

**City of Mesa  
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board  
Minutes**

DATE: Wednesday, January 10, 2024  
TIME: 5:00 PM  
LOCATION: 708 W Baseline Road Bldg. #4, Board Room, Mesa, AZ

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02, notice is hereby given that the Mesa Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will hold a meeting open to the public at the date and time above.

BOARD MEMBERS: Chair Troy Campbell; Vice-Chair Robert Ingram; Board Members Nina Fader; Jacob Martinez; Brent Maldonado; Orchidia Peterson; Amelia Romney; Melanie Narish; Michelle Streeter; Benjamin Manning and Jeff Rush

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Campbell called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairperson Troy Campbell, Vice-Chair Robert Ingram, Board Members: Nina Fader, Brent Maldonado, Melanie Narish, Amelia Romney, and Michelle Streeter

**BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED ABSENCE:** Benjamin Manning, Jacob Martinez, Orchidia Peterson, and Jeff Rush

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

It was moved by Member Maldonado and seconded by Vice-Chair Ingram to approve the regular meeting minutes from November 8, 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES: Troy Campbell, Nina Fader, Robert Ingram, Brent Maldonado, Melanie Narish, Amelia Romney, and Michelle Streeter

NAYES: None

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Benjamin Manning, Jacob Martinez, Orchidia Peterson, and Jeff Rush

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were received.

**5. YOUTH SPORT GROUPS PRESENTATION-AFFILIATE YOUTH GROUPS**

Courtney Clay - Recreation Supervisor  
Aimee Manis - Deputy Director

Director Moore introduced the presentation by mentioning there was a public comment speaker two meetings ago that brought up some concerns about field rentals and this presentation will address some of the concerns he talked about.

Deputy Director Manis began the presentation by explaining that Aquatics wants to be accessible to and engage the public at all the sports venues. We also need to be organized, fair and equitable and not penalize City programs at the expense of renting to outside organizations.

Chair Campbell asked for clarification on how outside organizations such as little leagues and/or other outside youth sports receive field allocations. He wanted to know if City of Mesa programs are a priority. Manis confirmed that there is a review process and stated that Courtney would go into that a little more. She stated that there is a process to receive subsidized priority usage rates.

Courtney explained that all affiliate groups will now go by the name of Affiliate Youth Groups and the names CYG Community Youth Groups and Coalition Groups will be changed to reflect that. Certain criteria must be met to become an affiliate youth group with the City. They must have 80% Mesa youth residents, have no cuts so all can participate, align with the PRCF mission statement, follow policies, and offer financial assistance.

Courtney explained the benefits of being an Affiliated Youth Group. They receive subsidized field and pool/lane rates, they have priority allocation status over non-AYG groups, and PRCF programs can feed into their programs when youth want additional opportunities. The aquatics lane rates are subsidized to a 70% discount per lane per hour, the lifeguard hourly fee is discounted by 33% on practices, 15.5% on meets and 50% on classroom use. The Athletics rentals on fields are discounted by 70% for baseball fields per hour with or without lights, 40% for softball and soccer fields per hour, and 45% for softball/soccer complex/hour with lights.

Courtney explained that the application to become an AYG is done every 2 years. It is a 4-page questionnaire with detailed descriptions of the organization, coach training, demographics, and other requirements by the City of Mesa for certifications. The application is reviewed, and we will let them know if it is approved.

Deputy Director Manis added that there are background checks for the coaches, and they must be registered with the AZ Corporation Commission and in good standing.

Courtney reviewed the allocation process and how priority is assigned. First priority is City of Mesa programming, second is Mesa Public Schools' utilization and third is AYG groups. Fourth priority for Aquatics is independent sports organizations and fourth priority for Athletics is private tournaments and league rentals. Private rentals are accommodated if there is facility availability after the other priorities.

