

**MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**  
Meeting of May 19, 2015

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**LOCATION:** Flood Control District Operations Building, 2801 W Durango Street, Phoenix, AZ 85338

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

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:** Devin Del Palacio

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

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The official correspondence and staff recommendations contained in this Commission folder are hereby entered as supportive material to the official minutes of the May 19, 2015, Parks and Recreation Commission regular meeting.

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

**ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER – Rod Jarvis, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission**

- The regular meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m.

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

**ITEM #3 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 17, 2015, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING – Rod Jarvis, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission – ACTION ITEM**

- Commissioner Lynch motioned and Commissioner Branch seconded to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2015, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting as presented. All in favor, none opposed, and the motion was approved.

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

- Director Cardin recognized the recent retirement of Rand Mazingo, Trades Supervisor. Rand had worked for the Parks Department for 25 years.
- Reported revenues through April are up 11% in the Enhancement Fund and 17% in the Lake Fund with both reporting expenditures under budget. The Spur Cross budget is a small budget and remains in-line for revenues and expenditures.
- Capital Hotel Management (CHM) is conducting a market, development, infrastructure and financial analysis for a resort project at Lake Pleasant. Staff has begun working with the City of Peoria; they have requested additional analysis and will assist with the additional costs. The Use Management Agreement with Estrella Youth Sports (EYS) continues to be developed, pending the final results of the Estrella Regional Park Master Plan.
- Other park highlights include a new reservation and point of sale system (POS) scheduled to go live July 1, 2015; a vendor has been selected to refresh the Parks website; celebrations were held during March and April at the various parks thanking the park hosts and volunteers for their work during the past season; several renovations and restoration projects are underway at the parks; San Tan park now has a well as the water source for the park and water no longer needs be hauled in; the Maricopa Trail continues to be built. Agreements with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), State

Trust Land and MCDOT were needed for a one half-mile segment, making parts of the trail harder to develop than others; the Trails Crew, with the assistance of the Arizona Conservation Corps (AZCC), finished the trails at Lake Pleasant, Usery and McDowell and are currently working at Estrella Park; the parks are in their busy season with large number of visitors coming to the parks for programs, weddings, scout events, and church retreats; during the Phoenix International Raceway (PIR), there were 569 camping units on park property; the first Native American Neo Tribal Festival was held at Estrella; Lake Pleasant Park held the C.A.S.T. for Kids event, Dam Good Run Walk Hike, and Paddlefest over the past couple of months. The Lake Pleasant Visitor Center renovations are underway and will double the size of the old facility; McDowell hosts several bike and race events every spring; San Tan Park generates several community events in the area; Spur Cross hosted the Archaeology Expo; Usery Park's stargazing event drew over 300 visitors and their campgrounds were 97% full in March; and White Tank hit a historic high revenue collection day on March 7, 2015.

- Commissioner Branch inquired if WiFi in the parks will be considered again in the future. Director Cardin explained that staff will keep the project on the radar as additional cell towers are constructed and costs decline.

**ITEM #5 – VICTORY LANE SPORTS COMPLEX EXPANSION UPDATE – Emily Miller, Contract Administrator, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department and Dan O'Brien, Project Developer/Owner and Randy J. Miller, CEO, Legacy Sports, LLC. – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM**

- Ms. Miller provided a brief location, description and history of the Adobe Dam Park. The area is considered a flood impoundment area by the Flood Control District. Current non-profit groups located in the park include Arizona Karting Racing Association, the Phoenix Kart Racing Association, Sahuaro Central Railroad Preservation Society and Maricopa Live Steamers, and the Arizona Model Pilots Association. For-profit organizations include Fort Adobe Paintball, 500 Club, Wet 'N' Wild and Victory Lane Sports Complex. Victory Lane has expressed interest in expansion. A "Request for Expression of Interest" was published in October 2014 for the development, financing, construction, operation and maintenance of the expansion; one response was submitted.
- Mr. Miller explained that Legacy Sports would like to construct a family sports center and entertainment park. Plans include additional softball fields and sand volleyball courts along with new soccer fields, baseball fields, pickleball courts, batting cages, challenge courses and zip-lines, and a main building with a restaurant, arcade and entertainment center, daycare center, proshop, retail outlets, a health and fitness training center, indoor basketball courts and volleyball courts, concessions, and restrooms. The sports facility would cost over \$100 million and create a new infrastructure to the park to handle the estimated 1.2-1.5 million people during the first year of operations.
- Mr. Mark Tudi from SportsSearch informed the Commission that soccer is the number one participation sport in Phoenix. There is a shortage of quality fields for local, regional, national and international games/tournaments.
- Mr. Miller explained the main building will serve as the focal point for all visitors as they enter the facility and disperse out to the various fields.
- Mr. O'Brien explained the mission of Legacy Sports is to provide youth the opportunity to leave a legacy. One goal is to provide a local tournament venue for area sports teams so they don't have to always travel to other states to compete. Along with sports participation, a focus needs to be placed on health and wellness to the youth. Challenge courses will offer corporate groups some fun activities for their conferences and meetings.
- Ms. Miller informed the commission the next steps include finalizing the Use Management Agreement; Board of Supervisors approval; and to obtain permits with a tentative construction start in January 2016 and opening in January 2018.
- Chairman Jarvis asked what the City of Phoenix pre-submittal meeting is for. Mr. Miller explained that Legacy is hoping to increase the ingress/egress roads around the complex to assist with traffic flow. Director Cardin also explained that zoning for that area was also verified.
- Commissioner Stapley asked when staff anticipates the agreement going to the Board of Supervisors. Director Cardin estimates in four to six weeks. Commissioner Stapley asked if a builder has been awarded the contract. Mr. Miller informed that Legacy has a project manager, but that no work has been awarded at this time.

