

Parks and Recreation Board
Meeting Minutes

The Parks and Recreation Board of the City of Mesa met in a regular meeting at the Parks and Recreation Administration Office, 100 North Center Street, on September 12, 2002.

Board Members Present:

Robert Brinton
John Dyer
Fernando Guerrero, Jr.
Bud Page
David Peterson
John Storment
Don Thompson
Robin White

Board Members Absent:

LeRoy Brady, excused
Joseph Fu, unexcused

Staff Members Present:

Tim Barnard
Jennifer Cleavenger
Diane Eft
Don Flavell
Joe Holmwood
Wayne Korinek
Beverly Nielsen
Terri Palmberg
Doug Tessorf
Bob White
Mark Woodward

Others Present:

Jim Perry
Esther Rumpol

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by Robin White, Chair.

Welcome New Board Members

White welcomed Bud Page to the Parks and Recreation Board. Page provided a brief personal background.

Approval of Minutes

Robert Brinton requested that the minutes from the meeting of July 11, 2002 be amended to include his comment that the estimated additional cost to build the Mesa Indoor Aquatic Center could be \$10 million over the approved budgeted amount.

John Storment said he would like his comments on page 6 to read "...educational opportunity to help the public better understand what bond monies will be used for."

David Peterson made a motion, John Storment seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes from the meeting of July 11, 2002, as amended.

Public Comments

No public comments.

BMX Bike Track

Doug Tessorf, Mesa Real Estate Services Director, introduced Jennifer Cleavenger, acquisition agent with the Real Estate Services Division. Tessorf said he and Cleavenger

have been meeting with the BMX representatives to discuss the possibility of their leasing City-owned property for a BMX bike track. The site currently has various types of citrus trees and is leased at no charge to Kaser Citrus who, in return, maintains the property.

The City-owned property, which is not park land, is approximately 15 acres in size and is located within Maricopa County's jurisdiction on the north side of Thomas Road, approximately one mile east of Gilbert Road. Therefore, the BMX representatives will need to go through the County plan review approval process. Any issues that the County does not address and which the City believes are significant will be addressed with the developer by the City Plan Review Division.

Feedback is now being requested from the Parks and Recreation Board. Various City departments and divisions have also been contacted to receive their comments and feedback regarding the proposed project. The primary concern expressed with leasing this property is the reaction of the surrounding neighborhood. The BMX representatives have spoken with the Lehi Homeowners Association and received its support and approval for the project. Most residents are in favor of the addition of a family-oriented activity in the neighborhood.

When the BMX track is developed, several conditions will need to be addressed before opening, such as dust control, night lighting, noise control, and the establishment of specific opening and closing times. The developer plans to: plant grass or another appropriate material instead of installing asphalt for the track; retaining as many citrus trees as possible; having lighting lower than standard streetlights; and testing the public announcement system with surrounding residents to establish reasonable noise levels. This will be done through sponsors and private funds; the City will not be responsible for any costs.

Fernando Guerrero, Jr. asked about the current and future use of the land south of the proposed site.

Tessendorf said citrus groves are south of the site. The BMX representatives have been advised that the proposed site can be used only temporarily.

Guerrero asked about the monetary investment by the BMX representatives.

Tessendorf replied that the current plans are to have a paved road into the area and a dirt BMX track. Since there are no sewers into the area, restrooms will be portable and on-site water tanks or bottled water will be used.

White asked whether the BMX freestyle concerns that the City has been experiencing at Reed Skate Court would be alleviated with this proposal for the dirt bike track.

Holmwood responded that BMX dirt tracks are different than facilities needed for BMX freestyle venues. As to whether a freestyle facility could be located on the same property, that is another issue.

Peterson asked about future plans for annexation.

Tessendorf said the City of Mesa cannot annex right now. Annexation will eventually occur, at which time the City will be in contact with the property owners.

Guerrero asked about the number of spectators and participants expected at the events.

Tessendorf said that according to BMX representatives, the numbers will be small. Only 50 cars at one time can be accommodated in the parking lot. However, if it is an annual event, the numbers will be larger.