Chair Campbell asked what was meant by "private rentals" and what happens if a private citizen wants to rent a field? Manis responded that private rentals are more on the commercial end but that we do have walk up fields that anyone can rent. AYG status means

that you will have a multi-date reservation with a higher priority for allocations. Private organizations can rent the spaces only if there is remaining availability.

Courtney continued explaining that they monitor the usage to make sure that the teams are using their permitted times and complying with the requirements.

Member Fader asked how long it takes to determine usage. Courtney responded the schedules for practices are done every 6 months and fields are done seasonally.

Member Fader followed up with a scheduling question about how far in advance can an Affiliate Youth Group request a field. Courtney responded that the fields are booked out by the City and Mesa Public Schools 6 months to a year in advance. This allows us to respond to AYG requests in a timely matter. Manis added that we have allocation periods to determine field use so everyone will know where they are permitted within that allocation period.

Courtney finished by stating that we currently have 2 artistic swim, 6 baseball, 2 dive, 1 rugby, 5 soccer, 2 swim and 2 water polo Affiliate Youth Groups.

Member Streeter asked if we cap the number of AYG groups. Manis said yes, but it depends on the specific sport. In a lot of ways, we are at capacity. Streeter also asked if there are any tennis AYG groups. Manis said that we have one at the Mesa Tennis and Pickleball Center.

Chair Campbell asked if there are any affiliate softball groups. Manis stated no, but there are softball groups in Mesa that are not eligible for AYG status.

Member Fader asked if Mesa offers youth soccer. Manis said that we had a small program last year. It was only one season in the spring, but it could be expanded if resources become available.

## **6. DIVISION UPDATES – Recreation, Commercial, Planning & Operations**

Recreation- Aimee Manis-Deputy Director

Deputy Director Manis stated that Aquatics Winter Lap Swim had almost 1000 people just in December. The Aquatics Team trained 15 new instructors to help with swimming lessons this summer. Registration just opened for the next lifeguard training program, and we are accepting applications for summer positions.

Adaptive had 426 people register for different activities. The Mistletoe Magic Christmas Dinner/Dance had over 200 people attend. There is going to be a new adaptive advisory group starting. It will be made up of parents and caregivers to help us communicate with our participants and their families to help meet the needs of the participants. Kallee Swanson is our new adaptive intern who just started from ASU.

The Park Rangers hosted 3 fishing clinics in the fall and winter with over 100 people attending. They are taking a lead role in the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association Ranger Coalition and met at the APRA conference. We get many inquiries from other

agencies that want to start having rangers or change how their system works. Youth Archery is continuing to be very popular and has been at 100% capacity. There was also an Aquatic Habitat Building Workshop that built 47 new structures.

The front desk registered over 4000 people in programs, and they were instrumental in getting the reservations for Merry Main Street Ice Rink with over 13,000 reservations.

The Recreation Centers just ended their winter break programs which had 100 participants. After school programs are averaging about 250 kids per month. The Red Mountain Center had almost \$11,000 in insurance revenue and over 4000 attendees in fitness classes.

Athletics had the adult sports teams double to over 100 teams and field rentals are up as well. The Junior Suns Youth Basketball Team is starting and is at 100% capacity. There is a wait list, and we are trying to get different facilities to add more teams. There are 3 new Recreation Programmers, Roger Ramirez (Youth Sports), Robert Gaschler (Rentals) and Dustin Stevens (Adult Sports).

Youth Programs had almost 800 participants at Fun N Fitness events over the month of December. We are developing a great clientele and are getting ready to start daily events at Pioneer and Kleinman and we have a 3<sup>rd</sup> unit to visit the other sites.

#### Commercial Operations-Luis Ruiz-Deputy Director

Deputy Director Luis Ruiz updated that they were working on a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mesa Convention Center, Delta Hotel, and Visit Mesa, that will allow us to create more awareness of Mesa as a destination and signed it in November. We are also going to conduct a Facility Improvement Study to figure out how to improve and enhance what we have. We want to create a campus image between the hotel and Convention Center.

