

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 January 9, 2003.

Members Present:

LeRoy Brady  
Robert Brinton  
John Dyer  
Joseph Fu  
Bud Page  
John Storment  
Don Thompson  
Robin White

Staff Present:

Tim Barnard  
Diane Eft  
Joe Holmwood  
Myrna Jacobson  
Terri Palmberg  
Bob White  
Paul Widman

Members Absent:

Fernando Guerrero, Jr., excused  
Dina Lopez, excused  
David Peterson, excused

Others Present:

Les Riell  
Laura Watson

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by Robin White, Chair.

**Approval of Minutes**

LeRoy Brady made a motion, Bud Page seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes from the meeting of December 12, 2002.

**Public Comments**

No public comments.

**Fee Adjustments**

Terri Palmberg reported that the basic philosophy of the Parks and Recreation Division is to offer year-round diversified recreational programs, services, and facilities ensuring that all citizens have equal opportunities to participate. However, since the demand on the Division is greater than the public's ability to appropriate public funds to support the demand, it becomes necessary to charge fees and pursue other supplementary revenues and resources. Fees and charges for parks and recreation services provide only one source of funding. Other sources include but are not limited to: general fund appropriations; quality of life sales tax; grants in aid; special gifts; donations; contractual receipts; and impact or development fee revenues.

Fees and charges are not intended to diminish the City's inherent responsibility to provide public open space, facilities, and general leisure opportunities. Rather, fees and charges will be viewed as a method to expand and continue to provide basic services on an equitable basis.

The four types of cost recovery programs that establish the basic premise for fees and charges establishment are partial cost, direct cost, all costs, and valley market.

The City's philosophy of "no youth shall be kept from participating because of a fee" is addressed and applied by providing one of the following alternatives when economic hardship is an issue:

1. Fee Assistance – The fee assistance program provides financial assistance to participants in selected programs when participation would not otherwise be possible due to economic hardship. Individuals who qualify for the public school free or reduced lunch program and/or federal subsidy recipients may receive a discount on selected program fees.
2. Scholarships – Scholarships may be offered for participation in selected programs when an outside source provides funding that either covers the entire program or a portion of the registration fee according to the terms of the financial support.
3. Refunds and Credits – Refunds or credits to a household account may be given to participants for reasons of illness, emergencies, etc.
4. Fee Adjustments – It is understood that, on occasion, special consideration may be needed in determining fees for groups or individuals having circumstances uncommon to those in the fee structure criteria. In these cases, the Parks and Recreation Director will review such requests. A request shall be submitted in writing to the Director prior to the event. The request may be taken to the Parks and Recreation Board for consideration, as determined by the Director. In addition, the Director is authorized to institute special discounts, promotions or other short-term fee adjustments that are of benefit to the City, program and/or service.
5. Satisfaction Guarantee – Mesa is so confident that its classes are of the highest quality that a money back guarantee is offered. Within the first week of class, if a participant is not completely satisfied, 100% of the class registration fee will be refunded.

Palmberg further reported that all fees are reviewed annually beginning in October when staff evaluates direct and indirect costs, arriving at a cost per participant for core programs provided. Staff also contacts other municipalities for fee structure information as well as completing market comparisons. A Parks and Recreation Board subcommittee consisting of LeRoy Brady, David Peterson, and John Dyer met three times to review and recommend changes.

Palmberg presented the following details on the various fee adjustments recommended. (Attachment 1 is the full proposed fees and charges summary schedule.)

#### Adaptive Leisure

Based on public requests, a full-day program will be offered in summer 2003. The fee is in keeping with the half-day program and falls within the existing range.

#### Elementary/Jr. High Programs

New fee ranges to be established and new \$6 fee established in Junior Leadership League, High School opportunities, and Counselors in Training programs where no fee currently exists.

#### Aquatics

Competitive eight-week program fee to increase from \$30 to \$35. Lessons to increase from \$14 to \$16, and proposed budget reductions will eliminate Friday lessons, thus each two-week session will have 8 rather than 10 days of lessons. Pool reservations will increase from \$18 to \$20 per hour per guard, with a 25% additional fee for profit-making groups. Further, a use fee of \$4 per hour for aquatics coalition use is being recommended.

#### Exercise and Fitness Program

Per class costs to increase \$1 to \$2 per session in keeping with increased instructor and facility costs.

### Park Use/Ramadas

Daily maximum use fee to be eliminated, thus groups will pay for all hours of use. Beer permit to increase by \$20 per permit. A new fee for inflatables/tents is being initiated at \$20 per use. These require additional attention and maintenance needs as they require staking and use electricity when available. For profit activities or activities that have profit venues available, i.e., fundraising events and weddings, will pay up to 25% in additional cost for exclusive use.