- Director Cardin acknowledged Mr. Miller, Mr. O'Brien and their team on their plans to construct a high quality sports venue while keeping the family-friendly concept. They have been excellent to work with and he appreciates their efforts to partner with the current organizations at Adobe Park.
- Chairman Jarvis complimented Legacy's plans and that they will help reduce burdens on families and provide opportunities for their children to grow.

**ITEM #6 – FY16 PROPOSED BUDGET UPDATE – Aimee Upton, Administrator, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM**

- Ms. Upton explained the FY16 budget process. The Board of Supervisors approved a tentative recommended budget on May 18<sup>th</sup> with final adoption on June 22, 2015. FY16 Guidelines and Priorities included no funding for new or expanded programs, fund balances limited to either building reserves or one-time, non-recurring expenditures, no funding for new capital improvements and to include staff salary increases. Parks requested additional revenue and expenditure authority in four special revenue funds to allow for staffing, supplies, salary increases and significant central service cost increases, Risk Management and technology services increases. The requested special revenue fund increases were approved.
- The FY16 Budget request for the General Fund included expenditure authority for Phase 1 Vulture Mountain Recreational Areas Master Plan implementation including management and operations of the Hassayampa River Preserve and capital improvement project (CIP) funding. The increase expenditure authority for management and operations of the Hassayampa River Preserve was not approved. Limited approval was given for some CIP projects in existing parks.
- Chairman Jarvis asked if staff was able to provide an estimate of income from the proposed Legacy facility and how the funds would be used. Ms. Upton informed the Commission that the facility is not scheduled to open until 2018 and budgeting forecasts do not extend that far out. Approximately 50% of our revenues come from concessions and any expansion is helpful as it does not increase staffing costs. Commission Branch asked if there was any immediate impact to Parks with the proposed Board of Supervisor approval in four to six weeks. Director Cardin informed the Commissioners that Legacy is financing the \$100M project; therefore there will be no revenues to Parks while in development. Legacy plans to open in 2018 and Parks would start to see revenues similar to Wet 'N' Wild Water Park in 2019. FY15 park revenues increased significantly and staff was hopeful to use some of those increased revenues to partially fund staffing at Vulture Mountain, however, the significant FY16 central service costs and Risk Management cost increases nearly matched the additional revenues. Commissioner Branch asked if revenues currently coming from Victory Lane will cease over the next two years while Legacy is in development. Director Cardin explained that Victory Lane will operate as long as possible during development. When construction begins, the proposed agreement will decrease the annual payments by approximately 30% during construction but some revenues will still be paid to Parks. After the facility is open, there will be a minimum payment amount every year with a percentage on top of that.
- Chairman Jarvis asked if there is a possibility that as Parks' revenues increase, contribution from the general fund will decrease and if the commissioners need to lobby the Board of Supervisors to maintain Parks funding from the general fund. Chairman Jarvis stated that if staff is being this entrepreneurial on a project that serves both the public and Parks, Parks should not be punished for increasing revenues and offered his support to speak to the Supervisors to help prevent this when the time is appropriate.

