

**MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**  
Meeting of July 15, 2014

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**LOCATION:** 234 N. Central Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Arizona Conference Room, Phoenix, AZ 85004

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

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:** Carl Yoshioka

**STAFF PRESENT:** RJ Cardin, Director; Donna Southard, Recorder; Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager; Michele Kogl, Planning and Development Manager; Dawna Taylor, PIO; 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 July 15, 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 MAY 20, 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 May 20, 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**

Commissioner Jarvis arrived at 9:03 am.

- Director Cardin informed the Commissioners about the Sun Corridor Trails Project. The goal is to connect existing loop trails from Las Vegas to Cochise County at the Mexican border. A meeting was held with many of the stakeholders which showed a lot of interest and support. The next step is to develop the GIS mapping layers identifying existing trails and gaps. More meetings will be held over the next year and led by Maricopa County and Pima County. Commissioner Lynch asked how the Arizona Trail would hook up to the Sun Corridor Trail. Director Cardin stated that the Arizona Trail is more of a wilderness type trail and the Sun Corridor Trail would link large urban trails, offering two different types of experiences.
- Other updates included the moving of Parks Administrative Headquarters from downtown Phoenix to Lake Pleasant; review of the budget revenue and expenditure figures; removal of the non-functioning solar system at the DOC; staff is working with Estrella Youth Sports on an agreement to potentially add up to eight soccer fields and six baseball/softball fields at Estrella Park; a new commissioner from District 1 will be approved by the Board of Supervisors and will join our board at the next meeting; souvenir fund is working on a new product line and has been successful as an additional revenue source for park operations; the volunteer program continues to expand with over \$2 million in volunteer labor during the last fiscal year; the Bureau of Land Management has signed the Travel

Management Plan for Vulture Mountain and requires a 30-day period to allow letters of protests to be submitted; refurbishing various park restrooms continues; Maricopa Trail sign installation continues along with acquiring additional right-of-ways; and Parks staff continues to hold night events which are well attended.

- Commissioner Branch and Chairman Stapley publically recognized the outstanding work the volunteers do in each of our parks.

**ITEM #5 – VULTURE MOUNTAIN ACCESS ROADS STUDY – Leigh Johnson, Park Planner, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – *INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM***

- Ms. Johnson informed the Commission that MCDOT completed a roadway evaluation for the Vulture Mountain area in September 2013. The project area looked at access road options off of Vulture Mine Road to the tentatively planned campground area, the day-use area and the OHV (off highway vehicle) area. Four options were provided; alternative #2 is preferred due to neutral environmental and drainage impacts and positive vehicle and pedestrian access. In 2009, a traffic count was taken on Vulture Mine Road; results showed approximately 389 vehicles per day. Staff estimates approximately 438 vehicles per day or an estimated 160,000 vehicles per year will use the road when the park opens. MCDOT has agreed to schedule and fund preliminary engineering and design for the access roads.

**ITEM #6 – ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK PLAN UPDATE – Leigh Johnson, Park Planner, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – *INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM***

- Ms. Johnson provided a brief history on Estrella Regional Park. The first system-wide master plan was completed in 1965; the Casey Abbott area plan in 1967; and the park is currently working under the 1988 park master plan. The update will incorporate items from the 2009 strategic system plan, the 2012 Estrella trail plan and current agreements/partnerships with park stakeholders. Public meetings will be scheduled for this fall and next spring.
- Commissioner Jarvis recommended that this area be developed as a destination area for west side valley ball tournaments.

**ITEM #7 – STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN UPDATE – Leigh Johnson, Park Planner, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – *INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEM***

- Ms. Johnson informed the Commissioners that the current Strategic System Master Plan was completed in 2009 with a 10-year outlook. This update includes a review of accomplishments and progress on long-term objectives. Accomplishments include implementation of the reservation system; hiring the volunteer coordinator position which increased hours worked by park volunteers by 26% within one year; completion of the cost of service evaluation; and completion of the signage manual.
- Director Cardin informed the Commissioners that the cost of service evaluation provided staff with costs for a unit of camping, a unit of day-use entry, etc. In conjunction with benchmarking data, staff was able to make recommended fee increases. 93% of Parks overall budget for FY15 is recovered through earned revenue.
- Chairman Stapley expressed his appreciation for the information received through the cost of service evaluation. Commissioner Branch noted that even though some fees went up, annual pass fees for senior citizens remained the same and the inclusion of the Lake Pleasant Regional Park on the annual pass schedule enhanced the program. With these changes and the new disabled Veterans discount, Commissioner Branch feels Parks is offering more to park visitors.
- Ms. Johnson reviewed the ongoing items, such as partnership with other organizations and the land acquisition priority list. Items that are being recommended to be eliminated were also reviewed. New challenges and opportunities were identified.
- Director Cardin stated that the 2009 plan was a milestone for the department with the last one completed in 1965. Despite the recession, the department was able to complete approximately 40% of the identified major tasks over the past five years. Chairman Stapley stated that he has served on the board for the past 22 years and is impressed with the accomplishments of the past five years and appreciates the practice of a mid-term review. He encourages staff to continue planning for 20-40 years out to be prepared for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

- Director Cardin invited the Commissioners to submit any comments or concerns before the plan is finalized.

**ITEM #8 – CALL TO THE COMMISSION**

- None.

**Item #9 – CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

- Director Cardin invited the Commissioners to let him know if they would like any topic found in the Director Summary report be put on a future agenda for discussion.
- Commissioner Branch asked if future meetings would possibly be held at a park. Chairman Stapley encouraged scheduling a board meeting occasionally at the various parks.

**Item #10 – ADJOURNMENT**

- There being no further business, Chairman Stapley dismissed the meeting at 9:59 am.

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RJ Cardin, Director

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Jack Stapley, Chair