



Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Minutes

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Minutes:

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

PRESENT: CHAIR WHITE (excused until 4:09 p.m.) and COMMISSIONERS SCHULTZ, SHERMAN (via teleconference), McCURDY, ARMENIAN, BECKER, NEIGER, BRIARE (via teleconference), ASSELIN, JIMENEZ and KELLER

EXCUSED: COMMISSIONERS GEBRE, HENLEY, HOWARD and FOEMMEL

ALSO PRESENT: GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, APRIL DI GIOVANNI, Administrative Secretary, JOHN RIDILLA, Deputy City Attorney, and ASHLEY FOSTER, Deputy City Clerk

2. Announcement Regarding: Compliance with Open Meeting Law

Minutes:

ANNOUNCEMENT MADE: This meeting has been properly noticed and posted at the following locations in accordance with the State of Nevada Executive Department Declaration of Emergency Directive 006: The City of Las Vegas website – www.lasvegasnevada.gov and The Nevada Public Notice Website – notice.nv.gov.

3. Public Comment: Comment during this portion of the agenda must be limited to matters on the agenda for action. If you wish to be heard, come forward and give your name for the record. The amount of discussion, as well as the amount of time any single speaker is allowed, may be limited.

Minutes:

None.

4. For possible action to approve the Final Minutes by reference of the Regular Meeting of December 1, 2020

Motion made by William McCurdy to Approve

Passed For: 10; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Did Not Vote: 0; Excused: 5

For-Richard Becker, Jesus Jimenez, Steven Neiger, Audrey Asselin, Lisa Sherman, Bob Briare, William McCurdy, Adroushan Armenian, Larry Schultz, Micaela Keller; Excused-Eric Foemmel, Malcolm D. White, Elizabeth Gebre, Mike Henley, Melody Howard;

5. Report by the Department of Public Safety regarding issues at City facilities and parks – All Wards

Minutes:

DEPUTY CITY MARSHAL MICHAEL REINARZ reviewed the Monthly Report for December, a copy of which was submitted for the record and is included in the backup. He presented statistics related to the total number of calls for service in all of the Wards, and broke those down in the categories of arrests, misdemeanor citations, traffic citations and warning citations. He reported the three locations with the highest number of citations and enforcement activity included the Homeless Resource Center, Fremont Street Experience and the Detention Center. He proceeded to provide the breakdown of these statistics by Ward.

MARSHAL REINARZ reported there were a total of 380 people contacted during the Rapid Response detail, which is where Marshals are assigned for standby, but none of those contacts resulted in any enforcement action.

He also noted 131 verbal warnings were given to patrons related to mandatory face mask coverings.

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ asked about the nature of the park violations. MARSHAL REINARZ indicated he did not have that specific information in front of him.

6. Presentation by Craig Galati, Principal of LGA Architecture, regarding the development of Northwest Regional Park near North El Capitan Way and West Log Cabin Way – Ward 6

Minutes:

CRAIG GALATI, LGA Architecture, stated their company has contracted with the City of Las Vegas to begin design of the Northwest Regional Park. Through a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was submitted and is included in the backup, he provided the location and history of the site, which drives the design of the park. He explained how the public can help and provide input on various amenities, and he also outlined what the next steps will be. He noted this was also presented at a virtual neighborhood meeting held in December.

MR. GALATI stated the approximate 160-acre site is located in the far northwest part of the valley, at Log Cabin Way, El Capitan Way, Moccasin Road and Skye Canyon Park Drive. However, not all of that land will be utilized for the park. He thought it was important to note that traversing the site is an existing historic railroad bed. From 1905 to 1919 a rail line ran that connected to the Union Pacific line, which carried not only passengers, but also freight, gold and other mining elements between Las Vegas and Goldfield, Nevada, which eventually connected to Tonopah, Nevada. The site is believed to have been called the Tule Stop on the rail line. He also mentioned a “Y” that is believed to have connected to another rail or wagon trails that were utilized to haul wood from the Spring Mountains down to this line. The line was eventually sold off and people took the materials, but he noted there is a cabin near Cold Creek, Nevada, that was built from some of the salvaged wood.

