Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

April 21, 2022

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board held a meeting on January 20, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall Council Chambers, 700 N. Main, Las Cruces, NM.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Members Present:

- Cassie McClure – District 1
- Stan Engle – District 4
- Megan Schuller – District 6

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Members Absent:

- Eric Montgomery – District 5
- Vacant - District 2
- Vacant – District 3
- Vacant – At Large

Others Present:

- Rhonda Diaz, H2O Conservation Program Coordinator, Las Cruces Utilities
- Ronald Borunda, Deputy Director Water, Las Cruces Utilities
- Phillip Pruett, President, Mesilla Valley Shotgun Sports
- Greg Shervanick, Public
- J. Woods, Keep Las Cruces Beautiful, Parks & Recreation
- Robert Nunez, Youth Services Administrator, Parks & Recreation
- Donna Harvath, Public, Vice-President, Las Cruces Dog Park Coalition
- Kevin Armstrong, Public, Las Cruces Dog Park Coalition
- Robert Wojcikiewicz Public, Las Cruces Cricket
- Javed Akhtar, Public, Las Cruces Cricket
- Ahsan Jamil, Public, Las Cruces Cricket
- Jake Gutierrez, Manager, Parks & Recreation
- Wilfred Martinez, Parks & Recreation
- Franco Granillo, Parks Administrator, Parks & Recreation
- Phil Catanach, Recreation Services Administrator, Parks & Recreation
- Cathy Mathews, Landscape Architect, Parks & Recreation
- Hazel Nevarez, Recording Secretary, Parks & Recreation
- Sonya Delgado, Director, Parks & Recreation
- Franco Granillo, Parks Administrator, Parks & Recreation
- Phil Catanach, Recreation Services Administrator, Parks & Recreation
- Cathy Mathews, Landscape Architect, Parks & Recreation
- Hazel Nevarez, Recording Secretary, Parks & Recreation
- Sonya Delgado, Director, Parks & Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting of April 21, 2022, at City Hall Council Chambers, 700 N. Main, Las Cruces, NM and was brought to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair McClure and recognized the meeting as having a legal quorum.

1. Introductions

Board members introduced themselves and stated the district they represent.
2. **Conflict of Interest**

No Conflict of Interest.

3. **Approval of Agenda**

Board Member Schuller moved to approve Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting Agenda for April 21, 2022, seconded by Vice-Chair Engle.

Roll Call Vote:
- Vice-Chair Engle - Aye
- Board Member Schuller - Aye
- Chair McClure - Aye

Motion carried unanimously.

4. **Approval of Minutes**

Board Member Schuller moved to approve Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting minutes of January 20, 2022, seconded by Vice-Chair Engle.

Roll Call Vote:
- Vice-Chair Engle – Aye
- Board Member Schuller - Aye
- Chair McClure - Aye

Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Public Participation**

Prior to public participation, Chair McClure advised public they are allotted seven (7) minutes to speak split between public participation and agenda items.

Phillip Pruett, President, Mesilla Valley Shotgun Sports Inc., began by informing the Board his item is also coming up under Agenda 7.4 and may possibly also speak at that time. Mr. Pruett said he is present to ask for help to fix the entrance road to Butterfield Shooting Range. He said Mesilla Valley Shotgun Sports is a group of shotgun enthusiasts engaged in building, operating, and maintaining the trap, skeet, and sporting clay ranges within the Butterfield Park. They host numerous shotgun shoots every year that attract hundreds of people from within New Mexico and neighboring states. Several other clubs including the Las Cruces Police Department and the general public utilize the park daily. He said other than shooting, the most common topic discussed is the road. The 231-yard road on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land which connects from the I-10 overpass to the Butterfield Range is in extremely horrible condition. He said they are hoping that Parks & Recreation can temporarily repair the road for now and eventually come up with a long-term solution to pave and maintain the road.

