



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING



February 13, 2015

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

Quorum having been established, Chair Lundin called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m on February 13, 2015.

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

Staff present were Chris Cawein, Robert Padilla, Nanette Slusser, Nancy Cole, Nicole Fyffe, Diana Durazo, George Kuck, Steve Anderson, Kerry Baldwin, Greg Hagen, Joe Barr, Robin Hadden and Ann Khambholja.

Those present recited the pledge of allegiance.

Commission Discussion/Action Request

1. NRPR/Commission Discussion: The Chuck Catino community leadership award: Staff presented the commission with suggestions on the criteria and submission procedures for nominations to be awarded annually. Commissioner Cesare moved to accept the criteria, which was seconded by Commissioner Purdon. All were in favor.
2. NRPR/Commission Discussion/Action Item: County Administrator's memorandum dated February 9, 2015 regarding Parks and Recreation Future Bond Projects and Programs. Chair Lundin reminded the commission that they had no power to recommend projects that were not recommended by the Bond Advisory Committee and could only prioritize the projects that were recommended. The chair on behalf of the commission asked staff to recommend an implementation policy as they are involved in the day-to-day activities and thus have a better understanding of community needs. Mr. Cawein introduced Ms. Nanette Slusser from the County Administrator's office, Ms. Nicole Fyffe who is overseeing the bond program, Ms. Nancy Cole who manages the Capital Improvements Projects Program, and Ms. Diana Durazo. Ms. Slusser gave the commission a brief history of the Rillito Park bond project that has been ongoing since 2006. Ms. Fyffe also explained the Bond Advisory Committee's process. Mr. Bill Adamson, an advocate for trails and bike lanes informed the commission that project #281 – Public Natural Park Trailheads is very important as trailheads provide access to trails, and in many cases there are none so hikers have to park on the roads. He also thanked the commission for their work. Chair Lundin asked how the priorities would be implemented if the bond election was passed. Ms. Slusser explained that implementation would be developed as part of a bond ordinance and that most likely, the first funding would be for acquisition costs and payment of debt. Commissioner Cesare was supportive of the bond, however she was not enthusiastic about the staff recommendations. Chair Lundin reminded her that County Administration asked for the commission's recommendations and he believed that Park staff knew best and the commission could rely on and trust their judgment. Commissioner Cesare said she was not inclined to vote to support this list. Commissioner Johnson said this shows what staff prefers. Chair Lundin asked if there was a motion to accept the prioritization schedule and move on to the Rillito Race Track. Commissioner Johnson moved to accept the prioritization and was seconded by Commissioners Purdon and Marohn. All commissioners, except for Commissioner Cesare were in favor.

