

**MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**
Meeting of November 18, 2014

LOCATION: 234 N. Central Avenue, 3rd Floor, Arizona Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ 85004

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Jack Stapley, Anne Lynch, Rod Jarvis and Denise Merdon

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Carl Yoshioka, Dr. Robert Branch

STAFF PRESENT: RJ Cardin, Director; Donna Southard, Recorder; Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager; Michele Kogl, Planning and Development Manager; Dawna Taylor, PIO; and Betsy Pregulman, Deputy Maricopa County Attorney

The official correspondence and staff recommendations contained in this Commission folder are hereby entered as supportive material to the official minutes of the November 18, 2014, Parks and Recreation Commission regular meeting.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER – Jack Stapley, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission

- The regular meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

ITEM #2 – ROLL CALL – Roll Call taken - a quorum was present.

ITEM #3 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 16, 2014, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING – Jack Stapley, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission – ACTION ITEM

- Commissioner Lynch motioned and Commissioner Jarvis seconded to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2014, meeting as presented. All in favor, none opposed, and the motion was approved.

ITEM #4 – DIRECTOR SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS – RJ Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM

- Director Cardin invited the commissioners to stay after the meeting to view the informational boards around the room. Each division and park was asked to create a storyboard highlighting the accomplishments over the past year.
- There is a newly forming White Tanks Mountain Conservancy group which includes members from DMB, other surrounding cities and businesses, and Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department.
- A dedication ceremony was held on Sunday, November 16th, at Lake Pleasant for the newly opened trails built by the Trails Crew and the Arizona Conservation Corp. Approximately 46 participants were in attendance.

ITEM #5 – DESERT DISCOVERY CENTER – Samantha Campana, Desert Discovery Center Advocate – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM

- Ms. Campana, former Mayor of Scottsdale and the National Audubon Society's state office, provided an overview of the proposed plans for the Desert Discovery Center (DDC) located in the McDowell Mountain Sonoran Preserves. The goal is to develop a tourism attraction for global research, education and interpretation of arid environments. The City of Scottsdale's \$74M project will be partially funded (\$25M) by bed-tax monies from the tourism industry. Projected attendance is 300,000 visitors annually. A partnership has been formed with Arizona State University to allow for international research. The DDC's mission is to promote sustainable living in arid environments and to change individual behavior and public policy. Objectives include development of other collaborations and partnerships with McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community, Desert Botanical Gardens and others. To date, approximately 250 community leaders have signed on as advocates for this project.
- Parks Commission members were impressed with the progress and plans for the project.
- Chairman Stapley asked staff to prepare a letter of support for presentation at the next meeting.

ITEM #6 – ESTRELLA YOUTH SPORTS UPDATE – Emily Miller, Contract Administrator, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM

- Ms Miller provided a timeline of the Estrella Sportsfield Complex beginning with an ITN (Invitation to Negotiate) notice issued in July 2013 for renovation, expansion, operations and maintenance of the existing sports facility in Estrella Park. In December 2014, a Good Faith Letter was issued to Estrella Youth Sports (EYS) group to start negotiations and preliminary analysis. A Special Use Permit (SUP) was issued in February 2014 allowing EYS to begin ground and facility improvements. The SUP will remain in effect until the Use Management Agreement (UMA) is approved. An infrastructure study was done by an EYS consultant.
- EYS is a non-profit organization operating out of Goodyear. Dale Kamarata, Executive Director, and Joe Bruyer, Chief Strategic Development Officer, from Estrella Youth Sports explained the phasing plans of the project. Total build-out costs are estimated at \$10.5M. EYS is working with various private donors, grants and foundations for funding. The goal is to begin phase I within six months of receiving the final UMA and each phase's completion every 12-months for a total build-out time of 5 years.
- Ms. Miller outlined the next steps, including possible plans to build mixing ponds (reverse osmosis) by the City of Goodyear as part of the project irrigation system.
- Commissioner Merdon inquired about the anticipated usage by private groups, EYS, tournaments, etc. EYS estimates 80% usage by outside groups. Director Cardin informed the commission that the City of Goodyear completed their City Park System Master Plan which prioritizes the need for additional sports fields. The City of Avondale is in a similar situation. Parks is in discussions with the City of Goodyear for possible joint construction/use/lease agreements.

