

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 March 13, 2003.

Members Present:

Robert Brinton  
John Dyer  
Fernando Guerrero, Jr.  
Dina Lopez  
Walter "Bud" Page, Jr.  
David Peterson  
Robin White

Staff Present:

Tim Barnard  
Sue Deck  
Diane Eft  
Joe Holmwood  
Jason Mangum  
Terri Palmberg  
Wendell Smith  
Mark Woodward

Members Absent:

LeRoy Brady, excused  
Joseph Fu, unexcused  
John Storment, excused  
Don Thompson, excused

Others Present:

Colleen Andersen  
Kevin Montney  
Laura Watson  
Alison Williams

The meeting was called to order at 12:07 p.m. by Robin White, Chair.

**Approval of Minutes**

Robert Brinton made a motion, Bud Page seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes from the meeting of February 13, 2003.

**Public Comments**

No public comments.

**Budget Reports**

Joe Holmwood reported that at this morning's City Council study session, the Deputy City Manager presented a budget overview to City Council. A copy of the City Council Report that was presented at the Study Session was distributed to Board members.

Tim Barnard then gave a slide presentation relating specifically to the Parks and Recreation budget. He said most of the operating side of the budget is funded by the General Fund, which receives revenue from sales tax, state shared revenues, and the City's utility fund.

Holmwood said that the budgets staff have been preparing over the last several months do not take into consideration any major reduction in state shared revenues, so City revenues could be affected dramatically if state shared revenues are reduced more than anticipated.

Highlights of the slide presentation concerning the Parks and Recreation Division budget included:

- The baseline budget proposal that was submitted to meet the FY03-04 targeted reduction amount of \$1,819,358 is summarized below (no final decision has been made on any of these proposals):
- To achieve the reduction:
  - hold vacant 54 positions (12.5 FTE) and 38 filled positions (15 FTE); the majority are part-time positions
  - Reduce grounds maintenance and cleaning at various facilities
  - Eliminate drug testing of all returning seasonal employees
  - Eliminate funding for replacement of capital maintenance equipment
  - Reduce hours of operation at Red Mountain MG Center, Jefferson and Webster Recreation Centers, Gene Autry Sports Complex, and swimming pools
  - Shorten program sessions at Red Mountain MG Center
  - Reduce swimming lessons and competitive practices
  - Eliminate August public swim, Saturday free swim, and holiday public swim programs
  - Eliminate adult basketball leagues and reduce service hours in other adult sports programs
  - Eliminate purchase of softballs for adults leagues and tournaments
  - Reduce open gym programs and close concession stand at Washington Activity Center
  - Eliminate nine special events and downsize remaining special events
  - Reduce park ranger staff positions (part-time) and overall duties
  - Lease the Broadway Recreation Center to a non-profit organization

Holmwood said that at any one time, the division could have as many as 800 positions, full time and part time, which represent about 320 FTEs.

Brinton asked if the Parks and Recreation reduction of 7% was typical throughout the City.

Barnard said the reduction target range given to all areas was 7-10%.

White asked if there would be maintenance reductions at the golf courses as those areas need to be maintained since repairs made in the future will be more costly.

Holmwood said reductions in the operating budget for the golf courses amounted to \$30,000, which is small considering the golf course budget is over \$2 million. The golf program is expenditure neutral because of the revenue it generates, so reductions were less.

Barnard explained that capital equipment has been eliminated from the division budget and repair or replacement will be delayed. Reductions in maintenance will result in change in the appearance of parks and retention basins.

Concerning the Quality of Life Sales Tax fund, Barnard reported that Budget and Research continues to work the revenue numbers which are definitely not what was projected when voters approved the tax in 1998. When the issue went before voters, there were a number of proposed

program expansion areas and capital improvements to be funded. A variety of new youth programs was initiated, along with many capital improvements. There are a number of capital projects which could be affected with the reductions in sales tax revenues

Based on the latest information from Budget and Research, Barnard said the following reductions, eliminations or delays could result once final revenue figures are analyzed: not constructing and operating Countryside Recreation Center, Skyline Pool, Red Mountain Phase V and Phase VI, and the Indoor Aquatic Center.

