



Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Minutes

1. Call to Order

Minutes:

CHAIR WHITE called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT: CHAIR WHITE and COMMISSIONERS SCHULTZ, McCURDY, BECKER, HENLEY, BRIARE, HOWARD and FOEMMEL

EXCUSED: COMMISSIONERS SHERMAN, ARMENIAN, GEBRE, NEIGER, LOZANO, ASSELIN and JIMENEZ

ALSO PRESENT: GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, APRIL DiGIOVANNI, Administrative Secretary, SETH FLOYD, Deputy City Attorney, and DEBRA A. OUTLAND, 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: City Hall, 495 South Main Street, 1st Floor; Clark County Government Center, 500 South Grand Central Parkway; Grant Sawyer Building, 555 East Washington Avenue; City of Las Vegas Development Services Center, 333 North Rancho Drive.

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 January 7, 2020

Motion made by Richard Becker to Approve

Passed For: 8; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Did Not Vote: 0; Excused: 7

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

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

Minutes:

DEPUTY CITY MARSHAL CHARLES SHEPHERD provided a brief summary of the Deputy City Marshals' Monthly Report for January 2020. Staff distributed the report which is included in the backup. He stated there were 965 calls for service during the month which included calls from dispatch and those that were self-initiated by the officers. There were 79 total arrests, 70 citations and 48 warning citations. He reported Ward 3 had the most arrests and citations followed by Ward 5, and that there is a heavier presence on Fremont Street now that they have a full squad there. He noted even though there was a higher number of calls for service, citations and arrests were slightly down.

MARSHAL SHEPHERD stated although the new ordinance is now in effect, they have been given direction and are working closely with their MORE (Multi-agency Outreach Resource Engagement) Team and cleanup crews to provide three more weeks of education. He noted that they have not had any related calls or problems thus far.

CHAIR WHITE asked how the department internally planned on handling the new ordinance. MARSHAL SHEPHERD stated they are not actively seeking these types of violations. Currently, when they come across someone while cleaning up the streets, they work with Rapid Response and other departments to handle it accordingly. The Chair asked if they patrol the County building. MARSHAL SHEPHERD said they do not, but they do patrol the exterior of the courthouse. CHAIR WHITE indicated there were homeless all along Third Street, to which the Marshal explained that is addressed via a joint operation.

COMMISSIONER McCURDY stated the homeless are moving from public streets and sidewalks into residential communities and asked if the ordinance also pertained to these areas, specifically the West Las Vegas Library area. MARSHAL SHEPHERD stated the ordinance applies to the streets and sidewalks in that area, but if the homeless are on private property, that would be a different matter of trespassing.

CHAIR WHITE added that Los Angeles, California, has a problem with the homeless moving away from the public areas and into private areas such as alleys, and it is an issue for the residents who use the alleys to pull their cars in and are now inundated with these individuals. MARSHAL SHEPHERD stated they have been helping with cleanups in the alleys for years. CHAIR WHITE commended the department for the job they are doing and recognizes the effort it will take going forward. COMMISSIONER McCURDY commented one way to control the homeless and encampments would be to enforce an ordinance prohibiting stealing shopping carts from shopping centers so they cannot utilize them to carry their belongings. MARSHAL SHEPHERD indicated there is already an ordinance in place for this and that it is enforced as much as possible.

CHAIR WHITE stated there is an ongoing issue with the shopping carts and if someone has purchased a shopping cart, they should have their receipt on their person. He also noted when a homeless individual is arrested that all of their belongings are left behind. MARSHAL SHEPHERD explained any essential items accompany them, the non-essential items are given to Rapid Response and the shopping carts go back to the company that owns them.

The Chair thanked MARSHAL SHEPHERD for his report.

6. Report by Mauricia Baca, Executive Director of Get Outdoors Nevada, regarding the organization's activities and partnership with the City of Las Vegas – All Wards

Minutes:

MAURICIA BACA, Executive Director, and ALMENDRA JOHNSON, Volunteer Program Manager, Get Outdoors Nevada were present. MS. BACA stated Get Outdoors Nevada is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that has been working with the City of Las Vegas and other jurisdictions for many years. She explained the organization's focus is to connect folks to Southern Nevada and the outdoors. At one time they were called the Outside Las Vegas Foundation, but they rebranded to Get Outdoors Nevada because they are not a foundation in the typical sense and in order to be more inclusive because they work with individuals throughout the state of Nevada. They accomplish their mission through volunteer programs, education programs and a suite of different types of community engagement elements. MS. BACA distributed the handout Connecting the Community to Nevada's Diverse Outdoor Places, which is included in the backup.

