

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 December 13, 2007.

Members Present:

Frank Alger
Russ Gillard
Don Goodrum
Connie Gullatt-Whiteman
Dina Lopez
David Martinez
Michelle Udall
Marilyn Wilson

Staff Present:

Larry Alexander	Dale Furnas
Darla Armfield	Cindy Hunt
Nicole Behrman	Andrea Moore
Dawn Bies	Beverlee Nielsen
Jerry Bradney	Kym Otterstedt
Sue Deck	Kelly Rafferty
J.D. Dockstader	Rochelle Rotert
Rhett Evans	Sherry Woodley

Members Absent:

Reggie Dye, excused
Jeff Kirk, unexcused
Walter "Bud" Page, Jr., excused

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 pm by Connie Gullatt-Whiteman, Chair.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman stated that her name was misspelled on Page Two of the November 8, 2007 minutes, and with that amendment, she asked if there was a motion for approval of the minutes from the November 8, 2007 meeting. Russ Gillard made a motion, Frank Alger seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the amended minutes as written.

Public Comments

None.

Hear Presentation and Discuss Open Meeting Law

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman introduced Deputy City Attorney Alfred Smith, to give the Board an informational presentation regarding Arizona Open Meeting Law. Mr. Smith explained that his discussion would include parliamentary procedures as well as some information on the subject of "conflict of interest" that Board members may face.

The definition of an "open meeting" is any call to the general public that provides them an opportunity to observe what the government is doing and how it is being done and to also have the opportunity to comment on any item that is on the agenda. Mr. Smith said that all legal action, such as voting on an issue that is going forward or making a recommendation to the City Council, should be done during an open meeting with the door left open.

Don Goodrum questioned Mr. Smith about the Parks Board ever taking part in "legal action." Mr. Smith clarified that any Parks Board recommendation to City Council, even though Council may choose not to follow that recommendation, is "action" taken that must be done during an open meeting.

Mr. Smith explained that this Law applies not only to the City Council, but *all* advisory boards, committees and subcommittees that are chartered or authorized by the City Council and/or the City Manager.

During Mr. Smith's presentation, some key points that he brought to the Board's attention included:

- A quorum, with respect to this 11-member Parks Board, would constitute six members. Six affirmative votes would also be the majority vote for passage.
- It is best not to exchange e-mails or phone calls regarding Board issues; doing so may violate the Open Meeting Law. Staff can provide the entire Board with factual information and not be in violation of the Open Meeting Law.
- During a public meeting, staff, as well as Board members, cannot discuss any item that is not on the agenda. The reason is that citizens interested in a particular issue may not be present because they did not know that the issue would be discussed.
- An item can be placed on the agenda by the Chairperson or by three members of the Board, and the agenda must contain enough information to reasonably inform the public of the item to be discussed.
- The City of Mesa has not adopted Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Procedure. Mesa Code gives the Mayor the authority to run the City Council, and the chairperson of any board or committee sets the rules as well. They determine the order in which persons speak and establish time limits as to how long citizens may address the Council/Board. However, a chairperson can be overruled by three-quarters of their Board members.
- If agenda items include "Director's Report" and "Chair Comments", these must be informational only, and no subsequent discussions by the Board may take place.
- Agendas must be available 24 hours prior to meeting.
- The purpose of outlining "conflict of interest" is to limit the possibility of personal interest being a factor in the decisions that are being made by Board members. The City of Mesa's Ethics Handbook recommends that members avoid even the appearance of impropriety, which then builds trust in government. It prohibits financial and ownership interest and applies to all Board members, spouses, children and stepchildren, parents and stepparents, in-laws, grandchildren, or grandparents. If a conflict of interest arises, Board members must state the conflict on the record during an open meeting, and from that point forward, must not participate in any discussions, deliberations, or votes regarding the issue.
- If a Board member accepts a gift from someone with business before the Board and the gift exceeds \$50 in value or includes tickets for sporting events or entertainment tickets, regardless of their value, a statement must be filed with the City Clerk's Office stating that a gift was accepted.

Mr. Smith concluded his presentation by showing Board members the Open Meeting Law Handbook that is available through the Arizona Ombudsman's Office. These free handbooks are available to Board members and contain the entire statute in detail as a reference.

