



Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Minutes

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Minutes:

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

PRESENT: CHAIR WHITE (excused until 4:01 p.m.) and COMMISSIONERS SCHULTZ, SHERMAN (via teleconference), ARMENIAN, BECKER (via teleconference), GEBRE, NEIGER, BRIARE, ASSELIN, JIMENEZ and KELLER

EXCUSED: COMMISSIONERS McCURDY, 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

NOTE: Subsequent to Roll Call, it was determined that Commissioner Howard was not present.

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 October 6, 2020

Minutes:

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ stated he reviewed the minutes and did not notice anything that he would consider incorrect.

Motion made by Audrey Asselin to Approve

Passed For: 11; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Did Not Vote: 0; Excused: 4

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

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

Minutes:

DEPUTY CITY MARSHAL JOHN RIVAS reviewed the Monthly Report for October, a copy of which was submitted for the record and is included in the backup. His report included the total number of calls for service, arrests, misdemeanor citations, traffic citations and warning citations. He also relayed the percentages of each which were transient related.

MARSHAL RIVAS provided the percentages of the total number of arrests involving park and pedestrian traffic violations, along with the percentages of citations involving driving violations and trespassing. He proceeded to provide a breakdown of the number and types of arrests and traffic and misdemeanor citations by Ward and the associated locations within each Ward.

With regard to the upcoming election, CHAIR WHITE mentioned the gates around City Hall, but wondered what other facilities the Marshals were looking to provide a buffer. MARSHAL RIVAS stated they would be working with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department on this, and other than City Hall, the North Fifth Street School was mentioned as a primary area for increased perimeter checks, but information was still forthcoming.

COMMISSIONER NEIGER asked about the process when a complaint is received regarding a homeless person loitering, causing trouble or sleeping in a park. MARSHAL RIVAS explained the Department of Public Safety's primary objective is to provide these individuals with information related to available resources. However, most times, although familiar with these resource centers, they choose not to take advantage of them. Their next objective is to identify a violation, remove them from the park and try to get them help if possible. The Commissioner asked if the Marshals would provide transportation if the individual asked to be taken to one of the centers. MARSHAL RIVAS stated they are not allowed to provide a courtesy ride, but instead would contact the MORE (Multi-agency Outreach Resource Engagement) Team to transport them.

CHAIR WHITE thanked MARSHAL RIVAS for his report.

6. Presentation by Greg A. Weitzel, Director of Parks and Recreation, regarding the Parks and Recreation System Master Plan – All Wards

Minutes:

Through a PowerPoint presentation, which was submitted and is attached as backup, GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, discussed the Parks and Recreation System Master Plan (Plan). A video was shown, which MR. WEITZEL believed was a powerful reminder of why a plan to help avoid the addiction to highly- stimulating technology was needed for parks and recreation in the community. Adults need to look at the role technology plays, what they are doing on a day-to-day basis and how to get children to reconnect with nature. He stated the City of Las Vegas has never had a Parks and Recreation System Master Plan, and he thought it was time to start thinking of the future and to address some of the critical issues in the community.

MR. WEITZEL stated the Plan would be a component of and compliment the City of Las Vegas Master Plan 2050, which some of the Commissioners may be familiar with, and will provide recommendations that will help shape the professional delivery of parks and recreation services. He noted the current pandemic has brought to light how important the parks and recreation system is to the community. Floyd Lamb Park is one of the parks where attendance can be tracked, and the number of people that visited the park in March totaled 15,000-17,000, while more than 55,000 visited in May. This demand has an impact on how the parks are maintained and operated, and the limited amount of public dollars and resources requires careful research of operations, efficiencies and planning of future programs. This Plan will provide such recommendations and more with regard to the provision of facilities, services, park land acquisition, maintenance, operations, administration and management.

MR. WEITZEL provided an example from the City's 2050 Master Plan where the City is striving to provide seven acres of park land per 1,000 residents. Currently, that figure is 2.5 acres per resident, so there is a long way to go. This requires looking at areas that can be acquired for future park land and where the city is growing in the future.

