Call to Order – Roll Call

Quorum having been established, Vice Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:16 a.m.

Commissioners present: Jan Johnson (Vice Chair), Charles Catino, Anita Kellman, Jim Mazzocco, Victor Rivera, Peter Chesson

Commissioner absent: Michael Lundin (Chair) and Enrique Serna, Richard Barker, Tom Drzazgowski

Staff present: Chris Cawein, Kerry Baldwin, Joe Barr, George Kuck, Joy Mehulka, George Kuck, Chris Doak, Ann Khambholja

Guests: Nanette Slusser, Assistant County Administrator for Public Works
Bob Richardson, Principal, R&R Productions
Tom Hausen, retired pediatrician
Bill Adamson

Those present recited the pledge of allegiance.

Consent Agenda:

Commissioner Catino made a motion to approve the August 9, 2013 minutes. Commissioner Mazzocco seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Call to the Public: Bob Richardson will speak during the smoking ban policy discussion.

Commission Discussion/Action Request

Featured Presentation: River Park Enhancement and Expansion Initiative

Nanette Slusser, assistant county administrator for public works policy, gave background information on The Loop that currently encompasses 131 miles shared-use path for bicyclists, walkers, joggers (originally planned 55 miles path). Before presenting to the public the county's planned enhancement and expansion to The Loop, Pima County conducted an Economic, Environmental, Community, and Health Impact Study. The video presentation illustrated the impact of the Initiative to the community’s leisure environment and the local economy. The impact study revealed that for every dollar the county invests on The Loop, the return economic benefit is approximately nine dollars. She referred to a similar study in Europe, which yielded approximately twenty-dollar benefit. Ms. Slusser stated that the county had spent approximately one hundred million dollars, and The Loop’s planned enhancement would cost about the same.
Commissioner Mazzocco inquired whether the Board of Supervisors would take any legislative action. Ms. Slusser stated that the enhancement and expansion initiative is [for now] for information purposes only; that future revision to the initiative will include the Green Valley community; that the justification for the land and infrastructure issues could be added in the Initiative. The anticipated completion of The Loop is about a year and a half.

Commissioner Chesson commented on the American River Run Trail in Sacramento, California, wherein pedestrians and bicyclists share the same path in opposite direction—bicyclists to the right, pedestrians to the left—for traffic visibility. George Kuck stated that the river park system was similarly designed until five years ago when the path became very popular to users, thus less space to accommodate them.

The River Park Enhancement and Expansion Initiative and the Economic, Environmental, Community, and Health Impact Study can be viewed or downloaded from the Pima County Web site.

Board of Supervisors Smoking Ban Policy (continued discussion)

Tobin Rosen, civil deputy county attorney, advised the commission that the Board of Supervisors, in addition to the smoking ban policy, has adopted an ordinance that prohibits smoking in closed structures and vehicles. However, neither the ordinance nor the policy prohibits smoking in county parks. He commented that the commission may suggest to the Board of Supervisors to expand the smoking ban at county parks. A lengthy discussion ensued as to whether the smoking ban policy should only apply to dog parks, sports fields, playgrounds, and park areas where people congregate, or to the entire park system. Enforcement of the smoking ban at county parks is a major concern for staff. Kerry Baldwin expressed concern that the smoking ban is unenforceable at open space properties and should therefore only be applied to urban parks. Youth leagues using county sports fields have, on their own initiative, initiated a no smoking ban in the play field areas. Shouldn’t the county follow the leagues initiative to enforce such a ban, asked Commissioner Mazzocco.

Statement from the public: Bob Richardson, in reference to his request at the last month’s commission meeting, stated that discussion, in the Facebook and e-mails, with other park users favored a smoking ban, or a signage such as “please do not smoke inside the dog park.” George Kuck read the e-mails from four dog park patrons who expressed support for a no smoking policy at dog parks. Tom Hausen, a retired pediatrician, spoke in favor of the smoking ban in all public spaces, which is being enforced in some states.

Commissioner Kellman agreed that enforcement of the smoking ban would be problematic; however, she suggested that placement of a courtesy signage should be taken as a start. Commissioner Catino mentioned that at the Canoa Preserve Softball Complex, the BAJA group prohibits smoking in the dugouts and 20 feet from the audience. Commissioner Chesson favors a no smoking ban in all county parks. Commissioner Mazzocco favors a practical solution of educating park users about the Pima County’s smoking ban policy.

