



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING



February 14, 2014
Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department
3500 West River Road, Tucson, Arizona

Quorum having been established, Chair Lundin called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m on February 14, 2014.

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

Staff present: Chris Cawein, Robert Padilla, George Kuck, Kerry Baldwin, Robert Vaughn, Evelyne Thorpe and Ann Khambholja.

Those present recited the pledge of allegiance.

Mr. Chris Cawein introduced and welcomed Thomas Purdon, representing District 4, to the commission. Dr. Purdon informed the audience that he is a recently retired obstetrician/gynecologist who lived and practiced in Tucson for 13 years and has now moved to Green Valley. He is on the Green Valley Council and also on several environmental committees and is in his third term as President of Friends of Madera Canyon and on the board of the Save the Scenic Santa Ritas. Chair Lundin also welcomed and thanked Dr. Purdon.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Cesare made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rivera, to approve the January 10, 2014 minutes as presented. The motion passed.

Commission Discussion/Action Request

- a. Informational update report on the Rillito Regional Park/Racetrack: Assistant County Administrator for Public Policy, Ms. Nanette Slusser updated the commission members on future plans for the Rillito Regional Park. She said the Southern Arizona Fair Horse Racing Association is in their final year of their lease, and moving forward the County will enter into year-to-year leases. Mr. Tom Moulton, Director of Economic Development and Tourism has been in discussions with them.

There have been several plans to provide more soccer fields and include lighting as well. Another plan developed with the City of Tucson was to build a community center at the site, but when the recession hit, this plan also did not work out. The City told the County that they needed more recreational amenities, more soccer fields for the community, thus they agreed that the bond monies would be used to provide more fields.

Ms. Slusser handed out a proposed plan to the commissioners. Phase 1 of this concept provided for the addition of three new soccer fields and lighting for three fields. The existing usable stables would be relocated to the east side, unusable stables would be demolished and removed to make room for the new soccer fields. Three condemned brick barns would also be demolished and portable barns added. The original grandstand,

clubhouse and racetrack would remain. Construction would start after the 2014 racing season. Ms. Slusser has done research into what alternative parking would be available in the area. There will also be some ramadas added on the southeast side. In addition, this area which is close to the Loop, is being looked at for a potential farmer's market. The Bond Advisory Committee in April will be looking at recommendations for Parks' projects. There is one project in the proposed bond list to turn this into a soccer tournament facility, which originally would have 18 fields, but the site would only fit 16 fields if everything else was removed. County has looked at other sites in the vicinity to supplement that as shown in the report. Ms. Slusser had looked into the Western Regional tournament sites which usually have about 20 fields per site. When looking at the multi-site scenario, two additional county parks with soccer fields in the area would allow to compete for large scale tournaments. One is the Dan Felix Memorial Park with four lit soccer fields, and land to add a fifth. Additionally three fields are available at the Brandi Fenton Memorial Park. Other suggestions were adding fields along the Rillito River Path to supplement the tournament site.

Ms. Slusser told the commission that there were no plans to tear down the racetrack. The only plans are to add three fields and some other amenities. Ms. Slusser told them that these were only plans that could be considered and that nothing was final yet. Other plans offered were splitting use between the horsemen and soccer people, keeping the racetrack and grandstand, with 13 soccer fields but removing the clubhouse which needs extensive rehabilitation. However, this did not satisfy both parties.

Ms. Slusser also said that there are other parties interested in racing there as well.

Commissioner Johnson asked about one plan that included the skybox with parking underneath and said she supported it. Ms. Slusser said that plan would cost about \$14 million that did not take into account the \$27 million to move racing to the Fairgrounds. Commissioner Purdon asked how many parking spaces are estimated to be in the plan. Ms. Slusser said there would be 800, though 1600 were more likely needed. Commissioner Cesare thanked Ms. Slusser for the update that she had requested, and said that her office was adjacent to the racetrack and she would be very sad to see the horses leave. She also inquired about Spring Fling and was told that they had not negotiated for the space this year. Spring Fling will be held at the University of Arizona this year. Commissioner Cesare also told the commission that her office complex now provides overflow parking for a charge for major events held there which provides a much-needed service. She also heard that the Centurions would be at the Rillito this year and would like a heads-up when major events were planned. She mentioned that her property owners group was also concerned with the access from 1st Avenue. Commissioner Cesare also asked about the historic chute at the racetrack. Ms. Slusser told them that the entire site is registered as a historic district. Commissioner Johnson was concerned about doing the lease on a year-by-year basis. Chair Lundin told her it was an option to give both sides the ability to move after the year. Ms. Slusser also told them that there first was a 25-year lease, then 10-year lease and that now, since there are no definite plans it will be done on a year-to-year basis. She also said that there was probably at least three to five years of racing ahead depending on the voters approving a bond election. Commissioner Johnson also wanted to know if there would be enough time for the horsemen's association to get organized each year. Ms. Slusser also said that the county was not in favor of any more long leases on the property as it has a history of several lawsuits. Ms. Slusser also said that they could not make definite plans because ultimately the voters would make the decisions. There were no more questions.

