

Parks & Recreation Board Meeting Minutes

The Parks and Recreation Board of the City of Mesa met in a regular session at Parks and Recreation, 200 South Center Street, Mesa, on March 9, 2011.

Members Present:

Kent Bulkley
Don Goodrum
David Martinez
Bert Millett
Kathleen Rahn
Matt Shaffer
Marilyn Wilson
Ron Wills

Staff Present:

Dawn Bies
J.D. Dockstader
Marc Heirshberg
Mike Holste
Andrea Moore

Members Absent:

Milt Fort, unexcused
Steve Ikeda, excused
Mark Yarbrough, excused

The meeting was called to order at 3:37 p.m. by Don Goodrum, Vice-Chair.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Goodrum asked for a motion for approval of the minutes from the January 12, 2011 Parks Board meeting. Marilyn Wilson made a motion, Ron Wills seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes.

Mr. Goodrum asked if there was a motion for approval of the minutes from the January 5, 2011 Fees and Charges Subcommittee meeting. Mr. Wills made a motion, Kathleen Rahn seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes.

Public Comments

None.

Take action regarding recommendation for permitting alcohol in parks

Marc Heirshberg told the Board staff had been making changes to clean up the city code in regards to parks/retention basins. One of the recommended changes to the city code would be allowing alcohol in parks with reservable sports fields and ramadas.

Matt Shaffer asked if the guidelines would be consistent with other cities.

Andrea Moore said there were some variations in other cities and added that staff had worked with the City Attorney's office to draft the guideline, which will be presented to Council at a later date if approved by the Board.

Mr. Heirshberg added that staff would take the recommendation to the Council's Community and Cultural Development Committee with Board approval.

Kent Bulkley made a motion recommending approval of the guideline as written. Mr. Wills seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the recommendation.

Hear update on fees and charges

Mr. Heirshberg told the Board staff would take Fees & Charges before the Council's Audit and Finance Committee on Thursday, March 10th and, if approved, would go before the full Council on March 21st with the goal of having the fees in effect by April 1st.

David Martinez asked if staff anticipated any questions about the fee changes. Mr. Heirshberg answered that the questions were mostly about the commercial areas in the department, most focusing on the Cemetery.

Hear information on FY 11/12 budget

Mr. Heirshberg told the Board that the City's budget has shortfalls anticipated for this year and next. He said most valley cities are starting to climb out of the recession and Mesa would most likely be last due to our tax structure, and unexpected expenses, some mandated by the state legislature. He said the City Manager requested a 5% budget reduction scenario from all departments. The PRCF Department asked that funds from the Environmental Fund be moved to PRCF Department budget to maintain the retention basins, which covered the 5% reduction.

He added that there would be no cuts to staff positions or programs.

Hear information on playground equipment donations

Mr. Heirshberg told the Board a neighborhood meeting had been held at Golden Hills Park regarding building a playground at the park; Mr. Bulkley and Mr. Shaffer were in attendance.

He said staff has been working with local representatives from companies to get equipment/shade structures, etc. donated to the park to enhance the park. He said costs to the PRCF Department would be approximately \$25K for prep work that needed to be done (moving sprinklers, etc.) Mr. Heirshberg added this would be a community build project.

Mr. Heirshberg had previously heard from Vice Mayor Somers that there were two parks in southeast Mesa where residents had been requesting a playground; Golden Hills Park was one of the parks.

Andrea Moore had mapped addresses from residents who had attended the meeting due to some of the residents being opposed to this plan; the results showed 200 residents in favor of the playground and 32 opposed. Mr. Bulkley assessment was that it was due to a lack of communication on the part of the residents; some felt it was going to cost them money to put in the park, it would bring in undesirable elements, there were concerns about lighting, etc.

Mr. Shaffer heard concerns about graffiti and said a couple residents were very adamant about not putting in a park; however, most residents who had families, and many were in attendance, were in favor of adding a playground.

Mr. Heirshberg added that the residents who were in opposition to the playground lived immediately adjacent to the park.

Mr. Bulkley said one resident mentioned that park users even now block his driveway when using the park and suggested signage or possibly increased police presence on occasion.

Mr. Heirshberg added that was one of the inherent risks of living across from public space. He recommends contacting the Park Rangers if this happens and, if no response, call the Mesa Police non-emergency number.