White asked about the status of the Indoor Aquatic Center.

Holmwood said the project is on hold and no doubt will be delayed. It is estimated that nothing will happen for at least the next two to three years, but again that is a decision Council must make.

White asked if the money set aside for the Indoor Aquatic Center will remain available for its intended purpose.

Holmwood replied that it is staff's understanding that the capital dollars for the Indoor Aquatic Center will remain intact. The issue is with the operating monies; Budget and Research is still working the numbers.

White expressed concern that if the designated funds are expended on other projects, they may not be available when needed in the future.

Holmwood said the consultant that recently conducted the fundraising feasibility study believes that the City could raise \$2.5 million in private fundraising. City management is looking at the possibility of redeploying an existing staff person to assume responsibility as fund development supervisor to work with the consultant.

Brinton said the construction cost has escalated but it was previously reported that not operating the aquatic center would cover the extra costs of construction. However, if another two-year delay occurs, the cost will increase even more.

Holmwood said differing information has been received about delaying the project to cover the operating costs.

David Peterson said the City needs to be cautious about listing Quality of Life projects that will be reduced or eliminated. Citizens have expectations of these projects being completed. The City needs to get the information out why these projects were not completed.

White said the programs and activities that Parks and Recreation provides for youth are critical; even with budget constraints, staff has done an incredible job.

### **Citywide Facilities Programs**

Mark Woodward reported that spring training began February 28. The first few games were not well attended due to the weather; however, as the weather has improved so has attendance, with

two sold-out games last weekend. The Cubs Fan Fest held on March 10 was very successful, with about 2,000 people in attendance. On March 16, wives of Chicago Cub players will hold a food drive and raffle for Cubs memorabilia, with the proceeds going to Paz de Cristo.

Brinton said the spirit of cooperation during spring training has been exceptional. The game program had space available this year, so at no charge information was placed in the program on the Mesa Arts Center and parks and recreation programs.

Woodward reported that at Dobson Ranch Golf Course, an event was held on March 4 for the dedication of the new clubhouse and the debut of the tee pod system. John Stormont gave the opening comments and Vice Mayor Dennis Kavanaugh was in attendance. The tee pod system has been receiving good exposure from the media. One of the challenges now is getting golfers to use the system. It is being promoted and a practice system is available so use should increase. Comments received from golfers have been positive.

Page asked about the number of golfers using the system and the break even point for the cost.

Woodward replied that the City pays about 50 cents a round for the tee pod system. Several years ago golf fees were substantially increased, so the cost of the tee pod system has been absorbed into the budget with no increase in fees.

Holmwood said staff from the City's Public Information Division were in attendance at the dedication and shot footage of the event, which will be shown on a continuous basis on the City's Channel 11.

Woodward said that Fox 10 News will be doing a special report on the tee pod system on March 19, 2003.

### **Meetings and/or Events Attended**

White acknowledged that Laura Watson, Chairman of the Foundation for Mesa Parks and Recreation, was in attendance.

John Dyer reported that he attended a softball tournament at Skyline Park after the recent heavy rains and the fields at the park were dry. The construction of the drainage system at Skyline is excellent.

Brinton said the Mesa Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors is concerned about the Indoor Aquatic Center project. City staff and City Council members have been invited to the next Board of Directors meeting, and Parks Board members are also invited to attend. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for the first Wednesday in April, and the focus will be the Indoor Aquatic Center.

White asked about the next bond subcommittee meeting.

Barnard replied that the date has not yet been determined.

Holmwood said Jenny Sheppard is the staff person who will be working on the process for the City bond issue; she will be attending the next bond subcommittee meeting.

### **Director's Report**

Holmwood gave the following reports:

- At this morning's City Council meeting, staff made a presentation on the Hawes Loop Trail. City Council unanimously approved that the City proceed.
- One of the topics discussed by City Council this morning was cost recovery. Staff will be looking at program fees, especially for adult programs. Fees need to have balance; they cannot be priced out of market but they do need to generate revenue. Also, Southwest Ambulance will be contributing an additional amount of money this year for scholarships for swim lessons.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph H. Holmwood, Assistant Manager  
Community Services Department