Northwest Regional Park will include 40 acres within the 160-acre site at the corner of El Capitan Way and Log Cabin Way. The hope is to use the railroad bed and existing “Y” to create trails and to educate people about the history and significance of the rail line. Maps were displayed showing the “Y” connection and the rail line from Las Vegas to Goldfield and Tonopah, as well as Tule Stop, which was the first stop outside of Las Vegas. An old Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad schedule was shown as well.

MR. GALATI stated there is a desire to re-create the railroad camp originally located on the site, which will be both interpretive and a place to hold events, but more research is needed.

He explained at the neighborhood meeting that was held in December, a survey was provided to gain feedback as to what amenities residents would like to see at the park. Some of the elements asked about in that survey included a dog park, fitness court, horse trails, natural areas/nature trails, a ninja obstacle course, pickleball, playgrounds, water play, shaded trails/sidewalks, grass versus artificial turf, and neighbor-friendly light fixtures. When considering these questions, the residents were asked to keep in mind that the park would have a railroad theme. Trails will be highlighted along the old railroad beds, and the hope is to re-create an actual railroad trail with a train on it. Residents were also shown two different options of the site to illustrate the size of the park.

As far as next steps, MR. GALATI stated the City of Las Vegas is currently working on finalizing the lease with the Bureau of Land Management for the property. Other steps include schematic design (a further refinement of the plans with the incorporation of neighborhood input), a neighborhood review, budget preparation and submittal of an application for funding by the Department to SNPLMA (Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act). Once funding is secured, the design will be completed and put out to bid, with a groundbreaking to follow.

COMMISSIONER SHERMAN asked if the Las Vegas Railroad Society was notified or involved in the planning of this park. MR. GALATI replied not to his knowledge. He added the research phase has just begun, which includes a researcher and an interpretive planner, and he thought it would be beneficial to get the Society involved. COMMISSIONER SHERMAN agreed, stating they are an active community, and she felt they would be able to provide some valuable input.

CHAIR WHITE wondered about the possibility of including an amphitheater. MR. GALATI replied there is space for it if that is something of interest to the residents. He noted a meeting was scheduled to take place in the upcoming weeks to discuss the surveys, and he would make sure that was a point of discussion.

COMMISSIONER KELLER asked what the neighborhood feedback has been up to this point. MR. GALATI indicated that was the topic of the next agenda item, and GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, would address the neighborhood feedback during that item.

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ clarified with MR. GALATI that the survey occurred in December and that it was conducted online. MR. GALATI confirmed the survey was publicized several ways to include the City's Facebook page, Twitter, discussion at an advertised public meeting, along with mailers to residents. He indicated approximately 600 responses were received, so he is confident word got out. COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ stated he and COMMISSIONER HOWARD would like to be more involved whenever the opportunity presents itself.

COMMISSIONER NEIGER appreciated and commended MR. GALATI for recognizing the importance of the historical aspect of the area. He asked for further clarification with regard to the railroad camp area. MR. GALATI stated it is early in the process, but they are working with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and others to research this further. What they do know is that workers lived and slept at this camp while building the railroad and that there was a dining tent and a saloon tent. The idea is to create the feeling of that camp and to be as historically accurate as possible. Signage would help educate people about the railroad and what life was like during that time period. A farmers market may also possibly be included along with other elements, such as an amphitheater, as CHAIR WHITE mentioned.

COMMISSIONER NEIGER asked whether the softball fields could be used for Little League games. MR. GALATI pointed out the differences between softball fields and those used for Little League, but noted softball fields could be created so they can also be used for Little League games. COMMISSIONER BECKER referenced a hybrid at Children's Memorial Park, where there are two Little League softball fields adjacent to two softball fields that are sometimes used for Little League, indicating that might be an option. As a regional park, he wondered if it would primarily be for Ward 6 residents or a combination to include the adjacent Wards. Due to the scale of the park, MR. GALATI believed it would draw residents from across the entire valley. He noted there would be the potential for sports tournaments, which will also draw people to the park.

CHAIR WHITE thanked MR. GALATI for the presentation.

