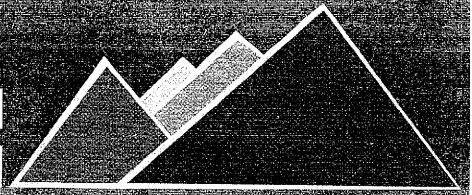


GLENDALE CHERRY CREEK CHRONICLE



From LoDo to the Dam

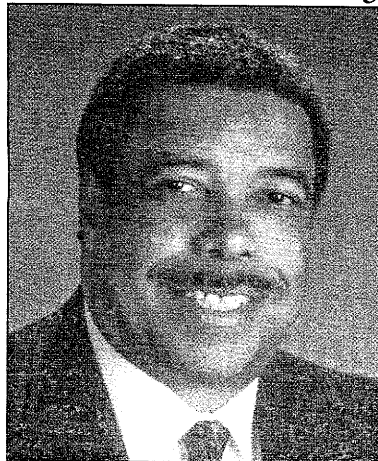
THE VOICE OF THE CHERRY CREEK VALLEY —

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Mayor Hancock Begins His Assault On Parks Advocates *Former Councilwoman Thrown Out of Key Parks Meeting — City Boards Cleansed Of Pro Park Members*



Blow To Hancock: Popular former Denver Mayor Wellington Webb has joined and contributed to Friends of Denver Parks which is suing the city to prevent the trading away of park land for development.

by Keith Thompson
Denver Mayor Michael Hancock has been bedeviled by citizens who are protesting his administration's commercialization and giveaway of Denver parks and open space, including protesters who have shown up at public appearances of the mayor and members of his cabinet.

Moreover, there has been increasing media coverage of his actions regarding parks and open space to his administration's ire. *Westword's* front page story for its December 31 edition was titled "Parks and Wreck — In Mayor Hancock's world-class city, everyone matters — except park lovers," written by Allen Pendergast. The story blasts Hancock's commercialization of the city's parks and the giving away for development of a portion of *Hentzell Park*.

Former Mayor Contributes

Park advocates are also gaining important allies in their fight against the powerful Denver mayor. Wellington Webb, the popular former mayor of Denver, and his wife Wilma recently joined *Friends of Denver*

Parks, the group that is fighting for Hentzell Park, and is the plaintiff in a lawsuit against the city. Reportedly the couple also made a generous financial contribution to the non-profit group.

Webb wrote to the group, "I believe in the protection of Denver parks within the city and in the mountains. I do not support the use of park space for development."

He added, "I believe we should maintain what we have and acquire additional park space for future generations."

The fact that Webb, who was Denver's first African American mayor, supports Hancock's opponents in the Hentzell Park fight was a serious blow to Hancock's pride and his standing in the African American community, according to insiders.

Hancock Publicity Campaign

In response Hancock has gone on a public relations campaign to bolster his deteriorating public image while privately retaliating against any and all parks advocates that hold positions on boards and commis-

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Kicked To The Curb: Former Denver City Councilwoman Cathy Donohue was thrown out of a city run park meeting when she asked a question about how certain Denver parks were being used. Never in her long and storied career in Denver had she ever been thrown out of a meeting.

Will Glendale Become A Retail Marijuana Mecca?

by Mark Smiley

with a 3.5 percent additional sales tax but

Hancock Begins Assault On Parks Advocates

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sions within the City and County of Denver.

In December the mayor's office announced that Hancock was forming a new group to be titled "Mayors for Parks" with Fort Worth's Mayor Betsy Price to purportedly advocate for more federal funding for municipal parks. He wrote in an article in the *Denver Business Journal*:

"Preserving and expanding our green, open spaces in Denver is not only smart, it is critical to the future success of our city."

Parks advocates in Denver found the mayor's transparent public relations attempt to be somewhat disingenuous if not dishonest. Jamie Johnson ruefully noted, "He is nothing more than a world class hypocrite. While forming groups for concepts he apparently doesn't believe in, why doesn't he get together with former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani and start 'Mayors for Marital Fidelity.' It is not what you say in public it is what you do behind closed doors that counts."

Parks advocate Dave Felice was equally blunt, "Frankly, I think this mayor is intent on destroying the parks."

Hardball Or Dirty Politics?

While the mayor is publicly trying to soften his anti-park public image, his administration is purging all boards and commission of any and all parks advocates according to insiders. In addition they charge the administration is brutally attempting to publicly silence any critics including former City Council members.

