

Parks and Recreation Board  
Meeting Minutes

The Parks and Recreation Board of the City of Mesa met for a regular meeting at the Parks and Recreation Administration Office, 100 North Center Street, on October 21, 2004.

Members Present:

LeRoy Brady  
Robert Brinton  
John Dyer  
Russ Gillard  
Connie Gullatt-Whiteman  
Jeff Kirk  
Walter "Bud" Page, Jr.  
David Peterson  
John Storment

Members Absent:

Dina Lopez, excused  
Bernadine Mooney, unexcused

Staff Present:

Tim Barnard  
Steve Crider  
Dave Dunne  
Melanie Dykstra  
Mike Holste  
Aimee Manis  
Kym Otterstedt  
Terri Palmberg  
Diane Rogers  
Bob White  
Sherry Woodley

Others Present:

Andy Clark  
Rosalee Darby

The meeting was called to order at 12:02 p.m. by Robert Brinton, Chair.

**Approval of Minutes**

Russ Gillard requested that page 4 of the September 9, 2004 minutes reflect that he asked a question about recovery of costs for alcohol in parks, and the staff response was that it was a change of direction.

Mr. Brinton requested that the minutes be amended to show that his comments on page 6, paragraph 4, read "...list of parks geographically near or in each district..."

Mr. Brinton also requested that the minutes be amended to specify that the Board motion on page 6 included the recommendation that the City retain a \$20.00 fee for spirituous liquor in parks.

Bud Page made a motion, David Peterson seconded, and the minutes from the meeting of September 9, 2004 were unanimously approved, as amended.

**Public Comments**

No public comments.

**Fees and Charges Subcommittee**

Bob White reported that annually the Parks and Recreation Division conducts a comprehensive review of division fees, which is required by Administrative Regulation 2.2. Cost recovery has been a vital component for public agencies nationwide and many conduct similar fee review processes. For the past four years, the division has utilized the participation and expertise of its Parks Board members along with staff for the review process.

Since August 2004, division staff have been conducting the annual program/service cost analysis. The Fees and Charges Subcommittee will use this data in determining fee adjustments for recommendation to the Board in January/February 2005.

The tentative schedule for the subcommittee is:

- November 2004 - meet to review FY03/04 fee adjustment process and discuss division cost recovery philosophy and goals for FY04/05.
- December 2004 - provide status report to Parks and Recreation Board and receive data from fee survey results of other Valley parks and recreation agencies.
- December 2004 - meet to review and discuss staff fee adjustment recommendations for FY04/05 and decide on final recommendations to be presented at the January/February 2005 Board meeting.
- January/February 2005 - Board approves the Division fees and charges, which go before the City Council for final approval April/May 2005.

LeRoy Brady, John Dyer, and Connie Gullatt-Whiteman volunteered to serve on the Fees and Charges Subcommittee.

### **Park Ranger Program**

Steve Crider reported that the Park Ranger Program was established by City Council in 1987 with the intent and purpose of providing park visitors a safe environment through the use and visibility of Park Rangers. The initial focus was on five core city parks.

Recognizing the value of the program, the City Council allocated an additional 15 man-hours per week to the program during FY90/91 and 91/92, and in 1993, by Ordinance No. 2763, the Rangers were granted the authority to issue citations. The ordinance gives Park Rangers the ability to resolve violations that escalate beyond minor park disturbances. Through education, visibility, and enforcement, Mesa Park Rangers provide a critical service to visitors to Mesa's parks.

Mr. Crider further reported that in recent years, City Council has questioned the budget impact of the Park Ranger Program and whether there may be more cost-effective alternatives. Previously, a staff team from the Parks and Recreation Division and Police Department presented its recommendation to City Council to continue the Park Ranger Program as it is currently designed. Council agreed at that time; however, during recent fiscal budgets, additional analysis has been requested.

Alternatives considered included: 1) merging with the Mesa Police Department; 2) eliminating the Park Ranger Program and letting the Mesa Police Department provide the service; and 3) keeping only the basic Park Ranger Program service. It is staff's recommendation that the City Council continue its support of the Park Ranger Program.