Mr. Smith may be reached at the City Attorney's Office, 480.644.2325, if questions arise.

Russ Gillard asked Mr. Smith if any City boards/commissions have a provision in the bylaws for passing proposals with a majority of members present rather than a majority of members on the Board. He also asked if the bylaws specify a certain number of members that must be present before that provision applies.

Mr. Smith stated that currently no boards/commissions have adopted that provision. If this particular Parks Board were to specify a minimum number of members needing to be present to pass an item, that number, according to Mr. Smith, would be six members.

Rhett Evans asked Mr. Smith if a subcommittee chairperson is not present, who takes the lead at the meeting?

Mr. Smith replied that if a quorum still remains, a second chair could be designated. Through a motion, another subcommittee member can be second in command and can run the meeting in absence of the chair. If a vote is needed at that time, and only two members are present, it is best to table the vote for that meeting and bring the item back at a later date in order to prevent a one-one split vote.

Hear Presentation and Discuss Fit City

Cindy Hunt from Recreation Programs introduced the Board to a new City program that is in the start-up phase, called Fit City. Fit City is a national program that Mesa has decided to join. Ms. Hunt explained that staff wanted to come up with a program that would have a great impact on the community. They decided that Fit City was an excellent option to try to help people learn to make healthier lifestyle choices and make an effort to reduce obesity rates among children and adults alike. All areas of the PRCF Department will be working together to develop the program. A New Year's introductory kick-off will begin on January 19th at 9 am, with a Health Fair and 5K Walk at Red Mountain Park. Eleven additional activities/challenges will be taking place every month throughout the coming year at various parks and recreational facilities in Mesa.

In Ms. Hunt's presentation, she pointed out some statistics on obesity for the state of Arizona:

- According to height and weight data, 21.1% of adults and 12% of youth in Arizona are obese
- 68% of Arizona high school students do not meet recommended levels of physical activity
- 46.6% of Arizona adults do not meet the recommended guidelines for moderate and/or vigorous physical activity

Ms. Hunt also told the Board that it has been said today's generation might be the first to outlive their children if childhood obesity continues to increase. The typical child spends 35 hours a week in front of the television/movie screen and computer. Statistics also show that families who work out together and motivate each other stay with the Fit City Program much longer; therefore, the program strives to meet the entire family's needs, not just one segment.

By entering an essay contest, two Fit City families have already been selected. Their progress will be followed throughout the year; the East Valley Tribune and Fox Channel 10 will also be interviewing them and following their progress.

Registration for this event goes live on the web the week of December 10th, and additional information/community events will be posted on the website, www.MesaFitCity.com.

Many sponsors, including the Foundation for Mesa Parks & Recreation, have come on-board with donations, food products, sport clothing, etc. At the end of the year, if families participate in all 12 challenges, they will be eligible to participate in a drawing to win six round trip airline tickets from Allegiant Air.

The cost to participate in the Fit City event is very affordable: \$5 per participant, \$20 for all 12 challenges for a family of 5 or less (\$5 per person for each additional participant).

Mr. Goodrum asked Ms. Hunt if she knew what kind of participation numbers to expect this first year.

Ms. Hunt said that she is expecting approximately 400 participants to register in the program. By advertising in the next issue of TimeOut and many other avenues of publicity, including advertising from many of our downtown restaurants, she is hoping for a good turnout.

Mr. Evans added that many large organizations throughout corporate America have embraced similar programs to encourage nutrition and health. If the City can bring many local large businesses together and Mesa can become the hub of a “health awareness” group, we are hoping to see this program grow as people see the need to take charge of their health and find facilities and programs available for families to do together.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman said that she visited the Fit City website before coming to today’s meeting and noted that it connected to the national information. She commented that it was very user friendly and colorful, and a lot of good information was available.

David Martinez asked Ms. Hunt if other cities are invited to participate. Ms. Hunt responded yes; and the Adaptive staff has assured wheelchair accessibility.

Mr. Evans encouraged Board members to pick up some Fit City brochures and put them in the lobbies of their work places to help the City advertise.

Mr. Martinez asked Mr. Evans if there were costs to the City for this program.

