

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

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

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Jack Stapley, Carl Yoshioka, Anne Lynch, Dr. Robert Branch, and Rod Jarvis

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: RJ Cardin, Director; Donna Southard, Recorder; Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager; Michele Kogl, Planning and Development Manager; 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 March 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 9:00 a.m.

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

ITEM #3 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 21, 2014, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING – Jack Stapley, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission – ACTION ITEM

- Commissioner Lynch motioned and Commissioner Branch seconded to approve the minutes of the January 21, 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 distributed an Earth Day event flyer on the Maricopa Trail and invited the Commission Members to the event.
- Director Cardin corrected one item in the budget report; the Lake Fund expenditures are under budget, not over budget by 9.8%.
- Staff changes include the departure of Saturn at the front desk and Debbie who has moved to the Planning and Development Department.
- Host appreciation lunches have been taking place in smaller groups at several of the parks. The event includes games, years of service recognitions, a light lunch and prize drawings.
- The White Tank dump station project and the electrical system in the campground have been completed. The park has reported camping reservations have nearly doubled this spring.
- All the parks have been busy with their programs including 850 Cub Scouts attending Camp Digalus, an overnight scouting jamboree at Estrella Park. Lake Pleasant continues to work on trail construction. McDowell Park reported the campground was 98% for the month and most of the parks are reporting the same capacity.

Commissioner Jarvis arrived at 9:15 am.

ITEM #5 – EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS – RJ Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – *PRESENTATION ITEM*

- Director Cardin recognized Tom Rychtik (5 years) and David Carrillo (25 years) for their years of service and presented them with a Maricopa County service pin.

ITEM #6 – COMMISSION ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES AND LEGAL OVERVIEW – Betsy Pregulam, Deputy County Attorney, Maricopa County Attorney’s Office – *INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM*

- Ms. Pregulman reviewed the establishment of the parks commission per Arizona Revised Statutes and their role as established in the by-laws. Open Meeting laws were reviewed and include in-person, electronic, and executive session meetings. Revisions in the laws from 2013 and 2014 were presented. Political activity and participation rules were reviewed.

ITEM #7 – HASSAYAMPA RIVER PRESERVE UPDATE – Leigh Johnson, Park Planner, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – *INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM*

- Ms. Johnson informed the Commission that the questions from the attendees at the January and February public meetings were all addressed by staff from TNC and Parks. Positive comments were received. A 5-year timeline has been developed by staff outlining the period from now through the time Parks is scheduled to take over the day to day management of the Preserve which is scheduled for January 2016.
- The Vulture Park schedule includes BLM (Bureau of Land Management) to approve the Travel Management Plan by mid-April. FY15-16 is scheduled to begin road and facility design plans with construction beginning in FY16-17.

ITEM #8 – ESTRELLA PARK YOUTH SPORTS FIELD UPDATE – Emily Miller, Contract Administrator, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – *INFORMATION ITEM*

- Ms. Miller informed the commissioners the ITN response was received in September 2013 from Estrella Youth Sports. An evaluation committee reviewed and recommended the submitted proposal be accepted and a Letter to Negotiate the Use Management Agreement was issued in December 2013. The nonprofit organization has begun receiving donations for this project. A temporary Special Use Permit has been issued to allow Estrella Youth Sports to begin evaluation of the fields and possible improvements in preparation for fall youth ball programs.

ITEM #9 – REVIEW AND CONSIDER ALLOWABLE RECREATION USE/FLYBOARDING – Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – *INFORMATION/ACTION ITEM*

- Ms. Waller informed the commissioners that flyboarding activities were seen at Lake Pleasant last fall for the first time. The activity was explained and research found that it has been around for about 7 years. A team consisting of members representing Arizona Game & Fish Department, Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office, Maricopa Water District and Parks staff began meeting to ensure this was an appropriate activity for the park. To ensure consistent due diligence was followed, an evaluation matrix was developed to use as a tool to evaluate all new proposed activities within any of the parks. The Attorney General’s legal opinion is that flyboarding is not a water ski type activity and therefore does not require an observer. The units are a personal watercraft and will be regulated using the appropriate applicable laws. Based on the evaluation tool and other standards, Parks staff found that flyboarding is an appropriate use in the parks. Staff recommends that the activity be implemented on a one-year pilot basis with an evaluation at post one-year. If no significant issues are found, the activity would be allowed as an approved activity. Staff is in the process of crafting a management plan for this activity to outline staff responsibilities and roles for monitoring. The management plan includes language that if the activity is found to cause unsafe situations, the activity can be ceased immediately.
- Currently, the requests to conduct this activity have come from commercial groups, therefore, the agreements would fall under the Parks’ commercial management agreements (CMCA’s) and would include language recommended by the US Coast Guard for flyboarding. Each CMCA would include

the owner's safety manual for the equipment in the appendices which identifies recommended safety equipment, water depth, etc.

- Commissioner's discussion and questions included safety or kill switches on solo operated machines on privately owned units. Legal and financial responsibility to the County in the event of an injury; Ms. Waller informed the Commission that Arizona is a recreation at your own risk state and Ms. Miller will be working with the County's Risk office to establish insurance requirements for commercial agreements. The question was asked if there was a possibility of restricting this activity to a specific portion of the lake; Ms. Waller informed the commissioners that the committee extensively discussed this option and due to lake water level variations and past experience with jet ski limitations, it is not recommended. Commissioner Jarvis stated that there is an inherent risk and good rules and required safety equipment would help. Commissioner Branch stated newer technology is already available for this type of activity. Chairman Stapley complimented staff for developing a matrix to address flyboarding and future products that will arise.
- Mr. Jim Herzner representing JR Entertainment/AZ Fly Guys had submitted a speaker request and informed the commissioners that each unit is recommended to have an observer to lend assistance if needed as is stated in the jet ski's safety manual. Commercial users would have a qualified instructor on each unit. Ken Brown representing AZ Flyboarding Rentals had submitted a speaker request and informed the commissioners that flying solo requires advanced skills and commercial customers would never be given an option to control their own throttle.
- Director Cardin informed the Commissioners that if staff sees technology dramatically change over the course of the next year, staff will bring this item back to the commission prior to one year.
- Commissioner Lynch motioned to recommend the allowance of flyboarding as a recreational use activity for one calendar year. If within that year, no significant issues have been identified, the commission would then re-address the allowance of flyboarding to permit it to become an allowed activity within the Maricopa County Regional Parks System. Commissioner Yoshioka seconded. With all in favor, the motion passed.

ITEM #10 – CALL TO THE COMMISSION

- None.

Item #11 – CALL TO THE PUBLIC

- No public speakers.

Item #12 – ADJOURNMENT

- There being no further business, Chairman Stapley dismissed the meeting at 10:22 am.

RJ Cardin, Director

Jack Stapley, Chair