



Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Minutes

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Minutes:

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

PRESENT: VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ and COMMISSIONERS SHERMAN (via teleconference), McCURDY (excused until 4:07 p.m.), BECKER, GEBRE, NEIGER, HENLEY (via teleconference), ASSELIN, HOWARD, and KELLER

EXCUSED: CHAIR WHITE and COMMISSIONERS ARMENIAN, FOEMMEL, BRIARE and JIMENEZ

ALSO PRESENT: GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, APRIL DiGIOVANNI, Administrative Secretary, SETH FLOYD, Deputy City Attorney, and CHEYENNE LARANCE, 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 September 1, 2020

Motion made by Richard Becker to Approve

Passed For: 9; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Did Not Vote: 0; Excused: 6

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

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

Minutes:

DEPUTY CITY MARSHAL JEFFERY BELCHER reviewed the September 2020 Deputy City Marshals Report, which was submitted for the record and is included in the backup. He provided statistics related to the total number of calls for service and the percentages of citations and arrests that took place in City of Las Vegas parks and on Fremont Street Experience. He noted the most calls were from the Homeless Resource Center, followed by Fremont Street Experience, Floyd Lamb Park, City Hall, the Las Vegas Detention Center, Gary Dexter Park, Centennial Hills Park, Bob Baskin Park, Kellogg Zaher Soccer Complex and the Neonopolis Garage. MARSHAL BELCHER provided a further breakdown of the number of arrests, citations and warning citations by Ward.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MARSHAL BELCHER stated all community-oriented policing activities have been suspended temporarily. He briefly touched on the nationwide protests of police violence, noting that local protests took place along the Las Vegas Strip and downtown areas. He pointed out 181 verbal warnings for mandatory facial coverings were given on Fremont Street Experience.

COMMISSIONER NEIGER asked if violence-related citations and arrests are tracked each year in high population tourist areas and whether they have seen an increase. MARSHAL BELCHER said that information is tracked; however, he did not have it immediately available, but indicated it could be provided at another meeting if the Commission so wished.

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ stated he was disturbed to hear of the vandalism that occurred at Alyn Beck Park in Ward 6, and asked for further details as to the nature of the vandalism, the investigation, if any arrests were made and if any preventative measures have been taken to avoid this occurring in the future. As this park honors fallen Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Officer ALYN BECK, VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ stated the vandalism was extremely upsetting to him. MARSHAL BELCHER asked if VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ was referring to the incident with the trees. GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, explained there was extensive graffiti in the restrooms several weeks ago, to which staff responded quickly and cleaned it up. Additionally, the lighting system timer was not working, but has since been replaced. He stated staff is also working very closely with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to increase patrols at this park. VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ confirmed with MR. WEITZEL that no defacing of the statue took place, and that the flowers that had died were replaced with mulch.

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ spoke of preventing dumping in City parks, to which MR. WEITZEL confirmed there has been a significant increase of illegal dumping in the parks and that several measures have been taken to prevent such activity, including alerting DPS of the illegal dumping sites where these increases have been seen.

COMMISSIONER McCURDY asked if the City could request federal money to install cameras in the high crime parks. MARSHAL BELCHER explained a couple of mobile cameras were recently acquired that can be deployed to high crime locations. With the new Municipal Court building coming online, they are supposed to have some more capabilities as far as monitoring cameras as well. As far as possible grant money, he thought this to be a great idea and something that could be looked into. COMMISSIONER McCURDY reiterated his thought to seek federal monies and that possibly DPS could monitor the cameras in high crime areas, as Ward 5 specifically has seen an increase in crime.

COMMISSIONER KELLER asked for input related to cleaning up Baker Park due to the individuals on the streets wreaking havoc on the Ward 3 neighborhood near this park. Although she has seen a Marshal presence at the park, she is still not comfortable taking her children there. SERGEANT ZACH McCOY stated he was the Sergeant over Fremont Street, and just recently was put back over patrolling the parks. He provided the number for Dispatch (702) 229-6444, in which officers would respond to any complaints. He noted they have done multiple directed patrol activities at Baker Park and confirmed they have seen an increased presence. Noting that the individuals hanging out in the parks were not technically violating any laws, COMMISSIONER KELLER asked if the mask mandate could be enforced. SERGEANT McCOY stated there is a stipulation in the Governor's Directive that those experiencing homelessness are not required to wear masks, but there are other municipal ordinances that they could enforce. He was amenable to sending officers and talking to these individuals and offering them homeless resources to get them out of the parks.