MS. BACA explained their education program did not exist when she started with the organization but that it looks to activate outdoor educational opportunities. With regard to their microgrant program she provided the example of taking a \$10,000 grant from NV Energy and redistributing it as \$200 microgrants to teachers to help facilitate that connection to the outdoors. Other education programs include the Next Generation Science Standard (NGSS) Program, which is a teaching approach that the state mandated. They take grant funds and, at no cost to schools, work with eight to nine grade levels of an elementary school for two weeks on the NGSS. This includes classroom discussion where they are encouraged to have interactive experiences and develop hypothetical models and theories. They are then taken out to the field (i.e., Lake Mead National Recreational Area) so they can see what they have been hypothesizing about in the classroom and test those models. She stated their focus with those programs are with lower income and underserved populations and that about 83 percent of the youth that they work with fall in that category.

MS. BACA stated another program that they work specifically with the City of Las Vegas on is the Safekey Program. Last year, MS. JOHNSON did 180 education programs. While they cannot take these children outdoors on field trips, they can bring the outdoors indoors and provide some enrichment opportunities to ignite their imagination. Over the past seven years, the microgrants have helped more than 26,000 kids connect to the outdoors, and the education programs have been growing every year. She mentioned several private partners who provide support to these programs and that they have been able to leverage public support with private dollars.

MS. BACA stated the volunteer program did not begin until 2011. The City of Las Vegas approached them because it was getting a lot of calls looking for volunteer opportunities in parks and trails and asked if they would be interested in partnering to help field those phone calls. At that time it was just her, but they then hired someone to focus on that programing. As such, they launched the volunteer program with the City of Las Vegas on parks and trails. It has grown since then, and they have developed regional partnerships; one of which is the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC) which utilized some Question 10 funding to pay for some of their assistants so that they would have dedicated volunteer coordinators. She believes the best way to care for their volunteers is to have paid staff to oversee them. She noted besides the City of Las Vegas, they also have partnerships with North Las Vegas, Clark County, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Parks Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Forest Service and occasionally the Bureau of Reclamation. These programs are intended to engage the community in caring for these places that belong to everyone, and they invite the community to sign up for these volunteer programs. She referenced their website Get Outdoors Nevada where a suite of different types of events can be found. They have also opened it up to other nonprofits that are doing outdoor events because they want people to be able to connect to these opportunities as easily as possible. They have found that there is an incredible appetite for helping out with the outdoors and making it a part of their life.

MS. BACA reported that last year, MS. JOHNSON and her team conducted 122 volunteer events, but that they take the summer off due to the excessive heat. The size of the groups range from five to as many as 186 people. The vast majority of people assume the participants are corporate partners or a convention, when in reality they are local businesses, youth groups, faith-based groups, etc. The community deeply cares about these places, and the volunteer events are designed to be fun and really engage people. Volunteers receive a briefing why they are out in the community and learn about things such as micro-trash which are tiny bits of trash that do not seem like a big deal, but they can get into the sewer system or are eaten by critters. She said she has heard volunteers comment that a park does not seem like it needs a cleanup, but the goal is to keep the parks as inviting as possible and not let them get to a place where they really need a cleanup. Volunteers come from different parts of the valley, and people will come up to the volunteers and thank them for taking care of their park. She shared how children wonder why there is trash in the parks in the first place, but that every child that participates in one of these projects is someone who will grow up and understand how much work is involved and the impact of what it means. When they do volunteer programs, they engage with the Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments, and they always emphasize how well those departments are taking care of the parks and trails, but that it falls on everyone to help keep them as clean as possible. Once someone participates they then understand how much work is involved.

MS. BACA noted they also have kids come out that are doing their community service hours, and they are grateful to find an opportunity where not a lot of training hours are required beforehand. Additionally, some volunteer opportunities are closed off to those under the age of 18, but they are open to this as long as there is an adult that can sign the waiver and take responsibility for them. She said they have also experienced an influx of young people who are completing their court-enforced community service hours. She said she has realized that these kids that come out because they are ordered to, tend to lose any attitudes they arrive with when they see hundreds of other people volunteering because they want to. She emphasized that they treat everyone with respect, and she thought it elevated their experience over time.

