PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
February 21, 2019

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting was held on February 21, 2019 at
the Parks and Recreation Conference Room, 1501 E. Hadley, Las Cruces, NM.

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Marilyn Zahler
Robert Harrison
Eric Montgomery
Stanley Engle

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:
Cassie McClure
Megan Schuller
Eli Guzman

OTHERS PRESENT:
Eric Crespin, Las Cruces Soccer
Danielle Zeret, Mesilla Valley Soccer League
Greg Shervanick, Resident
Elizabeth Butler, CLC Keep Las Cruces Beautiful
Ceci Vasconcellos, CLC Community Outreach
Marina Montoya, CLC Parks & Recreation
Phil Catanach, CLC Parks & Recreation
James Woods, CLC Keep Las Cruces Beautiful
Bill Lindemann, Mesilla Valley Soccer League, Las Cruces Youth & Adult Soccer
League,
Christian Lentz, Half Assoc.
Julie Herlands, TischlerBise
Cathy Mathews, CLC Parks & Recreation
Steven Hanson, Youth Soccer
Hazel Nevarez, CLC Parks & Recreation
Franco Granillo, CLC Parks & Recreation
Jackie Simmons, Las Cruces Soccer

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Chair Harrison and recognized as having
a legal quorum.

I. Introductions

Board members introduced themselves and stated the district they represent. Staff
introduced themselves and stated their position. Public members present introduced
themselves.
II. Conflict of Interest

There was no conflict of interest.

Note: Meeting proceeded to agenda item V. Public Comment, as quorum was not present at this time to approve minutes or agenda. After public comment, meeting proceeded to items III. Approval of Agenda, IV. Approval of Minutes, and onto the rest of the agenda, as quorum was now present.

III. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Montgomery moved to approve agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Engle. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Zahler moved to approve minutes of January 17, 2019 as presented, seconded by Mr. Engle. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Public Comment

Mr. Steve Hanson, of the soccer community, said he was present at the invitation of Ms. McClure. He said this is the first time the soccer community has come before the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to report on issues faced by the soccer community, the biggest being the state of the soccer facilities, which have no lights, restrooms, concessions, or shaded seating like the baseball fields. Mr. Hanson said they would like to do anything constructive they can to get soccer a little bit of recognition and a little bit of help. Their question has always been why soccer is so far behind some of the other facilities in terms of lights and restrooms. Mr. Hanson said some progress has been made except for some areas, one being communication. Mr. Hanson said they have been meeting monthly with Parks and Recreation, but somehow missed in their monthly meetings that the permitting rules changed and also missed an all leagues meeting. Mr. Hanson said permitting rules changed as he understands, to give outside entities first priority. Now, their spring season has been taken over by an El Paso group so to get their regular spring season in, they are going to be playing graduation weekend and maybe the holiday weekend. Mr. Hanson said one of their requests is to evaluate where youth leagues fit into the grand scheme of things. He said according to website and the mission statement, long standing city programs like a youth league that’s been running for thirty years should have some standing. Mr. Hanson’s final comment is they have been trying to speak to as many groups as they can to offer constructive solutions going forward and their goal is to provide the best experience and opportunity for the soccer community, which is the largest athletic community in the city.

Mr. Eric Crespin, a licensed soccer coach in Las Cruces and lifetime resident, informed the Board the fields today are the fields his children play on today. He said he thinks the things that need to be focused on are that soccer coaches are unique in that they make
do with what they have and are now asking for help. He said soccer is the fastest growing
sport in the nation and unfortunately, the soccer community is having to develop their
players out of town and their tax dollars are being spent out of town instead of locally.
He said they are unable to host any tournaments because the first thing asked by
tournament groups are - how big are the bathrooms, are they A.D.A. compliant, and
what do we have for concessions. Las Cruces is losing revenue as a result. Mr. Crespin
said soccer is very successful in Las Cruces, raising doctors, lawyers, and nurses and
needs the backing from the city. He said soccer can't compete with other sports for field
time. He said we need to open our minds, accept and embrace that soccer is the fastest
growing sport in the nation and need to focus on how we can make it better and grow it.
Mr. Crespin said they can't get scouts here to see local talent, and hope when they travel,
there are scouts there to see our youth. Mr. Crespin added he understands the city also
fights for the soccer community because some of the fields played on belong to the
schools. He said he wants to ensure that everyone is aware the soccer community wants
to work with the city and the community to better the sport itself.