He added that police representatives attended both of the neighborhood meetings to answer questions and said PRCF staff would continue to work with the Transportation Department regarding traffic counts, signage, etc., although recent traffic counts showed no difference from other parks that have playgrounds. He said the more involvement and usage of the park by neighbors, the less chance of undesirable users will hang out at the park.

Mr. Heirshberg said staff's goal was to target this installation for the end of April and said staff was meeting with Vice Mayor Somers tomorrow morning to decide whether to put this playground at Golden Hills Park or somewhere else.

Mr. Bulkley asked about plans to communicate back with the neighbors regarding the results from the meetings. Mr. Heirshberg said Ms. Moore would be emailing results from both meetings to residents in the area. He added staff would be looking for volunteers to complete the project.

Director's Comments

- Cubs update: Construction should start by end of year with a goal of hosting Fall League in 2013 and ready for Spring Training in 2014.

Mr. Bulkley inquired whether the City would be using local architects, builders, etc. Mr. Heirshberg said most top builders/designers who interviewed for this job are not local; however, they would be required to have local participation from architects, engineers, etc.

Mr. Bulkley asked if there were plans for hotels also. Mr. Heirshberg said there was one existing hotel and the plans included a number of retail pads that could accommodate a hotel.

Mr. Martinez asked if the small retail area previously planned would remain. Mr. Heirshberg said there would be three (3) separate sections to the parcel: baseball operations including practice fields, Cubs clubhouse, batting cages, etc.; the stadium; and Riverview Park. He said the lake would still be there but could be reconfigured, and Waveyard would be where the ball fields are now located. He added that if Waveyard doesn't happen, staff would like to retain the ball fields for as long as possible until that area is developed.

Mr. Martinez asked if the City was going to trade out or try to build parks somewhere else. He said there are some encumbrances on that property that require the City to do some land exchanges; this information has been presented to City management awaiting Council action.

- Skyline Pool: Grand opening will be March 28th; Dawn will send out reminder to the Board.
- Calendar of events:
 - Jade Buddah (currently at Amphitheatre)
 - Blues Blast (February 19), Wingstock (April 9), Volbeat and the Damned Things (April 11), Black Keys (April 14), Deftones (June 9) concerts/events at Mesa Amphitheatre, UFest concert (April 23) at Quail Run Park
- Headlines –

- Recent articles regarding the Amphitheatre ran in the Arizona Republic; several facts mentioned were incorrect/distorted regarding air conditioning backstage, staffing for events, groundskeepers, etc. He added that it was mentioned that the City should move the facility under the Mesa Arts Center management; however, the genres are completely different. He said staff has been working with several new promoters to bring additional concerts/events to the Amphitheatre.
- Increase in backflow prevention thefts recently in Utilities, Transportation and Parks Departments; no copper thefts since recent arrests were made.

Reports on meetings and/or events attended by Board Members

Bert Millett attended Foundation fundraising meetings and said the Foundation is still looking for a title sponsor for the Triathlon on October 15.

Ms. Wilson attended soccer games at Countryside and Red Mountain Parks and plans on stopping by the Jade Buddah display at the Amphitheatre.

Mr. Martinez visited various Mesa parks and also rode the light rail for the first time, had lunch in Phoenix and came back to Mesa.

Mr. Wills attended numerous synchro meets and added the Master's National Meet will be at Kino Aquatic Center the last weekend in April, with swimmers from all over the United States in attendance.

Mr. Bulkley attended the Golden Hills Park neighborhood meeting and golfed at Dobson Ranch Golf Course and noticed replacement trees from last year's storms. He added the course looks great and was a great value.

Ms. Rahn attended the Community Day of Play at Skyline Park, checked out the iMesa website and attended the MLK dinner event at EVIT.

Mr. Shaffer attended the Golden Hills Park community meeting and visited Countryside Dog Park.

Mr. Goodrum visited various parks, Red Mountain Softball facility, and attended the Mayor's fundraiser.

Mr. Goodrum asked if there were any other items for discussion; the Board had no additional comments. Mr. Goodrum asked for a motion to adjourn, Mr. Bulkley made a motion, Mr. Martinez seconded, and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marc Heirshberg, CPRP
PRCF Department Director