

**MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**
Meeting of February 12, 2008

LOCATION: 234 N. Central Avenue, Suite 6400, Parks Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ 85004

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Laurel Arndt, Jill Kusy, Salomon Leija, Anne Lynch, Jack Stapley, Randy Virden

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Distant 4 (Vacant)

STAFF PRESENT: R.J. Cardin, Director; Tina Allen, Administrator; Ken Mouw; Jennifer Waller, Westside Superintendent; Teresa Retterbush, Eastside Superintendent; Dawna Taylor, Public Information Officer; Fareed Abou-Haidar, GIS Technician; Melanie Brown, Grants Coordinator; Tom Timmons, Contract Administrator; Amelia Sowers, HR Liaison; Jennifer Johnston, Park Supervisor – Usery; Debbie Lemon, Administrative Assistant and Recorder; Kevin Costello, County Counsel

The official correspondence and staff recommendations contained in this Commission folder are hereby entered as supportive material to the official minutes of the February 12, 2008 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

ITEM # 1 – CALL TO ORDER – Anne Lynch, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission

- Meeting 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 JANUARY 8, 2008 PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETINGS – Anne Lynch, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission - *ACTION ITEM*

- Motion to approve the minutes as written by Commissioner Kusy, with a second.

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

- Director Cardin gave a brief update on several items from the Director’s Summary. These items included:
 - He had participated in the workshop “On the Edge: A Dialogue and Design Exercise for Public Land Managers, Local Governments and Developers on the Urbanizing Edge of Protected Public Lands.” A final report is due to be released in March.
 - Usery offered 27 programs in January.

- McDowell held the first bike race of 2008 – going in reverse direction from the normal path of the track.
 - The attendance at San Tan continues to grow due to some great programs.
 - Western Heritage Days were held at Estrella.
 - White Tank held special events and programs for the visitors of the recent Super Bowl game.
 - Desert Outdoor Center sponsored sessions by Dr. Joseph Cornell ~ *Sharing Nature with Children*.
 - Scorpion Bay Marina dock dedication was January 17th; they are still scheduled to open in April.
 - The Verizon cell tower is now operational at Usery.
- Noted to the Commissioners that with the State budget cuts, the Legislature is looking at potentially taking Heritage Funds as well as taking State Lake Improvement funds.
 - Pointed out two handouts he provided for the Commissioners; an article in the Land and People magazine on connecting Children with Nature, coinciding with the work of Dr. Joseph Cornell. And a recent study stating that for Americans use of the outdoors has been decreasing.
 - Showed the White Tank Mountain Regional Park Waterfall Trail Construction ‘Thank you’ DVD to the Commissioners.

ITEM #5 – BUDGET UPDATE – Tina Allen, Administrator, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM

- As discussed previously the budget cut process started last December. Referring to Commissioner Leija’s question from last month stated that the department cannot implement its own pay for performance. All County employees are treated as a whole; it’s not per department.
- Parks Department budget reduction proposals for 5%, 10% and 15% were submitted. We can begin with an 8.4 percent decrease in Parks general funds by transferring three positions to the Lake Pleasant Regional Park fund. Other proposed reductions will not be so easy to accommodate. The department is still waiting for the results for the Budget office.
- Historically Parks has always come in just under budget. With a reduced budget, the department will need to account for and budget for everything.
- The Buckeye Hills Public and Sheriff’s shooting ranges are nearly complete. The project was under funded by approximately 1.4 million due to an unrealized grant from the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The Office of Management and Budget is working with parks on scenarios to repay the general fund for the grant that was not received. These scenarios will likely impact park capital projects and reduce the parks enhancement fund balance.
- Various Capital Improvement projects are continuing while other are being delayed completely. Estrella, Cave Creek and Usery Visitor Centers are currently in permitting process.
- Commissioner Leija asked about utility costs and total cost of utilities.

- Commissioner Leija was advised that Parks is currently making the transition with Facilities to take over managing the meters and costs for the department with a specific software program – Utility Manager. This will help the department oversee what is spent on utilities.
- Will report back on the total cost of utilities, as Tina Allen did not have that information with her at this time.
- Commissioner Arndt asked about Vulture Mountain, and if there are any costs to the department in the acquisition?
 - The department is currently working with The Nature Conservancy and the Bureau of Land Management, as well as the City of Wickenburg. Parks would enter into a cooperative agreement with all parties. This is still in the early stages. The department has \$100,000 budgeted at this time for any studies related to the project.

