

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 May 25, 2006.

Members Present:

LeRoy Brady
John Dyer
Connie Gullatt-Whiteman
Don Goodrum
Dina Lopez
David Martinez
Walter "Bud" Page, Jr.
Marilyn Wilson

Staff Present:

Larry Alexander
Joan Baier
Jerry Bradney
Melanie Dykstra
Cindy Hunt
Andrea Moore
Terrie Palmberg
Diane Rogers
Bob White
Sherry Woodley
Darryl Woodson
Debbie Yukolis

Members Absent:

Russ Gillard, excused
Jeff Kirk, excused
Bernadine Mooney, unexcused

The meeting was called to order at 12:01 p.m. by Bud Page, Chair.

Approval of Minutes

Marilyn Wilson made a motion, Connie Gullatt-Whiteman seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes from the meeting of April 13, 2006.

Public Comments

No public comments.

Chair's Comments

Mr. Page thanked Mike Holste for arranging the April 13 tour of park sites. It provided Board members the opportunity to visit parks they were not familiar with.

Mr. Page reminded everyone that the Board usually does not meet in June, July, and August unless a special meeting becomes necessary. He advised that Bob White will keep Board members informed of events, issues, etc. during the summer.

Autry RFP

Debbie Yukolis introduced Darryl Woodson and Joan Baier from the City's Purchasing Division and reported that in February 2006, the Purchasing Division released an RFP indicating the City's interest in contracting with a private entity for the lease and operation of the Gene Autry Tennis Complex. The RFP required that:

- the property be used solely for a tennis center and be open to the public at least 40 hours per week June-August and 60 hours per week September-May;
- the contractor manage and operate a safe and well-maintained facility which matches or exceeds the variety and quality of service offered by other private or public tennis centers;
- the offerer consider the purchase of existing City equipment, furnishings, and personal property;
- the contractor accept the majority of the financial burden associated with the facility's utility and maintenance costs; and
- the offerer pay a flat monthly fee to the City for the first two years (subject to future rate changes)

Responses were due no later than 3 p.m. on April 3, 2006. The opportunity was posted on the City's website, advertised in the East Valley and Scottsdale editions of The Tribune, and direct mail contact was made with known tennis businesses and enthusiasts. The RFP was also available at the Gene Autry Tennis Complex. On March 3, Parks Administration staff hosted a mandatory Vendor Conference/Site Visit. Eight individuals representing themselves or local firms attended the site visit at Gene Autry Tennis Complex.

East Valley Tennis LLC submitted the only proposal and, as defined by the RFP, the offer met the minimum requirements. An evaluation team comprised of representatives from the Parks Board, staff, and the tennis community heard an oral presentation from Tom Kenney, owner of East Valley Tennis LLC, and evaluated his written proposal.

The team evaluated the proposal utilizing the point system outlined in the RFP. A maximum of 1,000 points could be attained. The proposal was scored on the following elements of responsiveness and received a total score of 610 points:

- Response Format and Organization (Thoroughness, Clarity, Organization/Presentation)
- Terms and Conditions of Financial Relationship to City of Mesa
- Teaching Capabilities/Professional Experience
- Business/Management Experience
- Managing Tennis/Sports Facilities Experience
- Financial Stability/Capacity
- Merchandising Experience/Capabilities
- Reference Checks

During its evaluation, the team also identified the following strengths and weaknesses of the proposal from East Valley Tennis LLC:

Strengths

- Agreed to requirement to provide City \$25,000 performance bond
- Financial resources available outside of LLC and no indication that LLC or personal finances are subject to pending litigations
- Proposer has extensive experience as a tennis instructor and with managing a municipal-owned tennis complex
- Private operators are not limited by regulations that impact governments in securing outside services (such as web design or custodial services)
- Private operators can avoid personnel costs and restrictions that impact government employers
- Proposer's tennis knowledge and experience support a quick transition to a private operation

