

PARK CITY MUNICIPAL COMMUNITY NEWS INTERVIEW

CREATING AN ENDURING LEGACY

MYLES RADEMAN, ONE OF THE FOREFATHERS OF MODERN PARK CITY



Park City Municipal Corporation: How long have you worked for the city?

Myles Rademan: I was hired 29 years ago, on Halloween of 1986. I was working in Colorado when Arlene Loble, the city manager at the time, asked me to be the city’s planning director.

PCMC: What did you do when you first arrived?

MR: I subscribe to the 100-day rule: you have about 100 days to change something, and after that you just become part of the problem. I knew that I needed to work quickly and boldly to change the city’s trajectory, so the first thing I tackled was Main Street. Even though it had already been designated a historic district, the street was pretty derelict: vacant lots, boarded-up buildings, litter on the sidewalk. We knew revitalizing the city’s heart would generate momentum, so we made small improvements—like hanging banners—and larger ones like putting in pocket parks. Surprisingly, the biggest fight of my entire career came over hanging flower baskets from the streetlamps.

PCMC: I suspect this was about something larger, as most fights are.

MR: Yes, folks felt the baskets “Disney-fied” the city—that it conflicted with our hardscrabble mining history.

PCMC: How did you respond?

MR: I asked people, “When was the last time you got a check from the mining company?” And anyway, miners like beautiful things, too—they may have liked the hanging baskets themselves. I don’t have a lot of patience for terminal nostalgia: no town can afford to be just a museum. Our town’s cognitive dissonance often impedes our progress and strategic development.

PCMC: After beautifying Main Street, what was another large initiative that you took on?

MR: Looking at a map of the city, I realized the lion’s share of open space was private land, and I also realized that if we were going to protect it we would need to buy it. Working with Toby Ross, who was the city manager at the time, as well as longstanding community member Bob Richer and the City Council, we made our first big purchase: the Osguthorpe Farm (the land on which the big white barn on SR224 sits). Using only city funds, we paid \$5 million for the parcel. In 1992, that was real money. But no one would dispute (then or now) that it was absolutely the right thing to do. And this purchase set the stage for more formal land-preservation mechanisms: the formation of the Citizens Open Space Advisory Committee and the Summit Land Conservancy, as well as floating a series of open space bonds. To-date, we’ve issued over \$40-million in open space bonds, and land preservation remains one of our city’s core values.

“I DON’T HAVE A LOT OF PATIENCE FOR TERMINAL NOSTALGIA.”



PCMC: We can't tell your story without talking about the 2002 Winter Olympics. What is its origin story?

MR: As with any large-scale project, countless people helped shepherd the Olympics to completion, but then-Mayor Brad Olch was the galvanizing force. In 1989—13 years before it finally came to fruition—Brad received a call from two representatives in Salt Lake who wanted to formulate a bid. At first we all thought it was a joke, but the more we considered it, the more we realized it would be a great way to put us on the map. You have to understand that—in this era—Park City was the Rodney Dangerfield of ski resorts (we got no respect), so we knew we needed to do something big to change our perception. Things started slowly, but after 1995 the economy started to pick up, and the idea gained a head of steam. With a lot of hard work and perseverance, we landed the bid. With a lot more hard work, in 2002 we hosted one of the most successful winter games ever.

PCMC: You just completed your 21st year of Leadership Park City. How did this cornerstone of civic engagement come to be?

MR: I modeled it on a fellowship I had completed through the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. At its core, the program provides a structured way for motivated people to get to know each other on a personal level. I'll be the first to say I don't know how to teach leadership, but I recognize that communities polarize when the social fabric starts to fray. Three-quarters of the current class lives outside the city, but everyone is part of our community. I'm proud to say we have 550 alumni of the program, 250 of whom still live in our community, and about 150 of whom remain very involved. There is a hardly a board, commission, or committee that does not have an LPC alumnus or alumna. And we continue to broaden our reach as our community expands. We've begun including students from the local high schools, and I want to work more closely with Heber and Kamas.



We need to forge strong regional bonds if we are going to develop solutions that work for all of us.

PCMC: Folks worry a lot about change in Park City and what it is doing to our town fabric. Of course, reasonable people can disagree on what constitutes good-versus-bad change. How do you think we should grapple with it?

MR: Most people like progress, but not many like change. You can't have one without the other, though. I think our future is bright. Residents have been worried about Vail (Corporation) coming to town, but I think the company has made good on all of their promises so far. And let's recognize that Vail came to town because we are successful. Their presence only strengthens our foundation, and having them here makes us all "up our game," which isn't a bad thing.

We also need to realize that Park City is currently in a Golden Age, and—as a student of history—I know that golden ages don't last forever. The miners thought their good times would last and look at what happened to them. We need to build as strong a legacy as we can while we have the resources.

We also need to realize that not every problem has a solution,

and sometimes we need to just muddle through and count our blessings. Let's all recognize and be grateful for the beauty and the magic of this place. I like to say, "If you're lucky enough to live in Park City, you're lucky enough."

PCMC: Well, thank you for having the vision and foresight to create something that we can all enjoy far into the future.

For more information, visit the [Leadership Park City page](#) on Park City's website.