Mr. Gregory Shervanick expressed to the Board that he would like to give accolades to Sonya Delgado and her staff for Easter Saturday where the Parks Department co-sponsored the Easter Egg Hunt and the Parks Department cleaned the parks from top to bottom before, during and
after. He added the Recreation Department had a truck there, and he believed the ladies name was Frances, who takes care of the children’s toys, and she should definitely get a reward. Mr. Shervanick said she spent all day and took care of thousands of children almost by herself. Mr. Shervanick mentioned that the pictures of the event showed thousands of people smiling in the Sun News. Mr. Shervanick added that on Sunday, the Parks Department also did a great job of cleaning up after the public, but the biggest problem on Sunday and with Mother’s Day coming up, a lot of vehicles drive into the park and City staff needs to find a way for people to bring their property in and take it out and not stay with their vehicles in the park. It is understood Easter and Mother’s Day is a celebratory day, and it is dangerous to be driving in the park with children after celebratory conditions. Mr. Shervanick said the last thing he would like to say is in talking about critical thinking, cost of park projects, and as cost of park projects goes up, he feels the Board must be more vocal about projects. He said the Go Bond provided a brand-new picnic station at Young Park and at that time he mentioned to Public Works as well as others that there is erosion problem caused by metal roof which leaches everything down to the pond so the pond isn’t as clear as it should be, and on Monday he read that the building area was going to be closed off to fix erosion. He added he thinks the erosion should have been fixed when the property was changed and being built, and this is a secondary situation where critical thinking and sustainability didn’t work out. Mr. Shervanick also offered advice that the recreation department should have a secondary truck for games because as the park system grows, a secondary truck would be valuable to going to other locations, with the number of neighborhood parks that there are.

Ms. Delgado commented that the pavilion at Young Park is not closed, it will be available during the time of fixing the erosion, it just won’t be permitted out.

Chair McClure asked if there are areas for loading and unloading at any of the parks. Ms. Delgado said no, and she had made notation of that.

Mr. Robert Wojcikiewicz, was present representing group he calls the Las Cruces Cricket Club, an informal group of people that get together every weekend to play cricket. He said the group is made up of entirely of graduate students, most of which are from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. He said they wanted presence at this Board meeting because they play at Gomez Park and would like to ask that in the final plan for Gomez Park, there are provisional plans for a 20 meter by 5-meter area for playing cricket. Mr. Wojcikiewicz said there are about 25 of them that play cricket, and it would be nice to have an area for students that are in a foreign place to have an area to play cricket.

Mr. Kevin Armstrong, President of the Las Cruces Dog Park Coalition, said he was present because there are people at the Dog Park and on Facebook called Dog Parkers saying should go to Council and this Board meeting, and none of the people saying that came. He said he and one other person present who pick up poop and maintaining the park came. He said first off, he would like to say they really appreciate the city, every other week have been doing what they call a wash down because it helps keep the dust and odors down. He said they themselves have been cleaning the park once a month, wash everything by hand, and do a lot of maintenance work in the park. Mr. Armstrong said they do have some problems which lead to some of the comments being made. He said he hesitates, because he has respect for the chain of command, for Sonya, and not all things have been through the chain of command or put into the chain and not responded to. Mr. Armstrong said there used to be quarterly meetings and would like to see them resumed as haven’t had any in a long time. He said there were some trees, and two years ago he warned that the
pine trees were dying from the top down and should be checked out with no response from the person he thought was responsible. Now the trees are like halfway down. Mr. Armstrong said there are pine trees inside the park that are not yet infected and as far as he knows, the bad trees that are infected need to be cut down. Another thing that upsets him which leads him to question Board’s job even though it’s volunteer, Board’s job should be to make sure Parks and Recreation staff are doing their jobs and should be aware, which would require Board to go to the different parks and the recreation programs and talk to the people there to see what is going on. Mr. Armstrong ended by thanking the Board for their work and their time.

Chair McClure asked if the Board could put things on the agenda for next time. Ms. Delgado responded yes.

Ms. Donna Harvath, Vice-President of the Dog Park Coalition, informed the Board the lighting at the Dog Park needs to be fixed, and has been brought up a couple of times. She also said the rule boards need to be more specific, with ordinance numbers would help, at each gate so people understand what they are responsible for.

Mr. Javed Akhtar informed the Board that they play cricket after class, and it would be nice to have a designated area to play cricket.

Chair McClure asked to add this to list for next month’s agenda.

6. Action Items

6.1 Parks and Recreation Department 2021/2022 Fees & Charges/Facility Use Policy – Sonya Delgado, Parks & Recreation Director

Ms. Sonya Delgado, Parks & Recreation Director, provided a Power Point presentation on the Parks and Recreation Fees & Charges/Facility Use Policy explaining process for updating annually and summarizing policy and fee changes for the 2021/2022 Policy. She informed the Board this will be updated again with the new swimming pool coming on-line at the beginning of 2023.