Brinton asked how many years the lease would be for.

Tessendorf said the BMX group has been told the lease would be for 3-5 years.

Wayne Korinek asked how the area and activities would be monitored.

Tessendorf replied that County Police and Fire Departments would respond to any concerns. The site will have a fence and gate and will not be for public use.

Korinek asked if research had been done on the impact BMX courses have on the community (noise, traffic, lights).

Tessendorf research has not been done, however, the BMX group has been made aware of the City's concerns. When the plan is sent to the County, it will also be sent to the City Real Estate Services, who will then forward it to various City staff for review and comment.

Jim Perry, representing Kaser Citrus, said his company maintains the citrus groves near the site. He expressed concern about the proposed BMX activities.

Tessendorf said the City is in the exploratory stage right now; a lease has not been negotiated. Concerns will be addressed before the project goes forward.

White said the site is not located within the Mesa city limits, therefore the proposed use does not come under the jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Board for action. It has been brought to Board as an information item only.

New/Adjusted Golf Fees and Policy Changes

Mark Woodward reported that in the fall of 2001, a restricted enterprise fund was established for golf, with all surplus revenues generated credited to this fund. This necessitates the golf system be operated at a profit in order to fund equipment replacement and complete capital improvements at the golf courses.

Woodward then introduced Don Flavell, Golf Supervisor, who reported that in order to operate at a profit, the existing operations are reviewed on a regular basis and an assessment made to fees, policies, agronomic practices, etc. Staff reviewed the past 12 months and the factors that affect golf and determined that the following adjustments can increase revenue, increase annual rounds, and provide better customer service at the City's golf courses: allow golfers to make tee times seven days in advance; implement a transition fee in the fall; reduce the solo rider fee for summer specials; and institute a "shotgun" fee for organizations interested in shotgun tournaments.

Flavell gave the following explanations for the recommendations:

Seven day reservation policy

In 1987, the residential preferential tee time policy went into effect. It allowed Mesa residents to make tee times four days in advance and non-residents three days in advance. This policy is in effect November 1 through April 30. From May 1 through October 31, everyone can make a tee time four days in advance. However, demand for tee times has lessened over the years, which mainly is due to increased competition and choice of golf courses in the East Valley.

As the golf market continues to become more competitive, the need to differentiate between resident and non-resident is not as critical, but the ability to book a tee time seven days in advance versus four in advance is important. Staff believes implementing a seven-day reservation policy for residents and non-residents year-round would give golfers the first choice in choosing Dobson Ranch and/or Riverview over other area golf courses. This will allow the golf system to book as many rounds possible as early as possible and hopefully increase rounds at both golf courses.

Fall Transition Rate

The current fee structure for the summer season is June 1 through October 31. On November 1, the green fee increases to almost double the summer green fee. This large increase was a driving factor in the reduction of rounds in November and December 2001. To help alleviate this drop in rounds, staff recommends implementing a fall transition rate in adult green fees, to be effective November 1 through December 15. The junior green fees would not change. The proposed transition fees are:

Dobson Ranch Golf Course	
18 holes	\$22.00
9 holes	13.25
Twilight after 3 p.m.	10.00
Riverview Golf Course	
9 hole	\$13.25
9 hole repeat	8.75
Twilight after 3 p.m.	10.00

Staff and the contract professionals believe the golf season starts just before Christmas and runs through the end of March. Raising fees December 16 to the peak fee of \$28.00 for 18 holes and \$17.00 for 9 holes should not be a deterrent to the golfers who play Dobson Ranch and Riverview. Many of the area courses are already higher than these fees and the demand for quality, inexpensive golf will be at its peak.