She pointed out that they have an event almost every weekend, and she invited the members to join them. She noted that they also work with the Regional Open Space and Trails Workgroup which consists of all of the planners for the City of Las Vegas, Clark County, City of North Las Vegas, City of Henderson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Parks Service, Bureau of Reclamation, the United States Forest Service and a suite of different agencies. MS. BACA distributed a Neon to Nature Southern Nevada Trails Map which was submitted for the record. She stated there was no trail map that captured all of the trails in the area so they worked with everyone to develop this trail map. There is also a Neon to Nature free app which lets you know which trails are

nearby and which attributes they have, and they are in the process of updating this app to include a Spanish language translation. They worked on this with the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) who has been wonderful because they recognize that getting outside on a trail or in a park is one of the simplest things to do to stay healthy. She noted that 35 percent of Kindergartners in Nevada are considered overweight or obese and that number rises to about 44 percent amongst Latinos. The SNHD has become a huge advocate of being outside because it is a simple thing to do and something that families can do together which is something they emphasize.

MS. BACA reported they also run the Families in Nature educational program and were honored to be a part of the Las Vegas Community Healing Garden. She submitted for the record a handout on the Las Vegas Community Healing Garden which is included in the backup. One of the reasons they took that program on is because of the idea that outdoors is healing. Although it is a small space in the middle of an outdoor urban environment, it is important. They came on board approximately a week after the Healing Garden was established, and they helped fundraise for the new steel remembrance wall which was paid for entirely via donations.

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ commented that the work Get Outdoors Nevada does is very special and meaningful. He recalled participating in some programs hosted out of the YMCA Centennial Office, that operated under a similar name, and they went to places on the Arizona side of Lake Mead to do a cleanup where the participants were of all ages. Although the trash here seems insignificant compared to other countries he has visited such as Asia and Africa where trash is thrown everywhere, he reiterated this is a terrific program. He referred to one of the handouts and asked what was meant by sound, scientific information. MS. BACA gave examples of talking to children about erosion, biomimicry and helping people understand the science behind what they are seeing in the desert. A lot of the principles of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) are exhibited and are things you can bring to life in the outdoors. She gave the example of the Spring Mountains being considered a sky island because there are species there that can only live at that elevation.

CHAIR WHITE commented on the necessity of the Neon to Nature app and that it made it easy when talking to youth and individuals about trails. MS. BACA stated the members could email her directly if there was a community group or community center where they wanted to distribute the maps, and she would provide them with a box.

COMMISSIONER BECKER wondered if any thought had been given to adding a map system in the future to the app that ties into where you can actually walk with the trail. MS. BACA explained the Regional Open Space and Trails group falls under the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition which recently authorized \$25,000 to do some updates such as an expanded search, since it is currently limited to a five-mile area, and to add some interactive components. She noted the app was launched in 2014 which is dinosaur years in app time, and they are excited to get it updated.

Discussion took place between COMMISSIONER McCURDY, MS. BACA and MS. JOHNSON regarding the low income area schools they work with in Ward 5 because the Commissioner stated he has never heard anything about their organization reaching out to low income families in Ward 5 to get them involved. MS. BACA indicated last year, the NGSS Program worked with four to five schools in Ward 5. MS. JOHNSON added they were involved with the Safekey Program at Matt Kelly Elementary School as well. COMMISSIONER McCURDY asked about West Preparatory Academy to which MS. BACA stated they have done work with that school also. She explained the way the NGSS Program works is that they had 76 applications for the nine spots. Those applications are rated by need, how well they fill out the applications, etc. She shared that she grew up in an incredibly poor family; her father was a Mexican immigrant, and they were on welfare a lot of the time. As such, she has a personal connection to how important the outdoors are because they used to go to the park all of the time which is how she learned a lot of things and then went on to law school and is now with this organization. It is important to her to pay it forward and work with as diverse of communities as they can. She briefly spoke about Title I as it relates to being a metric for scoring and that the Clark County School District is reevaluating Title I.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD wondered why it was difficult to find their organization and asked if probation officers are allowed to recommend their program for community service. MS. BACA responded it is not so much that they are having a hard time finding their organization but more about finding people that will take these kids. After some presentations and engagement, they now have a growing relationship with these officers and they,

along with adults that work with the juvenile youths, participate in some of their events. These individuals now realize that this is a great opportunity, and she is pleased they are joining them because it is great for the kids to see other community members doing nice things and just getting outdoors generally.