Board Member Schuller asked for clarification of Resident and Non-Resident Fees. Ms. Delgado said Resident are for residents inside city limits and Non-Resident are residents outside city limits.

Chair McClure asked, regarding Parks and Recreation Advisory Board authority over Leagues/Organizations that utilize City fields and/or facilities being added back into the Fees and Charges, why the language was removed before. Ms. Delgado said it was because league agreements had been done away with and with no league agreement, leagues couldn’t come to the Board, which caused some issues, so now reinstated league agreements the language back into the policy.

Vice-Chair Engle asked if the policy also covers the rental of trails. Ms. Delgado responded yes.

Board Member Schuller moved to approve the Parks and Rec’s Department 2021/2022 Fees and Charges/Facility Use Policy, seconded by Vice-Chair Engle. There was no further discussion by Board or the Public.
Roll Call Vote:

  Vice-Chair Engle – Aye
  Board Member Schuller - Aye
  Chair McClure - Aye

Motion carried unanimously.

6.2 Park Master Plan Presentations for Branigan Park, Gomez Park, and Frenger Park (Virtual) –
Catherine Mathews, Landscape Architect, Emily Rogers & Aaron Zahm, Morrow Reardon
Wilkinson Miller (MRWM) Landscape Architects

Ms. Catherine Mathews, Landscape Architect with Parks & Recreation, informed the Board with
this agenda item, the Board will hear from Emily Rogers and Aaron Zahm of Morrow Reardon
Wilkinson Miller via telephone along with a Power Point presentation. Ms. Mathews said these
projects have been ongoing for many months with a lot of public input on what residents are
interested in seeing in Branigan Park, Gomez Park, and Frenger Park.

Ms. Emily Rogers came online telephonically and presented Power Point presentation giving
overview of the Master Planning Process, Public Engagement, and Design Concept resulting from
community members input for Branigan Park, Gomez Park, and Frenger Park.

Chair McClure asked how bike access is integrated with Branigan Park. Ms. Rogers responded
saying utilizing Hayner Avenue and looking at designated bike lanes or share road from bike
connection from Valley over to the lateral trail. She added as far as within the park, the path
currently shown is specifically for pedestrians, and the path could be widened. Ms. Catherine
Mathews added that the Amador Proximo plan called for the extension of Organ Ave., and that
constructed road would connect Valley Drive bike lanes with the Armijo Lateral Multiuse Trail so
that road would make sense to provide a possible connection. Chair McClure asked if there is
bike parking in this plan and if there is embedded language for this in the master plan. Ms.
Mathews responded yes to bike parking and she wasn’t sure about the language, but bike parking
is always included.

Board Member Schuller asked on Gomez Park as well as Branigan Park, if there is any
consideration, due to lack of gyms, for a full court basketball to give youth the opportunity to
practice on a full court. Ms. Mathews said the usable space is limited because Gomez Park is a
storm management facility. She added with Frenger, more space is dedicated to court space.

Board Member Schuller asked what would be an immediate action, based on public comment, to
level some ground for cricket pitch at Gomez Park. Ms. Delgado responded this space is primarily
a storm water management system, so will need to work closely with Public Works to see what
can be done moving forward.

Chair McClure asked from survey responses, was a full court something that was wanted and did
anybody want a plaza. Ms. Rogers responded on the plaza, she was really surprised how many
people didn’t want that. She said the basketball court, particularly at Gomez, did not get very
strong support.
Chair McClure said she would be interested in seeing a more dedicated crosswalk at the crossing marked #12 for Gomez Park, being that it is a high-density area and with Espina traffic, and getting the people from the residential area tied into this park.

Chair McClure asked if this falls into Elevate Las Cruces, in terms of high density. Ms. Mathews responded saying the Active Transportation Plan does call for Espina to be a pedestrian enhanced road because it does connect the University to neighborhoods. Ms. Mathews added that at the design stage, an ADA traffic study for this location would be called for to better address how to bring people from the residential area to cross safely.

Board Member Engle asked if it would be possible to link El Paseo to Gomez Park. Ms. Mathews said the property at the southwest corner of Gomez is private property and her understanding is that the owner is interested in developing that and when developed, there would need to be access to that property.

Chair McClure asked if it is being proposed to do away with Frenger Pool. Ms. Delgado responded yes because it has exceeded its life span, and this will come back to the Board with more detail.

