

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 February 13, 2003.

Members Present:

LeRoy Brady  
Robert Brinton  
John Dyer  
Fernando Guerrero, Jr.  
Dina Lopez  
Bud Page  
David Peterson  
John Storment  
Robin White

Staff Present:

Tim Barnard  
Diane Eft  
Don Flavell  
Joe Holmwood  
Terri Palmberg  
Kevin Petersen  
Bob White  
Paul Widman

Others Present:

Jayne Abraham  
Tom Culp  
David Elston  
Kirsten Hunt  
Sheila Mitton  
Michelle Mollenhauer  
William Puffer  
Roger Steill  
Mark Tompert  
Karla Waite

Members Absent:

Joseph Fu, unexcused  
Don Thompson, unexcused

Councilmember Present:

Rex Griswold

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 p.m. by Robin White, Chair.

**Approval of Minutes**

John Storment advised that a correction should be made to the minutes of the meeting of January 8, 2003. The last sentence under the heading Explanation of the Public Hearing Process should read "...comment card should be completed..."

Bud Page made a motion, John Storment seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes from the meeting of January 8, 2003, as corrected.

LeRoy Brady made a motion, Robert Brinton seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes from the meeting of January 9, 2003.

**Public Comments**

Kevin Petersen introduced several interns who currently are working with the Parks and Recreation Division. White welcomed them to the meeting.

White recognized Councilmember Rex Griswold and thanked him for attending the Board meeting.

**Award Presentation**

Terri Palmberg reported that she and Petersen recently attended the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Arizona Senior Olympics Program. At that event, the organization recognized several

staff from the City of Mesa, including Pat Schultz, Recreation Coordinator, who was recognized for her 20 years of involvement with the Senior Olympics.

Several cities were recognized for partnerships with the organization. The Arizona Senior Olympics is a Valley-wide event. The number of participants is projected to increase, and because of budget concerns, the organization will move forward to expand efforts with cooperative partnerships.

Palmberg presented to White the award given by the Arizona Senior Olympics to the City of Mesa for being "A Partner in Putting the Plus in 50+" for 20 years.

### Fee Adjustments

Palmberg said the Board recently took action on division fee adjustments. The Board's recommendation will move forward to the City Council with only one change, if approved by the Board, to recommend an additional fee adjustment to the fitness fees and charges at the Red Mountain Multigenerational Center.

Paul Widman reported that at the January 2003 Parks Board meeting, the Board accepted and forwarded to City Council the staff recommendation to eliminate the 6-month and annual pass option at the Red Mountain Multigenerational Center because it was not an option that many customers took advantage of. However, articles in the *East Valley Tribune* and *Arizona Republic* regarding the proposed change in fees sparked additional feedback from participants. And while the 6-month and annual passes do not seem to be popular, there does appear to be a demand for longer term passes other than just 6-month and annual passes. For example many participants have requested 4-month or 8-month passes. Parents of school children have requested a 3-month pass for use during the summer school break. Staff has considered the above factors in recommending an addition to the fee structure at the Red Mountain Multigenerational Center that provides flexibility by offering an advance purchase discount of 15% from the current fee structure which also maintains the cost recovery goals for the Center. The following fee adjustments were presented:

	Monthly Fee	Advance Purchase Discount (Discount is equal to 15% off the monthly fee)									
		3 months	4 months	5 months	6 months	7 months	8 months	9 months	10 months	11 months	12 months
Adult (18-54)	\$25	\$64	\$85	\$106	\$128	\$149	\$170	\$191	\$213	\$234	\$255
Teen (13-17)	\$18	\$46	\$61	\$77	\$92	\$107	\$122	\$138	\$153	\$168	\$184
Youth (5-12)	\$15	\$38	\$51	\$64	\$77	\$89	\$102	\$115	\$128	\$140	\$153
Senior (55+)	\$18	\$46	\$61	\$77	\$92	\$107	\$122	\$138	\$153	\$168	\$184
Two Adults	\$40	\$102	\$136	\$170	\$204	\$238	\$272	\$306	\$340	\$374	\$408
Family	\$50	\$128	\$170	\$213	\$255	\$298	\$340	\$383	\$425	\$468	\$510
Single Parent Family	\$35	\$89	\$119	\$149	\$179	\$208	\$238	\$268	\$298	\$327	\$357

Widman said revenue is expected to increase based on: 1) participation in fitness programs during all operation hours increased by a minimum of 20% each year since the facility opened in

1999 and continued increase in participation is expected; and 2) the monthly payment option will appeal to a wider section of the Center's participant base. The advance purchase discount will appeal to participants who attend on a regular basis

Palmberg said the overall revenue impact from these adjustments will not be great; therefore, no financial information was included in the report.