Mr. Bill Lindeman, soccer referee, said what has been said is just as true for the adult
league. Mr. Crespin added the adult soccer community would also like a home that they
would be willing to share with the youth. He said they have been unable to grow the adult
league for lack of fields.

Chair Harrison asked what the soccer community's national league affiliations are.
Responses were U. S. Youth Soccer and U.S. Soccer Federation (USSF). Chair
Harrison asked if the soccer community has looked into lights through the soccer
affiliations. Mr. Hanson said they are constantly looking for things like that. He said the
original fields that were put in (High Noon by Mayfield High School) were 1/3 or half paid
for by a grant that the soccer community brought from USSF, so they have a history of
doing this. Mr. Hanson said the soccer community understands that they funded a
substantial chunk of the original High Noon complex. The original complex was put in
and then was taken over by the city and the schools and the soccer leagues were ousted
from any control. Chair Harrison asked what fields the soccer community are limited
to. Mr. Hanson said U8's play at Hadley, the older youth play at High Noon complex and
have been several years without the Burns Lake complex. Mr. Lindeman said the adults
play at High Noon and played at Burns Lake before it went down. Mr. Hanson said the
youth and the adults have been very good about coordinating schedules.

Chair Harrison said he knows baseball would pay to resurface the fields and asked if
soccer has paid anything. Ms. Delgado said not with her but doesn't know if they have
done so in the past or if they put in their own money at High Noon fields since those
fields are Las Cruces Public Schools property. Mr. Crespin added before Ms. Delgado's
tenure, there are examples of the league giving somebody something, the public
schools, for fertilizer and upkeep maintenance, and it disappearing. He said the leagues
do contribute and the fact they are all taxpayers, they pay for their use of the field and
have paid for upkeep and maintenance. Mr. Crespin said what has been done in the
past is very shady and youth soccer has taken the brunt of the misuse or
misappropriation of fertilizer and contributions, but there is no one to speak to before Ms.
Delgado's tenure. Mr. Hanson said soccer has contributed in other ways, i.e. about three years ago there were no funds to replace damaged goals and the soccer community spent about $30,000 on goals, essentially donated, to be used on the fields. He said over the past few years, they have asked several times for a mechanism for how to get funds into Parks and Recreation, perhaps a player registration surcharge to start a Friends of Soccer fund. He said they have a strong history of contributing, followed through recently with large dollars on goals and fertilizer; they are eager to carry their weight and contribute as they move forward. Mr. Lindeman added, in kind as well. When Tashiro fields were put in, Mr. Lindeman said he personally was involved in planting every residual tree and for several summers, league parents weeded the fields where they could.

Ms. Zahler asked what Parks and Rec has done for the soccer community since their concerns have been brought forth. Ms. Delgado reported there is lighting coming in for Provencio Van Dame (PVD), along with a small soccer grant to assist with this. Staff is putting regular irrigation in at Burn Lake, where before it had flood irrigation. The fields at Burns Lake have been down, but the grass has been growing. Staff has met with NMSU on the grass. A walk through is scheduled at the end of the month with the soccer group. Ms. Delgado said the fields will be open this year, she doesn't know how quickly. Ms. Delgado added staff is working closely with the Las Cruces Public Schools to find whether or not the city can have a lease with them. If can't have a lease, she has a proposal to them to see if can get own fields. She said the City of Las Cruces can not spend general fund dollars on Las Cruces Public School property. Ms. Delgado said if any money for infrastructure or fertilizer was given to the schools, she does not know. Ms. Delgado said she is trying to find fields and are moving slowly in that direction.

Ms. Zahler asked if a proposal has been presented to City Council and asked if soccer group has gone to any private organizations for money. Mr. Hanson said the group does a lot of outreach and fund raising though they have not targeted it for field improvements. Pic Quick gave them $500 to help with tournaments.

Ms. Zahler asked the group if they might know why Albuquerque does so much better than them. Mr. Crespin said the concept Albuquerque has at their Bernalillo Complex is the $5 paid to parking stays for the field and the youth. Here in Las Cruces, parents pay for the youth to play in the tournament, and the fee paid to get in the gate to see the game does not come back to Parks and Recreation, it is lining somebody's pocket for baseball or softball. Mr. Crespin said he went to his City Councilor and asked for help. He told his councilor if the city would float the bill for the soccer complex, the soccer parents would charge a parking fee that would go to Parks and Recreation or the city for fronting the bill. Mr. Hanson added along with the parking charge, Albuquerque has a stiff rental charge.