Summer Solo Rate

Riverview and Dobson Ranch both have a summer special for two riders. The fee under this special is \$19.00 per person for 18 holes. However, if a solo golfer shows up and wants to play 18 holes, he/she must pay the \$13.50 18-hole green fee and a solo cart rate of \$14.50, for

a total of \$28.00 plus tax. This format was used to encourage golfers to bring a friend and to help increase rounds, but the opposite may be occurring. Occasionally a golfer may not be able to make the tee time, resulting in the group paying a higher fee and possibly playing elsewhere. Numerous complaints are received from singles about the higher fee if they show up alone. Many leave and choose to play elsewhere where they are not penalized for being a single. Due to the competitive summer golf market, staff recommends the summer cart special fee be \$19.00 per person, under the current fee schedule, regardless of the number of people who show up for the tee time.

Shotgun Tournament Fee

Currently, shotgun tournaments are discouraged at Dobson Ranch and Riverview due to the loss of rounds that is created by the lack of early morning walk on play and the time it takes to get golfers back on the course after the tournament has ended. On average, there is a reduction of 60 rounds per day when shotgun tournaments occur. Also, when requesting organizations are informed that shotguns must start within 30 minutes after sunrise and the group must utilize the Ranch House Restaurant, they usually decline. Due to the early start required, many organizations conduct their tournaments at competing golf courses.

One way to regain the loss of revenue from shotgun tournaments is to have an additional fee. When the tournament contract is signed, this additional fee would be explained as an added cost for reserving the entire course for the event. The base surcharge would be figured at $144 \text{ participants (full field)} \times [\text{Current Green Fee} + \text{Cart Fee}] + (60 \text{ round loss} \times \text{Current Green Fee})$.

With the shotgun fee in effect, it would add from \$5.50 to \$11.50 per tournament golfer depending on the season/time of year. Even at this higher rate, the fee is still less than other area courses charge for shotgun tournaments. By allowing shotgun tournaments, Dobson Ranch and Riverview golf courses can provide a higher level of service and options to interested organizations. Also, the City, contract golf professional, and food and beverage concessionaire will gain additional revenue with the increased number of tournaments, prize fees, and food and beverage functions.

Don Thompson said he supported the recommendations and requested that staff provide a status report at a future Board meeting regarding the results of these changes. He also asked about the extent of publicity involved in marketing the golf courses.

Woodward replied that marketing is minimal because only \$3,000 per year is budgeted for this purpose.

Stormont agreed that it is important to track the results of these changes over the next year. He asked about the fee for shotgun tournaments that have already been scheduled.

Woodward replied that tournaments pay the fee that is in effect on the date of the tournament, not the date when it is scheduled.

Woodward summarized the staff recommendations being presented to the Board, which would become effective November 1, 2002:

1. Allow seven-day advance tee times with no distinction made for resident versus non-resident.
2. Implement a fall transition rate from November 1 through December 15.
3. Have the summer special fee be the same for all golfers regardless of number of golfers in the group.
4. Implement an additional fee for shotgun tournaments.

Don Thompson made a motion, Robert Brinton seconded, and it was unanimously carried that the Board recommend that action be taken to adopt the proposed changes to the policies/fees for Dobson Ranch and Riverview Golf Courses, as presented by staff.

Tee Pod Electronic Scoring System

Woodward reported that in the spring of 2001, staff and contracted golf professionals from Dobson Ranch Golf Course received a presentation from 4everSports on a Tee Pod Information System, which is a multifunctional electronic system that enhances the golfer's experience in many different ways. It also allows City staff and the golf professionals to better manage the facility and increase rounds and revenues. The system consists of computer kiosks at each teeing area to be used by golfers to enter their scores and other pertinent information tailored specifically for each golfer. It is the intent of 4everSports to use Dobson Ranch Golf Course as a model for the system because of Arizona's extreme weather conditions and the high volume of rounds. The Tee Pod Information System provided by 4everSports is on the cutting edge of technology in the golf management business. Dobson Ranch Golf Course would be one of the first golf facilities in the United States with this system.

