

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 100 N. Center Street, Mesa on November 9, 2006.

Members Present:

Reggie Dye
Russ Gillard
Don Goodrum
Connie Gullatt-Whiteman
Jeff Kirk
Walter "Bud" Page, Jr.
Marilyn Wilson

Staff Present:

Darla Armfield
Rhett Evans
Mike Holste
Cindy Hunt
Mary Lindemuth
Andrea Moore
Terri Palmberg
Jenny Sheppard

Members Absent:

LeRoy Brady, excused
Dina Lopez, excused
David Martinez, excused
Bernadine Mooney, excused

The meeting was called to order at 12:01 p.m. by Bud Page, Chair. Mr. Page thanked Assistant Director Mike Holste and Aquatics Supervisor Darla Armfield for the tour of the aquatic facilities.

Approval of Minutes

Connie Gullatt-Whiteman requested that the October 12 meeting minutes be amended to state that in her remarks she would like to have all the citizens of Mesa involved in discussions regarding Riverview and other west Mesa land use issues, not just west Mesa residents, as ultimately all are affected. Marilyn Wilson moved to accept the minutes from the meetings of October 5, 2006 and October 12, 2006 as amended. Russ Gillard seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Chair's Comments

Chair Bud Page informed the Board that he had invited Assistant Director Terri Palmberg and Historic Preservation Planner Stephanie Bruning of Neighborhood Services to speak before the Rotary Club regarding the 1912 Pioneer Park steam engine. He thanked them for their informative talk. Mr. Page noted that the Rotarians sponsor an annual *Christmas in Guayamas* gift and candy distribution. Last year \$4,200 was raised. Ms. Palmberg asked if the Rotary Club could provide a similar sponsorship for the steam engine. Mr. Page responded that he has a meeting planned with journalist Slim Smith of the East Valley Tribune the following week to explore opportunities for

running a feature article on the train. Ms. Palmberg had assembled a packet of information on the old locomotive in preparation for Mr. Page's meeting.

Review Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2025

Development and Strategic Planner Andrea Moore addressed the Board to review the current status of the 2025 Plan. Russ Gillard suggested that, given the lengthy nature of the 19 page document, Ms. Moore point out the relevant highlights. Ms. Moore agreed and provided the following updates:

- Great progress has been made in developing operating standards relating to maintenance, facilities and programs. A staff squad formed and wrote the standards.
- Acquiring and developing parks according to approved parks and open space guidelines is lagging, as well as opening new facilities, due to scarce resources. Some land has been acquired at McKellips and Ellsworth, next to Zaharis Elementary School.
- The Multi-Use Paths have been transferred to the Transportation Division and are no longer under Parks jurisdiction. Transportation has greater resources with which to maintain and develop trails. Another segment along the south canal is in the final design stage.
- Funding strategies are awaiting direction from Council on bonds and CDBG funding. Council has not yet set a schedule for the bond issue.
- Developing indoor facilities and recreation centers to meet population/facility guidelines has been placed on hold due to lack of operating and maintenance monies.
- Partnerships are working well. Intergovernmental agreements with Mesa Public Schools and Gilbert Public Schools are successful.
- The fees and charges review process is in place with the Parks & Recreation Board.
- Developing a strategy for closing facilities and replacing with new where demographic changes take place is ongoing and as needed. The Falcon Field pool closed, the Gene Autry Tennis Center was privatized, the Broadway Recreation Center is now run under the auspices of MASD, and four Kleinman Park tennis courts are now a wheels court. At present, nothing new is on the horizon. A future squad may review this issue in more detail. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked what a squad is. Ms. Moore replied that it is a staff group that would be formed to tackle this and other issues.
- Establishment of a process to evaluate recreation revenue strategies to reduce subsidies has been completed. The Fees & Charges Subcommittee of the Parks Board convenes yearly for this purpose. The first meeting of the current fiscal year will be November 15th. The Making Waves sponsorship program whereby scholarships are granted for swimming lessons is successful and ongoing.
- Developing new funding sources is on hold due to lack of availability of matching City dollars. Reggie Dye asked the significance of a blank status box. Ms. Moore responded that it signifies that no work has yet been done.
- An interactive map for the Parks website has been designed and WebTrac is now available for class reservations. It is scheduled to be available fairly soon.
- A sponsorship position is expected to be recruited in the near future and should help meet some service delivery goals through enhanced partnering.
- Increased marketing activities and public communications are evolving based on available resources.
- Expansion of open spaces and park development remains on hold.

- A market survey was conducted two years ago to determine Mesa residents' wants and desires with regard to parks, open spaces and recreation.

Mr. Gillard asked whether Proposition 106 had passed, as 105 failed. Ms. Moore responded that it had not yet been called. The Board complimented Ms. Moore for her work on the master plan.

Report on Special Events - Subcommittee

Mr. Holste addressed the Board to report on the subcommittee recommendations. It is important to note that the City Council has provided new direction. Special events are no longer required to be profitable; charging enough to cover direct costs is sufficient. As an example, the Pow Wow was charged just under \$500, as opposed to the full rental fee. And, while it is not legal to give priority to groups solely on the basis of prior involvement, use of the criteria form might be acceptable. The subcommittee proposed that a Board subcommittee convene to review the forms and provide recommendations to the Director. The Director would then make the final decision on the event award. At this point, the City Council is awaiting the opinion of the City Attorney. As Cinco de Mayo is the event under consideration and is six months out, a timely decision is necessary.