Weaknesses

- Limited capital to pay for start up costs
- No guarantee that personal funds will be committed to keep the LLC solvent if expenses are higher or profits are less than projected
- Proposer has no experience in financing or managing a small business with responsibilities for profit and loss
- Estimated expenses cited in the proposal, in some cases, do not appear realistic
- Staffing levels and coverage may not be adequate; Mr. Kenney would manage the business and a pro or pros would have to be located and trained
- Proposer's flat monthly fee offer was low

In the final analysis, the team also considered that there were no competing proposals, the RFP did not specify a maximum point value that must be attained, and, with the "no" vote on the property tax,

the City anticipates closing the facility July 1, 2006 unless it is able to contract with a private entity to provide uninterrupted service.

It was the opinion of the team that it would be detrimental to the City and the community to close the facility and await the release and outcome of a new RFP process. The result of a July 1, 2006 closure would be loss of revenue from canceling and refunding registration fees for scheduled tournaments and events, as well as negatively impacting a future private operator by the departure of tennis customers who will find services elsewhere and choose not to return to the facility upon its reopening.

An alternative presented to the Board was to seek approval for funding to leave Gene Autry Tennis Complex open long enough that staff could re-evaluate the RFP and release a new offer, and review and recommend additional RFP responses.

Ms. Wilson questioned why only one response was received.

Ms. Yukolis replied that other individuals/organizations had expressed interest and also attended the on-site conference. Staff has no knowledge of why they did not submit proposals.

Ms. Wilson asked about fee increases.

Mr. White replied that if the property tax had passed, the City would have continued to operate the center and the fees would have increased, as was recommended by the Board.

Ms. Wilson said one of the weaknesses listed in the report is limited capital to pay for start up costs. She asked how that would affect the transition.

Ms. Yukolis replied that the team made estimates of what the costs would be. It is noted in the strengths that Mr. Kenney has personal funds that could be used for that purpose.

Don Goodrum, who was on the evaluation team, said an initial concern of the team was that the business would not have start up capital. However, Mr. Kenney obtained a line of credit and has personal funds that could be used for start up. Contracting the services will cut the City's losses, but it will not provide a revenue source. It will allow the facility to remain open beyond July 1.

Dina Lopez, a member of the evaluation team, said at the initial meeting there were concerns about the weaknesses of this company. She believes that the Board should not be forced to make a decision because of the property tax not passing; that the Board needs to look at this issue further and consider the alternative.

David Martinez asked about the length of commitment and if another RFP could be issued at the end of the contract period.

Ms. Yukolis replied that it would be a five-year contract with one renewal.

Terri Palmberg said that if significant problems can be documented, another RFP process could happen. However, if performance is satisfactory, the renewal would be allowed.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked what would happen if the company did not succeed financially.

Ms. Yukolis replied that the City would terminate the contract because it is not obligated to keep the company in place if it defaults on the contract. The City would retain ownership because the center is leased.

Darryl Woodson advised that when a default occurs, the City usually sends a letter to the provider and gives a timeline for a remedy; the tennis center would not immediately close.

Mr. Page asked if existing City equipment was itemized and how the value was determined.

Ms. Yukolis said the equipment was itemized in the RFP but the value was not determined. It was the responsibility of the proposer to make an offer on the equipment.

Mr. Page asked if there are scheduled reviews of the lease in the five-year contract.

Mr. Woodson replied that after two years, the City of Mesa will look at the numbers again and can renegotiate the contract.

Ms. Wilson asked about the alternative presented.

Mr. Goodrum said the reason for the alternative presented is that the team felt that 610 points out of a possible 1,000 points was not a strong bid; however, closing the facility and issuing another RFP was a worse alternative.

Ms. Lopez asked if the panel felt that the proposer was ready to assume the operation.

Mr. Goodrum said the panel was optimistic that the proposer would be ready. It appears that he has everything lined up.

Mr. Martinez asked about the City closing the facility on July 1.

Mr. White replied that because of budget impacts, the City had to reduce services. The closing of the tennis center will be implemented unless a private contractor can be secured.