Mr. Brinton said a presentation was made to the Board in October 2002, and at that time, it was the Board's recommendation that the Park Ranger Program remain under the supervision of the Parks and Recreation Division for cost-effective reasons.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked about training and education for Park Rangers.

Mr. Crider replied that new hires receive 40 hours of classroom instruction, which covers report writing, City codes, park ranger procedures, use of force, etc. Also, new hires are required to attend the City's various training programs. The on-the-job training process involves new hires riding with experienced park rangers for 3-4 weeks to learn correct procedures.

Mr. Dyer asked about staff morale and workload due to staffing shortages.

Mr. Crider replied that the Park Rangers try to keep the workplace upbeat. Program cutbacks have resulted in few rangers on duty during the daytime and fewer visits to Mesa schools to monitor parks and recreation facilities and programs.

Ms. Palmberg said problems are being addressed as they occur. Retention basins are not being monitored at the level they used to be and sports staff is handling some of the responsibilities previously allocated as ranger duties; however, some things are not getting done.

Mr. Brinton said he supports the Park Ranger Program because if Parks and Recreation did not have it, the responsibilities would go to the Mesa Police. This program is more economical.

Mr. Stormont asked for a definition of "calls for service" and questioned having less Park Ranger presence at the skate park.

Mr. Crider replied that a call for service is received from the City's Base 8 when a citizen wants to meet with a Park Ranger. It could be that someone is locked out of their car or there is a ramada reservation conflict. It is a call for a ranger to be dispatched to a park rather than a ranger observing something as he/she is monitoring a park.

Concerning Reed Skate Park, when it opened, the Park Ranger Program had about 34 part-time staff and had a presence there. Currently a park ranger whose shift begins at 5 a.m. stops by in the early morning. When ranger staff begin their shifts in the afternoon, Reed is one of the first parks they go to (after school hours).

Mr. Stormont asked about current staffing and budget for the program.

Mr. Crider said the program currently has 8 full-time equivalencies (FTEs); 3 part-time at 25 hours a week; and 5 at less than 20 hours a week. The annual budget for the program is approximately \$460,000, with about \$420,000 being for personal services.

Mr. Stormont said he appreciates the work of the Park Ranger Program.

John Stormont made a motion, Connie Gullatt-Whiteman seconded, and it was unanimously carried that the Board recommend that the City continue its support of the Park Ranger Program and allocate the appropriate funding to maintain the program.

### **Golden League Baseball**

Dave Dunne reported that the Golden League Baseball is an independent minor league with teams playing 45 home games at Hohokam Stadium between Memorial Day and Labor Day. It is an 8-team league that is not affiliated with any major league team. The league has a strong financial base that is viable for 5 years without selling one ticket. The league likes Mesa because it is a large city and has a large family base.

The attendance target is 1,000 people per game. The 5-year agreement with the City of Mesa will result in about \$250,000 revenue to the City. Also, players will stay in Mesa hotels. There are many reciprocal effects for having the team play in Mesa.

Mr. Page asked about league marketing efforts and insurance.

Mr. Dunne replied that CNBC did a story about the league, and newspaper advertising is planned. Also, there currently is a "Name the Mascot" contest on the league website and they are working with Mesa Public Schools with sponsorship by Safeway Stores. Concerning insurance, the league has a hold harmless agreement and the required paperwork is in progress.

Mr. Page asked about a concessionaire.

Mr. Dunne replied that the concessionaire is cooperating and has agreed to lower his percentages.

Mr. Brinton said Dunne worked with the Chicago Cubs, and they approved this Golden League Baseball play. The team ownership has expressed their satisfaction in working with Mr. Dunne. He is managing/operating Hohokam Stadium and doing good things for the City.

Mr. Stormont asked if the league has an office in Mesa.

Mr. Dunne replied that they are looking for some office space near the stadium. A representative with the organization is currently housed at the stadium as there is space when the Cubs are not in town.

