

MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Regular Meeting of March 20, 2024

LOCATION: Usery Mountain Regional Park, 3939 N. Usery Pass Rd, Mesa, AZ 85207

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: John Crane, Megha Budruk, Shelby Scharbach, Jack Stapley, Robert Branch, and Eric Mears

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Isabel Chavez

STAFF PRESENT: R.J. Cardin, Director; Donna Southard, Amber Gribler, Amanda Lumbre Recorders; Jennifer Waller, Deputy Director; Kara Currie-Gonzales, Finance, and Betsy Pregulman, Deputy Maricopa County Attorney

The official correspondence and staff recommendations contained in the Commission folder are hereby entered as supportive material to the official minutes of the March 20, 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 10:04 a.m.

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

ITEM #3 – INVOCATION – Mr. Russell (Rusty) Bowers

ITEM #4 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ITEM #5 – APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 16, 2024– John Crane, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission

- Commissioner Scharbach motioned for approval of the January 16, 2024, meeting minutes, seconded by Commissioner Stapley. All in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

ITEM #6 – DIRECTORS SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS– R.J. Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department

- Director Cardin provided a brief overview of the summary report. The Prickly Peddle Mountain Bike Race was held on January 24 with 250 riders participating. Sponsored by the Maricopa Trail + Park Foundation and hosted by Aravaipa Rides. Registration for the 2025 Prickly Peddle Race is already open!
- Director Cardin provided, upon their request, the Commissioners with the Maricopa County Park's free admission days and the Arizona State Parks' free admission days. Both offer two free admission days throughout the year. Director Cardin recommends keeping the current schedule and is open to discussion on a future agenda if requested.
- Director Cardin announced the Board of Supervisors (BOS) has awarded a contract to J2 Engineering and Environmental Design to provide professional master planning services. Phase I includes McDowell Mountain, Spur Cross, and Cave Creek parks.
- Director Cardin highlighted some of the development projects, including the completion of the Roadrunner campsite electric and sewer hook-ups at Lake Pleasant; the Bike Park design at McDowell now has conceptual design plans; White Tanks is working on 60% design plans for upgrades to the competitive track area and the horse staging area; San Tan Gold Mine Trailhead is under construction and will be completed this fall.

- Commissioner Mears asked what type of contracts the projects are under, Design Build or CMAR (Construction Manager at Risk). Director Cardin stated there is one CMAR project. The rest are Design Build.
- Each park's Nature Centers hosted Open Houses with the help of various concessionaires; each site had 100 – 300 visitors in attendance. We anticipate making this an annual spring event.

Commissioner Branch arrived at 10:17 a.m.

ITEM #7 – PARKS FY25 BUDGET AND CIP SUBMITTAL – R.J. Cardin, Director, and Kara Currie-Gonzalez, Finances and Administration Manager, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department

- Director Cardin received feedback from the Finance Department that a nearly perfect budget had been submitted and recognized Ms. Currie-Gonzalez for her efforts.
- Ms. Currie-Gonzalez reviewed the budget cycle and deadlines. The FY25 budget's primary focus is construction, repair, and maintenance. New funding was requested for Vulture Phases II and III; they have been combined to reduce mobilization and other duplicative costs.

ITEM #8 – JOE FOSS SHOOTING RANGE MANAGEMENT – R.J. Cardin, Director, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department

- Director Cardin stated that MCSO (Maricopa County Sheriff's Office) has asked the County during budget hearings for additional funding to update its shooting range. The discussion prompted county supervisors to ask about the need for additional range space. As a result, MCSO has requested the use of the Joe Foss Shooting Range facilities to meet their training needs. A meeting has been scheduled to discuss joint use with MCSO and the currently contracted managers to keep the range open to the public if possible. Staff is waiting on BLM to see if a collaboration is compatible with the R&PP patent on the land.

ITEM #9 – 100 MILES IN 100 DAYS CHALLENGE 2024 RESULTS – Gabby Vera, Westside Superintendent, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department

- The 2024 final statistics were 1,424 registered participants, 19,429 miles logged, and 632 participants completing the challenge.
- Commissioner Stapley inquired about the increase in participation and if the department is tracking it. Ms. Vera stated that the parks are seeing new visitors with their social media presence and increased word of mouth from past participants.
- Commissioner Branch commented on the ease of use for the application and encouraged the connection to social media accounts.
- Commissioner Brudruk stated that ASU (Arizona State University) has been conducting park visitor surveys, and the collected information will be used to help with future demographic profiles.

ITEM #10 – PARK COMMISSIONER EMERITUS MEMBER RECOGNITION – R.J. Cardin, Director, and Donna Southard, Executive Assistant, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department

- Director Cardin informed the Commission that due to Commissioner Stapley's historical documents; an extensive search was conducted to ensure we were not missing any former Emeritus-eligible Commission members.
- Ms. Southard provided a brief historical review of the Parks Commission. The Commission was formed by the Board of Supervisors in 1953 with the appointment of nine members. In 1959, the Commission was expanded to 11 members and in 1969 to 15 members. In 2002, the BOS dissolved the 15-member Commission and formed an advisory Commission with seven members, which is the current format. To date, there have been 108 Commission members, with 33 eligible for the 10-year Emeritus service award. Ms. Southard provided cost estimates for recognition plaques and memorial benches.
- Director Cardin explained that there are limited available spaces for memorial benches in the system. A discussion was held regarding the recognition options and the need to review the County's gift clause to provide a lifetime pass for Emeritus members.

- Commissioner Stapley stated that for nearly 70 years, a member of the Stapley family has served on the Commission. In support of the Commission, the Stapley family will donate up to \$5,000 towards the Emeritus recognitions.
- Based on discussions, Director Cardin will order a plaque for each park and select a small token gift to be presented to each Emeritus recipient. Staff will do their best to locate past Emeritus members and invite them to the celebration (date to be determined).

ITEM #11 – SET MAY 2024 PARKS COMMISSION MEETING LOCATION AND START TIME – John Crane, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission

- Commissioner Scharbach motioned to hold the May 21, 2024, meeting in the town of Queen Creek beginning at 10:00 a.m., with an optional tour of San Tan Mountain Regional Park after the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Branch. With all in favor, and none opposed, the motion passed.

ITEM #12 – CALL TO THE PUBLIC – John Crane Chairman, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission

- None

ITEM #13 – CALL TO THE COMMISSION - John Crane, Chairman, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission

- Commissioner Branch inquired about the shade sail damage over the playground equipment at Lake Pleasant Discovery Center. Staff informed him that a storm had caused the damage and a replacement had been ordered. Commissioner Branch also inquired why the road to Park Headquarters was closed to the public. Director Cardin informed him that it is closed for safety reasons as MCSO uses the area for helicopter landings and other law enforcement and search and rescue situations.
- Director Cardin introduced two new Park Supervisors: Steve DaCosta at Utery Park and Michael Weber at McDowell Park.

ITEM #14 – ADJOURNMENT – John Crane, Chair, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commission.

- Commissioner Mears motioned to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Stapley. With all in favor, and none opposed, the meeting was adjourned at 11:22 a.m.