MR. WEITZEL noted the Plan would be community driven, and staff would appreciate the help of this Commission in the planning process and in getting the community involved. Primary deliverables will include focus groups with internal staff and key stakeholders. There will also be a city-wide virtual public forum and other workshops, along with three virtual public forums. MR. WEITZEL noted they have seen more participation with regard to the virtual front. Additionally, a statistically-valid survey will be conducted that will help quantify the range of ideas and the needs and priorities identified by the public meetings, focus groups and other public input. A non-statistical electronic survey will also be conducted, where individuals can go on a website to complete the survey, which will also help to shape the future.

MR. WEITZEL commented this Plan will provide many benefits, such as guide decision making, help fill in the gaps, identify system redundancies and provide community engagement. It establishes a long-range vision and a five-year strategic plan. He stressed the importance for it to be a living document, and not a plan that just sits on a shelf. He noted that prior to the pandemic, the City was offering up to 700 programs at its centers, but that came to a halt once the pandemic hit, and how those programs will look in the future needs to be considered, and he thought this to be the perfect time to create a system master plan.

The Plan will also help prioritize budgets and serve as a grant tool. He added most state dollars and foundations want to see a master plan in place because of the desire to accomplish a long-term goal. It also provides opportunities for future development. Additionally, system plans may recommend community set aside open space and preserve land to accommodate population and spatial growth in the area. Census data, demographics and regional trends all help determine the amount and type of park lands needed in various communities, and the Plan is meant to help cities work with developers, as growth occurs, to ensure future recreational needs are met. It also establishes a park amenity life cycle and a maintenance management plan, which is important for the Commission to understand, because of the fact that many parks look a lot alike because they were developed over a short period of time. This creates problems in the future due to equipment needing replacement all at the same time, so establishing a strategy for completing upgrades will be beneficial. The need for a maintenance management plan is an essential tool as they continue to try to manage the City's resources and facilities in the park system.

MR. WEITZEL stated there are multiple plans within this Plan (i.e., a marketing plan, a recreation program plan, a maintenance management plan, a safety and security plan, etc.). He also thought this to be a great opportunity to create more partnerships with the school districts, private educational facilities, fitness centers, associations, watershed state agencies and other municipalities.

Lastly, MR. WEITZEL pointed out a master plan is a requirement of accreditation from CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies), which consists of 154 standards. The City plans to comply with these national standards in order to provide an excellent park and recreation system in the future and to become accredited. He thought it came down to providing a high level of service and excellent professional services. The ultimate goal is for the City to win the gold medal, which means you are the top in the country; while a gold medal finalist consists of the top four in the country.

With regard to the timeline, MR. WEITZEL stated staff is currently in the project management/reporting phase, with the goals, objectives and scope being finalized. Additionally, outcome expectations with the consultants and staff, figuring out the communication plan, the branding and data collection are all being determined, but the anticipated launch is in January.

The second task includes moving into the community profile and public outreach between January and July of 2021. Staff will then seek approval from the Planning Commission and the City Council between November 2021 and January 2022. The CAPRA review was originally scheduled for February 2021, but due to the pandemic, he stated it has been delayed to February 2022.

CHAIR WHITE complimented MR. WEITZEL on a great job, and said he was on the Commission several years ago when the City went through the accreditation process. MR. WEITZEL added that it has been 12 years since the City was accredited, which typically lasts for five years.

COMMISSIONER SHERMAN said the Plan talks about new parks in the downtown area, and she wondered if any land has been identified for that purpose. Also, she said in the past, surveys have shown that people like open spaces and she asked about this in relation to the booming population. MR. WEITZEL replied that additional land has been acquired for park space downtown, specifically noting the purchase of a property right across the street from City Hall, which will include a park and public plaza. Additionally, staff is working with the Departments of Economic and Urban Development and Planning to identify other areas and future opportunities in the downtown core. With regard to open spaces, he stated current open spaces will be included as a part of the Plan. He noted there is also the need for a regional open space plan, and he has discussed a joint planning effort with other municipalities. While that is not something that has yet been budgeted, it is something the municipalities recognize as a need in the valley.