John Dyer said that since minimal financial impact is based on past experience at the Red Mountain Multigenerational Center, staff may have to assess the actual impact after a large number of passes is sold.

Storment asked how the pass system is monitored.

Widman replied that the Center uses the RecTrac registration system and all customers check in at the front desk, where they receive a wrist band to indicate that they have checked in.

Page asked about the type of feedback received from citizens.

Widman said most feedback has been positive, however, some patrons want a more flexible structure, such as a 3-month pass during the summer school break, which the proposed fee adjustments will address.

Page asked how refunds were processed.

Widman replied that if a pass still has value, it is pro-rated and a refund is processed via the City Finance Division. Also a written request canceling the pass is required for documentation.

LeRoy Brady made a motion, John Storment seconded, and it was unanimously carried that the Board recommend that action be taken to adopt the proposed fee adjustments at the Red Mountain Multigenerational Center, as presented.

### **Hawes Loop Connector Trail**

Joe Holmwood said this item is a follow-up to the January 8 public hearing hosted by the Parks Board, at which much citizen input was received regarding the proposal to have the City become involved in realigning the Hawes Loop Connector Trail. The majority of the public input received was positive regarding: 1) the Parks Board conducting a public hearing in a timely manner to gather input; and 2) the City considering taking a leadership role to have this proposal happen with partners.

Tim Barnard provided background information on the Hawes Loop Connector Trail relocation issue. He said that the Connector Trail was not included in the recently adopted Mesa 2025 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and also that Parks and Recreation Division staff has limited experience in building and managing mountain-type trails. Staff realizes this is a unique opportunity for volunteer involvement, however, staff also realizes that volunteer projects do not just happen; they involve coordination, time, equipment, some money, follow-up, and cooperation from a variety of potential partners.

Staff has identified the following issues regarding the City's role in making this project a reality:

1. Liability – Is the City willing to assume the liability for the trail during construction and once it is completed?
2. Trail Construction – How will the trail be designed and constructed? Who will provide design and labor? Is there a need to follow normal City design and construction standards for a project like this?
3. Ongoing Maintenance – Once completed, who and how will the trail be maintained?
4. Safety and Emergency – Once completed, who will regularly monitor the activity and users on the trail? Who will be responsible for emergency medical assistance in case of user injury while on the trail?
5. Priority of this Project – Where does this project fit in with the City's overall trail and parks plan?
6. Access Easements – Will the City obtain easements for the property needed for the trail?
7. Proximity to Neighbors – Are there issues related to the proximity of the trail to neighbors?
8. Costs – How much will the project cost?

Barnard said that staff conducted much research on these issues and received assistance and information from various City departments, outside agencies, and volunteers. Based on the information obtained, the following responses to the issues were presented:

**Liability** – The City Attorney's Office reviewed the project and the process to cover the volunteers through Worker's Compensation will be established. With regard to liability, the recreational use statute would apply and staff has confirmed that the U.S. Forest Service standards will be followed during construction.

**Trail Construction** – Representatives from the Mountain Bike Association of Arizona (MBAA) and the U.S. Forest Service have offered to design and construct the trail. These agencies routinely provide this type of trail building by utilizing volunteer staff and members. The City has begun to establish guidelines for having volunteers work on projects and the City Attorney's Office is confident the necessary details will be finalized to allow for the volunteers to construct the trail.

**Ongoing Maintenance** – The MBAA will conduct trail maintenance projects twice a year, which will help mitigate the maintenance concerns and Parks and Recreation maintenance staff will provide the remaining maintenance as needed, based on the guidelines outlined in the U.S. Forest Service Trail Construction and Maintenance Handbook, 2000 Edition.

**Public Safety** – Staff has contacted City of Mesa Police and Fire departments and they indicated they would include this area in their regular patrols and emergency response areas. They recommended that the development of the new trail include mile marker signs along the trail and the placement of an emergency solar-powered call phone halfway up the trail, which would assist emergency response efforts.

**Priority and Its Relationship to the Parks Master Plan** – The portion of trail being proposed does not make a direct connection to or enhance the existing trails plan outlined in the recently approved Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2025. Staff does believe, however, that the project

is valid as it provides a connection to a series of loop trails that currently exist partly within city boundaries and mostly in the adjacent national forest. The trails are utilized by a variety of users including hikers, mountain bikers and equestrian users.