Chair Lundin informed the commission that the race track funding was cut from its initial \$14 million proposal in November 2014 to \$8 million, the County Administrator is now recommending \$3.5 million. Ms. Slusser gave the commissioners a brief narrative of the racetrack and the discussions in the past of it being replaced by one in Marana or at the Pima County Fairgrounds, but those options did not pan out. In 2004, the City of Tucson (CoT) received bond funding to build a community center in the northwest part of the City. The City of Tucson was not able to find a suitable location for the community center. The City of Tucson approached Pima County and requested they use the bond funds to increase recreation amenities at Rillito Park to include additional soccer fields, ramadas, etc. There were plans at Rillito Park for an 11-field site but the Parks Advisory Commission proposed a 16-field site along with demolishing the track and grandstand. However, in the interim the County purchased the Kino site as a sports tournament site with plans for 12 soccer fields with artificial turf and several multi use fields. She also explained that the \$8 million proposal for the race track included improved fields, parking and \$4.3 million for rehabilitating the grandstand which needs major repairs and improvements. The \$3.5 proposal does not include improvements to the grandstand. Chair Lundin asked the commission if they wanted to endorse any of the options. Mr. Jaye Wells, President of the Rillito Park Foundation spoke to the commission and updated them on what the foundation has accomplished to date. They have restored the Jelks House in the Rillito Historic District and intend to convert it into a museum. They have brought in the University of Arizona's Track Industry Program and hired an alum, Mike Weiss, as general manager who has a lot of experience with the racing industry. Mr. Wells would like to develop it as a multi-use park, with the track generating revenue as well. Mr. Wells is supportive of the County Administrator's plan and wants horse racing to be self-sustaining. However, he said that the foundation needed some time. They have been fundraising and have received grants which were used to upgrade the track, provide better concessions and simulcast wagering. On the first weekend of the race season, over 11,000 people visited the track and generated record capital, all of which goes back into the park. Commissioner Purdon asked whether they opposed the 3<sup>rd</sup> option, and Mr. Wells said no and further stated that he believed the racetrack could be turned around into a profitable venture. Mr. Manish Shah, the executive director of the Heirloom Farmer's Market which is also at Rillito Park spoke about the grand opening of the market in November 2014 and that with construction of the ramadas complete, all is working well and the market operates on Saturdays and Sundays. He has hosted several events like Viva la Local. Mr. Shah is in favor of the grandstand as it has amenities like a commercial kitchen and cold storage that can be used by vendors for food festivals. He said that the venue could be in use all year long with these amenities. Commissioner Johnson said that it was good that Kino was being developed as this allows to keep racing at Rillito. Chair Lundin asked if there was a motion to endorse any of the options. Commissioner Johnson made a motion to endorse option #3 and was seconded by Commissioner Kellman. Commissioner Cesare commended them for keeping horse racing and mentioned that she loved watching the horses and people who visited. Commissioner Johnson mentioned her concerns about parking. Mr. Wells told her that they had made arrangements with other private entities and leased several properties in the area for overflow parking. All commissioners were in favor of recommending option #3.

### Consent Agenda

Commissioner Cesare made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Purdon, to approve the January 9, 2015 minutes as presented. Commissioner Johnson wanted it noted that the letters in support of the future bond were not reviewed by her. Chair Lundin acknowledged that it was an oversight. Commissioner Marohn made a motion to approve the minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Cesare. The motion passed.

### Commission Discussion/Action Request (continued)

NRPR/Commission discussion on content/frequency of Director's office report: Mr. Cawein told the commission that he will provide, in draft form, an annual report on all the Department has done through the year and future plans. Commission Johnson commented that Mr. Padilla had provided them with that information in the past. Mr. Padilla told her that he had only provided financial reports. Mr. Cawein asked whether the commission preferred an executive summary or present an outline. Commissioner Cesare said this was essential to connect to a larger audience and Commissioner Purdon asked for ideas of how to support NRPR. Commissioner Cesare said she would prefer a report with more graphs and pictures and most people do not take the time to read lengthy reports. Commissioner Kellman made a motion to recommend the outline and was seconded by Commissioner Purdon. Commissioner Johnson said that the new commissioners were not knowledgeable about what Parks does and Commissioner Marohn would also be more comfortable with more knowledge. Chair Lundin said that the commission already receives monthly reports from the divisions and asked what more they would need from the Director. Commissioner Johnson asked that they received more information on new items that come up. Commissioner Marohn asked if there was any orientation for new members as that would be helpful. Mr. Cawein told them about the new initiative that Parks is undertaking. It involves a comprehensive inventory of all the parks and recreational facilities in great detail and that he would provide periodic updates.

**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 discussion may be placed on a future Commission meeting agenda.

1. Natural Resources (Kerry Baldwin): There were no questions about Mr. Baldwin's report. However, Mr. Baldwin informed the commission about the Predation Masters convention in Tucson and that the County Administrator's office had sent a letter of concern to Arizona Game and Fish. He also said that county park rules can apply to open space properties. He said that NRPR will continue to work with Arizona Game and Fish. Commissioner Kellman wanted to know which environmental education (EE) program attracted 4000 people. Mr. Baldwin told her that EE has 26 to 30 different programs a month and that this was the total.
2. Operations (George Kuck): There were no questions.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(S) :**

1. County Attorney's office to attend the next meeting to explain Open Meeting Law
2. New initiative to inventory all parks and recreation facilities

**ADJOURNMENT:** As there was no further business to come before the commission, duly motioned and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.