Ms. Lopez asked how soon the process would start if the Board decided on the alternative.

Mr. Woodson said the minimum would be 6-8 weeks to issue another RFP and re-evaluate proposals.

Mr. Martinez asked about the number of people impacted by the closing.

Ms. Palmberg replied that in terms of overall use of the facility, about 32,000 people registered for various classes and programs during the past year. The number of uses was about 60,000. Use during the summer is obviously more limited; prime time use is in the evenings. It is mainly open play, with no tournaments in July and August.

John Dyer asked if the contract must be for five years.

Mr. Woodson replied that five years is stated in the RFP and it is difficult to change.

Ms. Palmberg said five years was used because there is an investment and commitment by the contractor.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked how much equipment would need to be purchased by the proposer before starting the operation.

Ms. Palmberg replied that the RFP provided a list of equipment available. If the proposer does not want to purchase that equipment, he can buy new.

Mr. Martinez expressed the opinion that entering into a contract is an effective way to maintain the tennis operations. If the effort fails, the tennis center just reverts back to the City, which is the current situation.

Mr. Goodrum said the evaluation team did not want the facility to close; it is a valuable asset to Mesa. The score of 610 points was not good; however, if the City issues another RFP, the result may be the same. There is a risk in re-evaluating. In the eyes of the public, the City has made an

attempt to keep a valuable asset open. It is not necessarily ideal, but unless the City of Mesa is willing to keep the facility open and operate it, the best alternative is to give Mr. Kenney a chance.

Mr. Martinez asked for and received clarification of appropriate Board action.

Dina Lopez made a motion, and Marilyn Wilson seconded, to not accept the proposal from East Valley Tennis LLC and to seek approval for the Gene Autry Tennis Complex to remain open long enough to release an RFP and evaluate proposals.

Mr. Dyer said he believes this is an opportunity for a private entity to operate the facility. It is no loss to the City because if the contractor defaults, the City is right back to where it is now.

The motion made by Dina Lopez was defeated by a vote of 1-7 (yea-Lopez; nay-Brady, Dyer, Gullatt-Whiteman, Goodrum, Martinez, Page, Wilson)

David Martinez made a motion, and LeRoy Brady seconded, that the Parks and Recreation Board accept the proposal from East Valley Tennis LLC for the lease and operation of the Gene Autry Tennis Complex.

After brief discussion, David Martinez amended the motion, with a second by LeRoy Brady, that the Parks and Recreation Board accept the proposal from East Valley Tennis LLC for the lease and operation of the Gene Autry Tennis Complex, and that Gene Autry Tennis Complex remain open until East Valley Tennis LLC is able to assume responsibility for operation of the facility.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Sports Field Maintenance

Due to time constraints, this agenda item will be presented at a future Board meeting.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Page presented a plaque to Mr. Dyer in appreciation of his years of service on the Parks and Recreation Board.

Mural at Broadway Recreation Center

Cindy Hunt reported that in August 2003, the City of Mesa agreed to lease the Broadway Recreation Center (BRC) to the Mesa Association of Sports for the Disabled (MASD). This allowed MASD to have a venue for individuals with disabilities. The BRC is utilized six days per week by the adaptive recreation programs, adult sports, special interest classes, tournaments, and rentals.

In February 2006, Deven Pai, a volunteer for MASD and Eagle Scout candidate with the Boy Scouts, approached the MASD director regarding a project he wanted to complete for his badge. The project would involve a mural being painted on the large north wall inside the gymnasium that would depict a sports theme and the MASD logo. Though the gym floor is considered one of the best wood floors in the East Valley, the setting inside the gym is mono-painted white and it quickly shows that it is dated and is a very worn building. After viewing many of the high school gymnasiums throughout the Valley that are brought to life by having large colorful murals on the wall, Deven believes that this would also add some enthusiasm to this venue.