Ms. Zahler asked Ms. Delgado if this is true. Ms. Delgado said all fees collected by Parks and Recreation goes back to the general fund. Parks and Recreation is not an enterprise fund.
Mr. Montgomery asked if there is any policy on the books that addresses taking parking fees in public lots. Ms. Delgado said out of town tournaments, events that come in, come through Visit Las Cruces (VLC). VLC is an economic driver and come to Parks and Recreation and request the fields needed. Staff will try to negotiate the weekend because of league tournaments, but because VLC is an economic driver and is bringing in money to the city, sometimes staff has to give the field up. Ms. Delgado said bottom line, more fields are needed.

Mr. Montgomery asked if there is a reporting mechanism that shows the amount of money that is said will be brought is brought in. Ms. Delgado response was yes.

Mr. Montgomery asked if there is model that can be explored similar to Friends of the Library where there could be a fee structure if some outside entity of the city were able to raise funds, those funds could be dedicated back towards Parks and Recreation. Ms. Delgado said absolutely. Mr. Hanson said if they were given the latitude to collect a parking fee and the facilities to draw a wide soccer community with all this expertise, they could create a Friends of Soccer.

Mr. Engle said he noticed Ms. Delgado shake her head no when she heard charging additional fees and asked about her reaction. He asked if a 501C3 was set up, would this create a negative reaction. Ms. Delgado said she doesn’t want additional fees to go back to the youth. Ms. Delgado said a Friend of Parks and Recreation is needed. As for parking fees, Ms. Delgado said she would need to research this as parking lots are public.

Chair Harrison commented concerns brought forth have been eye opening, and in respect to the fields, understands there will always be somebody competing for fields, and suggests communication remain open.

(Note: At this time, Meeting progressed with items III and IV, Approval of Agenda and Minutes before progressing to item VI, Unfinished Business. (A fourth Board member arrived during public comment, making a quorum.)

VI. Unfinished Business

A. Youth Board Update (Informational) – Katie Albright, Youth Board Chair

Ms. Delgado informed and apologized to the Board, Ms. Albright was not present to report to the Board.

B. Keep Las Cruces Beautiful (KLCB) (Informational) – James Woods / Elizabeth Butler

Mr. Woods reported over twenty-two tons of trash was collected from the past Toss No Mas and Great American Cleanup, collected from parks, city right of ways, neighborhoods, ditches, arroyos. Twelve roll offs were provided, six per event, for the
community to toss trash where they wouldn't get charged. There were close to 3,000 volunteers on these two major cleanups.

Mr. Woods reported KLCB is starting a program called Team Up to Clean Up and will be coordinating cleanups in each district through district volunteers. Supplies and roll offs will be provided. Mr. Woods said one of his goals is to have someone out every weekend doing some type of litter pickup or beautification.

Mr. Woods reported Adopt-a-Spot is up and running. The public are starting to adopt parks, trails, right of ways.

Mr. Woods reported upcoming events are:

- April 13 - Great American Clean UP
- April 20 - Reuse & Recycle Fashion Show during Earth Day Celebration

Also, in April - Water Festival (organized by the Water Conservation Department) –
Hosting about 1,200 youth from various elementary schools to teach them about water program and our environment.

Mr. Woods introduced Ms. Elizabeth Butler, his NMSU work study. Ms. Butler reported she began working in October 2018 and will continue until May 2019. She said this experience has provided her the opportunity to be more involved in the community. Her work focuses on school visits with the KLCB mascot, Libby, talking to youth about recycling and illegal dumping. Ms. Butler said she has talked with more than 500 youth thru these Libby visits, being about eight school visits, and has four more scheduled. She said she has shared with the youth information on the Reuse & Recycle Fashion show and has a lot of them asking if they can participate. Ms. Butler said she also works with the After School Program doing recycle based crafts and is also looking to incorporate Libby visits. She is currently working on the Reuse & Recycle Fashion Show, reporting an interest from NMSU who has a clothing, textile and fashion merchandising program, and an interest from the middle schools.

