

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 July 8, 2009.

Members Present:

Frank Alger
Milt Fort
Don Goodrum
Connie Gullatt-Whiteman
Steve Ikeda
David Martinez
Matt Shaffer
Ron Wills
Marilyn Wilson

Staff Present:

Darla Armfield
Dawn Bies
Stacy Cheaney-Thompson
J.D. Dockstader
Dale Furnas
Michael Holste
Bryan Raines

Members Absent:

Michelle Udall, excused
Mark Yarbrough, unexcused

The meeting was called to order at 3:36 p.m. by David Martinez, Chair. Mr. Martinez introduced new Park Board member Ron Wills and informed the Board that Milt Fort, Matt Shaffer and Mark Yarbrough have been reappointed for another 3-year term to serve on the Board. Mr. Martinez welcomed Councilmember Finter and Deputy City Manager Bryan Raines, who were attending. He then asked Mr. Wills to share some background information on himself with the Board.

Mr. Wills told the Board he is an attorney and has served on various Boards and/or commissions around the valley. He grew up in the valley and worked in parks and recreation as a lifeguard/pool manager in his teen years, has two children involved in aquatics programs in Mesa and has lived in Mesa for 20+ years.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Martinez asked if there was a motion for approval of the minutes from the May 13, 2009 Parks Board meeting. Frank Alger made a motion, Connie Gullatt-Whiteman seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes. Mr. Martinez then asked for a motion from the Dogs in Parks Subcommittee members for approval of the minutes from the June 23, 2009 meeting. Mr. Alger made a motion, Mr. Martinez seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes.

Public Comments

None.

Hear update on aquatics programming

Mr. Martinez introduced Darla Armfield, Recreation Supervisor, to give an update on the summer aquatics programming. Ms. Armfield told the Board she had received several inquiries from the media recently regarding the potential closing of Taylor Pool and that there would be a news piece on the news this evening. Ms. Armfield gave the Board a synopsis of the

competitive program, which is the bulk of their summer enrollment. She stated that staff has seen some increases and decreases from pool to pool and class to class, based partly on demographics in each area. She mentioned that program registration went online this year and that the declines could also be attributed to the bad economy and decreased marketing from the TimeOut. She said staff will be using Facebook and Twitter to get information out to more citizens.

Ms. Armfield told the Board that staff would use this information to restructure and adjust their programs/staffing levels for the following year.

Mr. Martinez asked Councilmember Finter if he had any comments to make regarding the Taylor Pool closing. Councilmember Finter stated that Council had received almost 500 signatures on a petition to keep Taylor Pool open and thanked staff for their work and dedication on finding solutions regarding this issue. He feels that there is a big gap in services for aquatics in south/southeast Mesa. He added that he hopes the Mayor and City Manager would be able to come back through the Board and look at a "regional" concept for pools in Mesa.

Matt Shaffer shared with the Board that while he lives close to Shepherd he takes his child to Fremont due to personal convenience; he stated that the staff/service at Fremont was really focused on customer service.

Mr. Martinez asked how staff will address the issue when Taylor closes. Ms. Armfield stated that the only option was to go to another pool. This will require some travel since the pools closest to Taylor are often at full capacity. She added that Rhodes pool would be completed this fall which would provide another pool for our users.

Marilyn Wilson added that transportation is an issue for many of our users and hopes that staff can come up with another solution to closing Taylor since class enrollments at some of the pools remaining open are lower than Taylor's enrollment.

Ms. Armfield shared with the Board that feedback she had received from the community was that they loved their neighborhood pools and did not want to drive to another pool.

Ms. Armfield gave an update on the Rhodes pool remodel. She stated that it is scheduled to be completed at the end of August. It includes the Flow Rider and will have the best water playground splash pad in Mesa. This pool was created to be a "destination" facility that people will drive to. The pool will also accommodate all lesson and competitive programs offered. City staff will be operating a concession stand and she hopes to recover all operational costs with revenue earned. She stated there would be a grand opening in mid-September and would provide more information as it is received.

Mr. Martinez shared a letter received from the Arizona Aqua Stars thanking staff for the opportunity to use the new Kino facility.

Hear about vision and concept plan for downtown Mesa

Tom Verploegen, President of the Downtown Mesa Association (DMA) gave the Board an overview of their vision and concept for downtown Mesa. The DMA is a private non-profit organization that promotes the downtown square mile, which represents about 450 businesses and 250 property owners.

Their vision is for downtown Mesa to become a vibrant, unique community, making it a quality place to live, work, dine, and shop. Ten (10) transformative projects/programs most critical to advancing the DMA vision:

- Embrace regional/area transportation access
- Adopt municipal buildings in the downtown Master Plan
- Develop city owned redevelopment/vacant property within downtown
- Formulate tailored downtown Mesa building rehabilitation code
- Subdivide outmoded and oversized private buildings in downtown core
- Develop unique and inviting walkable public realm
- Evaluate Latino/Hispanic marketplace/culture complex
- Attract more education facilities
- See and be seen in active downtown
- Increase downtown's sphere of influence

Mr. Verploegen welcomed the Board's feedback/comments, particularly in regard to having a central park in the downtown square mile area.

Update on subcommittee meeting regarding dogs in city parks; appoint replacement subcommittee member

Mr. Martinez told the Board the subcommittee met with staff from the Management Performance and Accountability (MPA) department to discuss ways to gather citizen input/comments in regard to dogs in city parks. A link on the Parks, Recreation and Commercial Facilities web page will be available for use as a means of accepting citizen input, along with inserts in utility bills, information on Channel 11, Mesa's Facebook and Twitter pages, and any other sources made available by the Public Information Office (PIO). Staff will accept this information during the months of September through December, then bring the data gathered back to the Board for a recommendation about whether to change the city's ordinance regarding dogs in parks.

