

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

DATE: Wednesday, March 13, 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; 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 5:00 PM.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairperson Troy Campbell, Board Members: Benjamin Manning, Brent Maldonado, Jacob Martinez, Melanie Narish, Orchidia Peterson, Amelia Romney, Jeff Rush, and Michelle Streeter

**Andrea Moore noted that Vice chair Robert Ingram has resigned from the Advisory Board.**

**BOARD MEMBER EXCUSED ABSENCES:** Nina Fader

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

It was moved by Member Rush and seconded by Member Narish to approve the regular meeting minutes from January 10, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES: Troy Campbell, Benjamin Manning, Nina Fader, Brent Maldonado, Jacob Martinez, Melanie Narish, Orchidia Peterson, Amelia Romney, and Michelle Streeter

NAYES: None

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No comments were received.

**5. PARKS MAINTENANCE PRESENTATION**

Brandon Erno – Deputy Director

Deputy Director Erno started with introducing Mark Bragg the Parks Superintendent, Tracy Hanley, and Mike Baumann both Parks Maintenance Supervisors and not in attendance, James Thompson, the Contracts and Sports Fields Supervisor. Erno went on to explain how Parks Maintenance is divided into three different work groups. They are Aquatics & Parks Maintenance, Contracts & Sports Fields Maintenance, and Riverview, Hohokam, & Fitch.

The external structure is managed through a lot of contracted services, with the largest one being landscape maintenance. There are also contracted services for custodial, tree and lake maintenance, pest management etc.

Parks Maintenance maintains 9 aquatic facilities, 7 fountain/splash pads, 13 sport complexes, 2 professional baseball stadiums and 209 parks and basins. The organizational structure includes the 3 work groups with a team of 95, including 21 vacancies. The team is working hard and interviewing on a weekly basis. The industry is highly impacted by the strong economy, which results in good wages being paid in the private sector. The city is doing a really good job of trying to elevate and promote the benefits package.

James Thompson manages the contracts/sports field team with landscape coordinators who monitor the work done by the contractors. Mike Baumann has 2 parks maintenance teams, and an aquatics team. Tracy Hanley manages Riverview, Hohokam and Fitch. Some of the things the groups do are mowing, tree trimming, chemistry equipment, preventative maintenance, inspections, trail maintenance, plumbing and electrical work.

The adopted budget for this year was \$24 million. It is separated into 3 funds which are General, Commercial Facilities and Environmental Compliance. The Contracted Services that manage the landscaping is at about \$11 million.

The statistics for completed projects for last year are:

Work Orders Completed: 5,680  
Cleanings at Aquatic Facilities: 183  
Sports Fields Preps: 5,723  
Environmental Inspections: 10,694  
Facility Inspections: 3,500  
Water Saved: 9% or 88,436 kgals  
Trees Planted: 1,079 (Removed 207)

Member Rush asked about the Million Tree Initiative and how it affects the parks. Deputy Director Erno explained that they are given a certain amount of money to plant and fill tree vacancies. He added that Mountain View Park is part of the Million Tree Initiative, and the team planted a ton of trees to increase the shade canopy. Director Moore stated that we are at about 22,000 trees in the park system and that the Million Tree Initiative is really based on getting the tree canopy to increase on private and public land by about 16%.

Chair Member Campbell asked if park prep includes putting the lines down for games. Deputy Director Erno confirmed that it does.

Member Maldonado asked what contracted services include. Deputy Director Erno explained that it includes landscaping for all the parks minus Riverview, Hohokam, and Fitch which are managed in house. Some of the services included are liter pick up, leveling sand, detailing planter beds, tree upkeep, daily custodial services, vector control, and pest control.

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

### **Recreation – Aimee Manis – Deputy Director**

Deputy Director Manis said that she does the accreditation visits for the National Parks and Recreation Association and stated that other cities do not take care of their amenities or have high standards the way our team does. Agencies all over the country have not established standards or even know where all their parks are. She stated that Erno and his team work very hard to keep our play spaces enjoyable and safe for everyone.

Manis started her presentation with Aquatics updates. There is over a 90% return rate for staff from last year. This is mainly due to the pay rate increase which helps to keep the good employees that we currently have. We will only need to hire around 50 employees this season. Aquatics is in the middle of spring lifeguard and instructor training season with full classes.