Deven has secured Ivan Lawson and Jimmy Lawson to assist him in this project. These individuals, though not professionals, are very competent artists who have painted many murals in various elementary school libraries, cafeterias, and offices in Gilbert. They have also received many awards for their community service and their work in the schools. Measurements have been taken of the wall and the draft of the artwork is in the process. The Lawsons will be instructing Deven on the materials and supplies that he will need and volunteers will be secured through the Boy Scouts. Deven will be presenting the proposed mural to the MASD Board, the Mesa Parks and Recreation

Board, and Mesa Parks and Recreation administrative staff for their approval. All three entities must approve before he is allowed to continue with the project.

Mr. Page asked about the timeline.

Ms. Hunt said a rendition of the mural will probably be available at the end of this month.

MPYAA/MYSC

Melanie Dykstra reported that the majority of youth sports leagues operating in Mesa have been represented by an umbrella organization called Mesa Parent Youth Athletic Association (MPYAA). The formation of MPYAA in 1961 began with a meeting between a Little League director, the superintendent of Mesa Public Schools (MPS), and the City of Mesa Parks and Recreation Division. At the time, MPYAA was created to ensure that Little League baseball had places to play.

The group has kept the same purpose since 1961, but now consists of 27 recreation youth groups, including Little League and other baseball organizations, as well as football, soccer, softball, and lacrosse leagues. These leagues serve about 25,000 youth each year.

To become a member of MPYAA, leagues applied showing current insurance, non-profit 501(c)3 status, and demonstrated a no-cut registration. The MPYAA board met once a month to discuss league issues and had four mandatory membership meetings during the course of the year.

Approximately 30 years ago, MPS and the City of Mesa Parks and Recreation Division partnered to place lights on softball, baseball, and multipurpose fields. An informal agreement was made and the City agreed it would pay the lighting bills, maintain the lights, and allocate the fields to community groups for the hours when the schools were not in session. Outside groups usually used the fields on weekends and after 6:00 p.m. on weekdays. The lack of a formal IGA between the City and MPS had caused some confusion as to when the City had the right to request space on behalf of the youth groups.

Since the group's inception, the City has participated in an informal agreement to assist MPYAA by allocating fields to youth who were members of their organization. From 1973 to 1998, the City assigned a Recreation Supervisor to community relations, which included scheduling of school facilities for youth groups and working with MPYAA. In 1998, the supervisor retired and the job duties were re-assigned to multiple staff. In 2000, the Parks and Recreation Division conducted a survey of MPYAA members. Responses showed that they had a definite need for assistance from the City and MPS. The survey also showed that the leagues felt there was a strong need for improvement in communication with both organizations. Therefore, in July 2003 a Recreation Coordinator was assigned as the Community Youth Groups (CYG) Coordinator, working with individual groups, MPYAA, and MPS.

With the assignment of a Recreation Coordinator, changes were implemented in the processes. The City directs the allocations of both City and MPS athletic fields to community youth leagues. In addition, Division staff act as liaison between the youth recreation leagues and MPS. Further, all groups requesting field allocations must now become a partner with the City of Mesa through a Cooperative Relations agreement. Organizations previously recognized by MPYAA have been accepted as partners with the City.

Youth groups now apply for fields through the Parks and Recreation Division. The Community Youth Group (CYG) Coordinator, with oversight from the membership, assigns fields to the youth groups based on registration and field availability. Additionally, a formal IGA between the City and MPS has been created, leading to a more clearly defined process.

Youth sports groups that are not part of MPYAA have approached the City requesting field allocations. That identified the need to clarify the role between the City and MPYAA. To address the current challenges of youth sports, including the increasing number of youth leagues, the changes

within the leagues themselves regarding demographics, competitive level of play (cut programs), etc., the board of MPYAA felt it was necessary to look at changing its direction and focus to better meet the needs of youth sports groups.