**ITEM #7 – VULTURE MOUNTAIN UPDATE – RJ Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM**

- Director Cardin distributed a copy of the press release based on the Board of Supervisors' budget hearing of May 18<sup>th</sup>. He reaffirmed that Parks has no new funding for Vulture Mountain this next fiscal year. Parks had made the commitment to take over staffing the Hassayampa River Preserve in January 2016. With the funding request not approved, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) was notified. TNC had not budgeted any additional funds beginning in 2016, but will review their budget to see if they could fund one position. The Preserve may have to further limit access hours for public use of the facility. Parks will continue to offer assistance with existing staff from other parks by providing environmental education programs and possible maintenance assistance, but there are no operating dollars available. If TNC decides not to move forward with the management transfer of the

Hassyampa River Preserve to Maricopa County Parks, Parks will continue to move forward with development of the Vulture Mountain BLM land and partner with TNC.

- The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has offered to assist Parks with development of a budget scenario to submit for the new positions in the FY17 budget process. Supervisor Hickman and County Manager Manos continue to be supportive of the project.
- In the Vulture Mine portion of the park, Parks had submitted the lease application to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in 2012. Also in 2012, Parks received a grant from the Arizona State Parks Board Off-Highway Vehicle fund to conduct the environmental assessment (EA) work required to obtain the lease from BLM. In late 2014, BLM notified Parks that the EA could move forward. At the initial meeting with BLM and the EA consultant, BLM notified Parks that a Notice of Realty Action was going to be required. This process is estimated to delay the EA for at least six to eight months.
- The EA is funded by the grant in FY16. Staff will continue to work with Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) on the roadway analysis which is funded through highway user revenue funds as these are considered public roads. Parks will continue to move forward and bring back any new information as it comes available.

Commissioner Lynch was excused from the meeting at 10:13 am.

**ITEM #8 – MARKETING UPDATE – Dawna Taylor, Public Information Officer, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM**

- Ms. Taylor provided an overview of Parks advertising campaigns, partnership/cooperative opportunities, and outreach efforts along with social media and Parks website updates during FY14/15.
- Partnerships include the City of Peoria's quarterly *Get Active* guide and smaller local magazines and publications. New projects included a Maricopa County Parks and Recreation 2015 Park Calendar and a digital billboard *Go Wild for Flowers!* advertising campaign. The billboard ads directed viewers to the Parks website. The advertising banner was also posted on other County Department's website pages. A Facebook page was opened up to the public and invited park visitors to upload their personal pictures of the wildflowers they found in our parks. A Pinterest Board was also created which provided a map displaying the uploaded photos of the wildflowers blooming in the parks. Widgets were placed on the Parks webpage to allow visitors without Facebook or Pinterest accounts to view the photos. Parks partnered with the Maricopa County's Office of Communications to develop a video published on the *YouTube* channel highlighting this year's wildflower season. A press release highlighting the *Go Wild for Flower!* campaign was picked up by the Arizona Republic, the West Valley View and the Arizona Boating and Water Sports publication. Statistical reports show there were 517 photos uploaded to the Facebook account and 248 new friends added; 266 Pinterest Board followers with 10,945 Impressions (views); 1,370 YouTube video views to date; 115,797 webpage visits compared to 38,244 visits (202% increase) during the same time period last year; and a total increase of 79,441 more park visitors from February through April compared to the same months in 2014. The increased website views and/or the additional park entrance numbers may or may not be contributed to the wild flower campaign.
- Annual fall promotions include the buy one, get one camping offer, the Take A Hike Day free day-use entry, and the Military Service Appreciation Day with free day-use entry for all active/non-active military personnel on Veteran's Day. The *100 Miles in 100 Days* hiking challenge runs from November until February, and over the summer, the *Get Wet 'N' Wild This Summer* campaign raffles off family four-packs of day-entry tickets to participants attending various park programs. The tickets are compliments of Wet 'N' Wild. A portion of the ticket allotment is also integrated into the social media sites to allow viewers to win through a random.org drawing by submitting comments or captions, or by participating in a trivia/quiz game. Staff has found that the "comment to win it" method is a quick and easy way to solicit visitor ideas and feedback.
- Parks partnered with Maricopa County's Animal Care & Control Department (MCACC) during November 2014 to help the influx of surrendered animals. Everyone who adopted an animal from MCACC received a complimentary day-use pass to any of the Maricopa County Parks. Over 1,600 animals were adopted in November. Parks also benefited by additional media coverage on KTAR Radio, Fox 10 and Channel 12 news television. Another Partnership with MCACC is the Wag 'N' Walk program piloted at Utery Mountain Park. 65 canines participated in the program with 9 canine

adopted. The program is run by volunteers from both departments. This program has been submitted for a NACO award.

