The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting was held on May 16, 2019 at the Parks and Recreation Conference Room, 1501 E. Hadley, Las Cruces, NM.

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Note: Chair Harrison asked Board if it would be ok for Ms. Zahler to participate by telephone. Board agreed.
Robert Harrison
Cassie McClure
Maryln Zahler (by Telephone)
Eric Montgomery
Megan Schuller
Eli Guzman

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:
Stan Engle

OTHERS PRESENT:
Hazel Nevarez, Senior Office Manager & Recorder
Sonya Delgado, Director of Parks & Recreation
Robert Nunez, Recreation Services Administrator
Franco Granillo, Park Administrator
Cathy Mathews, Landscape Architect
Cecilia Vasconcellos, Community Outreach
Greg Shervanick, Public
Steve Montanez, Public
Dr. Isobel Hernandez

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 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.

III. Approval of Agenda
Ms. Delgado advised the Board Item D, Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Action) under Unfinished Business will not be coming before the Board as the final chapters still need to be sent to the Board for review.

Ms. Schuller moved to table item VI.D, Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Action) until the next Board meeting and accept the rest of the Agenda as presented, seconded by Ms. McClure. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Montgomery moved to approve the meeting minutes of April 18, 2019 as presented, seconded by Ms. Schuller. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Public Comment

Chair Harrison noted public comment is limited to three minutes with no discussion by the Board during the public comment and should the Board wish to pursue discussion on public comment, they can recommend it be placed on agenda for next Board meeting.

There was no public comment at time of request for public comment.

VI. Unfinished Business

A. Youth Board Update (Informational) – Robert Nunez

Mr. Nunez informed the Board the Youth Board Chair and Vice-Chair could not be present to report. He let the Board know the last two Youth Board meetings did not have a quorum. He said the Youth Board has discussed the Little Library and would like to host two special events in the summer with local and regional entertainment. A By-Law change referencing term limits and policies and procedures regarding attendance will be presented to Board at this meeting.

Chair Harrison asked if there is an attendance policy that if a Board member doesn’t attend x number of meetings, they are released. Mr. Nunez responded yes.

B. Capital Project Update – Cathy Mathews

Ms. Mathews provided the Board with a list of 2019 Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement, Go Bond and Non-Capital Improvement projects and reported on their status. Ms. Mathews said she can provide the Board with a list of the capital projects with dollar amounts so they can know the value.

Chair Harrison asked if the projects have proposed dates of completion. Ms. Mathews said she can include that on the revised list she will send to the Board.
Chair Harrison asked when the Las Cruces lateral will start. Ms. Mathews said the agreement was just signed last month and will be a matter of setting up the program. She said design will probably start in July and anticipates six months of design, and then move into construction.

Chair Harrison asked if Ms. Mathews had any ideas on trail surface. Ms. Mathews responded asphalt trail surfacing, which is relatively easy to make ADA compliant, is a well maintainable surface, and it will serve the people who will be using the trail.

Chair Harrison asked where it will complete. Ms. Mathews said from the trail, will transition into the bike lanes (Idaho/Main St.), and continue up to about Wyatt, and from there propose to join the improvements that will occur thru the Go Bond, which are the Las Cruces lateral section.

Chair Harrison asked if there are current hard surfaces being used where the lateral goes on Madrid. Ms. Mathews said the surfaces are currently being used but are not paved surfaces and are maintained by Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) as their maintenance roads.

C. Park Impact Fee (Action) – Sonya Delgado

Ms. Delgado informed the Board the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee (CIAC) approved the Park Impact Fee (PIF) as it stands at $2,600.00. She said the CIAC has the authority to approve the fee, which is their role, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board’s role is to give recommendations to the Parks and Recreation’s Master Plan; this is how the two things are split. Ms. Delgado reviewed a power point presentation with the Board to give them the history on Park Impact Fees, what they are used for, and reasons for updating. Ms. Delgado said City Council must take action on the CIAC’s recommendation by June 30, 2019. She said this is on schedule to be on the second meeting in June. Ms. Delgado said the CIAC’s recommendation is brought to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for their backing.

Ms. Schuller asked for clarification on the building code and the regulation, that it is in the plan. Ms. Delgado said the fee is done thru resolution that has an attachment, because it is not in the code. Code will be something that will be moving forward and will take longer to develop and will be in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Mr. Guzman confirmed that the Park Impact Fee is staying the same, it wasn’t raised. Ms. Delgado concurred. Mr. Guzman asked what the Board’s purpose is on the Park Impact Fee. Ms. Delgado said the Board’s purpose is to move it forward.

