

Minutes of the April 5, 2023 Ice Park Advisory Team

The Ice Park Advisory Team held its regular spring meeting on April 5, attended by Marcus Bailado, Tres Barbatelli, Kitty Calhoun (by phone), Silas Clarke, Tim Foulkes, Dawn Glanc, Tamara Gulde, Grant Kleeves, Bill Leo, Dolgio Nergui, Peter O'Neil (by phone), Frank Robertson, and Bayley Wood (by phone). Angela Hawse and Micah Lewkowicz let us know they were out amongst it and could not attend.

Agenda:

New Member	
Updates at season's end	Tres and Peter
Rec User Fee Working Group report	John
Management Agreement progress	Frank
Feedback on the season	All

Tres Barbatelli is our new IPAT At-large member. He will not be on staff next season, and so with the close of this season can participate formally as not an OIPI employee. We are very pleased to bring his extensive Park field experience to bear on our conversation.

Peter, Timmy, and Tres gave us a summary of operations and infrastructure progress through the season; more detail will be available in the Post-season Report to be delivered to the City by May 15.

The Park closed April 2 with 68 anchors open, after 100 days that saw the greatest amount of terrain ever available: 220 anchors during the prime season, up from 120-130 typical a few years back. The Farmers made the most of cold temps and plenty of water early on to carry lots of fat ice through a bunch of warm days and even rain.

Jacob provided a few key metrics ahead of the report, showing that the season came in close to last year in terms of total User visits, with a return to more typical Institutional Use, close to 6%, and far less crowding with all the new capacity. We are waiting on guide service reports to see how Commercial Use came in, but it looks likely close to last year as well – everyone got as much as they requested. We will examine use significantly under allocation for likely redirect to those using theirs for next season, and will reapportion the 25% non-recreational use at 17% Commercial / 8% Institutional going forward.

We celebrated a great season with a locals appreciation pizza party, courtesy Chad Jukes, who cranked out 40 or so delectable creations with his propane oven by the Chalet. We hope Staff work to bring the locals email distribution up to snuff was effective – please let us know if we missed anyone.

Close-out activities are in full swing – benches going back to Box Canyon, removing seasonal signage, ladders up from the gorge, etc., and the tower set to come down mid-April. Dawn's concern about ice covering rock-bedded rungs will be addressed with Chris Haaland (the installations were diligently engineered).

We lost power from the hydro plant, likely from an underground short, just before Fest and greatly appreciate John Hulburd's generator to get us through the season. We'll be pulling power from the pole by the Rescue Barn until we work out the permanent hook-up between San Miguel Power and the City's new water plant above the Kids Wall. That work will begin shortly and get to a state for normal Park operations before next season.

Ice Farmer Jason Watkins, a licensed electrician, took the opportunity to bring the Powder House up to code, and it's all looking so bright and orderly – thanks, Jason!

Peter reported that we have raised about \$1.1M of the anticipated \$1.4M for the Our Water Our Future capital campaign, and asked for help in identifying folks with the means and inclination for him to contact and take us home on the water project fundraising. Our environmental study led us to a State historical review, and will get back to laying pipe after the ground thaws. We are waiting for our transformer to power the pump and for Army Corps of Engineers approval to dig the wet well, likely this fall (thanks for bird-dogging that effort, to both Todd Jesse and Silas). We will probably still need to run off the City's overflow next season.

Peter also reported that we are bringing on a water engineer to tune up the new distribution system for pumped operation (*pro bono!*), building on initial design and engineering provided by Brian Briggs and Ouray Silver Mines, Inc.. A drone will be mapping the terrain for this purpose, and we will advise the Ouray Via Ferrata when it is scheduled. We are officially moving on from the days of cowboy ice farming...

We also covered another high-resolution data collection day, where Jacob and Frank staked out the Schoolroom on Saturday of Presidents Day weekend to count everyone in and out. The preliminary results from Jacob differed from the same big-weekend study two years back in South Park, in that the sum of the Ranger sample counts was not quite as close to the actual number present (there were more individuals through than the snapshots indicated), perhaps because of a flatter use pattern (maybe because less capacity in the Schoolroom drives folks to move on and not camp out for the day, vs. South Park with its pronounced, long peak occupancy). We will have more analysis and plan future data-gathering efforts in other areas and on other kinds of days.

Frank provided a brief summary of Working Group discussions. The topic of potentially charging recreational users a fee has been tabled by the agreement between the City and County that precludes such until 2029. While the group will continue that study as homework in case that revenue stream is ever needed, we have identified Park funding sustainability and managing occupancy against capacity as higher-level topics for continued discussion. The WG will report results of its study to the IPAT for further discussion and possible recommendations to City Council and the OIPI Board.

Frank gave an update on work between the City and OIPI on the new Management Agreement, which is on track for execution before the end of May. Frank and Silas are working on how to address a timing issue between the 5-year initial term of the new agreement and the schedule for an agreement with the County that figures as contingency for an automatic 5-year extension of our agreement. If a work session is scheduled by the City to close on any issues, we will make sure the work gets out and if not, we anticipate Council to formally address approval at the May 15 meeting. OIPI's May 17 Board meeting will include this item on the agenda and be open to the public (notice to be properly posted).

Inputs reflecting on the season included encouraging members to serve as stewards of the Park through role modeling adherence to the rules; providing privacy-shielded areas in the gorge for nature calls; beefing up fencing along sections of trail with big edge exposure; considering alternatives to the historic name of that north-end wall; featuring avalanche awareness for ice climbers next season (Dawn volunteered Pat for a fireside chat or evening program at Fest); beautifying the area around the Memorial or possibly moving it to a site more conducive to reflection and peaceful gathering.

The next IPAT meeting is August 2.