Adaptive had their Sweetheart Dance last month and everyone had a lot of fun. At a floor hockey tournament, our team Mesa Bulldogs came home with one gold medal and one silver medal. There was a snow adventure day at Snowbowl that had eleven participants.

The Park Rangers hosted a fishing clinic at Greenfield Park with 157 participants learning basic fishing skills. The youth archery classes are extremely popular with 100% capacity. The Ranger Supervisor, Brett Burton, traveled to Alabama to accept the National Park Law Enforcement Association Platinum Excellence Award. This is the first time that a municipal park ranger force has been given this award and it has not been given out for several years because they haven't had anyone meet the high standards.

Chair Campbell asked if there have been any talks of adding a second youth category to the archery classes. Deputy Director Manis stated that she knows that Rangers are doing as much programming as they can with the staff they have.

The Front Desk is getting ready for Summer Registration which begins April 8th for residents and April 15th for non-residents. The summer activity guide has been renamed to The Play Book and should be coming out in the next couple of weeks. Spring Registration had over 3,100 registered participants. Park Ramada rentals are up by 18% from 2023. The Park Attendant/Ambassador Program started. There is one Ambassador, and interviews are being held to hire more. They will work weekends to ensure that those who rent ramadas are welcomed to the sites and the areas are cleaned up along with offering on-site customer service as needed.

The recreation centers hosted 2 teen events at the Red Mountain Center: An opioid awareness presentation and a kickball tournament. Red Mountain Center is having their 25th Anniversary Celebration this Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, from 8a-1p with free admission. Red Mountain Center welcomed 12,308 visitors last month.

In Athletics, the Mesa Tennis and Pickleball Courts rented courts 2,538 times last month. Online court bookings at Kleinman and Monterey Parks continue to increase. Adult Sports has almost 60 teams during this session. Jr. Suns Youth Basketball is at 100% capacity.

Youth Programs has 2 new employees. They are Coordinator Raynetta Brown and Programmer Chauncey Milbrandt.

February Fun and Fitness attendance was our first month over 1,000!

- Pioneer-298 Daily Visits
- Evergreen - 80
- Escobedo- 51
- Guerrero- 46
- Beverly- 145
- Reed-123
- Kleinman- 468 Daily Visits

Member Martinez asked about insurance-based memberships at the rec centers. Deputy Director Manis stated that there are opportunities in retirement through different insurance carriers that will underwrite part of the cost of gym memberships, such as Silver Sneakers. We have partnerships with 4 different insurance carriers who send the City the reimbursement when we bill for their memberships.

Commercial Operations – Luis Ruiz- Deputy Director

Deputy Director Ruiz provided the revenue for the Convention Center for the past 8 years with 2022 being the best year, which included the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant. So far this year we are at \$3.5 million with expectations to increase by \$1.5 to \$2 million more. The Amphitheater had a lot of cancellations this past summer due to the heat, but there were 4 concerts. We have 4 upcoming concerts in April and May and some confirming for September and October. The Post opened in October with 37 events so far. Many of those events were City use, which is what the focus is being shifted to. There is an introductory rate being offered for the remainder of the year with the intention of having the community rent the space.

Regarding possible Convention Center facility improvements, there is an RFP available for firms to submit proposals to assist with evaluating options.

Chair Campbell asked who was on the committee to decide the RFP. Deputy Director Ruiz stated that it was all staff at this point but will go into a public process later with Visit Mesa, Delta Downtown Hotel, and City staff. Chair Campbell asked if it would be appropriate for a board member to be present. Director Moore stated that input would happen later after the RFP process.

The proposals are due on April 11<sup>th</sup>. They will be scored and then it will be determined if interviews will be needed.

Deputy Director Manis explained that the process is to get a consultant and then there will be public input. Deputy Director Ruiz followed up by stating that this is not in construction or design yet, it is just about cost and estimation.

Member Rush asked about what Delta's recommendations were. Ruiz stated that they had recommendations for physical space and ideas of how the space should be run. They suggested expansion of pre-function space with exterior opportunities. The idea is to create

more accessible and brighter entrances with connectivity between the Convention Center, the hotel and downtown. They are also looking at technological upgrades.