Former City Councilwoman Cathy Donohue was invited by a friend to attend a stakeholders meeting regarding the leasing out of city parks to commercial groups and was shocked to find out that there were almost no parks advocates but simply city officials and commercial groups in attendance as well as City Councilwoman Jeanne Robb.

During the initial portion of the meeting Donohue raised a question concerning how some of the parks were being utilized. At a break the meeting facilitator hired by the city came over and demanded she leave.

"I have attended literally hundreds if not thousands of meetings over my time in Denver and I have never ever been thrown out of a meeting. The Hancock administration is trying to silence anyone and everyone that does not agree with its parks agenda. It is truly shocking."

The *Denver Parks and Recreation Advisory Board* had voted 11 to 6 against Hancock's plan to develop part of Hentzell Park. Since then Hancock has sought to kick all of the individuals off the board who voted against him and replace them with city employees and individuals associated with real estate lobbyists.

Quid Pro Quo?

Mary Ewing had been on the Board since the mid-1990s and was considered one of the top parks advocates. She offered the resolution to deny the giveaway of a portion of Hentzell Park which carried the day. She got a call from Councilwoman Jeanne Robb asking to meet for lunch. Each of the 13 council members appoint one member of the 19 person board with the mayor appointing five and the *Denver Public Schools* having one representative.

Ewing was thrilled thinking Ms. Robb was finally going to praise her for all the years of hard work she had put in without pay serving on the Board as the representative of District 10 (Robb's District). Instead the councilwoman demanded her immediate resignation saying she "had been on the Board too long" and the councilwoman had to think about her own legacy.

Ewing noted that Mayor Hancock, on January 10, all of a sudden announced that he had "found" tens of millions of dollars that could be used to build a recreation center in Robb's District which had been referred by others as Robb's "legacy project."

Heretofore the city had estimated that the \$20 million needed for construction of the recreation center would have to wait until another bond offering to be approved by the voters at some indeterminate time in the future.

Robb declared, "I give the mayor's office a lot of credit for figuring out how to do it."

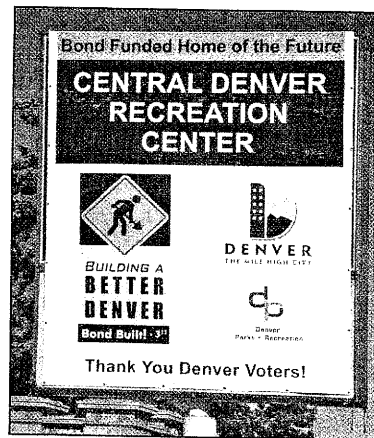
Others were less impressed. One parks advocate noted, "This is Chris Christie type of governance. You do not just find an undiscovered \$20 million in a budget. Everything and everybody is for sale in Denver these days under Hancock."

The last meeting of the Board for Ewing was also the last meeting for her fellow parks advocate and Board member Darrell Watson who also had led the charge against the mayor's development of Hentzell Park land.

Johnson said, "I used to be impressed when someone was appointed to a board or commission in Denver. It is disheartening to realize today if you are appointed it means you are little more than an unqualified lackey of Mayor Hancock and his real estate developer friends. It has become a mark of shame and not of accomplishment. It is not fun to find out how things really work these days in the City and County of Denver. It is so sleazy and dishonest."

Update On Court Proceedings

In the meantime construction has begun on the disputed Hentzell Park land notwithstanding the fact of the legality of using the land goes to trial on May 19, 2014. The Colorado Court of Appeals denied the



The Deal: Councilwoman Robb got funding for a recreation center in her district from Mayor Hancock and fired park advocate Wendy Ewing who had voted against the Mayor on the development of Hentzell Park.

Friends of Denver Parks appeal of the denial of a preliminary injunction by the District Court. The appellate court found that the Denver City Charter had abolished any "common law" dedication of parks in the City and County of Denver.

Interestingly the Jefferson County District Court ruled on January 16, 2014, in the case of *Jefferson County School District v. City of*

Lakewood that there was in fact under Colorado law a common law dedication of parks and a school could not be built on land so dedicated absent a vote of the people.

Attorneys for Friends of Denver Parks have indicated that an appeal of the decision of Colorado Court of Appeals will be lodged with the Colorado Supreme Court.