ITEM #7 – ESTRELLA MASTER PLAN UPDATE – Leigh Johnson, Parks Planner, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION ITEM

- Ms. Johnson provided an update of events since her last presentation in July. With the increased traffic due to the EYS plans at Estrella Park, staff has asked Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) to conduct a road access study/analysis. The National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (NPS-RTCA) has awarded Parks a non-monetary grant to provide 160 hours of planning assistance. Assistance will include public outreach and conceptual site plans in conjunction with EYS' plans within Estrella Park. The City of Goodyear has approached Parks and Bureau of Reclamation for a possible wetlands project within the park.
- Next steps include a tour of the back country area, continued work with NPS-RTCA and MCDOT, and a stakeholders meeting the end of January.

ITEM #8 – MARICOPA TRAIL UPDATE – John Rose, Maricopa Trail Manager, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION ITEM

- Mr. Rose provided a brief history and status of the Maricopa Trail. The Maricopa Trail was funded by the Board of Supervisors in 2004 with the concept to connect all the regional parks within Maricopa County. Staff continues to work with Tonto National Forest, Arizona State Land Department, Flood Control District, various cities and other private companies for easements, purchases or right of ways and other agreements for trail access. To date, 210 miles or 68% of the trails have been built. Target completion date is fiscal year 2017.
- A sign inventory is also in process to ensure adequate signage is available on the trail.
- In 1964, a 50-year agreement was signed with the Bureau of Reclamation to utilize the SRP canals and rivers for the Sun Circle Trail. A renewal agreement is in process with SRP.

ITEM #9 – LAKE PLEASANT VISITOR CENTER UPDATE – Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager, and David Jordan, Park Supervisor, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM

- Ms. Waller informed the Commission that the existing visitor center was built in 1990 to view the construction of the dam. Once the construction was completed, the building was repurposed for a visitor center. The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and Parks have signed an agreement of funding to update the facility. It will be a design-build project. Funding is split between BOR and Parks for a total project cost of \$1.4M. Construction is anticipated to begin in February with completion in September 2015.

ITEM #10 – PARK CAPITAL FINANCING OPTIONS – RJ Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM

- Director Cardin informed the Commission that the 2009 System Master Plan outlined a 50 year vision for the park system. Utilizing this plan, a 10-year capital improvement plan (CIP) was developed. The CIP shows \$120M is needed to complete the capital development and major renovation projects for the next 10 years. From FY04 through FY14, Parks has spent over \$25M on capital and major maintenance. Funding has come from the general fund, park funds, and other sources. From FY10 through FY14, capital expenditures were only \$6.7M. Director Cardin provided various financing options to further explore.
- Commissioner Jarvis inquired about the option to build commercial development on high traffic sections of park lands. Director Cardin informed the Commission that much of the park land was acquired from the federal government or the Flood Control District and contains restrictions on usage. The consultant hired to conduct a feasibility study for a resort at Lake Pleasant continues with a potential RFP in approximately six months if the feasibility study is positive.
- Director Cardin's recommendations would be to approach the Board of Supervisors for dedicated funds from the general fund for set number of years or the second option would be to look at a park bond.
- Chairman Stapley, with concurrence from the Commission recommended that staff explore the options for a bond, a consultant and approaching the Board of Supervisors.

ITEM #11 – SET 2015 PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION DATES AND TIMES – RJ Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – ACTION ITEM

- Director Cardin provided a proposed 2015 schedule. Chairman Stapley asked the Commissioners if there were any conflicts or concerns with the schedule; none given.
- Commissioner Lynch motioned and Commissioner Jarvis seconded to approve the proposed 2015 meeting dates. All in favor, none opposed, and the motion was approved.

ITEM #12 – APPOINT SUBCOMMITTEE TO NOMINATE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2015 – Jack Stapley, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission – ACTION ITEM

- Chairman Stapley asked Commissioner Lynch and Merdon to serve on the subcommittee to nominate the chair and vice chair for 2015. Both accepted and will bring their nominations to the January 2015 meeting.

ITEM #13 – CALL TO THE COMMISSION

- Chairman Stapley gave a shout-out on an article in the Arizona Republic newspaper highlighting McDowell Mountain Regional Park.

Item #14 – CALL TO THE PUBLIC

- None

Item #15 – ADJOURNMENT

- There being no further business, Chairman Stapley adjourned the meeting at 10:52 am.

RJ Cardin, Director

Rod Jarvis, Chair