Mr. Evans replied that many sponsors are providing their company’s products as well as sponsorship donations. Fit City activities are being held at facilities that the City owns and manages, so other than the cost for staff time, there are no associated costs to PRCF. Staff is trying to make this a strong program and have reallocated funds to put more monies towards Fit City.

Chair Comments

None.

Director’s Comments

Mr. Evans discussed the following:

Washington Activity Center (WAC) Anniversary – The WAC will be celebrating their 30th year in existence on Friday, December 21st, from 2:30 to 7:30 pm. Board members are invited to stop by for a piece of anniversary cake. Located at 44 E. 5th Street, near University Drive and Center Street, the WAC has played a big part in that community, hosting the Head Start programs and many other recreation programs for those children in that area.

Winter Nationals Baseball Tournament – The City will be hosting this baseball tournament during Christmas school break, December 27th through January 3rd, and will be utilizing three of our facilities, Gene Autry, Red Mountain, and Hohokam Stadium. A majority of the participating teams are from out of town, which helps Mesa's economy by filling up hotel rooms during a time when hotels are typically slower.

Parks Board Facility Tour – In an effort to try to accommodate each Board member's schedule, next month staff has decided to keep the regularly scheduled meeting on January 10th, but adjust the time to 4:00 pm. The meeting will last only an hour, ending at 5:00 pm, so that Board members can take a ride in a City van to visit some of our facilities and see some activities taking place.

The Board was surveyed and results suggested that Board members wanted to visit Hohokam Stadium, the WAC, Webster Recreation Center/Gym, and the two potential ballfield relocation sites (the retention basin near I-60, and the 202 Freeway site). This will be a west side tour, which will keep the travel time to a minimum, thereby being able to complete both the meeting and tour no later than 6:30 pm.

Mr. Evans asked the Board members for their input as to future agenda items for the upcoming year. He said that January's agenda would include an update on the Riverview/Waveyard project.

Marilyn Wilson said she was expecting today to hear a summary from each of the subcommittee chairpersons regarding their last meeting.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman stated that following today's regular Board meeting, the subcommittees will all meet, two of them for the first time: the Finance subcommittee and Parks & Facilities subcommittee. She said that she has asked to have brief subcommittee summary reports placed on the agenda each month as a standing item, beginning in January.

Mr. Gillard said that in the near future he would like to have a discussion about the relocation of the ballfields, then asked Mr. Evans if that was part of the Waveyard discussion in January.

Mr. Evans said that he was hoping to have a Board Report out by January so that Board members could take action on the two ballfield relocation sites.

Mr. Goodrum requested having a calendar or schedule of key events and key decisions that would be occurring during the next six months to a year time frame. A review of the calendar could become a standing agenda item that could help the Board generate future agenda items of interest; Mr. Goodrum thought this could be a good planning tool for everyone.

Ms. Wilson said that if the Board was asked to express their opinions regarding the ballfield relocation sites, it seemed to Ms. Wilson that the tour should occur *before* the meeting because the Board members would then have just had the opportunity to see the sites and be better informed to take action during the meeting.

Mr. Evans thought Ms. Wilson's comment was a good point, and if the Board agreed, the tour could be moved to 4:00 pm, and the meeting could follow. The Board members agreed that having the tour first would be better, allowing for more daylight hours to see the sites. A meeting would follow the tour, ending at approximately 6:30 pm.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked to keep an agenda item (as time permits) that gives the Board an opportunity to hear presentations from staff that introduces Board members to current programs PRCF is offering. She also requested that the Work Plan periodically appear on the agenda so that it is discussed and kept up to date.

Mr. Martinez asked if the regular meetings were to continue being held the second Thursday of each month. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman and Mr. Evans said they were to remain the same in 2008.

Reports on Meetings and/or Events Attended by Board Members

Mr. Goodrum and Mr. Gillard said they attended the Turkey Trot at Red Mountain Park during the Thanksgiving holiday.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman reported that she and Mr. Gillard attended the Board & Committee Chair and Vice-Chair orientation meeting on November 13th with other members from the various boards throughout the City. Debbie Spinner, City Attorney, led the in-depth discussion regarding the Arizona Open Meeting Law, and Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman was given the opportunity to ask Ms. Spinner specific questions. Mayor Hawker was also in attendance at this meeting.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 1:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Rhett Evans
Parks, Recreation and Commercial Facilities Department Director