

**FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS FOR CHEESMAN PARK (FANS For CP)**  
**ANNUAL MEETING**  
**Tuesday, December 8, 2015 - 5:30- 6:30 p.m.**  
**Embassy House - 1250 Humboldt Street**

**Officers Present:** Jay Rust, President; Greg Sorensen, Vice President; Paula Kauffman, Treasurer; Kathleen Rust, Secretary; and Judy Bedford, Director-At-Large

**Members Present:** Shelia Bisenius, Steve Lang, Kent and Leslie Miller, Joe Megeath, Cliff Marks, Doug Brenton, Tom Morris, Nikki Knapp, Don Bain, Michael Henry, Constance Mortell, Linda Good Wilson, Barbara Deeter

**Guests:**

Snow White, Community Resource Officer for District 6 Denver Police Department  
Sonia John, FANS of Washington Park

**President Jay Rust** called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**Judy Bedford** introduced the members of the Board and shared the Mission Statement of the organization.

**Paula Kauffman introduced Officer Snow White from District 6 Police Dept.**

Officer White announced to the group that Commander Lopez's son, Tony Lopez, Jr., had been shot today during a routine traffic stop. He sustained multiple gunshots and was in critical condition. Fortunately he was not shot in the head and he was wearing his safety vest. We are sending out best wishes for a speedy recovery to Officer Lopez Junior.

Officer White shared a detailed chart that included Crime Statistics from January 1 through November 30, 2015 for the FANS Neighborhood (Colfax to 6<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> Ave and York/Josephine to Marion Street). Crimes against Persons showed an 18.5% increase over 2014. Crimes against Property showed a 9.2% increase. Crimes against Society showed a 26% increase. All other offenses showed a decrease of 15%. She noted that homeless issues are a huge problem throughout the city. Homeless people are being given a one-way bus ticket to Denver from other cities. She noted that incoming homeless persons have not been as friendly. Community Outreach Officers are available for assistance.

**Greg Sorensen introduced Sonia John from FANS for Washington Park.**

Sonia spoke about concerns with the use of recycled water in parks. She reported that Washington Park and others, including City Park, Schafer, Swansea, as well as the Denver Country Club, have been using recycled water for the past 11 years. Cheesman has been using recycled water for the past two years.

Sonia has conducted research for the past 11 years and documented the number and type of all the trees in Washington Park, City Park and Cheesman Park. During that time, in Washington Park as a whole 38% of the mature conifers have been removed, and in the formerly majestic forest there called Evergreen Hill, near Humboldt and Virginia, 5/8 of the mature conifers have been lost.

Sonia and many others believe the problem is due to higher levels of sodium in the recycled water that build up in the soil and are absorbed by the trees. Conifer trees have needles and are green year round and thus absorb more sodium than other trees. She suspects that Linden trees (such as those found in the Cheesman allée of Linden on the west side) and other deciduous species may also suffer similar damage but that it will take longer to show up.

Denver Water prepared four consultant reports on recycled water in 2004 and 2010. Those reports show that Denver Water knew there would be a problem with the use of recycled water use due to it having higher concentrations of sodium, which is partly caused by the use of lye (sodium hydroxide) in the recycling process. Denver Water also claims that a major source of sodium comes from powdered laundry detergents.

Cheesman had 550 conifers in 2005. During the last 10 years, 41 have been lost. We have a total tree loss rate of 7.5%. Wash Park has had a total tree loss rate of 38% and City Park has had a loss rate of 19%. Cheesman has Legacy conifer tree clusters like Wash Park, which ultimately will have some loss issues unless changes are made to irrigation practices. It may be too late for Wash Park but Cheesman needs to do something NOW.

The use of recycled water was presented to the City as a “win-win” project. Denver Parks and Recreation got cheaper water rates and Denver Water had more potable water to use for new clients. Denver Water charges Parks 25% to 30% of what potable water costs. **The big hidden losers are the trees in the public domain and the citizens and the environment that benefit from those trees.**

What has Parks and Recreation done about this concern? Sonia feels they have been denying the problem by saying the increased salt content of the recycled water is only one of many things causing the major loss of trees such as weather, drought, fungus, insects, viruses, bacteria, and age. Parks ignored that all those other factors affect all Denver parks more or less equally, but it’s only the parks using recycled water that have the inordinate loss of conifers. Parks has also ignored Denver Water’s recommendations from 2004 and 2010 that specific remediation measures be implemented to counteract the negative impact of the sodium in the recycled water.

What can be done to address this irreplaceable loss and keep it from expanding? The park soils can be flushed with potable (low-sodium) water. The process to recycle the water can be upgraded to remove more of the sodium content. Different

chemicals can be added to the recycled water or the soil to counteract the effects of the sodium. Why hasn't any of this been explored or done? COST! Who pays for it? Denver Water wants Parks and other users to pay for it.

The Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC) has been able to get Parks to agree to convene a task force comprised of representatives from Parks, Forestry, Denver Water, INC, the Parks and Rec. Advisory Board, City Council and others to talk about the issues and how to resolve them. Denver Media has also recently interviewed Sonia and Cindy Johnstone, President of FANS of Wash Park. Please stay tuned for more information on this very important topic for the sake of Cheesman and all the other Parks and open green spaces throughout the City.

### **Greg Sorensen, Cheesman Rose Bed Volunteer**

Greg reported about the volunteer program for the roses. He said 24 volunteers help to support the Parks Dept. by working two to three hours a week dead heading and weeding each of the rose beds on both sides of the pavilion. **Linda Good Wilson, Rose Bed Volunteer Co-Coordinator**, mentioned the program this past summer was very successful in spite of the three rounds of hail, which stripped the roses, and the persistence of the Japanese beetle invasion. The rose beds were gorgeous in September and October. A big thank you goes to all the volunteers every year.

**Kathleen Rust** thanked the Kathleen Reginelli and Amber Fries families for maintaining the two planters on the west side of the park at the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue entrances. Each year they plant the urns, weed them throughout the summer and remove plants in the fall for winter preparation. Great job! The urns were beautiful again this year.

### **Election of FANS Officers**

Nominations were taken from the floor. *Leslie Miller made a motion to retain all the current Board Members from last year. Kent Miller seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion passed unanimously by the members present.*

Following questions and comments by those in attendance, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.