

**CITY OF SURPRISE
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION**

Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 26, 2021 @ 6:00 PM

City Hall Community Room
16000 N Bullard, SURPRISE, ARIZONA 85374

CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call

- Members: Chair Wayne Turner, Vice Chair Ron Jensen, Bill Pupo, Raymond Grim, Charlie Woodland, and new member Patricia Blaisdell.

Absent: Mark Brown

- City Staff: Director Donna Miller, Assistant Director Paul Frie, Business Services Manager Christine Frederickson, and Administrative Specialist Frank D'Andrea.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Current Events Reports

- **Commissioner Wayne Turner** welcomed Patricia Blaisdell to the board.
- **Commissioner Raymond Grim** mentions riding his bike on the Maricopa County Trail, and commented how nice the trail is and how the community could benefit from this.
 - **Commissioner Grim**, via communication with a member of the community, visited some of the dog parks. **Commissioner Grim** also wanted to welcome **Patricia Blaisdell** to the board.

D. Staff Reports

- **Director Donna Miller** stated her intent to retire, and that Assistant Director Paul Frie will be stepping into the role on an interim basis.
- **Assistant Director Paul Frie** gives program, facility, and parks updates. Some of the noteworthy mentions:
 - Summer Camp given the OK to operate at limited capacity
 - Surprise Pools open on May 22nd at limited capacity.
 1. Surprise Swim Safe event on April 30th.
 2. Summer Swim and Dive teams are operating at reduced numbers

- Adult Sports Summer League registration starts May 17th.
- Youth Baseball and Softball are ongoing. Approximately 73-75% participation compared to 2019.
 1. Summer Youth Basketball registration is ongoing.
 2. Esports is looking to host an in-person event.
- The Parks & Recreation is planning the annual 4th of July fireworks show with a controlled-capacity event at Mark Coronado Park with music, a few food trucks and pre-registered designated “pods” for participants to have a space to enjoy the event.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

- **Community member, Jim Dale**, shares how he came to live in Surprise and how one of his first social interactions involved visiting the Dog Park where he was able to meet new friends. Jim is unsatisfied with the conditions of the Dog Park.
- **Community member, Terry Burnett**, shares a similar story as Jim in that a lot of his social interactiveness comes through our Dog Park community. Terry mentions how the park is “dirty”, “not maintained”, and how people he knows have started attending Dog Parks elsewhere.
- **Community member, Andy Cepon**, brought bags of rocks to highlight the conditions in which dogs have to walk over. Andy mentions how this has been a multi-year issue (mentioning an email with a former employee from 2016) that he has brought to the attention of the Parks & Recreation Department staff and Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission Board. Andy is unsatisfied with the conditions of the Dog Park.

CONSENT AGENDA (N/A)

- E. Approval of items on the Consent Agenda
No items were identified as consent agenda items.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS – NON PUBLIC HEARING

Item 1 – Internal – The City Clerk will administer the Oath of Office to Patricia Blaisdell.

Sherry Aguilar administered Patricia Blaisdell’s Oath of Office prior to this meeting.

Item 2 – Citywide – Consideration and action to approve minutes from February 23, 2021.

Commissioner Charlie Woodland puts in motion to approve minutes; **Vice Chairperson Ron Jensen** seconds motion. Six votes yes. Motion passed.

Commissioner Grim comments that **Commissioner Bill Pupo's** future agenda item request from February pertaining to funding for future parks.

- This item is currently being developed with the appropriate departments taking action and is expected to be on the agenda for June 28th.

Item 3 – Citywide – Consideration and action pertaining to approval of changes to the Parks and Recreation Fee Schedule.

Business Services Manager Christine Frederickson presents on this item. Some of the highlights include:

- Grouping like-programs area activities together for more uniformity.
 - Ex. Tennis, Racquetball, Paddleball, Pickleball are now under “Racquet Sports Camps” or “Racquet Sports Leagues”.
- New or recommended changes for registration-based classes, programs, activities, etc. will be reviewed and approved by Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission.
- Fee ranges have been incorporated into the fee schedule to allow greater flexibility to adapt class schedules to meet customer need.

Commissioner Bill Pupo asks what the total registration number is annually.

- **Assistant Director Paul Frie** answers that it is approximately 180,000 registrations.

Business Services Manager Christine Frederickson replies that the Department is not looking at increasing any other fees at this time, other than adult sports basketball, but this will allow for flexibility in the event that a fee increase is determined to be necessary.

- **Assistant Director Paul Frie** mentions how when mentioning “supplies” and costs associated, it is more likely that it is a supply chain issue. (ex. The price of leather goes up; therefore, some equipment prices may also increase).

Commissioner Bill Pupo asks that if there were a recognition of a fee adjustment, would the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board be notified.