The following changes will be implemented:

- Dissolution of Mesa Parent Youth Athletic Association (by unanimous vote of the membership) and the creation of Mesa Youth Sports Coalition (MYSC).
- The Mesa Youth Sports Coalition will operate under new guidelines which focus on decisions by consensus and sub-committee projects.
- The Mesa Youth Sports Coalition will set goals for the year to be completed by committee members, under the leadership of a committee chair and assisted by the CYG Coordinator.

Ms. Dykstra said that Mesa Parks and Recreation is committed to clarifying the role of the Mesa Youth Sports Coalition to assist in making the changes successful and providing more comprehensive information and service to all youth sports groups. These recommendations, suggested by members of MYPAA, will make coalition members more accountable, will provide opportunity for better communication and consensus-building, and will help create a more cohesive organization. The previous MPYAA executive board and Parks and Recreation management support all information as provided.

Ms. Wilson asked for clarification of F.9. of the draft Operational Guidelines.

Ms. Dykstra said that Mesa has several basic youth groups. There has been a lot of interest from organizations that are just getting started. Some operate like a business and must understand that if they join MYSC, the board and other positions within the group must be volunteer. Priority allocation goes to volunteer organizations.

Mr. Dyer suggested that the Parks and Recreation Board have a representative at the three meetings MYSC conducts annually.

Ms. Dykstra advised that MYSC will be encouraged to make presentations once a year on their activities.

Mr. Page asked if non-Mesa residents will be allowed to join MYSC.

Ms. Dykstra replied that a prospective organization must meet most of the criteria in the application. Anyone can apply, but 80% Mesa residency is required.

FY06-07 Budget

Mr. White distributed a copy of the department budget slide show that was to be presented to Council on May 23, 2006 (it was not presented), and a recommendation from the City Manager regarding compensation and organizational changes which are still under consideration. The City budget will be finalized on June 28 or June 29.

Reports on Meetings and/or Events Attended

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman reported that she recently attended a meeting at United Way concerning allocation of funds.

Staff Updates

Andrea Moore reported:

- acquisition of 56 acres near Zaharis Elementary School (McKellips/Ellsworth) has been finalized;
- Crismon Farm (Gilbert/202) has been sold, with the funds coming back to Park Bonds;

- the construction contract for Carson Pool was approved by City Council, with work to begin the first week of June.

On behalf of Mike Holste, who was unable to attend the meeting, Sherry Woodley reported:

- on April 27-30, the City partnered with MASD for the Desert Challenge Games, which included various sports for disabled athletes;
- the Adult Sports softball league has 350 teams registered;
- Applebee's will provide 1,500 youth t-shirts for various summer programs.

Sherry Woodley reported:

- registration for aquatics and summer programs began in late April, and to date about 50% of the registrations have been on-line through WebTrac;
- the division's fees and charges report was accepted by the Finance Committee and City Council. The report includes recommendations made by the Parks Board.

Terri Palmberg reported:

- Bass Pro will be funding the Urban Fishing Program for one year and will be working with the City on cost sharing events;
- the Foundation for Mesa Parks and Recreation will be undergoing an effort to develop an off-leash dog area at Riverview Park.

Ms. Palmberg further reported that within the past 30 days, staff has received two requests concerning the train at Pioneer Park. Requests have been received in the past, however, Mesa has not had the funds to move the train. One of the requesting parties is a company in California and it is offering to purchase the train. The other is a Chandler organization that wants Mesa to help with the costs. The train is a historical piece; there are not many steam engines like it left. However, there is an asbestos issue; Mesa will have to spend a significant amount of money in the future. The Board will be kept apprised of the issue.

Director's Report

Mr. White reported:

- APRA Boards & Commissions Day will be August 31, 2006. The conference is being held in Mesa this year and Board members are encouraged to attend.
- The name of the Washington Activity Center will not change. A suggestion was made to City Council to change the name in memory of Margie Frost; however, the men's center will be named in her honor.
- Diane Rogers will be leaving the City at the end of this fiscal year. Diane has been Board liaison during her 19+ years with the City.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob White
Parks and Recreation Director