- b. Commissioner's Informational Report – Discussion on Protocol (Chair Lundin)
Chair Lundin told the commission that the commissioners' updates would now be included in the call to the public unless a very specific topic was to be discussed and that topic would then be included in the agenda. Commissioner Johnson asked if the report in call to the public would allow the commissioners to ask questions and respond. Chair Lundin told her this could allow too much leeway. He said that if any issue came up that the commissioners wanted to discuss, that item could be agendaized. Commissioner Johnson mentioned that from what she sees, many commissioners only know what is going on the day they are here. Chair Lundin explained that the commission does not want to get in to trouble with the open meeting laws and further clarified that commissioners could speak on any topic, but that it would have to be put on the agenda. Commissioner Johnson asked if the call to the public could be put after each agenda item. Chair Lundin informed her that there should be only one call to the public for each meeting, usually held at the end of the meeting. Mr. Cawein told the commissioners that staff would still provide regular staff reports where the commission members could ask questions and that discussion would be allowed. Chair Lundin said that nothing would change in the agenda other than the commissioner's reports would be handled as call to the public.

DIVISION UPDATE REPORTS: Division Managers will report on their recent activities related to the Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department. This item will be informational only and no action will be taken at this meeting. If further discussion is necessary, those items requiring action may be placed on a future Commission meeting agenda.

Natural Resources (Kerry Baldwin):

Mr. Baldwin asked if there were any questions regarding his report. He advised the commission that they had been monitoring the drought conditions and working with ranch operators to reduce grazing and have better water management. He told them that it was buffelgrass season and that they were still working to eradicate in sensitive areas. Agua Caliente spring is being monitored and has not shown any improvements. Agua Caliente has been included in the bond package proposal that staff completed which hopefully would allow rehabilitation of the pond and create a sustainable system without the need of spring flow into the future. Commissioner Lundin asked about the fire hazard caused by buffelgrass at park sites, and Mr. Baldwin told him the the Operations Division members were trained to identify and remove it. Commissioner Cesare mentioned hearing about a frost tolerant buffelgrass. Mr. Baldwin told her that this variant – called Frio – which was being developed by Texas A&M could grow at higher elevations. Commissioner Johnson asked how it could spread. Mr. Baldwin explained that there were many ways it could be transmitted. It primarily spreads along roadways and ADOT does not have sufficient resources to control it more intensively. Commissioner Cesare asked about the Weedwackers program. Commissioner Johnson asked about the results of the aerial spray test. Mr. Baldwin gave them some back ground on the project and said it did work and that spraying could be done with great precision. Reports on this can be found at buffelgrass.org. The final report is being produced by the U. S. Forest Service. Mr. Baldwin also said that the spraying had very little effect on trees and shrubs and mentioned that

Saguaro National Park intends to use this control method in future. However, he mentioned that it was very expensive.

Operations Division (George Kuck)

Commissioner Cesare asked Mr. Kuck whether a claim would be filed for the vandalism at Children's Memorial Park. The estimate for the repairs was \$10,400.00 and the county's deductible is \$9,000.00. Mr. Kuck explained that it would be repaired using the county's job order contractor, and the department would follow up with Risk Management on the claim to recoup approximately \$1,400.00 of that cost with the \$9,000.00 being absorbed by the department. Mr. Kuck also clarified that this deductible was per incident and that the county was self insured.

Recreation (Grant Bourguet)

A challenging repair to an underground conduit for an in-pool light at the Kino Pool was completed by NRPR's aquatics technicians, Pima County Facilities Management, and Canyon Builders; the splash pad at Brandi Fenton Memorial Park will open on April 19, 2014. There is an extra focus on leisure classes due to the influx of winter visitors to Tucson. The Winter hours at the Clay Target Center (trap and skeet range) at the Southeast Regional Park Shooting Range have been pushed back one hour at the request of customers and staff. New hours are Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., effective immediately. These hours will be changed again when the warmer weather arrives. The 24th Annual Ted Walker Youth Day at Old Tucson Studios took place on January 20, 2014 with approximately 3,400 students, teachers and chaperones in attendance.

Special Projects and Trades Division (Robert Vaughn)

Mr. Vaughn told the commission that the new park manager at Ajo was settling in and that the trades division handles the special trades like plumbing, electric, welding. There were no questions.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(S): Youth Programs update and information on the programs being offered.

ADJOURNMENT: As there was no further business to come before the commission, duly motioned and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.