MR. WEITZEL commended DPS for their assistance in increasing their patrol at this park after numerous reports of problems. He also noted that staff met with COUNCILWOMAN DIAZ, and stated a resolution has been placed on the upcoming Council agenda that would make Baker Park a children's only park. A fence is also being placed around the children's area so anyone that is not a child or parent of a child would not be permitted in that area. He offered to share the plan for the fence and the signage with the Commission.

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ asked if there were certain times of the day in which these individuals were noticed in the park. COMMISSIONER KELLER stated she notices a spike in the morning, but thought that might change as the weather changes and that she is not in the area past sun down so could not comment on that, but could get more information.

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ said parks are there for residents and children to recreate, and are not a hang-out joint, and asked if any of the Commissioners were opposed to staff continuing to pursue additional security measures to include surveillance cameras. COMMISSIONER McCURDY asked about the City applying for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money to enhance safety, as it is his understanding that money can be used

as long as it benefits low-income people, specifically Wards 3 and 5. He spoke of the need for additional signage related to children's parks being enforced by City Marshals. MR. WEITZEL informed VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ that the Department of Parks and Recreation is in the process of hiring a Grant Program Coordinator. He confirmed they are eligible for CDBG funds, and that staff has met with KATHI THOMAS, Director of Community Services, to discuss applying for such. They are also looking at other state and federal funds to assist with the implementation of the Smart Park Initiative, which involves increasing technology in the parks to include security cameras to assist with security and operations and maintenance. He added that in the last two months, six cameras have been installed at City fields and that there are also security systems at all of the aquatic, recreation and senior centers. COMMISSIONER McCURDY said he has been involved with the City for more than 50 years and commented how the low-income areas have been neglected. He stated in the past, CDBG monies given to low-income areas have been used in other Wards, and he hoped that could be reevaluated and the monies used in the Wards that need assistance.

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ asked staff to include any progress in their monthly report, as they need to be vigilant and have a focused continuous plan. MR. WEITZEL confirmed.

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ asked MR. WEITZEL if the fiscal priorities of expenditures are set and approved by the City Council, to which MR. WEITZEL confirmed. He agreed with VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ that the elected officials were the right place to go to obtain funding for this initiative and expounded that administration prepares the budget and makes the recommendations to Council for approval, but the Council ultimately has the final say. VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ urged the Commissioners to articulate this prioritization to their respective Councilmembers.

COMMISSIONER SHERMAN commented other parks have a "children only" section, and thought this would be a good first step to help deal with the issues and could easily be accomplished with signage.

SERGEANT McCOY wished to add that he thought cameras were a great idea, not only from an investigation standpoint in helping identify suspects, but also commented that many of the arrests and citations from Wards 3 and 5 are because of them being proactive and the extra patrols being done in those parks. He noted that one of the downfalls of cameras is that if an officer is not watching the live feed and a misdemeanor occurs not in their presence, it makes it more difficult, but he thought overall, they are of great benefit.

SERGEANT McCOY was also present

6. Presentation by Greg A. Weitzel, Director of Parks and Recreation, and Mauricia M.M. Baca, Executive Director of Get Outdoors Nevada, regarding the Volunteer in the Parks program – All Wards

Minutes:

Using a PowerPoint Presentation, a copy of which was submitted and attached as backup, GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, introduced Mauricia M.M. Baca, Executive Director of Get Outdoors Nevada, who has been a long-time partner of the City and the first partner to help with volunteers. He indicated an update would be provided on The Healing Garden along with information related to a new project there called The Story Telling Garden and the Volunteers in the Parks Program. MR. WEITZEL reported there was an October 1st Remembrance ceremony held the week prior, with MAYOR GOODMAN and DAVID RIGGLEMAN, Director of the Office of Communications, reading the names of the victims, which was live-streamed on several television stations. He announced the Department of Parks and Recreation will now be overseeing the ongoing maintenance and operations of The Healing Garden and providing what he referred to as a Level 1 standard of service. This increased level of maintenance will include lighting, the overall appearance of the surrounding area, safety, security and the implementation of smart park technology at the site.