Mr. Martinez asked for a volunteer to fill former Parks Board member Russ Gillard's seat on the subcommittee. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman volunteered.

FY 09/10 Budget update

Bryan Raines gave an update to the Board on the FY 09/10 budget. He said Mesa had made significant cuts in FY 07/08 and again in FY 08/09. The adopted FY 09/10 budget is \$1,137,000,000; approximately \$57 million lower than the previous year and includes approximately \$46 million in federal stimulus dollars. Without the stimulus dollars the City's budget would have been approximately \$100 million less than last year.

Mr. Raines predicted that sales tax revenue will be down approximately 14% from the previous year, approximately \$20 million. Sales tax revenue predominantly funds general fund activities (police, fire, parks, and libraries, etc.) and a loss of this revenue impacts these departments directly. He further noted that hotel bed tax revenue is down 25% YTD as well, which affects the Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau. The City continues to see softness in the retail and construction environment as growth has slowed dramatically. Utility accounts have started to slack off slightly too.

Some inflationary fee adjustments were made across the City; however, staff is still facing unknowns from state budget impacts. A secondary property tax was adopted, to be used only to retire general obligation bond debt.

Stacy Cheaney-Thompson, Fiscal Analyst, gave an overview of the PRCF budget for FY 09/10 compared to FY 08/09, highlighting the approved budgets for PRCF Administration, Commercial Facilities, and Recreation Programs, and the approved capital projects for FY 09/10. FY 09/10 budget is \$28 million with forecasted revenue of \$11.3 million and 189 FTE's; this year's budget is down approximately \$7 million and down 59 FTE's.

Mr. Shaffer asked if there was a metric for measuring the number of FTEs per workload for the City of Mesa. Mr. Raines said there was a citywide measurement of FTEs per 1,000 residents and added that the 09/10 figure was lower than it was in 00/01.

Ms. Cheaney-Thompson then went over the list of approved capital projects for FY 09/10 for the Board.

Ms. Wilson asked about the Waveyard project and whether it was still a possibility. Mr. Raines told the Board that the Waveyard people were still trying to secure funding for the project, which is difficult in this economy, and until that time Riverview Golf Course will continue to operate as if nothing has changed.

Mr. Martinez asked if the maintenance of the existing pools falls under capital projects or operating costs. Ms. Cheaney-Thompson replied that it was operations. Mr. Holste added if it was a major replaster or something of that type, then it would come out of capital funds. Mr. Martinez asked about the source of funding for capital projects. Mr. Raines said funding came from the general fund except for Kino, Skyline and Rhodes pools, which are funded with Quality of Life sales tax money remaining from the previously planned Indoor Aquatic Center. Mr. Martinez asked where funding for repairs to the existing pool comes from. Mr. Raines said it would have to come from the general fund, or through bond elections.

Mr. Martinez passed around an article from the newspaper about Mesa's efforts to preserve water by reducing water use in the parks. Mr. Holste added that PRCF staff had established a standard for maintenance in the parks but budget constraints make it impossible to maintain the parks at that level, which affects root systems in trees, and turf conditions in the city parks.

Recap on KaBOOM! playground builds projects

Mr. Holste gave a recap on the KaBOOM! playground build projects at Park of the Canals and Beverly Park. He said the City had received grants for \$100,000 each to build a playground in these parks. He stated that there were several hundred volunteers from Home Depot, city staff, and neighborhood volunteers that participated in the building of the playgrounds. He showed the Board some before and after pictures of both locations.

Mr. Holste stated that the Park Rangers have seen a complete change in the people using the Park of the Canals, with lots of families back using that park.

Discuss methods of communication with public about Parks and Recreation issues (ex: listserv)

Due to time, this agenda item was tabled until another meeting.

Director's Comments

Mr. Holste gave an update on the following items:

- Rhodes Pool update - (See update on aquatics programming)

- Summer Program update – summer recreation camps reduced by approximately 1/3 from the previous year, programs started slowly due to economy. A donation of \$10,000 was received from the Mesa HoHoKams for scholarships for summer programs, which helped increase attendance greatly.
- Parks Master Plan update – approved by Planning and Zoning. City would like to keep existing Parks Master Plan as the long term plan with new recommended changes for short term only; will come back before the Board in September.
- Parks Maintenance update – maintenance area was reorganized into one group effective 7/1/09. All park maintenance staff will move to the Decatur office; Larry Alexander is the supervisor over aquatics/park maintenance.
- Family Movie Nights – J.D. Dockstader told the Board that the Amphitheatre hosted a free family movie night with over 400 people attending; another is planned for September.

Mr. Dockstader also informed the Board that Dobson Ranch Golf Course was voted #1 Municipal golf course in Arizona by Golf Digest Magazine.

- Calendar of Events (update on past/present events) –
 - APRA Board & Commissions Day (Thursday, August 28th); information will be sent to Board members interested in attending.

Reports on meetings and/or events attended by Board Members

Milt Fort told the Board that since Kino pool opened the Convention & Visitors Bureau had received a 3-year booking for an aquatic swim event, which will increase hotel bookings. He added that Allegiant Airlines at Phoenix-Gateway Airport was adding 3 more cities to their service route to be announced shortly.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Raines
Deputy City Manager