

**MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

Meeting of September 19, 2017

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**LOCATION:** Maricopa Flood Control District Operations Bldg., 2801 W Durango Street, Phoenix, AZ 85009

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Anne Lynch, Megha Budruk, Thomas Rhoades, Isabel Chavez, and Robert Branch

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:** Rod Jarvis, Denise Merdon

**STAFF PRESENT:** RJ Cardin, Director; Donna Southard, Recorder; Mary Christopher, Recorder; Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager; Ken Vonderscher, Planning and Development Manager; Dawna Taylor, PIO; Aimee Upton, Administrator; and Betsy Pregulman, Emily Craiger and Andrea Cummings, Deputy Maricopa County Attorneys.

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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 September 19, 2017, Parks and Recreation Commission regular meeting.

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**

**ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER – Anne Lynch, 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 AUGUST 15, 2017, REGULAR PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING – Anne Lynch, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission – ACTION ITEM**

- Commissioner Branch motioned and Commissioner Budruk seconded to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2017, meeting. With all in favor, none opposed, 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 provided a brief recap of the Director Summary Reports. The Department released an Expression of Interest for a native wildlife rescue conservation and nature center at McDowell Park with an October 10 response date. Buckeye Hills Shooting Range remains closed to the public but a Special Use Permit was issued to allow law enforcement agency use of the facilities until a Use Management Agreement can be completed; the UMA, if approved will allow for both government and public use. Final acquisitions for the remaining Maricopa Trail segments are pending State Land Department’s approval; staff anticipates approvals by the end of the calendar year with the trail completion early next spring. Each Park Supervisor provided a current highlight within their park.

**ITEM #5 – FY2016-2017 PARKS CIP PROJECT RECAP – Brad Reed, Project Manager, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION ITEM**

- Mr. Reed gave an overview of the 2017 completed Capital Improvements Projects (CIP) within Parks. They included underground services for data and phone lines at the Hassayampa River Preserve Visitor Center; storm damage repairs of Lake Pleasant’s floating bridge, the electrical unit and pump station at Estrella Park, and playground equipment at Cave Creek; restroom and ramada replacements/renovations at Estrella and White Tank; turf improvements at Estrella; a new evapotranspiration (ET) bed near the 4-lane boat launch at Lake Pleasant; the addition of 11 new developed camp sites at Cave Creek; and a new entry station at the Spur Cross.

**ITEM #6 – FY2018 CIP TIMELINE – Ken Vonderscher, Planning and Development Manager, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION ITEM**

- Mr. Vonderscher presented an overview for the 2018 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP funding process takes into consideration the life, health, safety, and visitor experience at the parks. The Board of Supervisors approved all submitted projects with approximately \$9M in funding for FY18. Mr. Vonderscher provided a brief overview of the timeframe and projects scheduled for this fiscal year.

**ITEM #7 – RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN GUIDELINE MANUAL – Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM**

- Ms. Waller presented an overview of the Resource Management Plan Guideline Manual. This Management Guidelines are an internal program that will serve as a foundation and give direction for the management and operations of the parks. Each section of the manual; foundation, parks system planning, land protection, natural resources management, cultural resources management, interpretation and education, use of parks, park facilities, and commercial visitor services, will include the contribution of experiences and informed input. The draft Natural Resource Management section is ready for commissioner's review and comment.
- Director Cardin informed the Commission that most of the contents within this section is currently in use and that the document will serve as way for staff to collectively put this information in one location for a reference to new staff.

**ITEM #8 – PROPOSED PARKS FEE SCHEDULE REVISIONS – SET PUBLIC HEARING FOR NOVEMBER 14, 2017 – Aimee Upton, Administrator, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM**

- Ms. Upton informed the Commission that fee revenues have provided 89% to 93% of the operating expense for Parks over the last eight years with all user fee revenues retained within the Parks and Recreation Department. Fee increases are needed as projected future operating costs will begin to exceed Parks' revenue funding. Fee increases would assist in providing funds for future and current growth (Hassayampa and Vulture Mountain), cover maintenance and repair for Parks' aging fleet, replacement of outdated technology and increased utility costs. In addition, Parks' incurs a 20-27% turnover rate in some market ranges due to uncompetitive salaries, which could be addressed with additional revenue. The Parks' Revenue Philosophy approved by the Parks Commission in 2012 subsidizes youth environmental education services which means fee revenue at Lake Pleasant is used to support the Desert Outdoor Center's operating expenses which focuses on educating youth. The fee increases are based on cost of recovery, benchmark comparisons and anticipated revenue. The anticipated timeline includes a public comment hearing with an action/vote at the November 14<sup>th</sup> Parks Commission meeting followed by the Board of Supervisors agenda item in December to set a public hearing in February and implementation March/April.
- Chair Lynch left at 10:55 am, handing the gavel to Vice-Chair Budruk. A quorum remained.
- Commissioner Budruk asked if a drop in visitor count due to the higher fees had been considered. Director Cardin said that a drop of 5-10% is typical, but over time, attendance levels return and has been calculated in the forecast. Commissioner Branch expressed several concerns regarding amount of the increases, potential loss of revenue and justification of increases. Commissioner Budruk referenced the last Parks' Visitor Survey and that visitors saw value in the fees for their experience. Commissioner Chavez would like to solicit additional public input through a survey regarding the fees. Commissioner Rhoades inquired what the number of in-state/out-of-state usage rates are for the campground sites. He recommended that staff keep the proposed schedule to hold a public hearing in November.
- Commissioner Branch motioned to have staff collect additional data and conduct a survey with results analyzed at the October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioner Chavez seconded. With all in favor, the motion passed.

**ITEM #9 – CALL TO THE COMMISSION**

- None

**ITEM #10 – CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

- None

**ITEM #11 – CONSULTATION FOR LEGAL ADVICE REGARDING PLEDGE AND INVOCATION. THE COMMISSION MAY VOTE TO CONVENE IN EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER PURSUANT TO A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3). – ACTION ITEM**

- Commissioner Branch motioned, seconded by Commissioner Rhoades, with all in favor, none opposed, the motion passed to convene into an executive session. Public was dismissed.

**ITEM #12 – ADJOURNMENT**

- Public meeting was reconvened. There being no further business, Commissioner Branch motioned to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Rhoades. With all in favor, none opposed, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 am

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RJ Cardin, Director

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Megha Budruk, Vice-Chair

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