7. Report by Greg A. Weitzel, Director of Parks and Recreation, regarding emerging issues related to the Department of Parks and Recreation – All Wards

Minutes:

Through a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was submitted and is included in the backup, GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, provided a breakdown of the December 15, 2020, virtual town hall meeting survey results related to the Northwest Regional Park. Over 600 survey responses were received, and more than 3,300 people watched the virtual town hall meeting, which is representative of great public input for a park. Soccer fields ranked the highest when asked what kinds of sports fields the residents would like to see, followed closely by baseball and softball fields. Natural turf was preferred over artificial, which MR. WEITZEL found interesting. He noted the entire neighborhood received a postcard notification of the survey and virtual meeting, and while it is not a statistically valid survey, it does provide an indication of what the neighborhood would like.

CHAIR WHITE asked what percentage the 600 responses represented in comparison to the number of postcards that were sent out. MR. WEITZEL stated he would have to check on the number of postcards that were sent out, but typically, a response of at least 400 constitutes a valid response and unbiased survey. This was a basic, public survey that anyone could fill out; it was not stratified or random.

After CHAIR WHITE commented on the possible reason behind the turf preference, MR. WEITZEL noted MR. GALATI had spoken about the pros and cons of both options at the public meeting. Natural turf involves a lot more water, maintenance and expense over time. Oftentimes, funding is found to build new parks, but the maintenance and operation of those parks over their lifetime has to be considered as well. He hoped the new Master Plan would outline that when acreage is added, maintenance and operational expenses must also be added to the budget to secure the proper staff to perform such maintenance.

MR. WEITZEL went on to report that out of the 648 responses, close to 60 percent were interested in a dog park. This did not surprise him because it is a trend he has seen throughout the country. He noted, however, that he just found out Henderson does not have a public dog park.

He also stated more than 60 percent of respondents were not interested in pickleball, but pointed out that could be based on demographics. COMMISSIONER KELLER asked if the demographics of the survey aligned with that of the build out of that neighborhood and if it was known why Henderson does not have any dog parks. MR. WEITZEL stated they wanted to keep the survey simple, so they did not capture demographic information, and as far as Henderson, he was told it has to do with liability issues because most of their parks are developed by Homeowners Associations and private developers, but he wished to verify that information.

MR. WEITZEL reported 56 percent of respondents were not interested in having horse trails, but 58 percent were interested in a ninja warrior obstacle course. This indicates to him that a lot of parents completed the survey. When asked about the top two to three amenities they would like to see in the park, the response came back as trails and sidewalks, followed by natural spaces. This ties into one of the categories of the SNPLMA (Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act) grant mentioned by CRAIG GALATI, LGA Architecture, under Item 6. Playgrounds, fitness courts and dog parks also scored high. He also reported almost 67 percent wished to have small and medium reservable picnic areas, and there was overwhelming support for large special events, such as sports tournaments, to be held at the park. This was also interesting because of concerns a lot of people have with parking, lights and the noise associated with these events. A list of other amenities respondents indicated they would like to see at the park was shown.

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ thanked MR. WEITZEL for a recap of the survey, and indicated he remembered filling it out. Although it was pointed out that the survey is not statistically valid, COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ thought he sensed some bias with regard to how it was interpreted, but at the same time understands decisions have to be made by the City that are appropriate to the total system. He also commented that even though the survey indicated otherwise, he believed the residents living adjacent to the fields would not be in favor of large sporting events and thought further deliberation was needed. MR. WEITZEL agreed and thanked COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ for his comments. He pointed out the survey was the first step in the planning process, and that a statistically valid survey would have been much more costly, but the survey that was conducted does provide some helpful information. He stated staff will be talking to more groups and organizations and meeting with the public again, and then a schematic plan will be drafted based on all input received. He said there is a lot of work ahead, and he thought it would take a couple of years before any groundbreaking occurred. He noted it is much more beneficial to collect as much input as possible versus making decisions in a bubble, and that he has always operated in this manner and is there to serve the community.

