



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: VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ and COMMISSIONERS SHERMAN (via teleconference), McCURDY, ARMENIAN, BECKER, GEBRE, NEIGER, BRIARE, ASSELIN and HOWARD

EXCUSED: CHAIR WHITE and COMMISSIONERS HENLEY, FOEMMEL, JIMENEZ and KELLER

ALSO PRESENT: GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, APRIL DI GIOVANNI, Administrative Secretary, SETH FLOYD, 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 November 3, 2020

Motion made by William McCurdy to Approve

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

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

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 November, a copy of which was submitted for the record and is included in the backup. He provided a breakdown of those locations with the highest number of calls for service, the total number of arrests, misdemeanor citations, traffic citations and warning citations, along with the percentages that were transient related. He also reviewed statistics related to the total number of calls for service, arrests, citations and warning citations for all Wards.

MARSHAL RIVAS also reviewed the top violations, which included assault and battery, pedestrian traffic arrests, driving violations and trespassing citations. He noted that 57 percent of the arrests took place in Ward 3; 33 percent of which involved warrants. Additionally, he provided a breakdown of the number and types of violations in each Ward, as well as the parks in which those violations occurred.

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ thanked MARSHAL RIVAS for his report. COMMISSIONER McCURDY expressed concerns with the individuals loitering at night at Lubertha Johnson Park and wondered why the fence that used to be there was removed. He thought closure of the park at night needed to be enforced, and he wished to see increased patrols in that area. MARSHAL RIVAS indicated he would bring this information to his Sergeant. The Commissioner asked GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, to also look into this matter and hopefully come up with a plan to address his concerns. MR. WEITZEL indicated staff would look into this and report back at the next meeting.

COMMISSIONER McCURDY added that he thought the Marshals were doing a good job at Doolittle Park and asked if all of the parks close at 11:00 p.m. MARSHAL RIVAS indicated the majority of the parks close at that time, but not all of them.

With regard to transient interactions, COMMISSIONER NEIGER asked what constituted non-compliance. MARSHAL RIVAS explained it varies; most times the individual will argue with the Marshals because they are upset they are even talking to them. He confirmed for the Commissioner that eventually the individual will comply, which typically means that they leave the area.

COMMISSIONER BRIARE asked for an example of someone being arrested related to pedestrian traffic. MARSHAL RIVAS provided the example of an individual being in the roadway and interfering with vehicles, etc.

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ asked if MARSHAL RIVAS wished to share any trends since GOVERNOR SISOLAK announced a three-week pause due to an increase in COVID-19 numbers. MARSHAL RIVAS indicated he expected things to get worse during the pause, similar to what happened during the initial shutdown, because more people go to the parks. As such, they see more fights and things of that nature.

6. Report by Greg A. Weitzel, Director of Parks and Recreation, regarding emerging issues and 2020 key takeaways related to the Department of Parks and Recreation – All Wards

Minutes:

Through a PowerPoint presentation, which was submitted and is included in the backup, GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, provided an annual report to the Commission, which he stated is something he anticipates doing every December. The topics he presented on included Mission and Department Overview, COVID- 19 Response, Completed Projects and On The Horizon, which included activities, programs, projects and improvements in the Parks and Recreation system. He stated although most of the year was spent dealing with the pandemic and the response to such, the Department has accomplished much. He thanked the Commission for volunteering, giving of their time and for their advice and guidance.

Mission and Department Overview – MR. WEITZEL stated the Department's mission is long, but could be summarized in three pillars: conservation, health and wellness and social equity. The Parks and Recreation system is extensive, with 85 parks, more than 1,700 acres, 144 playgrounds, 79 restrooms, eight community/sports centers, six aquatic facilities and more than 100 miles of trails.

He pointed out during a recent survey, 61 percent of residents stated that parks are the most common connection they have with the city. During the pandemic, many facilities are closed, but pre-pandemic, the City was on track to break annual attendance figures. He shared statistics related to facility attendance, sports fields/park pavilion users, registered participants, special events and Floyd Lamb Park visitors. He noted Floyd Lamb Park is one park where attendance can be tracked, and during the pandemic, there was a 250 percent increase in attendance. Typically, the monthly average attendance at this park is 10,000, but during the pandemic, that jumped to 55,000, which is a substantial increase.

