

**MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**
Meeting of March 15, 2016

LOCATION: Lake Pleasant Regional Park, Discovery Center, 41835 N. Castle Hot Springs Road, Morristown, AZ 85342

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: **Robert Branch, Denise Merdon, Devin Del Palacio, and Jack Stapley (via teleconference).**

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Anne Lynch, Rod Jarvis, and Megha Budruk

STAFF PRESENT: RJ Cardin, Director; Donna Southard, Recorder; Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager; Ken Vonderscher, Planning and Development Manager; Dawna Taylor, PIO; 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 March 15, 2016, Parks and Recreation Commission regular meeting.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER – Robert Branch, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission

- The regular meeting was called to order at 10:25 a.m.

ITEM #2 – ROLL CALL – Roll Call taken - a quorum was not present.

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

- Director Cardin presented past Parks and Recreation Commissioner, Carl Yoshioka, with a plaque for his years of dedicated service to the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission from 2007 through 2015.
- The Legacy Sports development team has hired Sports Facilities Advisory to conduct an independent feasibility study. This study is required in order to obtain necessary funding. Results should be available mid-April.
- An amended agreement with Phoenix International Raceway (PIR) is pending Board of Supervisors’ approval. The new agreement establishes a flat-fee annual payment with no additional camping fees, thus reducing staff’s time to count the number of campers each night during PIR’s NASCAR races.
- A cooperative agreement with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been finalized and is pending Board of Supervisor’s approval. This agreement sets up the path for Maricopa County Parks to acquire the Hassayampa River Preserve from TNC. The agreement outlines requirements for the development of a master plan, the transfer of a portion of land to the County for a visitor center, the County’s encumbering the parcel with a conservation easement and responsibilities of each party.
- Other highlight briefs include the FY16 revenue/expenditure status and the expansion of the 500 Club’s concept plans to expand the pro shop and add a banquet facility at Adobe Dam. The rodeo arena at Estrella will be closing as the concessionaire retires effective May 1, 2016. The area will be repurposed for other recreational opportunities as outlined in the master plan updates. Desert Troon Companies have opened the Scorpion Bay Grill and store replacing Dillon’s Restaurant in the marina. The number of volunteer hours has increased another 10% from the previous year. MCDOT continues to work with Park staff on the realignment of the Vulture Mine Road and design of interior park roads. Work continues on the refurbishment of several restrooms throughout the parks. The Maricopa Trail is now 77% complete with additional acquisitions in progress. Programs continue in all the parks.

ITEM #5 – EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS – RJ Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – PRESENTATION ITEM

- Director Cardin recognized the following employees for their years of service with Maricopa County: Amy Roberts (5); Jim Apthorp (5); Dawn Silvernale (5); Andrea Despotides (10); Natalie Harper (10); Chris Simpson (10); Kevin Smith (10); Dawna Taylor (15); Tony Blanco (15); Don Harris (15); Allen Ockenfels (15); and Jennifer Waller (20).

ITEM #6 – BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA, GRAND CANYON COUNCIL SILVER BEAVER AWARD RECIPIENT – Jennifer Waller, Operations Manager, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION ITEM

- Ms. Waller recognized Natalie Harper, Interpretive Ranger at the Desert Outdoor Center, for her recent award from the Boy Scouts of America. Ms. Harper was awarded the Grand Canyon Council Silver Beaver Award for her contribution to the Aquatics Camp. The award is only given to adults for their extensive contributions to the youth. Ms. Harper has been with the aquatics program for 10 years teaching over 2,000 scouts and awarding over 6,000 merit badges. Ms. Waller thanked Natalie for her years of hard work to build the program and holding it together for 10 years.
- Ms. Harper shared that the aquatics program started a few months after she was hired. Her most rewarding part is introducing various lake experiences to the boys who would normally never have the ability to learn how to sail, drive a motor boat, and learn about the desert environment. She recognized all the hard work and support of her co-workers and extended park family and is looking forward to their plans to make the program bigger and better.

ITEM #7 – PRICKLY PEDAL RACE RECAP – RJ Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION ITEM

- Director Cardin provided the Commission with the results of the inaugural 2016 Prickly Pedal Race held on January 12, 2016: 274 riders from multiple states and Canada; 120-150 volunteers; and raised approximately \$38,000 in profits that will be used in part for a trails steward program, a trails town program and maintenance of the trail. The race was a joint venture with Maricopa County and led by the Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation (MT+PF). Several communities joined efforts to highlight the Maricopa Trail System, including the City of Peoria and the Town of Cave Creek. Many compliments were received from riders on how well staffed and organized the event was while complimenting the beauty of the views and the condition of the trail. The goal is to move the race around the valley with other mayors expressing interest in being involved next year. Partnerships and sponsorships from over 25 different companies and entities provided different levels and kinds of in-kind and cash support for this event. Parks and MT+PF will begin planning for next year's event in the next couple of weeks.
- Chairman Branch complimented staff and shared how much riders he hosted from out of state enjoyed the well-organized race, the challenge, and the after party event.

ITEM #8 – MARICOPA TRAIL AND PARK FOUNDATION COMMUNITIES PROGRAM – Jan Hancock, Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation – INFORMATION ITEM

- Ms. Hancock provided a brief overview of MT+PF's role in supplementing the Maricopa County Parks Department with primary focus on the Maricopa Trail. The Maricopa Trail Communities Program utilizes asset-based community development efforts linking the Maricopa Trail and surrounding "Trail Towns". There are several other trail town programs throughout the United States. REI has awarded MT+PF a grant to develop a pilot program with several communities along the Maricopa Trail. Long-term benefits of a communities program include a physical connection between the trail and towns, increased marketing and economic development, increased trail use and maintenance, and a source of community pride with "gateway moments" as tourists and visitors enter each individual community.

