

**MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING**  
Regular Meeting of November 19, 2024

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**LOCATION:** Hassayampa River Preserve

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** John Crane, Megha Budruk, Eric Mears, Jack Stapley

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:** Shelby Scharbach, Isabel Chavez

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jennifer Waller, Director; Kara Currie-Gonzales, Finance Manager; Angela Anderson, Executive Assistant; Amber Gribler, Recorder; Betsy Pregulman, Deputy County Attorney

The official correspondence and staff recommendations in the Commission folder are entered as supportive material to the official minutes of the November 19, 2024, Parks and Recreation Commission regular meeting.

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**

**ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER – John Crane, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission**

- The regular meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

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

- Quorum achieved when Commissioner Stapley arrived at 10:20 a.m.

**ITEM #3 – INVOCATION – None**

**ITEM #4 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ITEM #5 – DIRECTORS SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS – Jenn Waller, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department**

- Director Waller provided an overview of the Director’s Summary.
- Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Lease was acquired for San Tan Mountain Regional Park and was 15-20 years in the works. Commissioner Mears asked if any learnings could be applied to future projects. Director Waller stated it was an anomaly and described the normal procedure. The Bureau of Land Management could not complete the R&PP process within their workload, and they used a letter of agreement instead until it was complete.

**Commissioner Stapley joins the meeting at 10:20 a.m.**

- Director Waller described mitigation and repair efforts due to the Gate fire at McDowell Mountain Regional Park. Provided overview of Development projects at the various parks. Commissioner Mears asked the Director to share the County vendor’s report about the berm remediation for Buckeye Hills Regional Park’s General Joe Foss Shooting Range with him. Director Waller provided kudos to Chris Matthews regarding the media awareness for the Preserve’s ‘wind phone’ and the County interns from Arizona State University(ASU) as they visited Utery Mountain Regional Park.

**ITEM #6 – APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 – John Crane, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission**

- Chairman Crane called for a motion of approval for the September 17, 2024 meeting minutes, moved by Commissioner Mears and seconded by Commissioner Budruk. All in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

**ITEM #7 – EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS – Jenn Waller, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department**

- Director Waller congratulated Laura Jo Boyd (10 years) and Dawna Taylor (25 years) for their tenure and shared her appreciation for their hard work.

**ITEM #8 – FEE STUDY UPDATE – Sheri Simmons, Management Analyst, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department**

- Provided update regarding the ongoing study that kicked off in July. It is a 6-8 month study, with 1<sup>st</sup> drafts coming in December and the final plan released in February 2025 to the Parks and Recreation Department. Work to date includes the data review and cost modeling/analysis based on fiscal year (past, present, future). Commissioner Mears asked how often this study is conducted. Director Waller responded that we review annually, but this is the first time we have asked a consultant to come in and overhaul and guide us for the future. Chairman Crane stated this was a good idea due to inflation and rising expenses. Chairman Crane inquired about the mention of construction and if that relates to maintenance and/or capital improvements. Ms. Simmons stated that maintenance, capital improvements, and any one-time expenses were separated because this would help us understand that it is a one-time expense versus an ongoing expense, such as administration. Director Waller reminded the Commission that the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors (BOS) must approve fee changes. Chairman Crane asked for clarification on whether the Commission would approve the study, not the actual changes. Director Waller stated that the Commission would review and recommend fee changes to the Board of Supervisors for the BOS's approval.

**ITEM #9 – MOUNTAIN PARKS VISITOR SURVEY RESULTS – Megha Budruk, Vice-Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission and Associate Professor, Parks and Recreation Program, Arizona State University; Nicholas Wise, PhD; Ziming Jin, Graduate student; and Katlyn Skabelund, Undergraduate student, Arizona State University School of Community Resources and Development**