The Post opened in November and hosted 9 City events, and a month and a half of Merry Main Street festivities. As of January 2<sup>nd</sup>, we have 17 events booked through 2024. The Neon Garden has a projected timeline to be completed by Jan 2025.

The Amphitheatre has some upcoming concerts already scheduled through July. There are dates held on the calendar for shows that still need to be confirmed as we get closer.

Special Events have a series of events coming up starting with the MLK Parade and Festival on January 15<sup>th</sup>. The All-American City Celebration on January 27<sup>th</sup>. Art in the Park will continue twice a month to engage the community. I Love Mesa Day is a yearly event coming up and Celebrate Mesa at Pioneer Park. Special Events took over licensing on September 1<sup>st</sup>. They had over 300 licenses which is due to the increased manpower and making the public more aware that they need to take out special events licenses.

Chair Cambell asked if the proceeds go back to support the Parks and Recreation budget. Ruiz stated that it goes back to the general fund.

Dobson Ranch Golf Course, run by Paradigm, is doing great things to increase use within the golf course.

## Park Planning and Operations-Brandon Erno-Deputy Director

Deputy Director Brandon Erno explained that we received a grant from the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona. The intent of that grant is to remove 5 acres of non-functional turf from 54 locations and replace it with a landscape of curb and granite. It is projected to save 5.7 million gallons of water per year. This is a million-dollar grant award with support from operations funding totaling \$1.4 Million. This will be presented to the City Council on January 18<sup>th</sup> with completion projected in June 2026.

The Red Mountain Park Expansion continues to move forward. The construction team is working on finishing up the vertical elements. We used a different type of turf, and it has been interesting to watch it hold green through December.

The Mesa Fire Fighters Memorial is continuing to move forward at fire station 201. There was a common community space that we are taking on and converting it to a memorial for our fallen firefighters. We are fundraising with a goal of \$200,000 and the Parks General Obligation Bond 2018 will contribute \$280,000 which will be used for infrastructure needs.

Red Mountain Sports Fields received dollars to convert the lighting fixtures to LED's. Baseball fields have been completed and they look good. Softball fields are underway for conversion with the addition of backstop replacements lost in the storm.

## 7. DIRECTOR'S UPDATES-Andrea Moore

Director Andrea Moore mentioned that the draft City General Plan is available on a website where you can provide feedback at [tomorrowmesa.com](http://tomorrowmesa.com). The link will be emailed to the board members. There are quite a few components from our Parks Master Plan that were incorporated into the goals for the City.

Director Moore reiterated that we are hiring. We need about 400 people to run our summer programs and asked board members to refer anyone who might be interested.

Deputy Director Ruiz added that he forgot to mention that the Merry Main Ice Rink had about 16,000 ice skaters in 2021, About 15,000 ice skaters in 2022 and 19,300 ice skaters in 2023. That is about 4000 ice skaters above where we were last year.

## 8. REPORTS OF MEETINGS OR EVENTS ATTENDED

Chair Campbell stated that his daughter enjoyed ice skating. She also did Archery, and the Park Rangers were phenomenal and very focused on safety. He concluded by saying that Merry Main Street was awesome.

Member Streeter and her husband sold raffle tickets at Breakfast with Santa and they thought it was fun. She also endorsed the internship program with the City of Mesa. Her daughter did an 8-month internship with Donna from Water Resources, and it was very impressive. She is encouraging her to apply for a job with the City of Mesa.

Member Narish mentioned that on Instagram the "now open" post with sunglasses came through on her feed and it was very eye catching.

Vice-Chair Ingram stated that he had his photo taken with Santa at the Post and commented how well it was run. He also visited Dobson Ranch Golf Course and the Mesa Tennis and Pickleball Center.

## **9. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on March 13, 2024, at 5:00 PM.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Vice-Chair Ingram; seconded by Member Streeter. Approved 7-0 without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.