Commenting that the lease is for the entire 160 acres, COMMISSIONER ASSELIN thought the area for the larger events could possibly be located towards the center of the acreage or the northwest side of the 40-acre park site. She said she lives in Desert Shores, which was designed in sort of a bubble, with the idea that one could go out and walk from one neighborhood to another or walk or bike to a park that may be a few miles away without having to walk or bike in traffic and asked if connectivity has been considered with regard to some of the trails that lead into this area. MR. WEITZEL stated that has been discussed in depth, and he asked MR. GALATI to respond further. MR. GALATI explained the idea is to provide connectivity going north, as development to the north is controlled by the City. There is some connectivity to the south, but it is not contiguous. As far as connecting to the new Skye Canyon development, they have been trying to obtain more information to see how they can connect into that trail, but it is unknown at this point how Skye Canyon is going to do their trails. He confirmed there would, however, be connectivity around the perimeter and throughout the park.

The Commissioner also asked what the estimated budget for the park was. MR. WEITZEL indicated that was difficult to answer since the final plan has yet to be determined, but estimated more than \$20 million. MR. GALATI confirmed, stating between \$20 million and \$30 million.

CHAIR WHITE thought this project could easily be connected through the Master Trail Plan. MR. WEITZEL confirmed there is definitely an opportunity to connect to the north and noted that the north rim trail had just been completed. Additionally, there is an old railroad bed to the west that could be converted to a trail, but that would depend on the Skye Canyon development. The Chair commented most of the seniors today are not seniors; 55 is the new 35, so he thought the responses to wanting a ninja course came from adults. MR. WEITZEL reminded the Commission that the first national fitness court was built within the city over the past year, and with the gyms closed due to the pandemic, the outdoor gyms are getting more use than ever.

Referencing the 44 percent of respondents that said they would like to see horse trails in the park, but that not all of those people had horses, COMMISSIONER NEIGER wondered how this would be interpreted. MR. WEITZEL interpreted it to mean that most of the properties in this area are called horse properties, meaning they

are larger acreage properties. Equestrian amenities become more of a priority the further north one goes, noting there is an active equestrian community that surrounds Floyd Lamb Park.

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ commented developments in the entire upper northwest area are developed with horse trails, even in the smaller communities with no horse owners. There are interconnected horse trails from community to community, and he thought it would be harmonious to include them, particularly since the proposed site is surrounded by larger acreage. He agreed future maintenance and operations costs of any new park must also be a consideration.

CHAIR WHITE asked if horse trailer parking has been incorporated into the plan. MR. WEITZEL stated it has been considered, but not yet incorporated, as the plan is preliminary. The Chair thanked MR. WEITZEL for his presentation, after which MR. WEITZEL encouraged the Commissioners to e-mail him with any ideas, questions or comments.

MR. WEITZEL proceeded to report on the Department's Top 10 Strategic Goals and the additional priorities within those goals, which are outlined below and are included in the backup. He stated the Department consists of more than 200 full-time and 450 part-time and seasonal employees, and creating these strategies and goals helps to ensure everyone is on the same page. The priorities are broken down according to what they wish to accomplish during the first quarter. Subsequently, action items are assigned to the management team, which then trickles down to supervisors and frontline staff.

Continue Department Reorganization & Change Management Plan – MR. WEITZEL announced this was year two of this goal.

Develop Parks and Recreation System Master Plan – MR. WEITZEL stated staff is excited this is a priority this year.

Complete CAPRA Accreditation Assessment – MR. WEITZEL announced the Commission would receive an update from the Chair of CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies) in February regarding the progress and the plan going into the future, as well as how the Commission can get involved in that process.

Implement Citywide Strategic Plan & Council Priorities – This is a three- to five-year plan that the City Manager introduced to the City Council at its last meeting, and there are some specific strategic initiatives included in the Plan for the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Program Recovery, Development and Implementation – MR. WEITZEL stated the hope is to get some of the more popular programs back on line and senior centers re-opened in 2021, after the City was required to close them due to the Governor's Directive during the pandemic.

Implement New Technologies – MR. WEITZEL stated this includes the Smart Parks initiative.

Develop Asset Management and Capital Improvement Program – This is goal number 7 on the list.

Expand Financial Resources – This involves applying for every available grant to assist with the development of programs, parks and trails.

Create Special Events "One-Stop Shop" and Productive Partnerships, Collaborations and Outreach were the last two goals mentioned.

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ appreciated receiving this information and commended MR. WEITZEL and his leadership team for providing it. With regard to strategic goal number 8, he asked about the status of hiring a Grant Coordinator. MR. WEITZEL informed the Commissioner that the recruitment was completed, and the top candidate accepted the City's offer, and will be starting on January 25, 2021. At the request of COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ, MR. WEITZEL agreed to bring this individual to an upcoming meeting to introduce them to the Commission.