### **Skylogix Report/Youth Sports Organization Recognition**

Mr. White reported that the City of Mesa owns, maintains, and pays the utility costs for lights at 6 elementary schools, 11 junior high schools, 4 high schools, and 15 City facilities (total of 72 ball fields). Mesa's community youth sports groups are allowed use of lights at school facilities for sports activities. The first Skylogix system equipment was installed in December 2003 at Escobedo and Jefferson parks as a pilot program. The Skylogix system's performance was so user friendly and efficient that two additional locations were brought on-line. Evergreen Park and Stapley Jr. High School were added in August and October, respectively.

The primary reason for adding Skylogix is to increase the efficiency for Park Rangers, improve customer service, and allow for future utility and manpower cost savings. The Park Rangers serve as goodwill ambassadors and enforcement officers for the City as they patrol parks, basins, and facilities. They also help monitor park activities, including manually turning ballfield lights on and off for events.

Although the City owns the lights on school facilities and there is a great deal of demand to rent the lights, the shortage of staff has prevented maximizing facility rental opportunities. The Skylogix system allows for all sports lighting to be switched on and off based on customer reservations of the facilities/fields. Sports field lighting can be remotely turned off with a phone call from any location in cases of no shows, rainouts or early termination of games. In addition, the keypad control enables confirmed use of a field before the lights will turn on, whereby the user enters an access code indicating that he/she is at the site. This function also allows for customer light usage tracking at the unit. Reports are available showing light usage (hour metering) and lamp starts per park and per field for relamping and maintenance purposes.

The purchase cost for automating sites ranges from \$2,800 to \$6,500, depending on the number of fields and electrical set-up.

Mesa community youth sports groups have embraced the concept of the system and have contributed \$10,750 towards purchase of additional system components. It is anticipated that other groups will be contributing funds by the end of the fiscal year. Community youth groups utilize both City and school fields for a total of 27,437 hours, culminating in an estimated

1,259,200 participant uses. In addition, approximately 2,652 volunteers, whose hours would convert into 323 FTEs, operate the programs. Although the City subsidized approximately \$259,066 for the FY03/04, the contribution of the volunteers to operate youth programs is "priceless."

Once installed, Skylogix costs include a service fee of \$16.50 per month for one-way communication (or \$30 per month for two-way communication). This cost includes: 24/7/365 technical support; software and firmware updates; wireless communication service; and extended warranty replacement of ARC10 electronic components that fail due to factory defect. Current savings due to more precise lighting control is estimated at \$22,122 per year.

Melanie Dykstra reported that Skylogix has been successful and has had a positive impact because of high customer demand, especially at the school facilities.

Ms. Dykstra presented certificates to Andy Clark, representing Mesa/Gilbert Arizona Youth Soccer Org. #688, and Rosalee Darby, representing San Tan Little League, for making a difference with their continued support and contributions to the youth of Mesa.

Mr. Page asked about the range of costs per unit.

Mr. White said the cost is based on the age of the facility. Some were constructed in the 1970's and the electrical service is outdated.

Mr. Page asked about a central location for monitoring the system.

Ms. Dykstra said the program currently is on her City computer, but it will soon be networked from a central server in the City's Information Services Division, thus it will be accessible to additional City staff.

Mr. Dyer said Skylogix is a wonderful program that works very well.

Mr. White said Dyer brought Skylogix to staff's attention after he attended a state trade show and visited a Skylogix booth. His push and support to staff made a difference.

### ***Making Waves Program***

Ms. Palmberg reported that each year the HoHoKam Organization Foundation uses some of the proceeds from the Cubs spring training to give back to the community. This year, it is donating funds to the *Making Waves* program. She introduced Aimee Manis, who directs the program.

Ms. Manis reported that *Making Waves* is a scholarship program that offsets the cost for swimming lessons. The *Making Waves* fee is zero; however, applicants must meet certain criteria to qualify. The response to *Making Waves*, which is part of the City's drowning prevention program, has been very good.

Bud Page, a member of the HoHoKam Organization, presented to Manis a check in the amount of \$3,000 on behalf of the HoHoKam Foundation, to be used for the *Making Waves* program.