MS. BACA provided a brief history of The Healing Garden, noting it was established with the idea to celebrate life and beauty and to help the community come together and heal. The genesis of The Healing Garden was two community members, JAY PLEGGENKUHLE and DANIEL PEREZ, who got together the day following the tragedy, wondered how to start the healing process and drew their idea on a napkin. A group of more than 300 volunteers came together to make the idea a reality within days; over \$300,000 in materials were donated in the process as well. There are 58 trees, surrounding a Tree of Life, one for each person who died that evening. She noted ways to acknowledge those individuals who have since succumbed to their injuries are also being considered. The Tree of Life is in a heart-shaped planter covered in tiles, which were made by family members, community members and survivors. The first official remembrance of the October 1 tragedy was held in 2018, by

which time a new remembrance wall was installed. The original remembrance wall was made out of wooden pallets, which were beautiful, but would not have withstood over time. The community came together and again, more than \$300,000 in cash and in-kind donations made the new permanent remembrance wall possible. A slide was shown of the many companies that donated, who MS. BACA noted they all insisted there not be any plaques with their names on it in the garden. She also recognized University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) professors, who came together to create a Healing Garden book, which documents the first year, and looks at the topics of love, hope and healing and whereby sale proceeds and royalties go towards the garden. Victims' family members who wished to have a copy were given one free of charge.

She stated they have learned over time that not everyone knows why The Healing Garden is there, so an interpretive sign has since been installed which provides an explanation. She summarized that the project involved 794 volunteers equating to over 16,000 hours, with a value of approximately \$500,000. She went on to acknowledge one of the volunteers, SUEANN CORNWELL, who designed trellises to replace what was originally placed around the trees. These were then fabricated by the City of Las Vegas and installed by several other volunteers, whom she named.

MS. BACA stated Phase 2 is the Storytelling Garden and is located adjacent to The Healing Garden. While The Healing Garden is almost a sacred place, this location will be a convening space. MR. WEITZEL stated the project started on January 27, 2020, and about 90 percent was completed by the October 1, 2020 ceremony. Improvements include landscaping, an urban orchard with almond, peach, apple and fig trees, community garden beds, new irrigation, lighting, fencing and pavers. Most importantly, it provides a place for people to come, gather and tell stories. He noted they are excited that a pre-fabricated solar house donated by UNLV will be installed by January 2021 to serve as a visitors center and a place to learn more about the garden.

MS. BACA added that the Get Outdoors Nevada volunteer program launched in partnership with the City of Las Vegas in 2012. They hosted 122 volunteer events in 2019, which included almost 4,000 volunteers, separate from The Healing Garden. MR. WEITZEL stated the program is called the Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Program, and the idea is to engage residents in a minimum of two volunteer events per ward annually. Some have already been scheduled with the wards and Councilmembers. The goal is to bring together volunteers who live near their parks and hold events that create ownership such as park cleanups, tree plantings, paintings, graffiti removal, playground equipment cleaning and community builds. MS. BACA stated they have met with every Councilmember and their staff to identify projects and are in the process of setting the schedule. A database of volunteers broken down by ward will be maintained so the City can track who is coming to these volunteer events. While these projects have a dollar value, she stated volunteers are priceless and that to acknowledge and thank these entities, organizations, groups and individuals who go above and beyond, they are presented with Presidential Awards, VIP t-shirts and have their photo taken. MR. WEITZEL thanked MS. BACA and her staff for their countless hours of work.

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ thanked MR. WEITZEL and MS. BACA for the presentation and asked how they recruit volunteers. MS. BACA explained although they have a website (getoutdoorsnevada.org), they have not had to do much community outreach because the word is out that they host volunteer events, and they receive calls every week from people inquiring about events, even throughout the pandemic. They also receive referrals from elected officials when community members identify something they need.

COMMISSIONER McCURDY asked how many volunteers come from within the African American community. MS. BACA responded they do not have a breakdown of demographics; however, the volunteers are very diverse across racial, gender and age demographics. COMMISSIONER McCURDY offered to help find volunteers and possibly volunteer himself because he would like to see people, including parishioners, get more involved. MS. BACA welcomed and appreciated the Commissioner's observation. She noted they have worked with various groups of faith and thought it incredibly important to get youth more involved. COMMISSIONER McCURDY asked if MS. BACA had ever reached out to JUDGE WILLIAM VOY, Juvenile Court Services. There are individuals there that need self-worth and rehabilitation, and he thought volunteering would provide these young people with some direction. MS. BACA stated Get Outdoors Nevada has had good attendance from youth involved in court-ordered community service, and she often sees their body language change and pride develop throughout the process. The juveniles are treated with respect, and are kept involved and engaged.