Chris Cawein stated that as of July 2013, there were 844 municipalities around the country such as New York, Illinois, and California have banned smoking in their parks; that Goodyear is the only municipality in Arizona that enforces a smoking ban at their parks. He said that enforcement, even with fines, had proved problematic at those municipalities. He said that self-enforcement would probably be the most effective to implement wherein people could point [to the smoker] at no smoking
signs and ask the smoker to put out the cigarettes. Agreeing on the placement of a no smoking sign as the first step to take, Commissioner Catino asked George Kuck how much the signage would cost. George Kuck responded that the cost would depend on the type of proposed direction, e.g., dog parks only. He said that some states, apart from the 844 municipalities, had assigned certain smoking areas; ban smoking within a specified number of feet from the playground areas, but not necessarily park-wide smoking ban. Kerry Baldwin reiterated the complexity of enforcing the smoking ban in natural resource and open space areas. There was a consensus that the smoking ban is unenforceable. Commissioner Mazzocco recommended that no smoking signs be placed at outdoor facilities and dog parks. Tobin Rosen commented that if an ordinance prohibiting smoking [in county parks] does not exist, only a no smoking sign could be recommended in a particular area. Otherwise, if a smoker is asked not to smoke, he/she can challenge it without an approved and implemented smoking ban. Tobin Rosen added that the narrower the focus of where to implement the smoking ban, there would be a better chance of enforcement. Tom Hausen hoped that the commission would recommend to the Board of Supervisors a smoking ban in the parks. Joe Barr commented that if the signage is conspicuously and specifically defined, then members of the public and staff would know what is and is not allowed. Commissioner Chesson suggested that the commission recommend to the Board of Supervisors a no smoking ordinance in all the [county] parks.

The commission took a break at 10:10 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 10:15 a.m.

Commissioner Mazzocco made a motion that staff develops an internal procedure to request persons to refrain from smoking within a reasonable distance from seating and fenced areas at park’s sports facilities, dog parks, and playground areas; and work with the county attorney’s office for the appropriate signage language. Commissioner Catino seconded the motion. Tobin Rosen clarified that the motion is not recommending that the Board of Supervisors expand its smoking ban policy. Instead, the motion is creating a departmental policy. The motion passed.

Featured Presentation: Operations/Maintenance Division Zone 2

Chris Doak, trades maintenance supervisor for the Operations/Maintenance Division Zone 2, introduced himself. He showed a PowerPoint presentation of the areas of his responsibilities such as the stretch of the Santa Cruz River path from River Road to Irvington Road, Summit Park and the Canoa Preserve Park. Zone 2 personnel interact with other jurisdictions, including the Desert Survivors. He reported receiving positive feedback from the public, especially after the bike repair stations were installed. He did not have an answer to Commissioner Chesson’s inquiry whether the Santa Cruz River could serve as a wildlife corridor and, if so, how will the wildlife corridor be maintained. Kerry Baldwin stated that a number of wildlife utilize the Santa Cruz River corridor. In response to Commissioner Johnson, Chris Doak indicated that the parking lots are accessible through the Ted Walker Park, the CDO Wash around the old landfill, off Camino del Cerro, Columbus Park, and Juhan Park. Commissioner Chesson remarked that the county did a good job recognizing the heritage of the Spanish era; however, recognition of the Native Americans who came earlier is lacking. Chris Doak mentioned the Mission Gardens recognize that heritage. Regarding the maintenance of the corridor, Mr. Baldwin said that along the corridor are several archaeological site acquisitions and the development of those sites is carried out by Cultural Resources and then later turned over to Parks and Recreation for maintenance.

Naming/Renaming of Parks, Park Facilities, and Open Space

Chris Cawein reported that staff received notification from the County Administration that there was an unwritten policy that no park facility shall be named after a sitting member of the Pima
County Parks and Recreation Commission and this policy should now become a written policy. Hence, staff recommends the withdrawal of the Parks and Recreation Commission action to rename the Canoa Preserve Softball Complex as Chuck Catino Softball Complex per the County Administrator’s memorandum dated August 23, 2013.

Furthermore, staff recommends an amendment to the policy for the naming or changing the name of Pima County parks, park facilities, or open space properties excluding the nomination of a sitting member of the Pima County Parks and Recreation Commission, and any member of a County commission, board, or committee, including all presently appointed staff and currently serving elected officials. Therefore, staff recommends the withdrawal of the commission’s action approving the naming of the Canoa Preserve Park Trail as Tom Ward Trail. Commissioner Catino stated that he had never asked for it to be named after him and, in fact, wanted it to be named the BAJA Sporting Complex; that he will agree to what the commission decides. Commissioner Kellman made a motion to accept the staff recommendations. Commissioner Mazzocco seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

Commissioner Chesson stated that the draft is clear and if deemed necessary it can be amended at a later date. Mr. Cawein mentioned that the Chair can sign off the policy as a commission policy. Commissioner Johnson said that she was told that the department head had to sign off. She prefers for the policy to remain as a departmental policy.

Commissioners Report

Commissioner Kellman reminded the commission that Beat Cancer Boot Camp research room at Brandi Fenton Memorial Park ribbon cutting ceremony is September 28, 2013. All are invited. The Beat Cancer Boot Camp will be on television in November, 2013. Commissioner Kellman commented that while Brandi Fenton Memorial Park was being built, she was a fund raiser and raised about $25,000 for the park, thus the camp’s exercise course is held at the park.

Commissioner Catino met with Public Works yesterday. The BAJA Project #37 has secured $50,000 from the Federal Government. The money will be available after October 15, 2013. Ms. Slusser has also made available $32,000 for BAJA. Top priority projects are installation of drinking water fountains and shade coverings for the bleachers.

Division Update Report: There’s no significant discussion on the written reports submitted.

Future Agenda Items:

  Approval of the September 13, 2013 Minutes
  Bond Program Update
  (can be viewed online at http://webcms.pima.gov/government/bond)

Call to the Public: No response.

Adjournment: Motioned and seconded the meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.