**Access Easements** – The City currently maintains a water storage tank which is located approximately 1,300 feet directly east from the terminus of Hawes Road. The water tank is accessed via an existing easement granted by Continental Service Corporation which provides a 30-foot wide access road for the City to the storage tank. This would become the new access point for the proposed trail relocation. Staff has had conversations with the owner of the easement and they have indicated interest in possibly relocating the easement slightly north; they have also considered deeding the property to the City. There would be financial costs incurred with the relocation of the easement. It has not been determined what the City share of those costs would be and there is no identified funding source for this cost. However, this is an issue to be resolved independently of the Hawes Loop Trail project. This easement is not absolutely necessary to the success of the project. It will be necessary, however, for the City to obtain easements from two landowners who control land on which the relocated trail will rest. Based on preliminary information, this does not appear to present a problem with either landowner.

**Proximity to Neighbors** – The subdivision final plat has been reviewed and accepted by the appropriate City departments and construction of the necessary infrastructure (utilities, streets, etc.) has begun. On December 27, 2002, Recreation staff contacted the agent handling escrow for the sale of these properties and was told that only 4-6 lots had down payments on them at that time and sales had not been finalized. The agent assured staff he would make the customers aware of the proposal to relocate the trail.

### **Fiscal Impacts**

The MBAA has indicated they could build the trail for a cost of \$1,000. And while it is realized that most bikers/hikers carry cell phones, staff concurs with the Public Safety recommendation that the trail include mile marker signs for better location coordinates (8 total = \$300) and that a solar-powered emergency phone (similar to the Code Blue CB 1-e = \$3,600) be installed. Total cost for the proposed trail relocation by the MBAA and U.S. Forest Service, which includes volunteer construction, signs, and emergency phone, would be \$4,900.

If the decision is made to follow the public bidding process, the design and construction procedures would require the use of contracted professional design and construction services and the cost would be approximately \$75,000.

Staff has researched the regular maintenance cost for similar type trails (from the Western Trailbuilders Association), which averages \$0.90 per linear foot, or approximately \$5,300 annually for the proposed one-mile trail. The MBAA has offered to provide two maintenance projects on the trail each year, which could reduce the annual maintenance costs possibly by one-half to \$2,500 annually. The Parks and Recreation Division does not have funds available in the current budget or the proposed FY03-04 and FY04-05 budgets for maintenance of the trail.

Barnard said that staff recognizes that this is a viable, collaborative project between the residents and user groups. Staff also believes that because of budget constraints, the City should enter into more partnerships such as this.

Holmwood acknowledged that Bill Puffer was in the audience. Puffer has been involved in many environmental projects in the East Mesa area. He put a great deal of work into this proposal and his efforts are appreciated.

Storment said he is in favor of this project, and asked which agency would supervise the project.

Barnard replied that there is usually a construction inspector from the City of Mesa monitoring the project. Either Engineering inspectors or Parks Maintenance staff will monitor the trail construction.

Storment asked who would be in charge of the annual maintenance.

Barnard replied that the annual maintenance would be done by Parks and Recreation maintenance staff in conjunction with the MBAA.

Holmwood said the City will be counting heavily on the MBAA to keep City staff informed of needed maintenance since the trail maintenance is outside the purview of the City's regular maintenance duties.

Barnard said trail maintenance is usually not done on a regular basis. Users, however, pick up trash on the trail and report problems.

Robert Brinton said there was good attendance at the January public hearing and everyone was positive. He asked if staff has received any negative comments.

Barnard said City staff has received no negative comments.

David Peterson said this effort will result in a nice trail with mile markers and a cell phone. He suggested that signs be erected notifying users when they are leaving the maintained trail and entering the natural forest.

Barnard said signs stating that users are entering the Tonto National Forest will be installed.

Dyer said he is in favor of this type of project involving community groups. He asked about the \$75,000 cost if it has to go through the formal City process.

Holmwood said if the decision is made to go through the bidding process, \$75,000 is an estimated cost.

White said if this project has to go through the formal process, it will be a lengthy process and the cost would probably be greater than estimated. Citizen input has been received and funds are limited. This project needs to be undertaken now and the media needs to be notified of the partnership that is making it happen.

David Peterson made a motion, John Dyer seconded, and it was unanimously carried that the Board support the proposed Hawes Loop Connector Trail relocation plan brought forward by the Mountain Bike Association of Arizona and the U.S. Forest Service.

Stormont asked about the cost of trail maintenance.

Barnard replied that the \$1,000 cost was brought forward to the City by the MBAA and other stakeholders. The lineal foot construction costs would be over \$5,000 if there were no volunteer groups to do the construction.

Tom Culp, MBAA, said it will be a natural trail. The MBAA will work together with the U. S. Forest Service and the City to construct and maintain the trail.