MR. WEITZEL stated the Department of Parks and Recreation went through a reorganization during 2020 and was broken down into five divisions – Administrative Services, Special Events (“One Stop Shop”), Municipal Sports and Inclusion Services, Community and Aquatics Facilities and Parks and Grounds Maintenance. There are now 211 full-time employees and more than 460 hourly staff.

COVID-19 Response – MR. WEITZEL stated everyone is trying to navigate these uncertain times, and while the Department of Parks and Recreation stepped up to respond to COVID-19, they did not do it alone. Staff worked closely with Directors from other local municipalities to align how to respond to the pandemic, which benefited the community. He pointed out the Department was featured nationally and internationally for their response to the pandemic. Their re-opening plans were shared across the world, and the City was highlighted as a city that kept their Parks and Recreation system services open during this time. He credited staff and the elected officials who support the Department.

MR. WEITZEL stated one of the first things the Department did was stand up the Healthy Parks Program (HPP). When the centers and other services closed, furloughed employees were reassigned into 12 crews that helped keep the parks clean during unprecedented attendance. This involved cleaning 651 parks and 5,771 garbage bags. He noted this has now become an hourly program involving 39 hourly staff working weekends to supplement the extra cleaning required as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health agency requirements. He thanked the many departments who assisted with this program.

Additionally, the Department held community food distributions, with more than 6,000 boxes being served to the community through the senior centers. He named and thanked several partners that made the food distribution possible. The Vegas Strong Academy was also set up in cooperation with the other municipalities and in partnership with the Department of Youth Development and Social Innovation and Cultural Affairs and involves six centers and four libraries. The academy consists of online learning, recreation, physical education and cultural arts, with currently more than 1,000 students registered in the program. He pointed out that regardless of someone’s ability to pay, financial assistance is provided, and no child is turned away. He thanked Clark County for allocating some of their CARES Act funding to the financial assistance program. The Mayor’s Fund also helped fund 256 youth in the program and provided funding prior to the pandemic for youth to participate in sports skills clinics and Corporate Challenge.

MR. WEITZEL noted the Department has applied for more than \$35 million in grants. So far, they received over \$1.7 million, and are hopeful some of the larger grants will be awarded. He noted a Grant Coordinator is also being hired as a dedicated resource to the administrative team to assist in this effort.

Completed Projects – Ward 1 – MR. WEITZEL reported Woofter Park and Bill Briare Park were completed, and he believes Woofter Park to be the best dog park in the valley. Additionally, in cooperation with the National Fitness Campaign, the first outdoor fitness court was completed, which became very popular when the gyms closed due to the pandemic. Staff has received requests from multiple Wards for this type of facility, as outdoor exercising in the parks, on the trails and at the fitness courts is a trend that will be seen more and more in the future.

Ward 2 – Improvements were made to the Veterans Memorial Community Center with new LED lighting. Additionally, the Pavilion Center Pool was re-plastered, new decks and new floors were installed, along with new paint.

Ward 3 – MR. WEITZEL noted one of the best parks the City built to date is the Baker Pool and Park. A fence is being added around the children’s play area, and the security is being upgraded. The East Las Vegas Family Park was also opened, with a new soccer field, basketball court, picnic pavilions, a playground and a water play area. The Stupak preschool classroom was completed in partnership with the Department of Youth Development and Social Innovation. This is a dedicated room for preschoolers with a new storage space and an exterior door to the outdoor playground. Additionally, Phase Two of the Healing Garden was completed. This includes the storytelling garden, arbor trellis, urban orchard and is where the Volunteers in the Parks Program was launched. He reported as of two weeks prior to this meeting, there were 794 volunteers who contributed 16,529 hours, equating to a value of more than \$400,000 in community service. That program will continue with a minimum of at least two events in every Ward throughout 2021.

Ward 4 – One of the most unique and creative parks built in 2020 is Trigono Hills Park, which MR. WEITZEL noted that COUNCILMAN ANTHONY is very proud of. He encouraged the members to visit the park to see the interpretive garden, the lighted walking paths and other unique features.