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ thanked MR. WEITZEL for the excellent update and stressed the need for a sound demographic database that would include variables related to population and aging by Ward or other identified areas, along with research from the standpoint of what a recreation profile would look like 10 to 15 years from now or beyond versus what people enjoy doing at the present time. MR. WEITZEL agreed demographics had to be considered and confirmed a market analysis and demographic analysis is being done. The consultant team assisting in this planning effort is the same consultant group that is being utilized to finalize the City's 2050 Master Plan, and is currently conducting that data review to use as a benchmark, as well as reviewing all of the current plans citywide.

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ asked about future updates, to which MR. WEITZEL stated a regular update could be provided every month once the planning effort commences, but also indicated the Commission could request a report from staff or the consultant team, if available. He reiterated the Commission would be a part of the stakeholder groups, as well as be involved throughout the entire process, and that staff would seek their recommendation of approval to forward to City Council.

CHAIR WHITE noted Henderson was also accredited 12 years ago and wondered if they were still. MR. WEITZEL confirmed Henderson is still accredited, and was, in fact, a finalist for the gold medal this year, although they did not win. He noted the City of Las Vegas has the largest system in the state, already making it a leader, but he wished for it to be a leader in parks and recreation also. More than 5.3 million people used the City's programs and services last year, and it is time for the City to become accredited and the gold medal agency that he knows it already is.

After COMMISSIONER BRIARE asked how success is measured of a public space or park, MR. WEITZEL stated, to him, success in a park space means that it is being used and in a way in which it was designed; as there is nothing worse than a park not being utilized by the community.

CHAIR WHITE thought the pandemic provides challenges with regard to future successes and wished MR. WEITZEL luck.

7. TABLED ITEM – 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, informed the Commissioners that the City Council approved a resolution designating Baker Park as a children's park. He displayed a rendering of the proposed fence line and children's play area, which encompasses the spray park, the playground and the kick wall, as well as a portion of the pool, a copy of which was submitted and is attached as backup. The fence will be installed shortly along with signage, which he thought would make a big difference, which then becomes a matter of enforcement.

COMMISSIONER KELLER asked staff to explain exactly what it means to be designated a children's park, as it relates to safety and the Marshals, etc. MR. WEITZEL stated it means any individual who is not a parent or guardian of a child is not permitted in that section of the park. If found in that area, the first step would be to politely ask the individual to leave the children's play area, and if they refuse, they could then be cited for a misdemeanor. CHAIR WHITE asked how that would be enforced with only a portion of the pool. The Director explained the fenced section is only at the entry to the pool, as there have been

issues with people sleeping overnight in the area by the pool building, etc. He noted it would be open during the day and locked at night.

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ believed consistency in handling these types of situations was key and asked who would be asking the individual to leave. As Parks and Recreation is not in the enforcement business, MR. WEITZEL stated the Department of Public Safety (DPS) would be contacted to respond. He noted there has been an increased Marshal presence at this park over the past several months due to several issues, and extra cameras have been installed as well. The Commissioner believes a formal understanding with DPS is needed to ensure sustained enforcement over a period of time to stop this type of behavior.

MR. WEITZEL confirmed for CHAIR WHITE the issues related to this park have to do with the homeless. After asking about the hours, he also informed COMMISSIONER KELLER he believed the park to be open from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., but he would verify that information.

CHAIR WHITE asked if there was any plan to direct the homeless to other areas. MR. WEITZEL was not aware of such, but indicated staff would reach out to the Office of Community Services. He stated staff meets with DPS regularly regarding this park and several other parks where there have been issues, and he appreciates everything they have done to help in the park system with regard to these issues. Chronic homelessness is a major problem, but they are doing everything they can to assist these individuals through the Courtyard or other funds provided to assist the homeless. While they are limited as to what they can do from a Parks and Recreation standpoint, he offered to help in whatever way they can.

COMMISSIONER KELLER added DPS and the Marshals have been doing a good job, and since the last meeting she has noticed fewer homeless people in the park. She also pointed out that many of the individuals at the park choose to not have a home or utilize the services being offered to them.