Councilmember Rex Griswold raised a question about the need for the special emergency phone since most people carry cell phones and the Mesa Police Department practices bike riding there. There is a need for a locked gate at the bottom, however. He believes this will be a good partnership.

### **FY03-04 and FY04-05 Budgets**

Holmwood reported that the City budget has not yet been submitted to City Council. In a meeting last week with Budget and Research staff, it was learned that when budget estimates initially came out, it was reported that the City budget was \$21 million out of synch to maintain the current level of service; however, that figure was revised to \$28 million. Last week it was again revised and is now \$32 million. That means the City will probably be looking at other reductions and other sources of revenue. Messages/updates have been sent out to staff from the City Manager's Office; everyone is being kept informed.

Many areas are being looked at for budget reductions – 252 positions in the City are not filled, and the City is always looking for new revenues. The fee adjustments recommended at the January Parks Board meeting will generate \$200,000 to \$250,000 in new revenues. The Board will be kept informed on the City budget process.

### **Capital Improvements/Park Projects**

Barnard reported that the grand opening celebration for Augusta Ranch Park occurred on February 8. Also, City Council recently approved funding via Quality of Life funds for lighting of Fremont Junior High soccer field. Bond money was approved for improvements at several aquatic facilities.

Barnard reported on the following planning issues:

- Staff has begun meeting with equestrians in northeast Mesa, who want to add trail access near the 202 freeway and Val Vista Drive.
- A public meeting was held in December with BMX freestyle bikers who have been using Reed Skate Park, which is a variation of the use of that site. A subcommittee has been established to find alternatives for these users.
- Red Mountain Park will be impacted by Red Mountain Freeway segments currently under construction in east Mesa. Staff meets regularly with ADOT and other officials to insure that the recreation aspect of the park is maintained.

Brinton asked about the presentation made to the Parks Board in September 2003 concerning a BMX track in north Mesa.

Palmberg said staff has spoken with the City's Real Estate Division. Negotiations continue with the BMX representatives and other properties are also being pursued. Real Estate staff will continue to address this issue.

Page asked about the location of the equestrian access.

Barnard replied that the area is south of the freeway near McKellips and Val Vista. The area could be linked with the multi-use path system and also land north of the freeway is a possibility.

## **Video**

The newly-developed division video, "The Benefits of Parks and Recreation," was shown. The video will be shown in public service announcement spots on Channel 11.

Storment suggested that some of the tape could be included when the City is ready to start talking about the bond election. The public needs to understand that the programs and facilities provided by Parks and Recreation do not just happen; they require public support and tax monies. The video could use the wording "bonds made it happen, bonds will continue to make it happen."

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

White reported that she gave the opening remarks at the Augusta Ranch Park dedication on February 8; Storment was also present. The event was well attended by neighborhood residents.

White also reported that the bond subcommittee has had two meetings to date.

Dyer said he attended a meeting with the Mesa Parent Youth Athletic Association committee for field allocations. The meeting pointed out the need for real estate in the East Valley.

Brinton reported that the Farnsworth family will be sponsoring a two-day Mesa Storytelling Festival in October. The event will be held at the Centennial Center and will bring in seven national storytellers. Brinton recently attended an out-of-state conference on storytelling, which is very popular with all age groups.

## **Director's Report**

Holmwood gave the following reports:

### Fee Waiver

A fee waiver request was received and administratively approved for the Cesar Chavez Celebration to be held April 6, 2003 at Pioneer Park. It is a good event that is co-sponsored by the City.

### Bond Issue

The Board bond subcommittee has met two times. Staff has spoken to the Deputy City Manager about a citywide bond issue and was told that Jenny Sheppard, Special Assistant to the City Manager, is the contact person for the bond initiative. Sheppard will be invited to the next bond subcommittee meeting to get feedback from the subcommittee on suggestions for the proposed bond issue.

### Catering Contract

City Council recently awarded the catering contract at Hohokam Stadium Arizona Catering. The catering services are provided during spring training.

### Staff Vacancy

The division has a staff vacancy that will be responsible for planning issues and implementation of the master plan. The position was opened for recruitment and applications received. Staff has looked at the applications and is in the process of short listing.

### Indoor Aquatic Center

Staff is developing a business plan for the proposed aquatic center. A draft has been circulated and after feedback is received, a final document will be created and appropriate meetings scheduled. The business plan document is needed before any fundraising efforts are undertaken. All parties involved in this project agree that it is a worthy project. The aquatic center needs to be a world-class facility, however, the timing is bad considering the downturn in the economy.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph H. Holmwood  
Assistant Community Services Manager