Brinton asked if the additional revenue would be used to replace or remodel the bandshell and bleachers.

Palmberg replied that the revenue goes into the City's general fund. The division's operations fund will continue to be used for maintaining the bandshell and bleachers.

White asked if there is a contract in place for an event that requires tenting and staking so the group is responsible for the cost of repairing any damage.

Palmberg replied in the negative and said that if large events occur at the same time or immediately after one another, it is not possible to determine which group is responsible for damage.

### Red Mountain Center

Fitness pass options are proposed to change to initiate a monthly pass and eliminate the six-month and annual passes that have had limited use. The demand for rentals has continued to rise and due to the impact on the facility and the staffing necessary to supervise the events, all room rental fees are recommended to increase. The fees are based on a four-hour block use resulting in a \$25 per hour average increase.

Bob White said that fitness services will be a range; staff is looking at different services for different fees. Increases in the facility rental fees are being recommended because of demand, which is extensive. The fees help cover the cost of opening the facility and staffing for use of the multi-purpose room and classrooms. The fees are reasonable for a recreation facility and are similar to fees charged at other Valley recreation centers. However, availability has diminished somewhat due to the facility being used for more internal activities. It will still be available to individuals who want to use it and the increased fees will make it more competitive with other facilities.

### Special Interest Classes

Per class costs to increase \$1 to \$2 per session in keeping with increased instructor and facility costs.

### Sports Field Rentals

A partial prep fee has been added for groups that do not want the fields lined but want a more playable surface. A city/school lighted field fee has been initiated so that non-partner youth groups may access fields when time permits, thus covering a portion of the direct utility cost.

### Sports Leagues

Adult basketball, flag football, soccer, softball and volleyball per team fees will increase to recover all direct operation costs as well as some utility costs. Fees for adult team registrations remain comparable with other valley communities. Youth sports increases include 1) a \$50 fee increase for girls fast pitch, and 2) instituting a fee structure for youth partner groups comparable to the \$4 per participant fee established by Mesa Public Schools last year.

Palmberg said that Mesa has leagues that currently use City facilities with no fee charge and staff is trying to provide parity with this new fee structure for youth sports.

John Dyer said the schools started charging the \$4.00 fee last year to place into a fund to be used for school maintenance. Youth groups are supportive of this concept.

Dyer also advised that the corrections should be made to the proposed schedule of fees: 1) Sports Camps Adult lights/per field/per hour should be \$18.00 to be consistent with the fee proposed for Sports Field Rental; 2) Sports field Rental youth use partners/hour should be "...non-partners/hour" to be consistent with the adult and non-partner/hour; and 3) the Youth Girls 1 game/week/per team should be corrected to ... "2 game/week..."

#### Summer Recreation Activities

A \$10 per session or \$10 per week fee is recommended to cover increased supervision as well as materials and supplies costs.

#### Tennis Center

The Autry Tennis Center is proposing establishment of a junior tennis pass at \$10 per pass to encourage additional junior play. Further, similar to Hohokam Stadium, the initiation of contract/agreement negotiated use fee for major event and tournament operations is proposed for both the tennis courts and sand volleyball.

Dyer pointed out that the subcommittee that evaluated the division fees and made the recommendations reaffirmed that financial needs would not prevent any youth from participating in swim lessons or certain recreation programs. A scholarship program is available and this information needs to be publicized.

Palmberg reported that the fiscal year 02-03 division budget is just over \$25 million with projected revenue associated with fees and charges anticipated at \$5.7 million. The proposed increased fees and charges are projected to generate an additional \$250,000 which represents a 4% increase. With an anticipated operations budget of \$23 million in fiscal year 03-04, this increased percentage offset is in keeping with the Parks and Recreation Division Master Plan goal of revenue offsetting 30% of total operations budget within five years.

Dyer expressed appreciation for staff's leadership of the subcommittee. They were well prepared and made it easy to participate.

Brady said there was a lot of discussion and awareness that some fees needed to be increased but not adversely increased.

Brinton asked what the cost increases were based on.

Palmberg replied that with youth programs, a cost recovery of 25% is the goal.

Brinton asked how 25% was determined.

Palmberg replied that the division has maintained for a number of years 25% cost recovery for youth programs and 75-100% for adult programs. Those percentages will be evaluated during the next year by looking at the division's pricing philosophy. Staff also continues to look at resident versus non-resident fees. The youth of Mesa are benefiting and that is the main goal.