ITEM #6 – EASEMENT RENEWAL REQUEST AT USERY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK – Tom Timmons, Contracts Administrator, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – PRESENTATION ITEM

- Tom Timmons gave a brief summary on the request.
 - The history of the area goes back to 1962 and the last agreement was set in 1998.
 - The department is looking to enter into another agreement with Action Towers Group and AT&T. Currently both parties maintain the road, which is private and accessed through a gate. There is no public access authorized.
 - A draft agreement has been presented to both parties to review.
- Commissioner Stapley asked for verification that there is a gate there now and that this request would be for a second gate.
 - Both Tom Timmons and Jennifer Johnston, Park Supervisor at Usery confirmed there is one gate now on the road at the entrance to the private property for the utility site, which works and that both parties would be agreeing to have a second gate at the west end of the entry road in the new agreement.
 - The gates are needed to protect the Park from illegal access and dumping, which has been occurring.
- Tom Timmons also noted that County Counsel would also be involved to assist with this process.

ITEM #7 – SET PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR EASEMENT REQUEST AT USERY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK PURSUANT TO PARK LAND DISPOSAL POLICY – Anne Lynch, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission – ACTION ITEM

- Chair Lynch assigned a sub-committee, Commissioner Stapley, and appointed Commissioner Stapley to assist with the easement requests and public hearings.
- First public hearing to be at Usery Mountain Regional Park on March 28th, 9:00 a.m. and the second hearing would be before the April 8th Commission meeting at 8:30 a.m.

- Commissioner Virden moved to approve the public hearing dates, with a second.

ITEM #8 – UPDATE ON THE PLANNING FOR THE NORTH REACH OF LAKE – R.J. Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – *INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM*

- Director Cardin introduced Jennifer Waller to give the Commissioners the update.
- Jennifer Waller showed a brief PowerPoint presentation of picture slides to show the Commissioners how much water is flowing in the area currently.
- Advised the Commission that at the end of January the department submitted a SLIF grant for the area and that the technical committee was getting off the ground.
- Also that some of the public is still going out to the area and cutting the gate and locks.

ITEM #9 – Park Law Enforcement Activities – Captain Bill VanAusdal, Maricopa County Sherriff's Office – *INFORMATION ITEM*

- Captain VanAusdal gave a brief history of the MCSO relationship with Parks, dating back to the time when the position of ranger was split as Interpretive Ranger and Park Police.
- Stated that in November 2003 the Park Police became part of the Sheriff's Office. Park Police then became Deputy Sheriff's.
- The Captain stated that the officer's do what needs to be done depending on the incident and that officers know and respect the Parks Department's mission. Captain VanAusdal verified for Commissioner Leija that the officers are not seeking out and checking park visitors documented status.
- Captain VanAusdal stated that his last day working with the Mountain Patrol Division was February 4th and introduced Captain George Hawthorne as his replacement.

ITEM #10 – CALL TO THE COMMISSION

- Commissioner Leija asked about the department's efforts with schools.
 - Director Cardin assured the Commissioner that the department was focused on children and making them aware of the outdoors. Noted the 'Be Outdoors Arizona' group.
- Commissioner Leija asked about the department's efforts to reduce energy consumption.
 - Director Cardin advised the Commission of the County starting a 'Green Initiative' program and a task force is being developed to help encourage the County to go green. Also noted the many ways the department looks to improve aspects and go green.
- Chair Lynch noted to the Commission that Director Cardin and she had been invited by the Director of the Audubon Society to take a tour; they are also getting ready to build a center.
- Chair Lynch reminded Commissioners that the March meeting is a week early – March 4th.

Item # 11 – CALL TO THE PUBLIC

- None.

Item # 12 – ADJOURNMENT

- There being no further business, Anne Lynch, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission, adjourned the meeting at 10:25a.m.

R.J. Cardin, Director/Secretary

Anne Lynch, Chair