ITEM #10 – 100 MILES IN 100 DAYS CHALLENGE RECAP – Dawna Taylor, Public Information Officer and Jennifer Johnston, West Side Superintendent - Maricopa County Park and Recreation Department – INFORMATION ITEM

- Ms. Johnston provided a brief history and overview of the challenge. Ms. Taylor showed how participants utilized the newly launched Facebook Page with 575 friends. 2016 results saw 82 more participants than 2015, including 41 families, log a total of 34,936 miles or 13,397 miles more than the previous year. 25 participants logged more than 200 miles, six participants charted more than 300 miles and two participants recorded over 600 miles. Each participant completing the challenge received a t-shirt and was invited to a small celebration at the park they hiked the most miles in. Post program survey results showed of the 245 participants, there were 220 hikers, one trail runner and one hiker/runner reaching the 100 required miles. 200 miles were required for the 11 bikers, 10 hiker/bike participants and the two hike/horseback riders.

ITEM #11 – MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH – Dawna Taylor, Public Information Officer, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – INFORMATION ITEM

- Ms. Taylor informed the Commission that the previous Parks' website was developed in 2004. With advances in technology and increases in mobile use devices, Parks' budgeted to have a new website developed. Statistical data was collected on how visitors used the old website; this data was then used in the development and navigation of the new website. Ms. Taylor showcased several features of the new pages.
- Commissioner Del Palacio commented that he pulled up the new site on his phone and it was very user friendly, beautiful, engaging, and a huge improvement from the old site.
- Chairman Branch asked if all the Commission meeting minutes will be archived on the site. Ms. Taylor informed the Commissioner that past meeting minutes are currently archived on the website in a table format. Development of a location to maintain the archived meetings will come in the future for easy searching without taking up too much space on the website. Chairman Branch agreed with Commissioner Del Palacio on how beautiful the site looked.

Commissioner Stapley joined the meeting via teleconference at 11:50 am. At this time, there is a quorum present.

ITEM #3 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 17, 2015, AND FEBRUARY 9, 2016, REGULAR MEETINGS AND THE NOVEMBER 30, 2015, AND DECEMBER 7, 2015, SPECIAL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETINGS – Robert Branch, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission – ACTION ITEM

- Commissioner Stapley motioned and Commissioner Del Palacio seconded to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2015, November 30, 2015, December 7, 2015 and February 9, 2016, Parks and Recreation Commission meetings as presented. All in favor, none opposed, and the motion was approved.

ITEM #9 – ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE APPROVAL – Leigh Johnson, Planner, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – ACTION ITEM

- Ms. Johnson provided the Commissioners with an overview of the master plan update process. The proposed update will be updating the Estrella Mountain Regional Park Long-Range Master Plan of 1988. Planning meetings included: 15 staff meetings; five partner/stakeholder meetings; three youth outreach events; two public meetings, multiple press releases, social media postings and newsletters; and five presentations to the Parks and Recreation Commission. Through input from the meetings and the on-line comment period, two alternative options were presented at the second public meeting. Alternative "A" had minimal changes to existing park features and recommends maintaining most of the existing 1988 Master Plan. Alternative "B" recommends existing facilities and distinctive improvements effectively eliminating the remainder of the 1988 master plan. Through comment cards and online comments received within 30 days after the second public meeting, Alternative "B" was

overwhelming the most preferred. An analysis conducted by Maricopa County Department of Transportation shows that the existing roadways can handle the anticipated Estrella Youth Sports traffic volume if their agreement is approved. Parks staff also recommends Alternative "B".

- With approval from the Commission, Ms. Johnson will seek a letter of approval from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) followed by request for approval from the Board of Supervisors.
- Commissioner Del Palacio thanked Ms. Johnson and all the staff for their hard work on the master plan update.
- Commissioner Del Palacio motioned to approve the recommendation, Commissioner Merdon seconded. With all in favor, none opposed, the motion carried.

Commissioner Stapley left the meeting at 12:10 pm. At this time, there is not a quorum present.

ITEM #12 – LAKE PLEASANT REGIONAL PARK HIGHLIGHTS – David Jordan, Park Supervisor, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department – *INFORMATION ITEM*

- Mr. Jordan provided a brief history of the dam which created Lake Pleasant. The previous visitor center was originally built as an overlook to allow visitors to watch the construction of the dam. After construction was completed, the building was converted into the park's visitor center. Major renovations have doubled the size of the original building allowing offices for staff, interpretive displays, a multi-purpose room, an expanded souvenir area and aquariums and tortoise/chuckwalla habitats.
- Other park projects include restroom renovations and campsite grading. Mr. Jordan recognized Interpretive Ranger, Terry Gerber, for his work on the park's major annual special events. Bald Eagle nesting sites are located in the Agua Fria Conservation Area and have two active sites with babies this year.

ITEM #13 – CALL TO THE COMMISSION

- None.

Item #14 – CALL TO THE PUBLIC

- None.

Item #15 – ADJOURNMENT

- There being no further business, Chairman Branch called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Del Palacio motioned, Commissioner Merdon seconded. With all in favor, none opposed, the meeting was adjourned at 12:24 pm.

RJ Cardin, Director

Robert Branch, Chair