- Commissioner Budruk temporarily stepped out of her role as Commissioner to introduce her team. After the introductions and providing an overview of the history of the survey collaboration between ASU and the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department, Commissioner Budruk returned to her role as Commissioner.
- Dr. Wise described how the ASU team collected data and their survey methodology from seven parks. Lake Pleasant Regional Park data collection/analysis will be completed in the next few weeks and included in the final report. Provided context that the survey response rate was significantly higher for this survey, which may skew data comparisons to previous years due to the difference in sample size.
- Ms. Jin provided an overview of the comparisons between the offsite surveys in 2008, 2013, 2019, and 2024. After reviewing the information on the level of satisfaction of recent visits at individual parks, Commissioner Mears asked about the statement of the increase in satisfaction, although the data shared showed a decrease in satisfaction. Ms. Jin clarified that the recent visit and overall satisfaction scores were separate metrics. The overall park satisfaction increased, and the perceived park quality decreased slightly. The recent visit satisfaction decreased in most parks.
- Ms. Skabelund reviewed the top reasons to visit - the top being to observe scenic beauty.
- Dr. Wise reviewed the data on overall trip expenditures. Commissioner Mears and Chairman Crane mentioned expenditures possibly being adjusted for inflation. Dr. Wise mentioned he would add context to the report.
- Ms. Skabelund discussed the data regarding attitudes toward fees, and all were generally favorable.
- Dr. Wise summarized previous comments that the spending amounts were direct expenditures, notations should be made about inflation points, and variation in satisfaction points may be due to larger sample sizes. Commissioner Mears was interested in the number of survey participants in previous years. Chairman Crane inquired about the miles traveled data (a reduction in miles traveled to parks from 2008 to 2024) and asked if our local zip code numbers go up and down. Dr. Wise responded that he reviewed data and described some outlier responses, such as treating anyone over 74 miles as an outlier. Chairman Crane asked about the data on how much money was spent (referencing the

visitor expenditures data) and if that information was used for the economic impact data.

Commissioner Budruk stated that is one of the factors used, but they also use additional sources, such as census data. Chairman Crane requested a copy of the presentation. Dr. Wise stated that they will send the final report once Lake Pleasant data is compiled. Commissioner Mears recognized Commissioner Budruk and her ASU team for their work on the survey.

**ITEM #10 – COMMISSION EMERITUS RECOGNITION – Jenn Waller, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department**

- Director Waller provided a quick update for the recognition, stating that we hoped to complete it by the January meeting; however, job vacancies were causing delays in the process. Director Waller introduced Angela Anderson, the new Executive Assistant. Director Waller presented the plaque's potential mockups with horizontal and vertical options. Commissioner Stapley liked the vertical orientation but stated it was not a big deal. Chairman Crane expressed that he is ambivalent about the orientation. Director Waller discussed and showed the visual for the walking stick. Director Waller presented the idea of having the recognition ceremony in March and with light food/drink as catering.

**ITEM #11 – SYSTEM MASTER PLAN – VISIONING FOR FUTURE LANDS – Jenn Waller, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department**

- Director Waller describes the history and context behind the current System Master Plan and acquiring additional lands. Director Waller stated the Parks department would move forward, with Commissioners Mears, Stapley, and Chavez having expressed interest in involvement. Commissioner Stapley inquired if these meetings would be separate from the regular Commission meeting and if the meetings could occur just before the regular Commission meetings. Director Waller stated that there will probably be a bit of both types of meetings, and she will work with the appropriate members, both Commission and Park employees. Commissioner Mears asked Ms. Pregulman about the technicalities of holding a meeting outside the open meeting laws—logistics to be determined.

**ITEM #12 – NOTICE OF SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS TO NOMINATE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR 2025 – John Crane, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission**

- Chairman Crane asked Commissioner Stapley if he would like to be a part of the subcommittee with Shelby Scharbach. Commissioner Stapley agreed to the request.

**ITEM #13 – APPROVE 2025 PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE – John Crane, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission**

- Chairman Crane requested to move the March meeting to March 11<sup>th</sup>, and Commissioner Budruk requested to move the August meeting to August 26<sup>th</sup> due to conflicts.
- Chairman Crane motioned to approve the dates as modified and listed, seconded by Commissioner Stapley. With all in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.

**ITEM #14 – SET DECEMBER 2024 COMMISSION MEETING LOCATION, DATE AND START TIME – John Crane, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission**

- Chairman Crane suggested a virtual meeting on December 17<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m.
- Chairman Crane motioned to approve, seconded by Commissioner Stapley. With all in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.

**ITEM #15 – SET JANUARY 2025, PARKS COMMISSION MEETING LOCATION AND START TIME– John Crane, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission**

- Chairman Crane led the discussion regarding location, with Commissioner Mears recommending the Forensic Science building used previously. Director Waller stated that we will check availability for the building and will announce the final location at the December meeting.
- Chairman Crane motioned to approve, seconded by Commissioner Stapley. With all in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.

**ITEM #16 – CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

- None

**ITEM #17 – CALL TO COMMISSION**

- Commissioner Stapley stated that we are lucky to have our new Director, Jennifer Waller.

**ITEM #18 – ADJOURNMENT**

- There being no further business, Commissioner Mears motioned to adjourn at 11:31 a.m., seconded by Commissioner Crane. With all in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.