Mr. Montgomery asked if action by the Board would be to add comments to CIAC’s proposal as they set forth. Ms. Delgado concurred. Mr. Montgomery asked if there is any direction that can be provided as to the decision-making process that CIAC went thru to come to not changing the fees and keeping them as they are. Ms. Delgado said the process was similar as to the process the Board is going thru with the Parks and
Recreation Master Plan process, reviewing the draft and providing comments. Comments on the PIF came from developers, contractors, homebuyers, which were incorporated and how adjustments were made that changed the fee.

Mr. Montgomery asked if an invitation was extended to the Executive Director of the Home Builder’s Association to attend this meeting. Ms. Delgado said she did call, and there was a lot of participation from individuals at the CIAC meeting who provided a lot of feedback, and there is an individual at this meeting today.

Chair Harrison asked with the different builders and the Home Builders Association, if there was discussion on finding a happier medium. Ms. Delgado said when the City of Las Cruces started taking in fees, a fee was created. As it moved forward, that’s where consultants came in to play and in looking at the broader picture and the overall, the number was going to be extremely high. Getting individual’s input and talking with the different sources, and getting the number down, this was a step in the right direction.

Ms. Schuller asked what does the city do if acquiring land with water rights – do water rights go to the city or do they stay with the seller to be sold or allocated somewhere else. Ms. Delgado said she doesn’t know but could find out.

Mr. Steve Montanez from the public audience clarified if Ms. Schuller was asking whether or not water rights convey to the city on city purchased land. Ms. Schuller concurred. Mr. Montanez said from his previous experience as a real estate professional, 90% of the time, unless it is on an agricultural or EBID rights, water mineral rights convey to the buyer.

Mr. Steven Montanez extended his sincere appreciation to Board for their volunteer time and appreciates the Board and staff for what they do. Mr. Montanez was present to share talking points from the CIAC meeting. He said there were three different points that were brought up that a majority of the CIAC agreed on:

- There is a concern that TischlerBise data is very inaccurate, specifically cost associated with purchasing land and adding improvements. One of the biggest variables as far as neighborhood parks go is land is donated. What the city is reimbursing for is park improvements.
- The way neighborhood parks are developed is they are developed on land that is donated by the developer with park impact fees that are paid for by the builder and a park improvement reimbursement back to whoever made the park improvements. The end result is a very well built, designed, maintained park. He said this is a very favorable system where a park can be built at roughly 1/3 of the cost of what it would to build a park on its own. The system that is in place is very favorable to everybody concerned.
- With a $3 million surplus of which 90% is accounted for – looking at projected amount of homes to be constructed in the next five years, another $3 million dollars will be acquired for another seven or eight projects. He said they are comfortable leaving the system in place as is – developers are donating land, builders are paying $2,600 impact fee, parks are being built.
Mr. Montanez said he personally thinks this is a win, win for all involved. He said he understands TischlerBise will continue to consult but there are other sources out there and he would recommend city start looking at other sources, more local sources for accurate costs. Mr. Montanez said he is a very safe professional and his organization could give a more accurate cost for an acre of land and would be happy to get the city in the right direction.

Mr. Montgomery moved to accept the $2,600 park impact fee as recommended by the CIAC, seconded by Ms. Schuller. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Schuller moved to open the floor to public comment, seconded by Mr. Montgomery. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Harrison reiterated public comment is limited to three minutes.

Dr. Isobel Klein Hernandez expressed the neighborhood, herself in particular, were concerned with the changes being made to the Pioneer Park master plan and didn’t feel they had a real grasp of the extend of the changes. Dr. Hernandez said she took it upon herself to measure the usage of the park. She said she made 24 visits to the park between March 23rd and May 15th, at various times between 9:15 am and 6 pm. She noted the time of day, the temperature, the number of adults in the park, the number of children in the park, and the usage of the playground equipment. She left her data results with Ms. Delgado. Questions she been asked to address:

- Moving playground equipment and buying new playground equipment to a different part of the park? In all her observations, there were no children in the park.
- Design of new gazebo?

Ms. Delgado said the Pioneer Park master plan that is about to be completed will answer all these questions. She said there was a lot of public input. The neighborhood association went to their Councilor and it came to Parks and Recreation to put together a master plan because the neighborhood wanted to see some improvements, replacement of equipment, and help with the gazebo. Ms. Delgado said the association went to state legislature to get funds for the master plan process. Three large input meetings have been held and Ms. Delgado said she will be happy to take Dr. Hernandez’ information. Ms. Delgado said she could set up a meeting with Dr. Hernandez or if the Board would like, can make this an agenda item. Ms. Delgado said she is not sure where in the process the master plan is but will make sure to invite Dr. Hernandez to the meeting. Dr. Hernandez left a series of questions she would like answered with Ms. Delgado. Ms. Nevarez noted Dr. Hernandez’ email address. Dr. Hernandez said she will be out of town May 26 and back mid-June.

D. Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Action) – Sonya Delgado

Note: This item was tabled under III. Approval of Agenda.
VII. New Business

A. Youth Board By-Law Amendment (Action) – Robert Nunez

Mr. Nunez provided the Board with the section of by-laws which lists term of Youth Board members. Mr. Nunez said Youth board is looking to expand term limit from a single year to at least two years, with alternating years, even and odd years, to have consistency of at least half of the Board present the following year when new Board members come on board.

Ms. Schuller asked what the process is to get on the odd and even terms when bringing in new slate of students. Mr. Nunez responded the returning members being in the even year with new members coming in the odd year.

Mr. Montgomery asked if shrinking the number of members on the board up for discussion. Mr. Nunez said it has been discussed that if there are sixteen Board members, possibly saying a minimum of twelve members need to be present for meetings with a quorum being six. He said he isn’t sure this is something that could be done. Mr. Nunez said the number determined to make this Youth board was determined from what other cities similar in size to us had, as well as looking at the number of council districts in Las Cruces and adding in the at-large members.

Ms. Schuller asked what constitutes the at-large members. Mr. Nunez said thru the application process, the at-large were chosen by the committee, ranked thru the interview process. Ms. Schuller suggested returning members would elevate to directors at-larges and could be more in the advisory position and drop the group down to 12 with quorum of six. Ms. Delgado said this is a great point but one of the reasons for having a large pool was because we wanted to engage youth in our community to find out how to make things better, and didn’t want to go to just the main schools for the board but incorporated the private and charter schools and this is why the Board grew. Some schools represent the district, but the other schools are at-large. The next question was which school is in and which school is out and what would be justification. Ms. Delgado said if we can figure out how to be creative with working with such a large Board and making sure they have ownership, engage, and participate. Ms. Delgado asked the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members for any creative ideas they have because it is not just about a certain school or a certain area, but to reach out to everyone if possible.

Ms. McClure asked if the Youth board has been asked what the hurdles are in meeting attendance. Mr. Nunez said one member obtained a job and wasn’t able to schedule between the job, school, and the evening meeting. Another member was involved with athletics. Mr. Nunez said some of these members are involved in quite a few of other activities.

Ms. Schuller suggested in application process, to name alternates for when active Board members have specified absences.
Chair Harrison asked what action is being asked for at this time. Mr. Nunez responded the action is for the two year with the odd and even year rotation. Ms. Delgado said all comments just given could be incorporated, approving with caveat to look into these other items and having Mr. Nunez come back at next meeting with an update that these things were done.

Ms. Schuller moved to accept Article 3 under participation, number 2, as presented under the Youth Board By-laws, seconded by Mr. Montgomery. Chair Harrison read out loud Article 3, number 2. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Las Cruces Public School Agreement (Informational) – Sonya Delgado

Board members were provided with a copy of the Las Cruces Public School (LCPS) Agreement (draft form) and a copy of the Field of Dreams complex map. Ms. Delgado said this agreement is to utilize fields one thru five on the map and ask for an extended lease for the Parks and Recreation soccer program. She said if she can get the extended lease, she can use capital dollars to help improve the fields. Ms. Delgado said LCPS was agreeable to her idea. She said this agreement would give the delineation of who takes care of what, the city on this side, public schools on that side. She said Tashiro is going to be widened this fall, some right of way would need to be acquired which would encroach on fields 11 and 12. Ms. Delgado said it is good move to get out of that way because once the road is widened, it will get close to those fields and might even run into the field. Ms. Delgado said this agreement is asking for fields one thru five. As part of this plan, the park that is north of the football stadium belongs to City. Ms. Delgado said she would look into trying to purchase the land that is north of that park to create more open space.

Ms. Delgado reviewed with the Board specifics of the draft agreement and attachments and asked the Board to review the agreements, going thru Chair or Vice-Chair with any questions for her, and any adjustments can be made when she brings the agreement back to the Board for action.

Mr. Montgomery asked where the wells are located on the map that are mentioned in Attachment A, page 3. Mr. Granillo pointed out the wells to Mr. Montgomery. Mr. Montgomery asked if the wells are owned by LCPS. Mr. Granillo said variances are put in to irrigate at certain times of the year and the schools don’t follow any variances. He said it is City water but the schools have more control of the wells. Ms. Delgado said one thing that needs to get done is to get a water meter because it needs to be split out. She said right now, Parks and Recreation gets and pays the water bill.

Ms. Schuller said it might be wise to put us signage to show what property is maintained by City and what property is maintained by LCPS. Ms. Delgado said this will be done if and when the property becomes City property.
Ms. Schuller asked what would be the ideal lease term, or will it be as far as legal will allow. Ms. Delgado said as far as legal will allow. She added that be getting a long term lease, it also stops the possibilities of LCPS flipping fields with us.