John Dyer made a motion, Leroy Brady seconded, and it was unanimously carried that the Board recommend that action be taken to adopt the proposed fee adjustments, as presented, with the changes recommended.

### **Affiliated Entity Agreement**

Palmberg reported that the Foundation for Mesa Parks and Arts, which was incorporated in late 1989, has supported City of Mesa efforts to enhance and expand services and facilities provided to the public. In 2001 the Foundation officially changed its name to the Foundation for Mesa Parks and Recreation following establishment of independent arts support organizations.

The Foundation for Mesa Parks and Recreation has provided support for a number of programs and projects over the years, including adaptive recreation programs, development of the Park of the Canals Master Plan, Falcon Field Park enhancements, and the Making Waves program that provides swim lessons for youth. The Foundation secures financial resources via grant request, direct donations through direct giving programs such as the United Way, and individual support by direct contributions, bequests and memorials.

The Foundation has been a tremendous support to the City of Mesa and it is desirable to continue the supportive relationship by entering into an affiliated entity agreement to recognize and formalize this association to ensure that record requirements and liability concerns are met. In calendar year 2000, the Foundation contributed over \$30,000 back to the community and in 2001 over \$29,000 from granting organizations and direct fundraising activities.

The proposed agreement is to summarize that relationship and insure that the City and Foundation understand the partnership, insure there are appropriate accounting procedures in place, and insure that liability issues have been addressed. Also, this agreement will ensure that a system is in place for community involvement and philanthropic opportunities when the indoor aquatic center comes on line.

Palmberg advised that the proposed agreement contains two blanks that should be filled in as follows: subsection 2.4 should say "...amount not less than \$10,000", and subsection 4.2 a should say "...each donation that exceeds \$5,000"

Laura Watson, Executive Director of the Foundation, expressed her commitment to the Foundation to invest the people of the community into parks and recreation. She said she feels that the more we work together and the more things accomplished, the greater the opportunity to make people aware that they can support parks and recreation through the Foundation. Her organization will develop lifetime commitments to Mesa parks and recreation programs.

White asked about meetings of the Foundation Board.

Watson replied that over the last year, the Foundation held six meetings but attendance was sporadic. More active members are needed and are being recruited.

Storment asked about the role between the indoor aquatic center and the Foundation.

Palmberg said the City sees the Foundation serving as the philanthropic institution for the indoor aquatic center.

John Storment made a motion, Robert Brinton seconded, and it was unanimously carried that the City enter into an affiliated entity agreement with the Foundation for Mesa Parks and Recreation, Inc.

### **Update on Budget**

Holmwood reported that City staff is at the beginning stages of the administrative budget process for the budget year July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004. It will be a very difficult financial year for Mesa and most cities in the Valley. There are many variables that will affect the final revenue estimates. The initial reduction target for the Parks and Recreation Division is about \$2 million; the entire division budget is about \$25 million, so the reductions will be significant. Staff has been asked to look at areas to reduce service levels or generate new revenue.

Barnard said it has been a challenging time. There will be changes in how services are delivered and how parks are maintained. Some of the proposed services that will be impacted include: park and retention basin maintenance levels; park ranger program; special events; adult sports programs; marginally attended youth programs; and others. Ultimately, City Council will review the budget which is submitted by the City Manager's Office and take action on what impacts will be realized. The fee increase recommendations represent about \$250,000 in additional revenue, which will help offset the \$2 million target.

Brinton asked about revenue reductions from the State.

Barnard replied that the proposed reductions do not include State Shared Revenue reductions. If that happens, additional reductions will most likely be necessary.

### **Hawes Loop Road Connector Trail**

Holmwood said this project provides an opportunity to be involved in a unique project and to develop good relationships with a variety of user groups. A meeting was held with residents and users on January 8; it was a well-attended, positive meeting. A formal report and recommendation will be presented at the February Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

Dyer asked about the number of people in attendance.

Barnard said it is estimated that there were about 60 citizens in attendance.

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

No report.

### **Director's Report**

Holmwood presented the following information:

- The Augusta Ranch Park dedication will be held on February 8 at 11:00 a.m. Invitations will be sent to Board members.
- On January 13, the City and ADOT will host the grand opening of a portion of Red Mountain Freeway. The event will start at 8:30 a.m.

- Information was distributed on the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday commemoration to be held January 18-20.
- The Board subcommittee that was created to work with staff on a future bond initiative will meet on January 28 at 4:00 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph H. Holmwood  
Assistant Community Services Manager