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ spoke of the Park Ambassadors function, and asked how they fit in with the Get Outdoors Nevada VIP Program. MR. WEITZEL explained there are a limited number of Park Ambassadors, and they are currently working on how to combine those Ambassadors with the VIP Program to make one solid

program. VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ requested the Commissioners be kept abreast of any events and indicated he planned to attend the events in his ward, and thought the other Commissioners would support the same. MS. BACA indicated they would provide a full calendar of events to staff, but specifically noted an upcoming event in Ward 1, and would pass that information on to the Commissioners.

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:

GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, indicated he would be presenting on the City's upcoming Parks and Recreation System Master Plan. However, due to a shortage of time and some technical difficulties, it was decided to table this item to the next meeting. MR. WEITZEL confirmed for COMMISSIONER NEIGER that they were looking at a start date in January, so there would not be a problem moving the presentation to the November meeting.

Subsequent to the vote to table this item, VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ noted the Commission had been provided with an organizational chart as requested at the last meeting, but said he was looking for something more along the lines of an executive summary organizational chart which showed Parks and Recreation and possibly one more level. MR. WEITZEL indicated an abbreviated version would be provided to the Commission.

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ also asked MR. WEITZEL if he had looked into the Park Condition Assessment Survey Tool discussed at last month's meeting. MR. WEITZEL stated he had researched this. He reviewed some of the quarterly park inspection reports, but it was yet to be determined if this was something that would be continued moving forward. VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ stated in the past, many of the Commissioners walked the parks with their respective Councilmembers, and this tool was used at that point to come up with recommendations and improvements and asked what staff's thoughts were as far as continuing these walk-throughs. MR. WEITZEL stated staff is currently doing those tours, and that one had taken place the day prior to this meeting with COUNCILMAN KNUDSEN, and other tours are scheduled. He stated he would instruct APRIL DIGIOVANNI, Administrative Secretary, to invite the Commissioners on those tours over the next several months. VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ encouraged the Commissioners to take advantage of this opportunity, as he found walking the parks with staff incredibly helpful.

Motion made by Richard Becker to Table

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

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

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

Minutes:

COMMISSIONER BECKER announced COUNCILWOMAN SEAMAN will be holding a town hall meeting regarding Bruce Trent Park on October 10, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. at the park itself, which is located at 8851 Vegas Drive.

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:

COMMISSIONER SHERMAN stated she had the opportunity to see "Hello Mayor!", which aired on September 29, 2020, in which GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, eloquently handled a rigorous interview with MAYOR GOODMAN. She noted he covered the gamut from being a custodian cleaning out bathrooms in his youth, to currently serving on the National Board of Directors for Parks and Recreation, focusing on very timely subjects such as conservation, health and wellness, and social equity. She gave kudos to the City for being recognized for diversity.

She also stated the public was informed on how parks are reopening safely, as well as public safety in general, including the 79 restrooms that are locked each night by the Deputy City Marshals.

She went on to state that Bill Briare Family Park and Fitness Court, near Washington Avenue and Tenaya Way, was presented. There was also mention of Parks and Recreation COMMISSIONER BRIARE, the son of former Mayor BILL BRIARE. COMMISSIONER BRIARE plays a vital role in the Mayor's Cup and Soccer Program. MR. WEITZEL complimented his staff, and the Vegas Strong Academy, which was discussed at last month's Commission meeting, was highlighted as a valuable resource, especially during the pandemic. The City of Las Vegas Department of Parks and Recreation took a very responsible and responsive stance addressing food insecurity at the community centers as well as took a lead in providing services to children in need. Very engaging videos of pop-up parks, social interactions, as well as The Healthy Parks Program, with a focus on preventative health, including mental health, were publicized. She commented MR. WEITZEL showed how adaptive recreation for those with disabilities is also a major goal, and described his experience being in a wheelchair all day to put himself in a truly empathetic situation, heightened the goal for inclusion. Renovations of Equestrian Park and Trail were revealed for those animal lovers needing recreational outlets. Future goals, including notifying the public of the expansion of the popular game, pickleball, and e-sports were also addressed. She thought this to be a very useful and positive informational piece for the public and a great tool for introducing citizens to what recreational and leisure activities are available.

10. Adjournment

Minutes:

In response to the question by COMMISSIONER McCURDY, MR. WEITZEL stated that the next meeting was scheduled for November 10, 2020.

NOTE: Subsequent to the meeting, it was confirmed with staff that the next scheduled meeting is set for November 3, 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Cheyenne LaRance, 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