MR. WEITZEL proceeded with his presentation, stating Bill No. 2020-32 would be presented at the November 4, 2020 City Council for a vote, which, if approved, would amend Las Vegas Municipal Code 13.36.030 to generally prohibit the feeding of wildlife, animals, birds, waterfowl and fowl within City parks, recreational facilities and public plazas. He thanked COUNCILMAN CREAR for sponsoring the proposed bill, as he and the Department of Parks and Recreation receive numerous complaints about the impact of overpopulation of waterfowl at Lorenzi Park. He stated the issue is not limited to Ward 5 and is also a major concern at Floyd Lamb Park. MR. WEITZEL read lengthy comments from park users regarding the impact of allowing open feeding in the parks. The comments included the negative impact on the environment, the need for additional signage and holding those responsible accountable.

MR. WEITZEL noted a representative from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would present at the City Council meeting to speak about why feeding wildlife is harmful, leads to public health concerns, increases the chance of disease transmission to people and pets and pollution of nearby waterways. He noted geese are known to drop over a pound of feces every day, and with more than 500 geese at a park, this presents a huge mess for the Operations and Maintenance team. Additionally, human food is harmful for the wildlife and causes aggression towards humans. MR. WEITZEL stressed the need for this issue to be addressed, as the wildlife population at these two parks has become too large for staff to try to manage.

MR. WEITZEL also pointed out these migratory birds are protected, so one cannot capture them or do anything to their nests without a federal permit. As such, staff will be working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as state wildlife organizations to assist with this problem going forward.

He stated the proposed bill went before the Recommending Committee and came out of that body with several recommendations, including reducing the associated fine from up to \$1,000 down to a maximum of \$300. The Recommending Committee also recommended in lieu of paying a fine, an individual could perform community service, which is a good way for someone to see the negative impact on the parks for themselves. He displayed a slide showing the Do Not Feed the Wildlife signage that will be placed where there are issues, and noted there are also problems with people feeding cat colonies and dropping off rabbits in the parks, which the proposed bill would also help address.

Relating to the sign and the fine of \$300, COMMISSIONER SHERMAN thought it would be hard to enforce the community service component, but liked giving the individual the option of doing so. Pointing out that many people do not understand everything that was just presented, she wondered about the possibility of an educational campaign that would inform the public of the issues that would include a news piece and a handout available on the website. MR. WEITZEL stated he had met with MAYOR GOODMAN the week prior who recommended an educational campaign as well. The goal is not to fine people, but to have them understand the impact this has on the parks system.

CHAIR WHITE also supported the idea of an educational campaign and suggested a mandatory class for first-time offenders, but thought the standard misdemeanor fine of \$0 up to \$1,000 should remain in place, because a repeat offense would show a blatant disregard for the ordinance.

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ suggested using social media to communicate information and mentioned research he had done that supported the proposed ordinance. He thought the Commission should endorse the proposal in its entirety before the Council.

COMMISSIONER ASSELIN said she lives in a community with private parks, although anyone can use them, and wondered how the proposed ordinance would apply to those areas. MR. WEITZEL stated the City does not have authority over private Homeowners Associations, but noted he had just spoken with the Summerlin Council regarding this issue, and he believed this to be an area where the City of Las Vegas can take the lead. He hoped the Summerlin Council would take the City's lead by looking at the research and available data and coming to the realization that feeding the wildlife is harmful.

CHAIR WHITE and COMMISSIONERS NEIGER and SCHULTZ supported staff's plan and approach. CHAIR WHITE added he could attend the City Council meeting on November 4, 2020.

COMMISSIONER GEBRE commented this has been an issue at Lorenzi Park in Ward 5 for a long time, and she asked what it meant that the wildlife were protected. MR. WEITZEL reiterated the wildlife are federally protected, so the first step would be to obtain a permit from the federal government. This would typically not be done by the City of Las Vegas, but rather a group such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, the Nevada Department of Wildlife or a subcontractor. CHAIR WHITE asked that this step be included in the proposed plan.

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

Minutes:

COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ asked GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, if any progress had been made with regard to the video surveillance initiatives following concerns raised by COMMISSIONER McCURDY at last month's meeting. MR. WEITZEL responded multiple cameras have been installed in approximately eight parks, but indicated he would provide a full report on the Smart Parks project and the camera systems at next month's meeting.

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 5:08 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