- **Director Donna Miller** mentions how typically with a fee adjustment that the commission will have a discussion prior to a final decision mentioning a “fee philosophy” in which the Department aims to reach a certain direct cost recovery rate (ex. Adult Sports is 100%, Youth Sports is 50%).
 - **Commissioner Charlie Woodland** would late comment that this recovery rate seems “fair and equitable” in regards to the programs, services, and amenities that the City offers.

Commissioner Raymond Grim notes how vendor fees are high and that it can turn some people away. Commissioner Grim also points out the inequality of roster sizes in relation to cost to participate in certain Adult Sports Leagues (Softball fields more players compared to Basketball). Is there a breakdown to the cost to run each league? What is the difference between Resident/Non-Resident fees? Commissioner Grim comments that Surprise Residents should essentially have priority over Non-Residents.

- The Department does track expenses and revenues to operate each of their programs and events.
- At this time, Non-Residents pay more – typically \$20 more – though this figure depends on the activity (ex. Entry to the Pool costs \$2 for Residents, \$5 for Non-Residents).

- **Assistant Director Paul Frie** mentions how the main culprit in the difference is cost comes down to the different rates in which officiating for both Softball and Basketball varies.
- **Commissioner Patricia Blaisdell** comments that based on her own research and participation in Surprise programs, that the fees seem fair compared to other surrounding Cities.

Commissioner Charlie Woodland inquires about how low-income families may still participate in programs and events.

- **Director Donna Miller** notes that the Parks & Recreation Department offers assistance in the form of the “Youth Scholarship Program” that depending on a family’s situation, families can receive a variable percentage off their registration fee.

Chairperson Wayne Turner and Vice Chairperson Ron Jensen note how the Department compares their rates to other Cities annually.

Commissioner Bill Pupo asks how does the Department determine who is/is not a Resident.

- **Assistant Director Paul Frie** responds with how the Department’s registration system works (CivicRec) in which the system identifies residents based on their inputted address.
- **Commissioner Pupo** asks how walk-ups at the pool for open swim are identified.
 - **In Commissioner Patricia Blaisdell’s experience, she said adults are asked to present their ID’s.**
 - **In a follow up with the Aquatics staff on April 27:** Staff is directed to ask for an ID, or to be looked up in the Department’s registration software. If no ID or account can be found, the user may present a bill for proof of address to verify address.

Commissioner Bill Pupo suggests a possible minimal surcharge per registration that would go into a “Park Development Fund” to take care of the Department’s deferred needs, or to use for additional parks. Commissioner Pupo states that he would be a “probably no” on fee increases.

Commissioner Patricia Blaisdell motioned to approve the changes to the Parks and Recreation Fee Schedule, **Commissioner Raymond Grim** seconded. Six votes yes. Motion passed.

Item 4 – Citywide – Update on Parks and Recreation Projects.

Director Donna Miller presented on this item. Highlights included:

- **Gaines Youth Ball Field Relocation project will be complete in May.**
- **Community Park Improvements**
 - **Commissioner Raymond Grim** asks if there will be a walkway from the Parking Lot to the Dog Park. As it currently stands, you need to walk through grass to get to the Dog Park.
 - **Director Miller** responds that accessibility will be addressed.
- **Countryside Park**
 - **Commissioner Bill Pupo** asks how the parking situation will work in relation to Dysart School District use.
 - **Director Miller** mentions that the district will be involved during design and may discuss how the parking lot can benefit both parties.
 - **Commissioner Raymond Grim** asks how close this project will be to homes and if there are any issues considered (ex. Lights for Sports Fields)

- **Assistant Director Paul Frie** assured that the current “cartoon” of the project is not to be taken as absolute. In addition, with the emergence of more LED Light use, any glare from lights is not as they were on older lights.
- **Chairperson Wayne Turner** brings up a similar situation at Veramonte Park where lights were installed and there have not been any issues related to Commissioner Grim’s question for that Park.
- **The Arts Commission Board** was present to state their offer of their expertise on design for monuments, memorials, and any other art features within the Parks.
 - **The Arts Commission** would like to setup a panel to be present during the design processes.
- **Commissioner Bill Pupo** asks if in the role of advising the council, if Council has approved the scope of work to move ahead.
 - **Director Donna Miller** replies that as it stands, only the budget has been approved.

Item 5 – Citywide – Introduction to proposed Parks Donation/Memorial Program.