Chair McClure expressed, regarding the Frenger master plan, she would like to see one of the sidewalks converted to a bike lane.

Board Member Schuller advised against a splash pad at Frenger Park or any master plans due to maintenance, upkeep, water, and staffing. Chair McClure added she was curious to know how many people knew of Frenger pool being removed. Ms. Delgado responded saying it was discussed of the pool coming offline because of its age, and the only real reason it is still running is because NMED is aware of the new pool being built. If the 50-meter pool was already online, Frenger pool would not pass inspection.

Board Member Engle said that in the past, Frenger was used for cycle lacrosse bicycle races and asked if that would still be able to be accommodated in this master plan. Ms. Rogers said this could happen again, the question would be how it would mesh with disc golf.

Ms. Mathews said she has noted Board member comments about not wanting to go with splash pads and also about lacrosse bicycle races, and minor edits can be made to address Boards requests.

Board Member Schuller moved to accept the Park Master Plan Presentations for Branigan Park, Gomez Park, and Frenger Park, seconded by Vice Chair Engle.

Ms. Mathews commented that as noted in both Gomez Park and Frenger Park, they are primarily storm water management facilities and Public Works has plans to make some improvements to the storm water management capacity at Frenger so the south end of this park will likely have a change so this plan will not be fully implemented on the south end and will have to be adjusted.

There was no further discussion.

Roll Call Vote:

Vice-Chair Engle – Aye
6.3 Pioneer Women’s Park Gazebo Final Design Plan Presentation – Catherine Mathews, Landscape Architect

Ms. Catherine Mathews presented to the Board a Power Point presentation on the Pioneer Women’s Park Gazebo Design work, giving information on history of the Gazebo, design considerations, Project Team involved with this project, public input meetings held, and finally the metal-work design and color palette selections. A picture board was also displayed to show what the gazebo will look like.

Board Member Schuller asked what the column for the gazebo is made out of. Ms. Mathews said column is made of durable steel and white was the color selected.

Board Member Schuller moved to accept the design on Pioneer Women’s Park Gazebo, final design plan to move forward, seconded by Vice-Chair Engle. There was no further discussion.

Roll Call Vote:
Vice-Chair Engle – Aye
Board Member Schuller - Aye
Chair McClure - Aye
Motion carried unanimously.

7. Discussion Items

7.1 Keep Las Cruces Beautiful (KLCB) Update – James Woods, KLCB Program Coordinator

Mr. James Wood informed the Board:

- Recent Great American Clean Up was a success, with 558 volunteers registered for the clean-up, over 34 groups, collecting 2.5 tons of trash, and four roll-offs that collected another 400 tons of trash. He added focus was on the East and West side of the Bataan area.
- Team Up to Clean Up will start up May 21, 2022 in District 6, 8 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., and will have three roll-offs.
- Youth Conservation Corp grant was awarded and so will be hiring youth to do some community mural projects, restore, repair, replace if needed.
- Recently submitted application for New Mexico Clean and Beautiful grant.
- Numerous groups stop by the office to pick up supplies to do clean-ups on their own.
- National Night out is coming up in August.

Chair McClure asked where people would go to pick up supplies. Mr. Woods responded supplies can be picked up at the Frank O’Brien Papen Community Center Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. or make arrangements for a different time.
Board Member Schuller said she is looking to have her local youth organization do some outreach and appreciates the information received.

Vice-Chair Engle asked on the murals, if this would include new murals. Mr. Woods said that is possible.

**7.2 Water Safety Update – Phil Catanach, Recreation Administrator**

Mr. Phil Catanach, Recreation Administrator, informed the Board he has asked Mr. Ron Borunda, Deputy Director of Las Cruces Utilities/Water and Ms. Rhonda Diaz, H2O Water Conservation Program Coordinator, to present on the safety of the City of Las Cruces drinking water, and after will present on the safety of our pools.

Chair McClure added the reason for this agenda item is because Board Member Eric Montgomery requested information on the safety of our water because he had read a story about brain eating amoebas. She said information received at this meeting will be shared with him.

Mr. Ron Borunda introduced himself to the Board and presented a Power Point presentation titled Is My Drinking Water Safe? Mr. Borunda reported information about the Safe Drinking Water Act, reporting agencies – the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), where water comes from addressing surface water and ground water, chlorination in the water, and discoloration of the water. Mr. Borunda said the city has some of the best water quality around because the city’s system is solely ground water.

