

Parks and Recreation Board  
Meeting/Public Hearing Minutes

The Parks and Recreation Board of the City of Mesa met in a special meeting/public hearing at Stapley Junior High School, 3250 East Hermosa Vista, on March 8, 2005.

Members Present:

LeRoy Brady  
Robert Brinton  
John Dyer  
Connie Gullatt-Whiteman  
Jeff Kirk  
Dina Lopez  
Walter "Bud" Page, Jr.  
John Storment

Members Absent:

Russ Gillard, excused  
Bernadine Mooney, excused  
David Peterson, excused

Staff Present:

Darla Armfield  
Tim Barnard  
Danny Gallegos  
Joe Holmwood  
Andrea Madonna  
Aimee Manis  
Terri Palmberg  
Diane Rogers  
Linda Thompson  
Bob White  
Sherry Woodley  
Debbie Yukolis

Councilmember Present:

Rex Griswold

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Robert Brinton, Chair. He welcomed the general public (approximately 100) to the meeting and said the Board is looking forward to receiving citizen input on the aquatic facilities improvements.

### **Approval of Minutes**

John Storment made a motion, John Dyer seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes from the meeting of February 9, 2005.

Mr. Brinton requested that the Board discuss at a future meeting the issue of dog parks and civil versus criminal fines.

### **Explanation of the Public Hearing Process**

Mr. Brinton explained that the meeting/public hearing is for gathering of information. The funds allocated for the aquatic facilities projects will be determined by City Council. There are no funds committed to a specific project at this time. The public comments (both verbal and written) will be provided to City Council.

Mr. Brinton asked that comments be limited to three minutes to allow everyone a chance to speak.

### **Presentation**

Terri Palmberg gave a slide presentation on the aquatic facility improvements recommendation that was reviewed by City Council at the January 13, 2005 Study Session. At that meeting, Council took no official action on the recommendation and requested that the Parks Board provide a forum to secure public input.

## **Public Hearing**

Mr. Brinton said it was suggested by some Councilmembers that the funds earmarked for the aquatics program be used for other City programs. He requested that during the public comment portion, citizens state the name of the pool or project they are addressing and indicate if the City funds should stay in the aquatics program or be redirected.

### Carson Pool

Fred Schwartz said he is a master springboard diver and would be interested in a competitive pool at Carson. The structure has deteriorated and durable materials should be considered.

Craig Cummins said new construction of Carson would give west Mesa a good pool. He would like for the pool to have eight lanes and 5½ foot depth.

Rick Rostain, swim coach at Westwood High School, said Carson is an eyesore; however, the students do the best they can with what they have. During competitions with other schools, negative comments are sometimes made; it is often called the “ghetto pool” of Mesa.

Donna Lovetro, said she likes what is being proposed for Carson, but would like 6½’ depth considered so the pool will be water polo friendly.

Yvonne Johnson said the Westwood area of Mesa is heavily populated and has many low-income families who do not have pools at their homes. It would be beneficial to start construction at Carson as soon as possible.

### Kino Pool

David Julian said Kino stays open all year and, as a result, is very cold in the winter. Indoor amenities, such as warm showers, are important. Kino is the flagship pool for Mesa and should be developed for competitive swimming.

Bill Haney said Kino needs to be restored as Mesa’s flagship facility. In the summer it is too hot and in the winter it is too cold so a meeting room is needed, along with a separate diving and warm up area and regulation height starting blocks.

Beth Loffswold said about 200 youth have completed the water polo program in the last three years; however, they must use the pool at ASU. Kino would fill the need if it had 6½ foot depth and 30 meters.

David Phillips said a pool is needed for water polo practice and games.

Maureen Stewart, a master swimmer, said when aquatic facilities are bad in the winter, the swimmers abandon the master swimming program. She encouraged the Board to consider the needs at Kino.

### Poston Pool

Mike Chaisson said Poston is an abandoned pool. There is nothing for young kids to play on and it is extremely hot since there is only concrete, no grass.

### Smith Junior High

Bruce Cox, principal at Smith Junior High, said it is currently the only junior high in Mesa that does not have a pool. A pool would also be advantageous for Skyline High School, which is only five minutes away.

Russ Heath, principal at Taft Elementary, said pools provide swimming lessons and recreation for youth in the summer. Smith Junior High deserves the opportunity to have a pool. Also, City Council should keep the money in the swimming program.

Kathy Myrmel said she has coached swimming for 16 years and understands the problems on the west side of Mesa. Swimming practices in east Mesa are held at Fremont, which is seven miles away from Skyline; a closer pool is needed.

Kym Mlazgar said the first priority should be Smith Junior High. She presented petitions containing 289 names and letters of support for a pool at Smith. She supports all the renovations proposed and encouraged that all the funds be used for aquatics programs.

George Smith, Mesa Public Schools Superintendent (retired), said the reason pools are placed at junior highs is for recreation purposes and Smith is the only school without a pool. The other pools need to be maintained and serious consideration should be given to building a pool at Smith.