VII. New Business


Ms. Julie Herlands, of TischlerBise Inc., made a Power Point presentation to the Board on Parks and Recreation Impact Fee Study. She informed the Board park impacts fees are a one-time payment on new development to pay for capacity improvements. Park impact fees can't be used for maintenance, or for rehab unless providing additional capacity. The power point presentation provided information on assumptions that go into the study of park impact fees, the various components that are proved in the study and detail of the components, and the elements that are today, part of the fee. Ms. Herlands said this study is being done at the same time as the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, so there will be a little bit of synthesis of the data from both sides. A copy of the presentation was provided to the Board.
Mr. Montgomery asked what the current balance of the park impact fees is. Ms. Delgado reported $3.4 million, with over $2 million earmarked for projects starting this calendar year. Ms. Delgado said the current impact fee is $2,600 per dwelling unit. With $1.4 million gap between the balance and what is earmarked, Mr. Montgomery asked if there are projects that still need to be discussed and are there assumptions by residents that they have paid into something and should be getting something out of it – Pines neighborhood and Angler Run in the Mesa Grande area – what’s been earmarked and not earmarked but has been paid with an intended purpose. Ms. Delgado responded yes and yes. Ms. Delgado said she has a list of projects, more than she has money for. The $1.4 million is not just sitting there, there is not enough staff to start working on some of the projects. Ms. Delgado said her list of projects grows daily, i.e. pickleball wants more courts, soccer wants fields, baseball and softball needs another quad. She said the $3.4 million is not going to provide these things. Ms. Delgado said that in early 2000, not all neighborhoods got a park, not all developers built a park for various reasons. Residents are asking where are these parks they paid park impact fees for. Ms. Delgado said it is her job to find land to put a park in, and people from all districts want a park right now. She said everyone thinks there is $3.4 million for these parks, but the $3.4 million is already earmarked for something else. The challenge faced is having to go backwards to fill in the gaps and yet move forward with all the new development. Ms. Delgado said will need to see what the Capital Improvement Action Committee (CIAC) recommends and what Council approves.

Mr. Montgomery said he has heard the Mayor say the city has $100 million in liquidity to cover an emergency and asked if it has been discussed relative to parks or infrastructure to use some of this liquidity to catch up. Ms. Delgado said she did not know but could ask.

Mr. Montgomery asked is the Board could get a list of the earmarked projects. Ms. Delgado said there is a list that Council approves every year, the Capital Improvements Project (CIP) list. She said every single project is on there. Ms. Delgado said all the capital projects are also on the city website and Parks & Recreation has also put their internal projects list there.

Chair Harrison asked if Plaza de Las Cruces and fees fall under Parks and Recreation. Ms. Delgado said because Plaza de Las Cruces is a gathering place for people, a community place, it falls under Parks and Recreation – only Plaza de Las Cruces, not all downtown. Mr. Montgomery asked if the plaza was paid through park impact fees or TIDD reimbursements through the developer. Ms. Delgado responded TIDD. Mr. Montgomery asked how maintenance is done to the rest of downtown? Ms. Delgado said Parks and Recreation has a portion of downtown to maintain and a contractor comes in to assist, working directly with Economic Development. Mr. Montgomery clarified this meaning maintenance is done through Parks and Recreation separate from TIDD funding.

B. Parks & Recreation Master Plan – Christian Lentz / Halff Associates
Mr. Cristian Lentz, of Halff Associates and Project Manager for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, made a power point presentation to update the Board on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The presentation covered the general preliminary findings regarding the level of service – parks provided to the community, and recreational opportunities provided to the community, and on the work Halff Associates is doing on assessment of condition in all of the city’s park properties. Mr. Lentz informed the Board the Park Impact Fees and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan have to be adopted by the end of June 2019. He said the Board will have some chapters of the master plan document by the March Board meeting so the Board can see in more detail Halff’s preliminary findings and initial recommendations in the planning process. Information gathered was from focus group meetings-public open houses, and public preference surveys-online surveys.

Mr. Montgomery asked if there is any kind of feedback being received as part of the surveys on why, where in some neighborhood parks where restrooms are being requested, those neighborhood parks are being frequented by outside residents, what is attracting outside residents to that neighborhood park. Mr. Lentz responded not through the survey, only by word of mouth from the public meetings.

