

Parks & Recreation Board Meeting Minutes

The Parks and Recreation Board of the City of Mesa met in a regular session at the Parks and Recreation office at 200 S. Center Street, Building 1, Mesa on August 9, 2007.

Members Present:

Frank Alger
Reggie Dye
Don Goodrum
Connie Gullatt-Whiteman
Walter "Bud" Page, Jr.
Marilyn Wilson

Staff Present:

Rhett Evans	Dawn Bies
Andrea Moore	Dale Furnas
J.D. Dockstader	Kelly Rafferty
Rochelle Rotert	Sherry Woodley
Cindy Hunt	Beverlee Nielsen
Bob Huhn	Josh Alston
Cheryl Fischer	Roger Singleton
Rebekah Dannenberg	

Members Absent:

Dina Lopez, excused
David Martinez, excused
Russ Gillard, unexcused

The meeting was called to order at 12:02 p.m. by Connie Gullatt-Whiteman, Chair.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked if there was a motion for approval of the minutes from the June 14, 2007 meeting. Frank Alger made a motion, Michelle Udall seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes as written.

Welcome New Members

Rhett Evans welcomed new members Frank Alger and Michelle Udall to the Board.

Mr. Evans presented outgoing Chair Bud Page with a gift in appreciation of his service as Chair of the Parks Board.

Director's Comments

Mr. Evans updated the Board on projects staff has been working on.

- Pioneer Park Locomotive – Report was received from consultant with options and associated costs to renovate or move the engine to another location. This will be an expensive undertaking regardless of which option is selected. He reported that staff has enlisted the help of the Historic Preservation Office to help finalize the report/recommendation for the Board. Item has been moved to a future agenda agenda.
- Pool Update – Part of the \$25 million "quality of life" money that the department received has been directed towards the redesign of Rhodes and Kino pools. The Rhodes pool is currently 30% completed in design; the concept for Kino's "competition" pool is still being drafted.
- Waveyard Project – J.D. Dockstader would be giving an update to Board today.

- Summer Recreation Programs – Programs have ended for summer season. Mr. Evans thanked staff for the great job they do in making a difference in the lives of Mesa’s citizens.
- Strategic Retreat – Don Goodrum asked about scheduling a retreat. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked the Board if they had a preference for date/time. Ms. Bies will email available times/dates to the Board. The Board agreed a retreat would be a valuable tool in planning for parks and recreation needs. Ms. Gullatt suggested having a list of clear, concise topics to discuss at retreat. Mr. Evans suggested that sometime during the fall, staff members and Board members plan a strategic retreat to spend some time thinking past the daily projects and look ahead to projects that are forecasted three to ten years in the future. Mr. Evans shared an example of possible discussion at the retreat, citing a July 23rd report from the Trust for Public Land, a non-profit organization from Washington, D.C., that studies our nation’s parkland. The City of Mesa participated in that survey, and results indicated that Mesa did not fair well in comparison to 60 other cities of similar demographics.
- Arizona Parks and Recreation Association (APRA) Conference – Board and Commissions Day at the annual conference is August 30th. Dawn Bies will send out information to the Board.
- Year End Report – The annual report for Parks, Recreation & Commercial Facilities is being completed by staff and will be issued shortly.

Chair Comments

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman thanked Mr. Page for his service as Parks Board Chair for the past two years. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman encouraged the Board to take the time to read the monthly publications from National Recreation and Parks (NRPA) and APRA. She mentioned an article in the APRA magazine on Sarah Hughes, a long-time Mesa Parks & Recreation participant and employee. There was also mention of an article about “Going Green,” linking outdoor recreation to pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors.

Riverview Park/Softball Complex Update

Mr. Dockstader gave an update on the Waveyard project. Highlights included:

- Staff conducted surveys at the Kleinman, Red Mountain, Riverview and Skyline park ballfields to gather data/statistics about the users of these facilities. He shared the results with the Board, showing that 51 percent of users are from Mesa and 49 percent from outside the city. Questions were also asked about the distances driven and user preferences, and the data indicates that a large majority is willing to drive up to 25 miles to participate in Mesa’s programs.
- Staff has been working with the Mesa Grande Community Alliance to get input regarding relocation of the Riverview Park ballfields, as well as the reconfiguration of existing parkland at Riverview Park.
- Staff is preparing an online survey seeking citizen input. Ms. Bies will send a link to the Board to review before it goes live.

Mr. Goodrum asked about the existing additional parcel of land at Red Mountain Park, and whether it was already developed. Mr. Evans said the land is vacant at this time.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked about the survey timeline. Mr. Dockstader said it would most likely be available online within a week and will be available for completion for approximately two weeks.

Mr. Page suggested sending the surveys out with utility bills. Sherry Woodley said that based on the timing of the bills and the desired quick survey response time, it would not be a viable option.

Mr. Dockstader gave an update on land acquisition, reporting to the Board:

- Real Estate Division had hired a land broker to look into vacant parcels available for sale
- Radio Disney property (Center & McKellips) not an option at this time, due to Disney's lack of willingness to sell
- Staff is looking at availability along Stapley and Gilbert Roads
- Staff is looking at availability in the Fiesta Mall area
- Other options are being considered with strong momentum for relocating ballfields in West Mesa

Mr. Dockstader asked for questions. Ms. Udall asked about using local high school fields. Mr. Dockstader replied that the high school fields were not regulation size for adult play. Mr. Evans added that most high schools only have one field and a multiple field complex is required to meet league-programming needs.

Marilyn Wilson asked about a limit to the number of times a person can submit the online survey. Mr. Dockstader said they would like it limited to one response per computer and that the online system can support that.