For special events, the last Art in the Park is coming up on March 28<sup>th</sup>. Cesar Chavez Celebration is on the 29<sup>th</sup> at Eagles Park. In April there is CylcoMesa, Celebrate Mesa and the Mesa Music Fest which are outside events. Special Events has many other events that they are involved in with supporting licensing and equipment, and they are having a deep impact on what is going on in Mesa.

Paradigm at Dobson Ranch is a great partner to the City and community. They are doing a lot of outreach including free clinics as well as working with schools and other organizations to provide practice times.

Park Planning and Operations – Brandon Erno – Deputy Director

The Red Mountain Expansion is at the end of construction. They are working on minor touch ups. The potential ribbon cutting will take place either the first or second week of May.

## **7. DIRECTOR'S UPDATES – Andrea Moore**

Director Moore started by discussing the potential Bond. City Council has not called the question on whether to hold the bond election yet. We are doing public outreach in April and invitations will be sent out. The Council will have a discussion tomorrow morning about general categories and philosophy about bond possibilities. We will go to a series of public meetings with one in each district. The idea is to have 3 questions on the November ballot for voter consideration related to all the categories. Generally, the park projects that are being considered are coming out of the 2022 Master Plan. The 3 questions will include one on public safety, one on street improvements and one on active lifestyles. The middle of town and Southeast Mesa are missing recreation space. We are looking at a parcel at McKellips and Greenfield that the City already owns for a recreation center. We could put a 76,000 square foot recreation center along with a 25,000 square foot library for combined programming.

Member Rush asked if there was a second location up for consideration. Director Moore stated that there was not, but we would like to do more. We would like to put in large group ramadas, a playground, a regional retention basin and the possibility of a pedestrian crossing over to Gene Autry Park.

Another project involves the land that has been designated for future park development for many years. We lease part of that from the Bureau of Land Management and they are pushing us to put some park amenities there. There were encampments and dumps that since have been cleaned out. We are hoping to have park development through the bond program over by McKellips. This would include a skate park, playground, some open grass space, restrooms, and trail-head parking. Further down we would like to put in a remote-control hobby area.

Member Manning asked if there were any concerns about air space usage. Director Moore stated that there was not. It is allowed at Elliot Road and Crimson Basin, and it is going well there, but we want to relocate it where there is more space. There is a trail alignment that

follows on the East side of the 202 freeway underpasses built in for pedestrian/trail use that can connect to the trails around the Granite Reef Dam.

Director Moore explained that we have 2 pools we are looking at. Red Mountain Park would replace Freemont Pool that is aging and hidden from view within the school properties. We could offer therapeutic options year-round with amenities for public swim and swim team use. Also, Eastmark has high demand for a pool and Eastmark High School has the space for one. We are talking with them about the possibilities.

There are 3 other projects. Building a neighborhood park next to Lehi Sports Complex, putting in a park at Mountain and Adobe and adding a soccer complex at Crimson and Elliot. We are also trying to bridge the gaps with land acquisition where we don't have parks.

We are looking at adding pickleball courts for drop-in use across the City. We have four parks that need new irrigation systems. We have 7 existing playgrounds we would like to renovate and add one additional playground at Holmes Park. At our meeting with Council tomorrow we will share the schedule for the public open houses and online surveys. We will then go back to Council in May and talk about how much the bond program should be and see if the Council wants to call for the election. The deadline is June 3<sup>rd</sup>. There will be a public meeting in every district through the middle of April or people can fill out the survey which will be live next week.

Director Moore mentioned that Summer Registration opens April 8<sup>th</sup> for residents and April 15<sup>th</sup> for non-residents and that Celebrate Mesa is Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at Pioneer Park.

Chair Campbell stated for the record that members Rush and Martinez left the meeting but there is still a quorum.

## **8. REPORTS OF MEETINGS OR EVENTS ATTENDED**

Chair Campbell went to the Mesa Pickleball and Tennis Center and said that it was super exciting and fantastic to see all the people there.

Member Streeter asked about pickleball lessons and if there will be more for the summer because they all seem to be sold out. Deputy Director Manis stated that she could call the center and ask them for advice to get into a lesson.

Member Manning went to an event that had a petting zoo down by The Yard during the All-American City Celebration. Member Narish also attended the event.

Member Maldonado attended the I Love Mesa event.

## **9. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on May 8, 2024, at 5:00 PM.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Member Peterson; seconded by Member Manning. Approved 9-0 without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 PM.