Mr. Gillard explained that the subcommittee had quite a bit of discussion regarding the first question on the selection criteria template, which asks about prior event experience and non-profit versus for-profit status. The question was asked whether a standing subcommittee would be required. It was decided that an ad hoc committee would be formed if and when necessary as only one event is currently on the table.

Mr. Page requested clarification. Acting Director Jenny Sheppard responded that while the City Attorney nixed awarding events based solely on whether or not an organization had prior experience with the specific event being requested, assigning weight as one criterion among many was permissible. A draft policy along with the proposed template will be submitted to the Council for review. Upon approval, Council will implement and send letters to affected organizations to make them aware of the new policy. The Tax & Licensing office coordinates various City Department comments and is able to provide feedback regarding event implementation.

Marilyn Wilson commented that she likes the selection criteria sheet and appreciated the clarification on prior event experience. She asked why a Mesa based non-profit is awarded more points than a non-profit with prior event experience? Recreation Supervisor Cindy Hunt replied that the benefit to the City of Mesa is greater. Assistant Director Terri Palmberg commented that the incoming director, Rhett Evans, will meet with the Mayor to set direction. However, as the Cinco de Mayo event is really about five months out, having the subcommittee in place and ready to review application would be wise. Mr. Gillard said that the subcommittee is ready to receive responses. Newly assigned Parks & Recreation Director Rhett Evans addressed the Board and stated that he would ensure that the letters be mailed out by December 1st. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman made a motion to submit the proposed selection criteria template to the Mayor and Council. Mr. Dye seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports on Meetings and/or Events Attended

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman reported that she attended a luncheon honoring Ms. Palmberg's induction into the ASU Hall of Fame. The Board offered Ms. Palmberg congratulations and thanked her for her many years of dedicated service to both the City of Mesa and to the parks and recreation field.

Staff Updates

Mr. Holste reported that October was a very busy month for recreation staff. Highlights included:

- The Pumpkin Festival at the Red Mountain Multigenerational Center.
- Recreation Coordinator Dana Hawkins will assume Adult Sports duties.
- The Washington Activity Center took a tour of the Cardinal's Stadium.
- The Jefferson Recreation Center's successful Fall Fest attracted approximately 500 attendees.
- The Webster Recreation Center's Fall Fest was equally well-attended with over 600 participants.
- Adaptive is gearing up for Power Soccer, which will be hosted by ASU this year. 300 athletes attend the event and hail from all over the country and Canada. Their stays generate significant local economic impact.
- Ms. Hunt reported on the success story of wheelchair athlete Zach Wharton and the grant awarded to Zach and his teammates.

Ms. Palmberg addressed the Board and noted that per the latest news release that quoted Governor Janet Napolitano, both propositions 105 and 106 regarding trust land failed. The Governor indicated that she would continue her trust land efforts over her next term.

- Updates from Ms. Palmberg's area began with an announcement that the Pioneer train group will meet with the Chandler Rail Museum to discuss the steam engine's future. Community meetings will be held as well, dates and times to be announced.
- A Parks Foundation fundraiser will be held November 15 at Daphne's Greek Café. 20% of the proceeds will be donated to the Foundation.
- Walmart presented the Foundation for Parks & Recreation with a \$750 donation.
- The Beverly Park wall is moving along. Emerson Elementary School students are writing essays in a competition to win monies for a playground donation.
- Reed Park is being converted to a wheels court, which will allow bicycles in. With reduced numbers of park rangers, enforcing a skates only policy is tenuous at best and subjects the City to liability concerns.
- Ms. Palmberg thanked the sponsors of the Making Waves program for another tremendous year. Over \$17,000 was donated allowing 852 swimming lesson scholarships to be awarded, as well as 35 competitive scholarships!
- The local ABC news affiliate this morning announced the Mesa Cemetery as one of the seven new wonders of the area!
- Ms. Palmberg thanked Ms. Sheppard for being a great transitional leader.

Mr. Gillard inquired about the status of the trees at Meadowgreen Park. Ms. Palmberg responded that the trees have been planted and that a plaque recognizing the Park Foundation's donation will be installed. \$5,000 was also donated for playground equipment.

From the Registration and Reservations area, Andrea Moore reported:

- That two CDBG grants were received; one for lights at Jefferson Park, and one for playground renovation at Kingsborough Park.
- While the Registration/Reservation area is being reorganized as part of the general City reorganization, production of the Timeout brochure continues.
- Youth group facility and field allocations ran smoothly thanks to Melanie Dykstra who manages this twice yearly process.
- Implementation of new cash handling procedures continues. Only Registration/Reservation staff may handle monies. Program staff are now separate from the collection of fees.
- Problems continue with enforcement of ramada reservations due to reduced Park Ranger staffing. Customers arrive at previously reserved (and paid for) ramadas to discover other people occupying the space.

Director's Report

Ms. Sheppard remarked that she enjoyed working with Parks staff, as well as with the Board. She announced that Community Services Director Patricia Sorensen has been transferred to an executive manager position. New Parks Director Rhett Evans will now report to Bryan Raines.

Mr. Page thanked Ms. Sheppard for her hard work. He reminded all of the Big, Fat, Greek fundraiser for the Foundation taking place within a week!

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman requested an organization chart be provided to the Board at the next meeting and asked how the changeover would affect the Board. Mr. Evans responded that he could foresee no major changes. The opportunities afforded by the synergy generated by combining Parks with Commercial Facilities are exciting, as are all the other changes.

Ms. Wilson clarified that the next Parks Board meeting is scheduled for December 14th.

Ms. Wilson made the motion to adjourn. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:02.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhett Evans
Parks, Recreation and Commercial Facilities Department Director