Ward 5 – The Dula Community Center, previously known as the Las Vegas Senior Center with the Dula Gymnasium, was upgraded and is now more of a multi-generational facility and houses the Parks and Recreation administrative staff, special events, Municipal Sports Unit and Adaptive Recreation Program.

Ward 6 – The Teton Trails Park was completed, including a third Lacrosse field with new LED lighting and a field dedication to JEREMY MITCHELL HUBER, a Lacrosse player who passed away. Besides himself, MR. WEITZEL noted VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ was in attendance at this event, which was very well done and heavily attended. The Alyn Beck Memorial Park was also opened to honor fallen Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Officer ALYN BECK, with GOVERNOR SISOLAK, MAYOR GOODMAN and COUNCILWOMAN FIORE in attendance. Additionally, mountain bike trails were opened at Floyd Lamb Park, which include 4.2 miles of trails and a new pump track, which has proven to be very popular. Staff has applied for a federal grant through the State Parks and Recreation Department to continue to improve this facility. MR. WEITZEL stated it was a very busy year, and he is so proud to work in a city that is dedicated to improving its parks and recreation system.

On The Horizon – MR. WEITZEL stated one of the Department's biggest initiatives is embarking on the two-year process for a Parks and Recreation System Master Plan. Working with The Smith Group and PROs Consulting, the plan is to engage the community to assess their needs and come up with a plan to address how parks and recreation will look 20 to 30 years in the future. A five-year strategic plan will also be done, which will help create the necessary objectives. Public outreach will begin in January, and the plan will be developed over the next two years with an anticipated presentation to the City Council in February 2022. This will set the City up for national accreditation through CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies) and the gold medal, which the City is aspiring to achieve.

With regard to SMART parks technology and innovation practices and technological efficiencies, MR. WEITZEL stated staff is actively working through these plans with the Department of Information Technologies and the City's Chief Innovation Officer, and would report on this further to the Commission in the future. He noted some things they are working on are optical sensors, drones, artificial intelligence, safety and security improvements, maintenance efficiencies, public notification systems, Wi-Fi connectivity, self-cleaning restrooms, water conservation and automatic locks and flagpoles. He pointed out currently it takes one staff member an entire day to raise and lower all of the flags in the city, and it would be much more efficient to just press a button. He is unaware of any other municipality looking to automate their flagpoles, and this is just one of many things being considered relating to SMART parks.

MR. WEITZEL proceeded with his presentation, pointing out eSports is a new trend, which is believed to rival the biggest traditional sports leagues in terms of future opportunities. As such, staff has been working diligently with multiple departments to launch an eSports program in 2021. MR. WEITZEL spoke of citywide tree planting, specifically noting the new trees on Fremont and Third Streets. The Memorial Tree Remembrance Program is being updated, and staff is looking to do a tree grove sponsorship with the Mayor and a new Mayor's Tree Initiative.

Ward 1 – The Rainbow Family Park playground is almost completed, and staff is planning a second soccer field at Cragin Park that will assist the Downtown Las Vegas Soccer Club.

Ward 2 – Staff is working on a new playground community build at Bruce Trent Park and a new regional aquatic complex at the Pavilion Center Pool, which is currently in the design phase. The Bruce Trent Park is heavily used and has fallen in disrepair. Along with the playground, the shade structures will be replaced, new signage installed, restrooms will be upgraded and there will be a new spray park.

Ward 3 – Improvements at the Harris-Marion Park are in the permitting process. This is a passive and active park that will include two youth artificial soccer fields and an equestrian area. A dog run is in the concept phase at Baker Park, which is in the land acquisition phase, and will be located next to the East Las Vegas Family Park.

Ward 4 – A regional pickleball complex at Wayne Bunker Park is currently in the preliminary design phase, and if funded, there would not be anything similar to this in the entire state of Nevada. An addition to the Cimarron Rose Community Center is currently under construction, and is anticipated to be completed during the second quarter of 2021. This is a well-utilized center, so the extra room will be beneficial.