Chair Harrison asked if there are any LCPS baseball games played at Paz or Apodaca fields anymore. Ms. Delgado said only in emergency or LCPS is having issues with their fields.

Chair Harrison asked where LCPS plays most of their tennis games. Ms. Delgado reported they play at Lion’s tennis courts.

Chair Harrison asked if the high schools swim at NMSU. Ms. Delgado said there is one high school swim team and they swim at Frenger pool and NMSU.

VIII. Staff Member Comments

Mr. Nunez reported out of school time programs are gearing down from after school and gearing up for summer day camps. There are over 320 participants participating in day camps from kinder thru teenagers at five locations, beginning June 1st. Las Cruces Public School and City facilities will be utilized.

Mr. Nunez informed the Board over 26 tons of trash was collected from KLCB’s Great American Clean up held in April compared to the 16 tons collected in 2018.

Mr. Granillo reported parks and athletic field staff are currently on their full maintenance schedules. For medians, right of ways, and alleyways (Clean Sweep), staff are hitting their targets with applications of herbicide, weed removal, litter removal and dumping removal. Construction staff is currently helping Ms. Mathews with construction at Calle Abuelo Park.

Mr. Granillo reported Young Park pond is about ready to be reopened, fencing will be removed, and pond will be re-stock end of May, first week of June. Mr. Granillo said Councilor Vasquez may want to hold an event at Young Park pond and staff is in early stages of speaking with him. Mr. Granillo said staff has supported several events in the parks, especially at Young Park.

Mr. Granillo reported construction staff has installed the kneeling soldier at the Korean monument at Veteran’s Park. Staff is also working with Ms. Mathews with repair of Women’s Memorial at Veteran’s Park.

Mr. Granillo reported only area needing improvement is weeds are starting to develop but staff is doing good job of taking care of it.

Ms. Mathews said she would like to mention a few more projects related to water conservation happening this summer. In cooperation with Utilities, Parks and Recreation sought a couple of grants. The first was a water smart small program grant
received to install a centralized control system for irrigation which allows for better management of irrigation water, and more control over potentials for leaks, and for on and off, and for making sure we are not watering when it is raining or when it has recently rained. The other grant received from the Youth Conservation Corp Program, and staff is in the process of hiring 18 youth to learn about conducting irrigation audits. The irrigation audits will start June 3 so we will have audit information from the summer. This grant will be applied for again next year to be able to conduct another audit to show the improvement that our investment has made. Ms. Mathews said this is a quality kind of partnership to make sure we are getting some value for our dollars.

Ms. Delgado informed Board members they will be getting Chapter Three for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and chapters Four and Five will closely follow. Ms. Delgado requested any comments Board members have be sent thru Chair and Vice-Chair so she can report them to the consultant.

Ms. Delgado informed Board the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy will be going back to Council May 20. She said staff will possibly ask Council to table indefinitely so because instruction has been given to include the Public Works Department, which includes streets, sidewalks, facilities and Codes. All of their information will need to be included in IPM and needs to be completed by the fall season. The revised policy will be brought before the Board.

Ms. Delgado reported the budget and CIP program will be going to Council for adoption May 20. Ms. Delgado will report what Parks and Recreation’s budget will be for the following fiscal year and provide a list of what the CIP projects are at next Board meeting.

Ms. Delgado reported updated information received with City Council from Go Bond Project Manager. The two building structures moving forward with requests for proposals are the animal shelter and the fire station. This will be followed by the East Mesa Sports Complex, and then move forward on the other projects. As these projects get closer, they will be brought to the Board. Ms. Delgado said with every request for proposal that goes out with regards to Go Bond, public input will be sought.

Ms. Vasconcellos said the next Team Up to Clean Up date is coming up in June.

IX. Board Member Comments

Mr. Montgomery asked if the application for the Youth Board is on-line. Response was yes.

Mr. Montgomery said he participated in signing up his children for the summer recreation program and reported the on-line process didn’t quite work out and so he came into the office which was a more fluid process.
Ms. Zahler said she doesn’t want the Board to forget about the War Dogs and she will be meeting with Ms. Delgado next week. She said a plaque will be needed for the war dog and one for the service dog. A letter will also be needed to send to all the state representatives. Ms. Zahler recommended the plaques be put on agenda for next meeting and the following meeting for review and send out action letter the next month.

Ms. Zahler would like the dog park put on agenda for next meeting. She said she was informed there are dogs that are not well behaved and there is no one supervision. She also said how do we know dogs there have all their rabie shots.

Chair Harrison informed Board to make sure to let him or Vice-Chair of any items they want on the agenda. He also informed Board to let him know if they would like to meet at other park facilities in their district.

X. Adjournment

Mr. Montgomery moved to adjourn meeting, seconded by Ms. McClure. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Hazel Nevarez, Recording Secretary                    Robert Harrison, Chair