Chair McClure asked if the water is generally surface water in New Mexico. Mr. Borunda said there are a lot of different municipalities that use surface water.

Board Member Schuller asked how underground areas are monitored and where are wells and meters monitored to know where the city stands, and whether the wells need to go deeper or drilled in different locations, in balancing daily use with what’s available. Mr. Borunda responded saying the City has to have monitoring wells for the entire city and that’s where they get depth level readings of aquifers and what’s put back into the ground, and this is monitored monthly. Mr. Borunda said metering is a whole other subject because the City meters everything used and said Ms. Rhonda Diaz, Water Conservation Coordinator, and she makes sure that everything is metered and that everything used is accounted for.

Vice-Chair Engle mentioned that the Board Member not present, his specific question was if there is flesh eating stuff that gets into the circulation of splash pads. Mr. Borunda said he can’t speak a whole lot on that, but he does know a little about amoebas, because he has worked with waste water. He said amoebas are formed from waste water, not fresh water. Mr. Borunda said that any sort of bacteria that you would see from fresh water would be more in the line of blood bourn pathogens like cholera but those kind of viruses come from human beings or animals or birds. He said you wouldn’t see flesh eating amoebas coming from the fresh water supply.

Chair McClure directed question to Mr. Catanach, saying splash pads have their own circular system, and hope filters of some sort. Mr. Catanach responded yes, and will have the Aquatic staff up next to talk about the City’s pools and splash pads.
Mr. Catanach thanked Mr. Borunda and Ms. Diaz for their presentation to the Board. He went on to inform the Board Mr. Abraham Celaya, Recreation Facility Manager, and Mr. Jake Gutierrez, Aquatics Program Manager will present on the City’s pools and splash pads.

Mr. Abraham Celaya, Aquatics Facility Manager, presented a Power Point presentation on Why Our Pool Water is Safe explaining the Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center’s disinfection and filtration process. The presentation covered the pools water filtration system, methods of disinfection, chlorination, and UV pool sanitizers.

Vice-Chair asked if this is the same system used on the splash pads. Mr. Celaya said yes, and as far as the amoebas the Board member read about, those conditions exist if the splash pad isn’t looked after correctly, and here the splash pads are continuously being looked after. Mr. Jake Gutierrez, Aquatics Program Manager, added with the World Aquatic Health Code, which has been enforced and implemented here in the last three years, the systems now are required to have the secondary UV system. Speaking on Frenger Pool, Mr. Gutierrez said with the infrastructure of Frenger Pool deteriorating, they are at the minimum requirements. Mr. Gutierrez said with the World Aquatic Health Code, they are required to check the pools every two to four hours, and documented.

Chair McClure said she toured Frenger Pool and concurs on all points.

Mr. Catanach thanked Mr. Borunda, Ms. Diaz, Mr. Gutierrez, and Mr. Abraham and said we are in very good hands with our Utility Water Department and Aquatics staff.

7.3 League/Association Agreements – Franco Granillo, Parks Administrator

Mr. Franco Granillo, Park Administrator, gave the Board an overview of the League Association agreements. Mr. Granillo informed the Board who the multiple organizations are that Parks and Recreation has agreements with. He said the agreement have what the organization desires from the City, conditions – what the City provides vs what the organization provides, fees, activities the group can provide to youth, and concession use. Mr. Granillo added there are benefits to both the City and the leagues.

There were no questions from the Board.

7.4 Butterfield Shooting Range Update – Franco Granillo, Parks Administrator

Mr. Franco, Park Administrator, informed the Board there are six ranges at Butterfield Shooting Range – the skeet range, cover range, silhouette range, pistol range, known distance range and the long-distance range. The known distance and long-distance ranges are going to be improved for ADA accessibility. Mr. Granillo said he would like the work done before end of fiscal year but isn’t sure that will happen. He added when this type of work is done, need cooperation from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Mr. Granillo said a question that has come to the Board is the entrance road to the range. He said Parks and Rec staff doesn’t maintain roads, or create them or build them. The issue he has seen with the entry road is it is on a slope and with a heavy rain or bad windstorms, there is a lot of erosion, potholes. He said these issues have been discussed with Public Works and have come up
with short term and long-term solutions. Long term would be to provide a plan for actual road upgrade or permanent road repairs, and would have to get BLM approval, and are looking to get a patent for the road because the entry road and the road that goes along the entire range is in a no man’s land. It is not considered a right of way or city road. Mr. Granillo said the short-term solution is either pothole repair or actual chip seal. Mr. Granillo said if this isn’t cost effective or can’t be done immediately, Public Works mentioned could remove the surface do it is more of a dirt surfacing and then can be back dragged or graded anytime there is a heavy rain or wind event.