COMMISSIONER McCURDY suggested MS. BACA contact Eighth Judicial District Court JUDGE WILLIAM VOY who is getting ready to issue a grant to a nonprofit to help at-risk youth. He expressed he is for diversification for everyone, not just one segment of the minority population. He thought a lot of times there were more opportunities in the more affluent wards, but that was not so in the low income areas.

CHAIR WHITE asked about Google in relation to biking the trails. MS. BACA explained that all of the trails have been mapped as a combination of taking information from the jurisdictions and human beings that have walked them since sometimes planning information and on-the-ground information does not correlate. CHAIR WHITE suggested it might be worthwhile to pursue having someone get on a dirt bike and ride the trails. MS. BACA stated a couple of years ago, they were working with the City on a bike project and some individuals went out on the trails with Go Pros, but that she would take that under consideration.

COMMISSIONER HENLEY stated it was important through the volunteers working with the young people to get the kids exposed to the outdoors to start building the next generation of political advocacy. He mentioned Nature Deficit Disorder which is where young kids are getting less and less exposure to the value of the outdoors physically and psychologically and it is creating a lot of stressors. It is very important to get kids outdoors and to build stewardship and proper land ethic, and these types of programs are invaluable for that. MS. BACA agreed, stating it is very important to get kids off the couch and outside to experience that the world is bigger than they are. She stated another program they have is the Nevada Outdoor Business Coalition and Outdoor Recreation Industry, and one of her hopes is that some of the kids they are working with now will become the Outdoor Recreation Industry leaders. She noted there is an incredible lack of diversity in the Outdoor Recreation Industry so she has been speaking with the heads of the Latin, Urban and Asian Chamber about business opportunities.

GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, thanked MS. BACA and asked her to touch on the critical role they are playing in connecting the trail system valley wide because there is no other group that is working with all of the municipalities to try to do so. MS. BACA stated one of the trail projects they have been working on for many years is the Vegas Valley Rim Trail that will literally and figuratively link all of the trails together. She referenced the thick salmon-colored line on one of the maps that identifies this trail. Within the next couple of years, the City of Las Vegas will complete its portion, and they have been working with Clark County Public Works in the southwest quadrant to identify the closure for that portion. The vision is that you will be able to bike or walk around the entire valley.

MS. BACA stated Southern Nevada has over 1,000 miles of parks and trails, and she tells people it is one of the best least told stories. There is always a lot of negative news, but one of the best things they have done, especially in Southern Nevada, is invest in parks and trails. It is important to the community because it links communities together and gives people an opportunity to experience different things. The Regional Open Space and Trails Workgroup meets monthly with the planners, and they are going to get them on a bicycle on the trails to assess and see the signage. There have been ongoing discussions about making sure the signage is present and helpful because there is not always proper signage. MR. WEITZEL stated the Department of Parks and Recreation is going to be taking a much more active role in an update on trails. Public Works builds the trails and Operations and Maintenance keeps them clean, but there has been no programming arm and no marketing or advertising of these facilities that cost millions of dollars to get people involved, to understand that it is about quality of life and to get out and exercise. Referencing COMMISSIONER HENLEY'S comment on the Nature Deficit Disorder, he recommended the Commissioners read a book titled *The Last Child in the Woods* by DR. RICHARD LOUV. It explains the disorder in more detail along with other impacts being seen by children who are disconnected with nature. He stated they have been working diligently with Get Outdoors Nevada to get more volunteers in the parks. In the upcoming budget there is a request for a new partnership with Get Outdoors Nevada to go out to two parks per ward in the next year and do volunteer events to get the neighborhood engaged and connected through the parks. He thought it was a great idea, and he hoped they could get it funded. He stated they have a Parks Ambassador Program that they are also looking to boost to get more volunteers in the parks. Lastly, he thanked MS. BACA for all of the work their organization is doing.

MS. BACA handed out an additional map titled Public Lands of Southern Nevada, which was submitted for the record.

CHAIR WHITE thanked MS. BACA for sharing the information with the Commission.

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

Minutes:

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ reported that on January 15, 2020, the City Council unanimously approved the renaming to Dula Community Center at the Dula Complex. He shared photos of the ribbon cutting for the grand reopening of the Dula Community Center on January 23, 2020, the opening and dedication of the Jeremy Huber Lacrosse Field at Teton Trails Park and the grand opening of the Alyn Beck Park on January 31, 2020.

