



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES REGULAR MEETING



December 13, 2013

Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department
3500 West River Road, Tucson, Arizona

Quorum having been established, Vice Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Commissioners present were Jan Johnson (Vice Chair), Charles Catino, Richard Barker, Peter Chesson, Anita Kellman, Tom Drzazgowski and Enrique Serna. Commissioners absent were Michael Lundin (Chair), Karen Cesare and Victor Rivera.

Staff present: Chris Cawein, Robert Padilla, George Kuck, Kerry Baldwin, Steve Anderson, Joe Barr, Joy Mehulka, Evelyne Thorpe, Valerie Samoy-Alvarado and Ann Khambholja.

Those present recited the pledge of allegiance.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Catino made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Serna, to approve the November 8, 2013 minutes as presented. The motion passed.

Commission Discussion/Action Request

Smoking Policy: Ms. Joy Mehulka handed out copies of the new signs requesting park users to not smoke in or around sports facilities, playground areas and dog parks. Mr. Chris Cawein told the commission that about 50 signs had been ordered with the George Mehl Foothills Park being the first one that they were installed at. Commissioner Serna asked if these were to be installed at Kino Stadium as well, and was informed that parks were exempt from the county's smoking policy and that the Kino Stadium District could add signs at its own discretion.

Naming/renaming of Parks, Facilities and Open Space: Vice Chair Johnson was pleased with NRPR's procedure distributed with the commissioners' packet for the naming or re-naming of parks, facilities or open space properties. Commissioner Chesson had concerns about the vetting process. Mr. Cawein explained that according to the procedure, only the Board of Supervisors can make the final decision and that the commission could only make recommendations. Mr. Cawein also asked whether background checks would be preferred for the vetting process. Commissioner Chesson also questioned the removal of the prior 30-day public notification period. Commissioner Serna said that there was a vetting process by staff. Commissioner Chesson recommended internet background checks. Commissioner Catino said that staff would vet the candidates and the BOS would have their own procedures for this process as well. Commissioner Drzazgowski said that this issue would be on the PRC agenda and then again on the BOS agenda, thus would serve as public notice, negating the need for a 30-day period. Commissioner Kellman mentioned that in the past there was a subcommission, hence the 30-day period was needed. Now that the subcommission has been disbanded it appears the 30 day period is no longer needed. Vice Chair Johnson said that there were complaints in the past that the process was too slow. Mr. Cawein said that the procedure for naming

could be updated to include two elements, a 30-day period and a background check. Also, including it on the agenda will get it out into the public eye and a procedure could be developed to provide for that. Mr. Barr told the commission that legal authority is needed for a background check through the Department of Public Safety. Also, permission is needed from the person concerned and this would add time and effort. This check is very intensive and lists all prior information from all states as well. Commissioner Serna recommends eliminating the 30 day period. Commissioner Catino stated that this procedure explains this clearly, what the Parks Commissioners will recommend and it also states that the Board of Supervisors may use other criteria to name or change the name of a park without a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Commission. Commissioner Chesson just needs staff's comment whether this procedure would be adequate. Mr. Baldwin commented that there would be certain well known community leaders who are well respected and may come up for nomination, who, if one digs into their background, may find some interesting things as a part of their history because of their involvement in the civil rights movement or other social issues. This would add to the complexity of evaluating the nomination but Mr. Baldwin is satisfied that this document gives NRPR adequate safeguards to provide a well recommended recommendation. Commissioner Chesson's concerns were satisfied after hearing from staff about the procedure.

Drafting of a letter of recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to convince the State Legislature to consider mandating funding for the Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department: Commissioner Catino had contacted Mr. Cawein and asked whether staff would be supportive of efforts to convince the legislators to consider funding for Parks. Mr. Cawein agreed that if Parks could receive more funding, it would be very welcome. Commissioner Catino proposed lobbying extremely hard for this. He has spoken to Legislators Andrea Dalessandro and Rosanna Gabaldon and he hopes it will include the other 14 counties as well. Commissioner Catino has also spoken to Supervisor Ray Carroll and Tom Ward, Mr. Huckelberry and Ms. Slusser. He also feels that it is time to put this issue out as every survey done shows Parks and Recreation as the first priority. Vice Chair Johnson asked whether Commissioner Catino had any idea of what would be needed to be done and he replied that he was getting Mr. Huckelberry and his staff to provide recommendations and to contact the other counties to see how they feel about this proposition. Mr. Huckelberry is looking for a one-cent tax and is looking forward to having it mandated by the legislature. Mr. Baldwin told the commission that he had received an email from Mr. Larry Hawke – the county lobbyist – looking for proposals to put before the next legislature that county administration would support. For this, the county develops a proposal concept which is submitted to Mr. Hawke who will discuss it with county administration to develop a package. Mr. Baldwin also advised the commission that this procedure is time consuming and a package may not be developed until the next legislative session. In the interim, staff will provide updates and report back to the commission at a later date.

Call to the Public: Ms. Debbie Hicks spoke to the commission, expressing her appreciation about the Sweetwater Preserve annex, but has concerns about the erosion on the trails there.

Report on new trail construction in the Sweetwater Preserve Annex (as requested by Commissioner Chesson): Commissioner Chesson congratulated Mr. Anderson and Mr. Mark Flint for their work building trails in the Sweetwater annex. Mr. Anderson told the commissioners about the annex and the sustainable trails that were being built there. The trails will be designed to drain off water by having a minimum two percent downward grade. Also, there were about 10 miles of trail on the annex, but is now down to less than five miles. Once the trails are built, the old trails are closed by

covering them with cactus and brush and ripping up about 50-100 feet of the ends. This would also alleviate Ms. Hicks concerns. The trails on the annex will include a loop trail and some access trails from North Bluebonnet Road, North Paseo de los Rancheros and Camino de Oeste. The Nighthawk Trail from the Bluebonnet access to the Loop Trail will also be added and ATV access will be blocked.

Presentation by Joshua Emslie about the Drexel Heights Community Center: Mr. Emslie gave the commission a presentation on the activities at Drexel Heights Community Center, which spans all ages and age groups, from the Kids and Parents Play program for toddlers, arts and crafts, afterschool programs for older children, the Tween program, games and sports to senior programs that include field trips and fitness programs.

Commissioner's Report

Beat Cancer Boot Camp: Commissioner Kellman showed the commission a video of the Biggest Loser Red Team who trained with and were inspired by the BCBC. She also let the commission know that due to unfortunate circumstances next year's Boot Camp Challenge was cancelled. The commissioners asked whether it would be held at a later date and what they could do to help. Commissioner Kellman informed them that the Beat Cancer Boot Camp's board of directors were looking at other options including other venues. Commissioner Kellman was also disappointed that of the funding of \$18,000 provided by the county, 40 percent was for staff payroll and she felt that this should have been spent for the program instead. Mr. Cawein indicated that the supplemental contained up to 72 percent for staff costs. Mr. Cawein also reminded the commissioner of the severe funding problems NRPR faces as well.

Canoa Preserve Community Park: The park continues to get funding and was awarded the block grant. There is now drinking water available on site, there soon will be bleachers and trail connections.

DIVISION UPDATE REPORTS:

1. Operations (George Kuck): Mr. Kuck brought pictures of the vandalism at Branding Iron Park. There were no questions.
2. Planning (Steve Anderson): There were no questions for Mr. Anderson.

Future agenda items: Budget update for the coming year and problems that NRPR may be facing.

Adjournment

As there was no further business to come before the commission, duly motioned and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.