Ward 5 – MR. WEITZEL reported improvements are planned for Charleston Heights Park and the community center, which is currently in the permitting process. This is approximately an \$8 million project, which will include a new basketball court, jogging path, shaded play structures, picnic areas and new technology. The tech center will host eSports and other tech activities, with the hope that it will be completed in the fourth quarter of 2021.

The Historic Westside Legacy Park is also in the design phase, which will include a unique gateway entrance, historic wall, centered plaza and will recognize and celebrate the historic leaders from the Westside. This project is being done in cooperation with COMMISSIONER LAWRENCE WEEKLY and Clark County, which contributed \$3.5 million towards the project. Additionally, staff is working closely with the architects and Department of Public Works on a regional adaptive sports complex, which is currently in the concept phase. Las Vegas has more than 260,000 people with disabilities, and this center will be specifically designed to meet their needs and will include group exercise, wheelchair sports, a meeting space and a therapy pool.

Ward 6 – MR. WEITZEL stated the Floyd Lamb Park Hay Barn Restoration is estimated to be completed during the first quarter of 2021, and can be used for weddings and other small special events. Currently in the preliminary design phase is the Northwest Regional Park. A virtual public meeting will be held on December 15, 2020, and he asked that APRIL DI GIOVANNI, Administrative Secretary, provide notification to the Commissioners so they can attend and provide their input. He commented this would be one of the largest regional parks in the City and would include an interpretive area for the old railroad camp once located there.

MR. WEITZEL ended his presentation with a video highlighting some of the special accomplishments from the last year. Following the video, he said it has been an awe-inspiring and challenging year, but there is much to be thankful for. He added that all of the projects and programs were accomplished with one City, one team and 19 other departments, all working together. He thanked the Commission for their support over the last year, and he looked forward to the next year.

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ thanked MR. WEITZEL, noting this was a similar presentation to that made at the November 18, 2020 City Council meeting. He commented he found it interesting to see the engagement of the Mayor and the Council in their dealings with MR. WEITZEL, and that having the support of elected leadership is a major engine to drive everything forward. He also thought the City's Parks and Recreation Department was a top-level operation. With regard to accreditation, the Vice Chair pledged his support/active engagement to help move that process forward. He also expressed his excitement with the SMART technology initiatives and the opportunities that provides. MR. WEITZEL confirmed for the Vice Chair that the public meeting for the Northwest Regional Park would be a Webex meeting.

COMMISSIONER BRIARE thanked MR. WEITZEL for all of his work and expressed his excitement, not only as a Commissioner, but also as a citizen, with everything happening regarding parks and recreation, and he thought it was a great time to live in Las Vegas. He thought the new regional pickleball facility looked fantastic and asked about the location in relation to Bunker Park; MR. WEITZEL confirmed it would be built on property the City purchased south of Bunker Park.

COMMISSIONER McCURDY asked where the adaptive center would be located in Ward 5. MR. WEITZEL stated staff was considering multiple locations, but is focusing on one specific park as a potential location, and that he would provide that information to the Commissioner. After asking about the status of Legacy Park, MR. WEITZEL informed the Commissioner a public meeting would be held regarding this project, but he believed the concept design was 75 percent completed, with the anticipated groundbreaking scheduled in December. He indicated further information would be provided via MS. DI GIOVANNI. The Commissioner wished for the Commissioners to be kept up to date on such events. MR. WEITZEL stated the Commissioners are always welcome to attend groundbreaking events, and he asked MS. DI GIOVANNI to provide the appropriate dates of the public meetings and groundbreakings to all of the Commissioners. He

confirmed for VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ that information for all Wards would be provided to the full Commission, so the members could attend any event they wished, not just those specific to their respective Ward.

COMMISSIONER GEBRE brought up the no-feeding ordinance that passed at the recent City Council meeting. She thanked MR. WEITZEL for his efforts regarding this matter and COUNCILMAN CREAR for sponsoring the bill, but asked for clarification regarding the amount of the fine that was approved at that meeting. MR. WEITZEL explained typically any park rule infraction is considered a misdemeanor, in which a judge can assess a fine up to \$1,000 and/or up to six months of jail time. However, the Council made an exception, making the fine for feeding wildlife \$10, with staff reporting back to the Council in six months. He noted truckloads of food are still being delivered to the park, so the problem has continued in direct violation of this ordinance. Staff is working with the Marshals to help address the problem, and the information is being documented and will be provided in a report to the Council.