### **Master Plan Trail Amendment**

Tim Barnard reported that several months ago, the Parks Board approved an amendment to the Trails Master Plan in response to an equestrian group that wanted access to a trail north of the Loop 202 freeway and east of Gilbert Road. The group came to the City and worked with City Council members and staff to amend the Plan, and City Council voted to approve the

amendment. The map is now updated; however, the project is not funded for construction at this time.

Mr. Page requested a status report on the Hawes Loop Trail.

Mr. Barnard said the project is moving forward and may be presented to City Council in the next few weeks. A trail builder will be hired soon and after the trail is constructed, a land survey will be completed. The Hawes Loop Trail will eventually be added to the Trails Master Plan map. The trail may be completed by the end of December and open for use in January.

### **Board Work Plan**

Mr. Brinton asked Board members to review the work plan to insure all goals expressed at the September planning workshop are included.

Ms. Palmberg said the key action steps are generic so they can accommodate a variety of actions. Staff will update the plan on a monthly basis and include with the Board meeting mailing each month.

Ms. Palmberg advised that a facility tour for Board members will be conducted in late November/early December. Board members will be contacted with possible dates for the tour.

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

Mr. Page said he attended a Mesa Association of Sports for the Disabled (MASD) event on October 9. The event included a silent auction and dinner party and it was acknowledged that a member of the Parks Board was in attendance. It was a good program and MASD provides a good service to the under privileged.

Mr. Brinton reported that on October 4, he addressed the City Council concerning the Board's recommendations for spirituous liquor in parks.

Mr. Brinton said the Mesa Storytelling Festival is to be held October 22-23 and encouraged Board members and their families to attend.

Mr. Peterson reported that he recently met with a parent group concerned about aging facilities.

Mr. Gillard reported that the Foundation for Mesa Parks and Recreation and subcommittees of the Foundation have met several times. The Foundation is currently working on a cancer survivors park.

### **Director's Report**

Board members were provided flyers and information about upcoming division events and programs. Information will be included in packages each month so Board members are kept aware of the various events.

#### MDO Process/Director Recruitment

Ms. Palmberg reported that the Parks and Recreation Division Management Development Opportunity (MDO) is in its final phase. The director position is open for recruitment; it has been posted at the national level and closes October 29.

Mr. Brinton said he recently met with Joe Holmwood regarding hiring of the Parks and Recreation Director. Brinton will serve on the selection committee and the Parks Board will be

invited to a reception and meeting for the five finalists. The City hopes to have a director hired by the end of the year.

The division recently reorganized and created a Commercial Facilities Division that will merge with the Mesa Convention Center Division. The cemetery, pro ball, and golf are being relocated to that division and Mark Woodward will report to Rhett Evans, Director. Regarding the Parks and Recreation Division, input has been requested from division staff concerning staffing levels, responsibilities, and reporting relationships related to restructuring.

#### Carson Pool

Ms. Palmberg reported that Carson Pool, one of the City's older facilities, recently had chunks of perimeter decking fall into the dive tank. The pool's lanes were kept open for the swimming team but the dive well was closed. The pool motor then quit working and is being repaired. Staff met on-site with Versar, who will provide design costs to the City. The school has been notified that a spring swimming curriculum will not be possible.

Mr. Brinton said there are no operating funds for the Indoor Aquatic Center. The City has needs at aging aquatic facilities but also has a commitment to construct a world class facility.

Mr. Peterson said many of the City's aquatic facilities are getting to the end of their useful lives and their repairs are a necessity, not a luxury.

#### Spirituous Alcohol in Parks

Council has requested staff to modify the Parks and Recreation Board recommendation to now allow two or more individuals to receive a permit and to look at additional parks for allowing spirituous alcohol. Council also cautioned staff to be aware of school and church locations and youth-oriented activities. Staff is preparing a City Council Report to recommend additional park locations.

#### APRA Membership

Ms. Palmberg said the Parks and Recreation Division has an organizational membership in the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association (APRA). This membership includes all Parks Board members so membership notices received at a member's house should be disregarded.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 1:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Palmberg  
Acting Parks and Recreation Director