Discuss and Take Action – Special Events Protocol

Mr. Evans gave a brief background about special events in Mesa, including how budget cuts had affected the City's ability to run special events. He talked about the previous methods used to run special events. A report was given to the Board with the following recommendations for the future special events:

- The City will co-host the Cinco de Mayo event. Staff proposes securing a partner to run the event through a competitive bid process. A selection review panel will be formed including staff and Board members. Staff will negotiate a three-year contract with potential additional one-year renewals.
- The eight other special events (Fourth of July Parade, Pow Wow, Veteran's Day Parade, Turkey Trot, Merry Main Street, MLK Parade/Breakfast, Mesa Days, Evening in the Park) previously produced by City staff would continue to be administered on a first-come, first served basis to private groups interested in continuing to offer the events. These events will be grandfathered in and the event organizer will only be charged hard costs (no rental fees would be charged).
- New community-based events would pay the standard park rental fees and go through the established special event process. Any new events proposed with an admission fee will be evaluated.

Mr. Goodrum asked about the revenue potential for the City. Mr. Evans stated that last year's Cinco de Mayo event was the first year admission was charged, netting approximately \$130,000 from gate admissions alone. The negotiated split with a partner would determine potential revenue (ex: 50/50 split of last year's event would have netted the City \$65,000).

Mr. Goodrum asked about the administrative costs to the City. Mr. Evans stated that those costs would be covered first before any profit was split. Ms. Wilson asked if the contract would

have a provision in it allowing the City to cancel the contract if it was not profitable for the City. Mr. Evans replied that there would be a cancellation clause in the agreement.

Mr. Page asked if the May 2008 contract for Cinco de Mayo had been awarded yet. Mr. Evans said no, that staff has just held space at Pioneer Park. Mr. Page asked if the two parties who had been in competition for this event last year had been notified about this new process. Mr. Evans said staff would notify them after direction has been received from the Board.

Mr. Goodrum asked if the eight other events charge admission. Mr. Evans replied that the Turkey Trot event charges an entry fee for participants, but not for spectators. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked if the Cinco de Mayo event was the only large event being considered at this time and if staff thought any of the smaller events may grow into larger events. Mr. Evans answered that the other eight events were community-based events and very costly to produce. He further stated that the Cinco de Mayo was the only one of the events that had grown larger and made sense as a paid-admission event. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked if the Cinco de Mayo event was originally started as a City event. Mr. Evans said yes.

Mr. Page made a motion to send the Special Events Board Report forward to Council for approval on the recommended process. Mr. Goodrum seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Summer Recreation Program Presentation

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman introduced Cindy Hunt and staff, who gave a brief overview of the City's summer recreation programs that had just ended. Highlights included:

- This was the 49th year for summer recreation in Mesa, with programs including sports programs, recreation, pre-school and special needs camps and inclusion programming.
- Rebekah Dannenberg gave an update on Camp Fiesta and TGIF programs.
- Cheryl Fischer gave a report on summer sports camps and clinics.
- Roger Singleton reported on the Youth Adventure program.
- Beverlee Nielsen reported on the new Kidtastics program, as well as the Adventure Series (Friday field trips) and Boredom Buster programs. Ms. Nielsen spoke about the quality staff Mesa employs to run these programs and made special mention of the Teen Leadership Training (TLT) volunteer program.

Mr. Evans pointed out the value of the volunteer program, considering the number of volunteer hours put in and staff salaries saved, which was close to \$1 million.

Ms. Hunt talked about partnerships with Mesa and Gilbert Public Schools, which provide transportation and facilities at a discounted rate to the City. She thanked the Mesa Aquatics staff for their support of the summer recreation programs during outings to the Mesa aquatic facilities.

Ms. Hunt mentioned challenges that the summer recreation programs have, such as, space to house programs, the limited number of days for summer programs, transportation costs for field trips, and facility maintenance schedules at the schools.

Ms. Hunt asked if there were any questions. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman expressed her excitement with the positive results from Mesa's summer recreation programs, specifically the volunteer program. Ms. Hunt gave special thanks to Jordan Heller, the Recreation Programmer

responsible for the TLT program, for his work with the teens and their families during the summer programs.

Mr. Evans stated he would like to make reports from our recreation programs a regular part of the Board meetings, which the Board supported.

Reports on Meetings/Events Attended by Board Members

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman reported that she had attended the Making Waves donation presentation of \$10,000 from Southwest Ambulance at the Carson Pool on August 3rd. She reported there were approximately 860 students who received scholarships for swim lessons from these donations. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman also appreciated the opportunity to see the new complex.

Items from Citizens Present

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman called on citizens who were present and wanted to comment. Marilyn Wennerstrom asked how many cities had participated in the Trust for Public Land survey. Mr. Evans said 60 cities nationwide had participated. He gave out the website for this report (www.tpl.org/cityparkfacts).

Ms. Wennerstrom inquired whether the citizen survey would be online. Mr. Dockstader said yes.

Ms. Wennerstrom asked whether the land broker had already been hired by the City. Mr. Dockstader replied that a broker had been hired, however, he was not sure of the date the land broker was hired.

Ms. Wennerstrom asked if there would be any further concerts at Hohokam Stadium such as the one held in 2005. She felt that event was a huge draw and the City should put on more of this type of event at that location. Mr. Evans stated the Def Leppard concert was held at Hohokam Stadium in 2005 and that staff would love to do more of those types of events at Hohokam; however, they needed support from the surrounding neighbors to be able to host those events.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked if there were any other items for discussion; the Board had no additional comments. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman announced the next meeting would be held on September 13th and that Ms. Bies would be sending out APRA information to the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Rhett Evans
Parks, Recreation and Commercial Facilities Director