

MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Regular Meeting of September 21, 2021

LOCATION: Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting (live feed and telephone). Maricopa County Parks Headquarters, 41835 N. Castle Hot Springs Road, Morristown, AZ 85342.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Jack Stapley, Eric Mears, Megha Budruk, John Crane, Shelby Scharbach, Isabel Chavez

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Branch

STAFF PRESENT: RJ Cardin, Director; Donna Southard, Recorder; Dawna Taylor, Public Information Officer; Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager; Aimee Upton, Administrator; 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 September 21, 2021, Parks and Recreation Commission regular meeting.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

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

- The regular meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

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

ITEM #3 – DIRECTOR’S SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS – R.J. Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department

- Director Cardin provided an overview of the September report to include recent Board of Supervisor approvals; contract administration updates, status on current projects, implementation of a butterfly monitoring program, preparations in all the parks for the upcoming busy season, the start of several high school mountain bike programs utilizing the regional parks for practice and the demolition of the White Tank contact station after a second vehicle crashed into it.
- Commissioner Mears inquired who will be paying for the cost of the contact station replacement. Director Cardin informed the Commission that a claim was submitted to Risk Management and that department will work to recover as much of the costs as possible. Commissioner Mears asked if anyone is evaluating the root cause and any safety issues that may be present regarding these incidents. Director Cardin stated that the Maricopa County Department of Transportation is conducting a Candidate Assessment Report which looks at the placement of the entry station and the safety implications.

ITEM #4 – APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES: AUGUST 17, 2021 – Jack Stapley, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission

- Chair Stapley called for a motion to approve the August 17, 2021, meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Scharbach motioned, seconded by Commissioner Chavez. With all in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.

ITEM #5 – DISCUSSION FOR 2022 COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE – Jack Stapley, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission

- Chair Stapley asked if Director Cardin had any input regarding the schedule. Director Cardin recommended that the Commission schedule six regular meetings and the Chair can call another meeting if needed. With the reliability of virtual meetings, the Commission may want to consider a mix of in-person and virtual meetings. Chair Stapley suggested that a meeting be held at Vulture Mountain Recreation

Area so the Commission can get a better feel of all the projects occurring at the new site. Director Cardin suggested a meeting in May as construction is scheduled to begin in the March/April timeframe. Commissioner Crane agreed and requested that other park site meetings be also scheduled (in-person or hybrid). Commissioner Mears preferred to hold as many meetings in the parks as possible. Commissioner Budruk agreed that park visits and meeting with people in the parks is beneficial but have a call-in option if a Commissioner can't make it that day. Director Cardin stated that staff would check the availability of call-in/virtual meetings at each of the parks for consideration.

- Chair Stapley recommended that the May meeting be held at Vulture Mountain and a similar schedule be developed for 2022.

ITEM #6 – FY22 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS TIMELINE – Jeff Gruver, Project Manager, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department

- Mr. Gruver provided an overview of the projects scheduled in fiscal year 2022 throughout the park system.
- Commissioner Chavez commented that the separation of the turf from the parking lot is a great improvement from what it was before.
- Commissioner Mears inquired on the type of delivery that the County can utilize to complete the projects. Mr. Gruver informed the Commission that most projects can be completed by a JOC (Job Order Contract) as they are under \$1M. If over that dollar limit, a public bid process is used with a design/bid build. JOCs are under contract with the County for three years with two one-year extensions. Parks currently can utilize two JOC construction contractors and one JOC electrical contractor. The public bid process includes 1) the design done by a contractor or a JOC, 2) Procurement develops the specifications based on the design, and 3) Procurement puts out the solicitation for bids.

ITEM #7 – SWIFTWATER RESCUE TRAINING AND RECREATION FACILITY CONCEPT WITHIN ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK – Emily Miller, Contract Administrator, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department

- Ms. Miller informed the Commission that a company has approached Parks and would like to partner in offering a Swiftwater rescue training and recreation facility in the west valley. To move forward and enter into formal discussions, the Parks would need to either issue a Letter of Expression of Interest or an Invitation to Negotiate. Two prototypes are currently located in North Carolina and Oklahoma. Both facilities are non-profit and their main purpose is first responder training for Swiftwater rescue. After receiving the initial information, staff feels that Estrella Mountain Regional Park would be the preferred location for this type of facility. The facility would incorporate the “raging river” into existing park features. The facility would require 98 Acre Feet of water per year and would have a closed-looped system that filters, treats, and recirculates the water. Based on prior experience, this solicitation would require a surety bond, cashier's check, or certified check to recoup liquidated damages for failing to enter into a formal contract with 1 year, provide a conceptual plan, proof of funding, and require full feasibility studies before finalizing a contract.
- Commissioner Chavez feels it would be a great addition to the west valley, but is concerned if this project would be viable.
- Commissioner Scharbach inquired if the same organization that runs the other facilities is the same company that is approaching Parks. Ms. Miller said it is a different company, but the same designer is working with this organization. Commissioner Scharbach suggested that staff reach out to the current facilities and inquire how their financial vetting process was completed and if they are located on a park or public land. She feels that this could potentially be a really good recreational opportunity; the Ninja training has become very popular in many gyms.
- Commissioner Mears inquired if this would be located on federal land and does additional studies need to be conducted. Ms. Miller informed the Commission that it would be located on previous state land currently owned by Parks. Commissioner Mears stated that with the facility located on Parks' land, that water rights would be the primary permitting need. Ms. Miller stated that Parks has the 98 Acre Feet of water rights available for the facility to purchase.
- Chair Stapley inquired how Director Cardin and staff feel about the project. Director Cardin stated that the additional solicitation requirements are needed after extensive staff hours were invested into previous projects that could not be secured due to lack of funding from the organization. If the solicitation

requirements are followed, he feels comfortable moving forward at this point. Ms. Miller shared basic background information obtained from internet searches.

- Commissioner Budruk stated that this project should keep in alignment with Parks' Missions and Vision. Commissioner Crane agreed and expressed concern if there is a need for this type of facility based on surveys and other feedback received from the public over the past year.
- Director Cardin informed the Commission that a formal solicitation is needed to obtain the answers to many of the questions raised during today's discussion. As information is obtained, staff would provide updates to the Commission for further direction.

ITEM #8 – PARKS VISION 2030 SYSTEM MASTER PLAN UPDATE – Eileen Baden, Park and Open Space Planner, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department

- Ms. Baden informed the Commission that two virtual public meetings have been set: November 8 and 10. Several chapters of the master plan have been drafted and are under internal review. Quarterly meetings are being held with Tonto National Forest. Discussions have included identifying a 3-5 miles buffer zone that would be envisioned as a transition area from the front country to the backcountry where citizens could use this high-impact area in their healthy lifestyle routines. The tentative schedule is to complete the draft plan and open it up for a 30-day public review in February and Board of Supervisor's approval in late March.

ITEM #9 – CALL TO THE PUBLIC

- None

ITEM #10 – CALL TO THE COMMISSION

- Commissioner Chavez commended Park staff on their hard work throughout the pandemic.
- Commissioner Scharbach inquired if there was a piece of artwork that was placed in Spur Cross Conservation Area. Director Cardin stated that the Town of Cave Creek dedicated the artwork and held a small commemoration ceremony recognizing the 20th anniversary of the acquisition of Spur Cross.
- Commissioner Crane shared that on a recent visit to Spur Cross, he saw a Cave Creek Public Works staff member working on parking curb placements.

ITEM #11 – ADJOURNMENT

- There being no further business, Chair Stapley adjourned the meeting at 11:19 am.