Mr. Lentz advised the Board the next steps before the Board’s March meeting is to formalize a full set of recommendations for the Board’s input. Mr. Lentz said he will be working closely with TischlerBise and Ms. Delgado to make sure the recommendations and categorizations of parks tie in neatly to the impact study.

Chair Harrison expressed interest in hearing more on the open spaces concept, and everything in between open spaces, the middle of town laterals, and the connection with the county and Mesilla to connect the whole linear park on trails. As for the park land dedication and the builders, Chair Harrison also asked about park land dedication and the builders. Ms. Delgado responded the $2.7 million from the Go Bond was approved and one of the four questions was to get some of those laterals from Elephant Butte Irrigation District and create a trail, so this in process. A timeline needs to be completed to see what projects from the Go Bond will go first. Staff is also working with Mesilla, NMSU, and the County to see if can get a grant to close the gap that crosses in the County, Mesilla, and NMSU. As for the parkland dedication, Ms. Delgado said what is done with the developers is a reimbursement agreement - when a developer starts building a subdivision, 400 homes triggers a park having to be built, a neighborhood park from one to two acres. The developer gives the land to the city and developer is reimbursed for building the park, and park impact fees, collected in that area and that are in the park impact fee fund, are used to pay for the park.

Mr. Montgomery expressed the disconnect he was trying to point out earlier was when someone buys a home and pays a park impact fee, the assumption is that the fee is going towards their neighborhood park, but fees are going toward expanded uses of city facilities city wide.
Chair Harrison asked if Benavidez Park is being redone. Ms. Mathews said some state grant funds will be expended at Benavidez to replace the playground.

Chair Harrison asked if there has been anything brought up again on a private sports complex. Ms. Delgado said no.

Ms. Zahler asked if there was any updates on parking at Apodaca Park and taking out the pool. Ms. Delgado responded the Apodaca blueprint was done to get an idea of what the area could look like if certain businesses came in. As for the park, the park wasn’t going to changed, it was going to be added to – a connectivity to the developed area. Ms. Delgado said currently, a grant has been submitted to remove the pool and and add a larger splashpad.

VIII. Staff Member Comments

Mr. Granillo reported cleanup of Young Park pond started in January. He said the first step was removal of wildlife which went well, no animal was harmed during the process. Currently the actual cleanup of the muck is beginning. Mr. Granillo said he is updating Ms. Delgado and City Manager’s office as the work progresses. He advised the Board to let him know if they have any questions.

Mr. Granillo expressed he respects and agrees with the concerns of the soccer community. He did say, though, staff has no control over some of their concerns. He added that as far as the permit changes, the information was out a long time in advance before the meeting took place.

Mr. Granillo said he thought the park assessment was fair and thinks money is being spent correctly based off the analysis. He said everything looks good and clean except for some the structure – the trash can holders, signage, lighting – which isn’t funded.

Ms. Zahler asked if any concerns were received regarding the ducks. Mr. Granillo said there was a concern, but spoke to the person, and with Animal Control and Game and Fish, who helped remove the animals the right way.

Mr. Catanach advised the Board they have in their Board packet is a flyer announcing the 5th Annual Chaos Collaboration Art Show February 22 & 23. He said over a hundred pieces of art.

Mr. Catanach informed the Board after the basketball registration in January, 58 teams (capacity) filled in one weekend. Cheerleading registration resulted in over 50 cheerleaders (capacity).

Mr. Catanach said bands have been announced for the Mayor’s Jazz Fest.

Mr. Catanach said he will inform the Board in March or April on Music in the Park.
Mr. Catanach said there is a Work Session on February 25 to discuss diving component for the 50-meter pool. The session will be held at the East Mesa Safety Complex at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Mathews reported staff is working on fourteen CIP projects, not including Go Bond and non-CIP projects. Of the 14 projects, $2.4 million is from park impact fees.

IX. Board Member Comments

Ms. Zahler thanked Ms. Delgado and staff for the snacks provided at the meeting. Mr. Engle concurred.

Chair Harrison expressed thanks for the Park Impact Fees and Master Plan presentations. He also said the experienced and liked the Butterfield Shooting Range.

X. Adjournment

Mr. Montgomery moved to adjourn meeting, seconded by Mr. Engle. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Hazel Nevarez, Recording Secretary

Robert Harrison, P&R Board Chair