#### Taylor Pool

Lindsay Coleman said her children use Brimhall Pool because of the amenities. Taylor has a good instructional program but it is an abandoned pool. It also is not deep enough for water polo. The City should consider renovation of all the pools and build a new one at Smith.

Jayson Knox said the pool at ASU is used for water polo and swimming. Mesa needs to provide for competitive swimming at its pools.

#### Outdoor Pool

John Giles, former Mesa City Councilmember, said he was involved in the Quality of Life sales tax initiative and sees great things happening in Mesa as a result of approval of that funding. However, voters said they wanted a competitive facility in Mesa and competitive swimmers have yet to see a benefit. A competitive pool is a priority, but there are citizens who will vote against whatever the City wants to do and will be critical of the process.

Kim Wills said there are no aquatic facilities in Mesa for competitive swimming. Synchronized swimming requires a depth of three meters. She would like the Board and Council to consider a competitive facility.

An unidentified speaker said Mesa is not a competitive swimmer friendly city. It does not have a lap pool available during the day and nine months out of the year, swimming is not available at all. He is in favor of a competitive pool.

Tom Verploegen, Director of Mesa Town Center Corp. (MTCC), said vision is important for a city. Mesa needs a competitive facility for identity and site 17 provides the needed site and MTCC supports it. Parking would be sufficient and it could be a good collaboration with Mesa Community College.

Bill Haney said he represents the 3,200 registered USA swimmers and 500 volunteer coaches in Arizona. Mesa needs a good public swimming facility and it has the premier location; site 17 would be perfect because it offers parking, hotels, and meeting facilities. What is provided for

our youth cannot be measured in dollars. He encouraged Mesa to move this forward on this project.

Mr. Brinton asked for further comments from the audience.

Starre Haney said pools that high schools use should be considered; eight lanes is not enough. Also renovation should include plans for depth that is available for competitive use.

Mark Harrison said all youth go to the junior high should have a safe and healthy environment to swim in. After that, adults should get the regional center, then the competitive swimming should be considered.

Dave Stacey said the bond passed in large part as a result competitive swimmers getting out and knocking on doors and urging people to vote. These people are being let down by not getting what they voted for.

Jeanette Phillips said there is a need to be able to teach water polo in a pool with enough depth. She asked that water polo be allowed to happen somewhere in Mesa.

Cindy Sage said pools at the schools are needed, specifically at Smith Junior High. She supports a year-round pool, with Smith being the top priority.

### **Close Public Hearing**

Mr. Brinton closed the public hearing at 8:25 p.m.

### **Board Discussion**

Mr. Brinton advised that the purpose of the meeting/public hearing was to gather feedback; the Board would make no decisions or recommendations at this time.

Jeff Kirk expressed concern about the Quality of Life fund and said he believes Mesa should look at the possibility of fulfilling the original goal of the funding.

Mr. Dyer thanked everyone for attending the meeting and getting petitions signed.

Dina Lopez also thanked everyone for attending and advised that the Parks Board is only one step of the process; the final decision lies with the City Council. She urged citizens to speak to their City Councilmembers to get these projects accomplished.

Mr. Brinton asked about the recommended timeline.

Ms. Palmberg replied that the timeline is six years, 2005 to 2010. Hopefully, Mesa would construct/reconstruct 1-3 pools during an overlapping fiscal year period. Information will soon be generated as to cost and then funding information will be made available.

Mr. Brinton advised that construction of the outdoor facility would need to go to voters for approval, and the neighborhood pools will probably not have to be voted on. He requested information concerning voter approval of the projects should a challenge should arise and timing be affected.

Mr. Stormont asked if there would be a need for voter approval if the City were able to do 3-4 of the projects by renovation rather than new construction.

Ms. Palmberg replied that the issue was addressed and a certain pool may need a certain requirement or feature. The primary use areas will be identified and the opportunity for future feedback will be provided when facility design elements are finalized.

A member of the audience asked for clarification.

Mr. Storment replied that renovation could be done that would allow for a specific program at a pool, such as water polo at one pool, synchronized swimming at another, and lap swimming at another. He then asked for a straw vote of agreement from the citizens in attendance.

About 50% of the audience, by a raise of hands, was in agreement.

Mr. Dyer asked about construction of a pool at Skyline High School.

Ms. Palmberg replied that Skyline was considered; however, site 17 was selected.

Mr. Kirk asked about renovation versus new construction and the maximum cost before a vote is required.

Mr. Brinton replied that if a pool is renovated, there is more leeway to say it is not a new pool. He requested that the legal ramifications of the question be clarified.

### **Closing Remarks/Adjourn**

Mr. Brinton said most of the members of the Parks Board became involved in City and Board issues by attending public hearings. The Board appreciates the comments made by citizens in attendance. The Board takes this responsibility seriously; recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council at a later date. He thanked everyone for taking the time to attend the meeting and public hearing.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting/public hearing adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob White  
Parks and Recreation Director

Attachment: Feedback Form Comments