- Outreach programs include major expos such as the Arizona Game Fish Outdoor Expo with approximately 39,000 visitors. The Park Rangers continue to visit area libraries, schools, trade shows and other events. The Rangers also use their Facebook accounts to engage visitors and market their parks and programs.
- Upcoming projects include a major refresh on the Parks website pages. A professional website developer has been contracted to provide a user friendly, marketing oriented interface.

**ITEM #9 – USERY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARKS HIGHLIGHTS – Dan Wilson, Park Supervisor, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM**

- Mr. Wilson provided a brief overview of the updates occurring at Usery during the past year. All four of the old playgrounds have been removed and two new playgrounds have been installed featuring self-play or free-play equipment that includes a mountain lion and a giant tarantula. The play equipment fits well with the park's environment and both parents and kids are enjoying them.
- Eight new circuit training fitness equipment pieces were installed last week across from the Merkle Trailhead. They were immediately used by hikers. This is a growing trend to put fitness equipment within a park.
- Other major park projects include new kiosks at all major trailheads and completion of the reroute of the Pass Mountain Trail.

**ITEM #10 – ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE – Leigh Johnson, Parks Planner, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM**

- Ms. Johnson presented the progress of the Master Plan updates occurring since November 2014. Through a grant, staff continues to work with the National Park Services for meeting facilitation and process guidance. A backcountry site visit was conducted in January to view the topography and historical sites.
- The first Stakeholder meeting was held in January; attendees included contractual partners, City of Avondale, City of Goodyear and other government agencies, along with select park users based on their activity type. A follow up site visit for stakeholders was held in March with Parks Commissioner Devin Del Palacio also in attendance. The Friends of Estrella representation was absent. As a result of suggestions from the Stakeholder meetings, two outreach opportunities were scheduled to obtain feedback from local youth; the City of Goodyear Youth Commission meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup> and the City of Avondale's Global Youth Service Day on April 11<sup>th</sup>. Both youth groups provided thoughtful answers and interest in the park, however, most youth had not heard of Estrella Park or had not had the opportunity to visit the park.
- The first public open house was held on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 40 participants attended, resulting in 15 comment cards, 14 postie notes, one written letter, and over 24 emails within the first 24 hours. Comments will be accepted until May 30, 2015. As a result of some misconceptions brought to staff's attention, a newsletter was created and distributed this week.
- Proposals/Projects include an analysis of existing internal roadways by MCDOT to see if they can handle increased traffic produced by the proposed Estrella Youth Sports development. The Initial report shows that the current roads can handle the increased traffic and offered recommendations. The study will be completed the end of June/early July. The Goodyear Reclamation Brine Wetlands proposals conducted a facility demonstration visit in November 2014 and a park visit in March 2015. The El Rio Watercourse Master Plan was completed in 2006 and recently reintroduced to the public.
- The next steps include accepting additional comments until May 30, 2015, staff meetings will resume late summer/early fall, and an additional Stakeholder meeting will be held prior to the next public meeting schedule for Fall 2015.

**ITEM #10 – ALLOWABLE RECREATION USE/FLYBOARDING REPORT AND POSSIBLE ACCEPTABLE USE APPROVAL – Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/ACTION ITEM**

- Ms. Waller reviewed the jetpack pilot program as a possible recreational use at Lake Pleasant. The deliverables included the development of a management plan; the internal document has been completed. If the recreational use is approved, the plan will be updated to reflect the change.
- An internal review was conducted. The commercial use did not occur on the Lake Pleasant side due to the insurance requirement costs. However, there was a commercial vendor already in place on the Maricopa Water District (MWD) side which carried higher insurance coverage than the required minimum set by Maricopa County Risk Management. During calendar year 2014, there were 264 commercial rides conducted with no complaints or accidents reported. There are no reports of significant public participation in the activity.
- Based on the reports, staff recommends moving the program from pilot to acceptable use.
- Commissioner Stapley motioned to allow the recreational use of “jetpack” on the waters of Lake Pleasant Regional Park following the stipulations of the “Jetpack Management Plan” and formally move the program from pilot to acceptable use. Commissioner Yoshioka seconded the motion. With all in favor, none opposed, the motion was approved.

**ITEM #11 – CALL TO THE COMMISSION**

- Commissioner Branch offered a suggestion to staff to prepare a packet of the top three or four upcoming events to be given to the commissioners in advance so that they and/or the appropriate Supervisor be able to attend.

**Item #13 – CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

- None.

**Item #14 – ADJOURNMENT**

- There being no further business, Chairman Jarvis called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Stapley motioned, Commissioner Branch seconded. With all in favor, none opposed, the meeting was adjourned at 10:52 am.

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RJ Cardin, Director

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Rod Jarvis, Chair