Chair McClure asked what the timeline is for something like this. Mr. Granillo said it would depend on funding, and possibly have to go to Council. Short term fixed could happen as long as Public Works is able to help.

Ms. Delgado added that this has been discussed with Mr. David Sedillo, Public Works Director, and he is aware and working hard to find funding on his end for short-term and then long-term, will have to go to Council. She said also during this process, upon going to BLM to ask permission to work on road, it was discovered road patent was not included with the Butterfield Shooting Range. BLM has given temporary permission to work on the road.

Chair McClure asked if this was similar to needing some sort of agreement in place for people to do anything on that area. Ms. Delgado said yes, anytime on BLM land, permission is needed, and if allowed, would need to stay within scope. If scope changes, would have to go through process again.

Vice-Chair Engle said Mr. Pruett reached out to him on this and is glad we have some answers. Mr. Granillo said he will reach out to Mr. Pruett. Ms. Delgado said she did give Mr. Pruett her business card and did explain to him information just shared with the Board so he is aware and she did ask him to reach out to staff.

Board Member Schuller asked if fees being charged to trap clubs or organizations be put aside solely for this road. Ms. Delgado said Parks and Recreation lives in the general fund and any revenue collected goes back into the general fund but said staff is trying to get some of those funds put back for specific things.

Board Member Schuller asked if it would be possible if those organizations could set up their own donation pot and donate it to that project. Ms. Delgado said that is a possibility. Mr. Granillo said maybe when he meets with Mr. Pruett, they could get on that path and get some sort of partnership going.

Board Member Schuller asked what the timeline is on the ADA modifications. Mr. Granillo said he would like to get it done toward mid-June, but if not, by Fall of this year.

7.5 2022 Go Bond Survey – Sonya Delgado, Parks & Recreation Director

Ms. Delgado informed the Board she wanted to remind them that there is a Go Bond Survey for the Public that is open for a few more weeks and encourage them to take the survey and to share with friends and family. She said that there have been over 500 responses so far. Ms. Delgado also said the survey has been sent out to all Parks and Recreation program attendees who have email addresses, all leagues and organizations.
Chair McClure asked if Parks and Recreation is able to collaborate with other departments to send out information like this. Ms. Delgado said yes. Ms. Delgado added that mass messages are sent out through our registration software to anybody we have email addresses for.

7.6 Letter of Support for Veteran’s Park Parking Lot – Sonya Delgado, Parks & Recreation Director

Ms. Delgado informed the Board that staff was recently asked by Senator Lujan to provide letters of support in favor of Veteran’s Park parking lot. The letters were done by Parks and Recreation and by the Veteran’s Advisory Board and sent out. She said hopefully this will bring in some funding to complete the parking lot.

Chair McClure asked if copy of the letter could be shared with the other Board Members. Ms. Delgado said yes.

7.7 Unidad Park Mementos – Sonya Delgado, Parks & Recreation Director

Ms. Delgado informed the Board Unidad Park was built in 2001. She said staff wanted to give a piece of the park to the group that started this park. Ms. Delgado showed board pieces salvaged from the park, with date and name of park, and are working on a list of the committee members to contact, so can do a photo op and present them with the Unidad Park memento.

8. Staff Member Comments

Ms. Cathy Mathews informed the Board:

- Projects discussed today will be moving forward to Council and anticipate they will come to some conclusion in June or July.
- Chandler Tank design project is ongoing and contract for traffic study was just initiated, and design work will conclude in July or August, and will then move forward on construction.
- Getting ready to issue letters of acceptance on two median projects – one was funded through a City Bond and included medians throughout the City, a few medians in each Council District and medians along Sonoma Ranch Blvd. called Sonoma Ranch Blvd. Mile 2 between Arroyo Road and Peachtree Hills.

Mr. Catanach informed the Board the Recreation Section has a lot of their summer stuff rolling out and encourages them to check out Parks and Recreation’s Facebook page – Movies in the Park, Music in the Park, Splash Pads, Mother’s Day Concert, and 4th of July information will be coming up.