The installation of all hardware and software for the Tee Pod Information System would be at the expense of 4everSports. It is being proposed to enter into a two-year agreement with 4everSports with the City paying a flat fee of \$42,500 payable in twelve equal monthly installments. With the rounds in FY 01-02 being 80,313, this amounts to approximately 50 cents per round. Staff believes this amount can be generated in numerous ways, but predominantly from a nominal increase in the fees charged to tournament golfers (\$1.00-2.00 per tournament golfer). There is also potential for money to be generated through the advertising component of this system as well as through selling bag tags to golfers with their pictures on them via a camera installed in one of the tee pod kiosks.

Guerrero said he was unsure if he would use the tee pod system. He questioned how the system would help the golfer and provide needed information at the tees. He asked about the free green fees for 4everSports while demonstrating the system to prospective customers and/or investors.

Woodward replied that there will be a cap on the free green fees for 4everSports.

Guerrero asked how the equipment would tolerate the Arizona heat.

Woodward replied that the tee pod cabinet is manufactured in the Valley so it should be the summer heat should present no problems.

John Dyer asked if there would be the possibility of a commission coming back to the City after the system is tested.

Woodward replied that staff has discussed an ongoing relationship with this 4everSports at a reduced rate.

Storment asked if the golf course would be dug up for wiring if this system is installed.

Flavell said the panels are wireless but the kiosks must be powered. Some areas of the golf course will require minimal trenching, for which 4everSports will absorb the costs.

Woodward said the trenching will be done during the overseeding process, which is usually a slow time at the golf course.

Storment asked about responsibility for repair of the kiosks.

Woodward replied that 4everSports would be responsible for all the maintenance and upkeep of the kiosks. The golf course will have one or two extra kiosks on hand should damage occur that is not repairable. The golf course will be responsible for keeping the screens clean.

Peterson said the agreement did not specifically address vandalism. He suggested that language be included.

Guerrero said he cannot support approving the tee pod system, and said he would like more information and possibly a presentation from 4everSports.

Thompson said he was unsure if the system is user friendly.

It was the consensus of the Board that this agenda item be tabled until the October Board meeting and that Woodward arrange a demonstration of the tee pod system by 4everSports prior to that meeting.

Dyer suggested that a subcommittee be formed to evaluate the system. Dyer, Guerrero, and Storment will serve on the subcommittee. The subcommittee recommendation will be presented at the October meeting.

Board Work Program

Holmwood said that last year the Board and staff conducted a facilitated process to develop a work program for the fiscal year. For this year, a less formal process will occur. Many items on last year's work program were accomplished, and several will be carried over to this fiscal year. He distributed information on those items that were partially accomplished or not accomplished.

Dyer said he believes each Board member perceives the City's needs from their interactions with the public. The needs that have been expressed by the public should be brought forward as part of the work program.

Holmwood said this year discussion will focus on the recently completed master plan, which should be the vision and road map for the future for the City, Division, and Board.

White said she thinks it is important for the Board to be effective, especially when a bond issue occurs. There are many exciting things for the City to move forward with.

Meetings and/or Events Attended

Brinton reported that he recently attended a meeting which was hosted by the Mayor for staff and citizens to discuss the Mesa Indoor Aquatic Center. The goal of the meeting was to explore possibilities for construction of the facility. The attendees were in agreement that the project should be done and it should be done right. Hartsook Companies has been retained to identify fundraising possibilities and a representative will be in Mesa next week to discuss the basic formula for fundraising.

White reported that she and Dyer attended the APRA State Conference Boards & Commissions Day on August 28. White said it was a fun and worthwhile day. She and Dyer went to sessions on volunteerism, board development, and citizens as advocates for parks and recreation. Dyer received the 2002 APRA Award for Outstanding Public Official.

Dyer said it was beneficial to network with peer groups and other board members and learn how other cities address problems that are common to all.

Director's Report

Holmwood distributed information on the June 19, 2002 Board and Committee Orientation presentation which was hosted by Mayor Hawker.

Holmwood also reported:

- Dina Lopez, Executive Director of Xicanindio, Artes, has been appointed as a new member of the Parks and Recreation Board.
- Wayne Korinek will be retiring November 30.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph H. Holmwood, Director
Parks and Recreation Division