12<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 7 pm.

## 8. Attendance

Maria Garcia Berry (Co Facilitator)  
Terrance Carroll (Co-Facilitator)  
AE (Globeville)  
Liliana Flores Amaro (Swansea)  
Carrie Atiyeh (VISIT Denver)  
Albus Brooks (Denver Councilman)  
Candi CdeBaca (Swansea)  
Drew Dutcher (Elyria-Swansea)  
Jim Garcia (Clinica Tepeyac)  
Coby Gould (Growhaus)  
Nancy Grandby (Globeville)  
Anne Hayes (Westfield)  
Vernon Hill (JJJ Properties)  
Kelly Leid (NDCC)  
Heather Lafferty (Habitat)  
Nola Miguel (Focus Points)  
Linda Morrison (Ambient Energy)  
Armando Payan (Globeville)  
Eric Shafran (NDCC)  
David Oletski (GCA)  
Juan Veloz (Elyria-Swansea)  
John Zapien (Globeville)  
Mickey Zeppelin (TAXI)