COMMISSIONER NEIGER commented it was hard not to be excited watching the presentation and seeing everything that is going on and the hard work that is taking place. He asked about a park that was donated in Ward 6 and thought that should have been included in the presentation as good news. MR. WEITZEL explained the park that was donated is not a City park, but rather is owned and operated by a Homeowners Association.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD asked for more information regarding feeding the wildlife at Floyd Lamb Park, as she was under the impression that the Park Rangers were City employees and fed the ducks, etc., and there was concern that the City wished to get rid of the ducks, geese and peacocks by not feeding them. MR. WEITZEL explained that was not the case, and wished to make clear that neither the City nor the public should be feeding the wildlife in the park. He added the City will be managing the wildlife, specifically the water fowl, in the park in the future, but that requires federal permitting to do so. Staff will be working with federal and state partners on a management plan going forward, but the first step is to stop the public feeding of the water fowl.

COMMISSIONER SHERMAN echoed VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ'S comments regarding MR. WEITZEL. Having sat on the Commission for almost 30 years, she thought MR. WEITZEL has done an excellent job as Director and also did an excellent job presenting the no-feeding ordinance at the City Council meeting, which is a very controversial subject and was discussed at this Commission's November meeting. She added CHAIR WHITE was given the opportunity to speak at the Council meeting, and represented the Commission well. She thought one of the Marshals provided a great suggestion, and it was her impression that the amount of the fine was lowered from \$300 to \$10 in order to move the ordinance forward, and that it would be re-examined at a later time. She thought the Commission should be grateful that MR. WEITZEL was successful in initiating the process. MR. WEITZEL appreciated the Commission's support and expressed the importance of educating the public, but realizes it will take time for the public to stop the feeding and understand that better managed water fowl in the park is much more enjoyable for many reasons.

COMMISSIONER McCURDY loved the presentation and thought MR. WEITZEL has done an excellent job as well, but wondered why there is always a lack of funding when it comes to an indoor pool at the Doolittle Community Center, and he wished for something to be done. MR. WEITZEL thanked the Commissioner for his comments, and explained while going through the Capital Improvement Program, staff was told due to the budget crunch, that they could only request three projects. However, he asked the City Manager for six projects, one in every Ward, and the project that was selected in Ward 5 was the Doolittle Community Center. A myriad of improvements are needed at that facility, from the roof to the floors, and everything in between, and he hoped the funding would be approved. He noted the request did not, however, include enclosing the pool, and that he had not personally been made aware of this need. Discussion took place between the Commissioner and MR. WEITZEL regarding this topic, after which COMMISSIONER McCURDY asked if a tarp could be placed over the pool in the summertime. MR. WEITZEL explained there were a lot of requests for projects in Ward 5, but staff felt the Doolittle Community Center was the highest priority with regard to needing improvements and renovations. With regard to enclosing the pool, he indicated he would speak with the Department of Public Works regarding the feasibility of such.

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

Minutes:

VICE CHAIR SCHULTZ made an official request of GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, for a full day to conduct a walk-through inspection of all of the parks in Ward 6 sometime during the beginning of April 2021 that would include the Vice Chair, along with COMMISSIONER HOWARD and COUNCILWOMAN FIORE. He requested staff provide him with several dates that he could bring to the Councilwoman since her calendar fills up. MR. WEITZEL acknowledged this would be done.

COMMISSIONER GEBRE expressed concern with moldy and rusty water fountains and wondered if these could be removed. GREG WEITZEL, Director of Parks and Recreation, informed the Commissioner that GOVERNOR SISOLAK directed all of the water fountains be closed as a result of the pandemic, but added many have been replaced with water bottle filling stations. He stated he would like to speak with Parks and Grounds Maintenance staff and report back to the Commission regarding how water fountains will be handled next summer.

8. **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.

9. **Adjournment**

Minutes:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 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 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