MR. WEITZEL stated he would be giving a more formal presentation on Smart Parks during the first or second quarter of 2021. He would like to invite the Chief Innovation Officer and Director of Information Technologies, MICHAEL SHERWOOD, to join him in making that presentation, as he is the project lead in Smart Parks implementation.

In response to the question by COMMISSIONER McCURDY at the December meeting regarding at which parks cameras are located, MR. WEITZEL stated Stupak Park, Ethel Pearson Park, The Healing Garden, Gateway Showgirls, All American Park, Kellogg-Zaher Park, Rafael Rivera Park, Baker Park, Gary Reese Freedom Park, Bettye Wilson Park, Ed Fountain Park and Teton Trails Park. He reported a new video management system has also been ordered, is expected to arrive within the next couple of weeks and will be installed in the first quarter of 2021, along with a dashboard and sensor system.

With regard to COMMISSIONER McCURDY'S question from that same meeting regarding installing a cover over the pool at the Doolittle Complex, MR. WEITZEL reported staff is meeting with Aquatic Specialists, who will be submitting a proposal for a feasibility study.

COMMISSIONER McCURDY thanked MR. WEITZEL for researching and reporting on these items. He stated he discussed the closure of the senior centers with COUNCILMAN CREAR, who indicated he would push for them to re-open. He also briefly mentioned some issues at Lubertha Johnson Park that had been taken care of, and stated he looked forward to additional improvements at that park. MR. WEITZEL added staff will be meeting with COUNCILMAN CREAR in the hopes of getting his support in replacing the playground at that park as well.

With COVID-19 continuing, CHAIR WHITE asked if there would be any opportunities to hold a virtual meeting with each of the Commissioners in their respective Wards. MR. WEITZEL stated staff would work to make that happen.

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ asked if the cameras are actively monitored or if data is accumulated and reviewed on an as-needed basis. MR. WEITZEL explained the cameras are live feed, and no data is being saved at this time. This is a first step and work still needs to be done on the management systems of the cameras. Ultimately, staff would like to have a live feed, so residents can watch their children playing soccer even from another country. Safety and security is an important component as well, which they would like to see increased in 2021. He clarified for the Commissioner that the cameras are currently being used as more of an operational assistance tool. Multiple staff members have been granted access to monitor the cameras, partly in response to COVID-19, but also to be able to identify any issues (i.e., full trash cans) without having to physically drive to the location.

CHAIR WHITE thought data retention would be very beneficial, to which MR. WEITZEL wholeheartedly agreed, stating that is one of the Department's goals, but that staff has to work with the City Attorney's Office and others regarding the rules associated with that. He noted at his last position, they saved data for seven years, which was costly, but worth it. He reiterated for the Chair that no private organization nor the public was able to view the camera feed at this time, but that it was a goal for 2021.

8. Report by Commission members regarding parks issues and events within their respective Council Wards and at large – All Wards

Minutes:

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ confirmed the Ward 6 park tour/inspections are scheduled to take place with COUNCILWOMAN FIORE, GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, himself and COMMISSIONER HOWARD on April 8, 2021. He suggested the other Commissioners work with their respective Councilperson to schedule an inspection of the parks in their Wards as well.

9. **Citizens Participation:** Public comment during this portion of the agenda must be limited to matters within the jurisdiction of the Commission. No subject may be acted upon by the Commission unless that subject is on the agenda and is scheduled for action. If you wish to be heard, come forward and give your name for the record. The amount of discussion on any single subject, as well as the amount of time any single speaker is allowed, may be limited.

Minutes:

None.

10. **Adjournment**

Minutes:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Ashley Foster, Deputy City Clerk

Greg A. Weitzel, Director of Parks and Recreation

Minutes Prepared by:
Debra A. Outland, Deputy City Clerk

THIS MEETING WAS PROPERLY NOTICED AND POSTED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATE OF NEVADA EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY DIRECTIVE 006
The City of Las Vegas website – www.lasvegasnevada.gov
and
The Nevada Public Notice Website – notice.nv.gov