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ explained that JEREMY HUBER was an 18-year-old student and lacrosse player, who passed away in 2015 while at John Hopkins University. He also commented that he did not realize how large the lacrosse community was in this area. ALYN BECK was one of two officers killed during an ambush, and his widow along with their three children, CLARK COUNTY SHERIFF JOE LOMBARDO, GOVERNOR STEVE SISOLAK, MAYOR GOODMAN and MAYOR PRO TEM FIORE were in attendance at that event. COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ was able to attend the first two events mentioned but watched the last event live on video due to an illness. CHAIR WHITE thanked him for representing the Commission at these events.

COMMISSIONER BRIARE reported he attended the opening of the fitness court at Briare Family Park. He said when it comes to things like this, Las Vegas does it well; it was a great event and brought the city into the 21st Century. GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, attended along with employees from the Municipal Sports Unit who demonstrated the facilities. The Commissioner stated he has a personal family connection to this park, and it was a great honor to have the fitness court presented in that park. CHAIR WHITE was glad COMMISSIONER BRIARE was able to participate in this event.

COMMISSIONER McCURDY shared there will be a Fish Fry on February 6, 2020, at 11:00 a.m. at the Doolittle Senior Center for Black History Month. There will also be an event honoring Las Vegas' first black firefighters at the Doolittle Community Center on February 8, 2020. He invited the Commissioners to participate in these events.

CHAIR WHITE thanked the Commissioners for promoting these events.

8. Report by Greg A. Weitzel, Parks and Recreation Director, regarding upcoming Department of Parks and Recreation activities – All Wards

Minutes:

GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, stated a handout was distributed with a calendar of events for Black History Month; this is included in the backup. He hoped the Commissioners could attend some of these events and noted he would be at the Fish Fry.

Also distributed was a handout, Hockey in Vegas, which is a new citywide program in cooperation with the Vegas Golden Knights. He believes there is a great future in this partnership not only for programming, but for facilities as well. He noted the Teton Trails lacrosse event along with the National Fitness Campaign, ALYN BECK and the Dula Community Center events were already reported on by other Commissioners, but he shared a video of the newly renovated Dula Community Center.

COMMISSIONER HENLEY commended MR. WEITZEL on using the recreation staff to help design the facilities as oftentimes that does not happen. MR. WEITZEL thanked him, adding that they are doing this more and more because they see things from an end-user's perspective which is different from an engineer or architect's view.

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ stated he previously watched this video on Facebook along with several others, and he said it comes across very professionally done and draws the viewer in. MR. WEITZEL stated APRIL DIGIOVANNI, Administrative Secretary, was the videographer who recorded it on her iPhone. He added that he was visiting all of the centers anyway so decided to record everything and share what he is learning with staff who have told him they are learning things they did not know even though they have been with the City for 20 years. He stated the Alyn Beck Memorial Park opening was recorded live and can be viewed on the City's Facebook page. He watched it, and it is a very touching and well done tribute to that fallen officer.

He went on to report that The Mayor's Cup will be held February 14-23, 2020. COMMISSIONER BRIARE as well as SAVONTA MANOR, Recreation Coordinator, will be working very hard on this tournament. Trigono Hills Park

is scheduled to open February 28, 2020, and he hoped the Commissioners could attend. He also reported that they are working on a community build project at Bruce Trent Park; it is in the design phase currently, but it needs some renovations. They would like to do a playground community build where they invite everyone in the community to come out and help build the playground. They will also be doing some trail renovations, multiple restroom renovations and a spray park. He noted Bruce Trent Park was named after the first Superintendent of Parks and Recreation in the city.

MR. WEITZEL stated they are also working on esports. He heard from the last Commission meeting that there was some interest from the Commissioners to assist in the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) process, and he thanked them for that. He would ensure that MS. DiGIOVANNI reached out to them, and if there was a Chapter they were interested in, the committees are being formed, and he would welcome their input.

Lastly, he reported the City will be part host of the Nevada Recreation and Park Society (NRPS) Conference which will be held in March, and that parks and recreation professionals will be coming from all over the state for that event. CHAIR WHITE offered the Commission's assistance in hosting that event.

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 5:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Debra A. Outland, Deputy City Clerk

Greg Weitzel, Director of Parks and Recreation

THIS MEETING WAS PROPERLY NOTICED AND POSTED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

City Hall, 495 South Main Street, 1st Floor
Clark County Government Center, 500 South Grand Central Parkway
Grant Sawyer Building, 555 East Washington Avenue
City of Las Vegas Development Services Center, 333 North Rancho Drive