Director Donna Miller presents on this item. Highlights included:

- The Department does not currently have an “in memorial” program through the Parks system – but they are interested in starting one. Some requests in the past have been for items like trees or benches. This program would allow individuals to place memorials for loved ones.
 - **Chairperson Wayne Turner** asks if these memorials will have some uniformity to them.
 - **Director Miller** responds that yes they will.
 - **Vice Chairperson Ron Jensen** asks if these memorials are limited to tree and benches.
 - **Director Miller** responds that is being evaluated based on situations where the item could be potentially damaged and how to maintain and/or replace the item.
 - **Commissioner Raymond Grim** asks about what type of assurances those that purchases these memorials may have for vandalism, natural disasters, etc. that impact the memorial.
 - **Director Miller** states that insurance should help cover a lot of these situations, but items like trees we would want to replace.
 - **Commissioner Raymond Grim** notes that we ought to look at this program as a potential profit maker as compared to other sites that do memorials – that is essentially their business model to make money off items like these.
 - **Commissioner Charlie Woodland** shared how a family friend has a memorial at another recreation site and that it is very nice.
 - **Commissioner Bill Pupo** mentions potential competition with the Sundancers.
 - **Assistant Director Paul Frie** assures that this should not be an issue as this is for those that specifically reach out to us.

Item 6 – Internal – Consideration and action to amend regular Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission meetings from a quarterly meeting schedule, to a more frequent meeting schedule.

Chairperson Wayne Turner notes that this is an idea that has been brought up and experimented with in the past (monthly, bi-monthly, and quarterly). The more frequent of meetings seemed to be met with minimal content and lack of quorums at times.

Commissioner Raymond Grim says that these meetings give both the public, board, and staff another opportunity to interact and listen to comments and concerns directly.

Commissioner Bill Pupo states that based on substantively in their role of advising council that it does not seem appropriate to meet monthly at this time. **Commissioner Pupo** asks if the council wants the Board to meet more frequently, what should those meeting contain.

Chairperson Wayne Turner notes that Council does suggest that the Advisory Board meets more frequently.

Vice Chairperson Ron Jensen suggests that the Board could try to meet bi-monthly.

Commissioner Raymond Grim asks Parks & Recreation staff present how do these meetings affect other work-related duties.

- **Director Donna Miller** explains the process in which Advisory Board agenda content is due two-weeks prior to the meeting date. This includes creating the agenda, presentations, etc.
 - **Commissioner Grim** asks if a more frequent schedule will “significantly impact” other duties.
 - **Assistant Director Paul Frie** assures the Board that it a more frequent schedule would not impact operations.
 - **Commissioner Charlie Woodland** asks Administration Specialist/Board Liaison Frank D’Andrea his thoughts on a more frequent schedule.
 - **Administrative Specialist/Board Liaison D’Andrea** responds that the organization of the meetings do take up too much of his time that would interfere with his other work duties.
 - **Commissioner Charlie Woodland** asks **Director Donna Miller** if she sees a need to meet more frequently.
 - **Director Miller** responds that with project design beginning soon it would be beneficial to meet more frequent in order to complete that process and begin construction.
- **Commissioner Bill Pupo** states that he would be open to a bi-monthly schedule to try out.
- **Chairperson Wayne Turner lays out three options for the Board to consider meeting monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly for the remainder of the calendar year on the fourth Monday of the chosen months.**

Commissioner Raymond Grim made motion to move to a bi-monthly schedule, **Commissioner Patricia Blaisdell** seconded. Six votes yes. Motion passed. The scheduled dates: June 28, August 23, and October 23 (no meeting in December).

OTHER BUSINESS

Other Business and Future Agenda Items

- **Commissioner Raymond Grim** made a motion to add an item to review the general dog parks discussion plan including current maintenance (rocks and curbing), as well as future dog park opportunities.
 - **Commissioner Bill Pupo** asks if there are dog parks that utilize user-fees. Commissioner Pupo then asks what the procedure will be over these next few months for the public that issued their concerns regarding dog parks.
 - **Assistant Director Paul Frie** mentions a meeting taking place with a council member and city management and assures that some solution will be presented in the period between Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission meetings.
- **Commissioner Pupo** made a motion for a future agenda item to discussion the potential future funding strategies for the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
 - **Commissioner Pupo** would also like to discuss a potential council/board sub-committee.
- **Chairperson Wayne Turner** on behalf of the board thanked **Director Donna Miller** for her service and congratulate her on her retirement.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Charlie Woodland made a motion to adjourn the meeting of April 26th, 2021; **Commissioner Raymond Grim** seconded it, 6 yes votes. Motion carried.

Wayne Turner Chair, Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

ATTEST:

Frank D'Andrea, Administrative Specialist
Parks & Recreation Department

CERTIFICATION:

I, Frank D'Andrea, Administrative Specialist for City of Surprise Parks and Recreation Department, Maricopa County, Arizona, do hereby verify that these are the true and correct minutes of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission meeting held on April 26th, 2021.

Frank D'Andrea, Administrative Specialist
Parks & Recreation Department