Mr. Robert Nunez, Youth Services Administrator, informed the Board his section is wrapping up the school year program and news release for their summer programs has gone out. They are working on getting staff on board, CPR/First Aid trainings done. His section is doing a lot of things with different groups, partnerships to get their expertise involved in our programs and to allow our youth to participate in other programs. There is a lot a positive program happening, and preparing now for opportunities with the balanced school calendar.
Chair McClure asked about the Youth Advisory Board. Mr. Nunez reported there is a new Teen Connection Supervisor on board, and he is allowing him to roll into the summer and then will get advertisement out for the Youth Board at the beginning of the school year.

Board Member Schuller asked if Youth Programs are back 100%. Mr. Nunez reported principals kept things status quo so Youth Programs are down 50% with the After School Programs. For the Summer, they should have full capacity in all programs.

Mr. Granillo informed the Board he and Jimmy Zabriskie, Community Forester will be going to a work session for a proposal of a Tree Ordinance.

Mr. Granillo acknowledged the issue of vehicles in Youngs Park during big events which has been an issue for years, and said the problem with Young Park is that there is only one gate there. He said he has looked into the cost of bollards for Young Park, Apodaca Park, and Veterans Park, and cost for these three areas is $85,000, not installed. Mr. Granillo said he is also looking for alternate solutions like boulders or landscaping.

Mr. Granillo informed the Board if they would like to see an agreement for their review, to let him know and he will send it forward.

Chair McClure asked if he can let the Board know how the Tree Ordinance work session goes. Mr. Granillo said he will let the Board know.

9. Board Member Comments

Board Member Schuller asked how staff is handling cost increases of landscaping, fertilizer. Mr. Granillo said staff has done well to plan ahead and material was purchased before inflation took place but are starting to run out of materials so staff is prioritizing areas that need upgrades or repairs and using materials towards those areas. As new amenities, new requests from the public come up, Ms. Delgado brings those costs to Council’s attention for help with funding.

Vice-Chair Engle expressed his thanks to staff for today’s information and for their good job.

Chair McClure said she was hoping something could be done to work better with the bicycle community, and specifically to include in master plans and what they would like to see in terms of access via biking, to have a sort of collaborative environment where bicyclers know who they might want to talk to and what they might want to see. She said she is interested in putting this on agenda for next Board meeting. Ms. Delgado responded saying there is VELO Las Cruces, and they work closely with the transportation plan and staff could have them talk to the Board on things they are involved in, projects.

Chair McClure asked about ADA compliance with Pickleball. Ms. Delgado said Apodaca Park pickleball area is ADA accessible. She added there is a range, and the minimum is met.

Chair McClure asked if there is an update on the Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) agreement. Ms. Delgado said she verified today that the City’s Legal department did send the agreement to LCPS today, and has received confirmation from LCPS Legal team that they received it.
Chair McClure asked if the Board meetings are filmed. Ms. Delgado said no.

Chair McClure said with the dog park people, there seems to be an idea that there is citizen activists, not in a bad way, but that they are going above and beyond, and would like staff to reach out and talk to them a little bit more. Chair McClure said she would like to see more engagement - who are these people, why are they doing this, why are they going above and beyond, and are they going above and beyond, and to hear both sides of the story. Ms. Delgado responded saying the last time staff met with the Dog Park Coalition was before Parks and Recreation shut down due to Covid and now that staff is back, staff will start the meetings back.

Chair McClure said she is enjoying the Hidden Gems that is on Parks and Recreation’s Facebook because it gives an idea of parks people don’t know about. She said to keep doing that and try to promote in different ways on social media. She added she agrees from public comment that Board members should go out to the Parks, and to Parks and Recreation programs.

Chair McClure also said the Board’s condolences go out to Maryln Zahler’s family, and expressed thanks for her time on the Board.

Board Member Schuller said staff and Board should try to push the War Dog Memorial forward to memorialize Ms. Zahler, since she was an advocate for this. Ms. Delgado said she has discussed this with the Veteran’s Advisory Board President, and she will continue to pursue this.

10. Adjournment

Board Member Schuller moved to adjourn the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting, seconded by Vice-Chair Engle.

Roll Call:
  Vice Chair Engle – Aye
  Board Member Schuller - Aye
  Chair McClure - Aye

Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Hazel Nevarez, Recording Secretary    Cassie McClure, Chair