

**SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES OF THE COTTONWOOD
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
June 23, 2020**

Present:

Absent:

Ann Shaw, Chair
Edna Ahrens, Vice-Chair
Kimberly Kelley
John Kubrock
Donna Fulton
Doug Hulse
Christopher Young

Also Present:

Jak Teel, Parks and Recreation Manager
Robin Babbitt, Information and Business Specialist
Rudy Rodriguez, Deputy City Manager
Brian Sager, Project Manager and Architect, Norris Design
Stacey Weaks, Principal, Norris Design
Mandy Woods, Research and Data Consolidation, Norris Design

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Shaw called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm in the Cottonwood Recreation Center Cottonwood Room.

MINUTES – FEBRUARY 25, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

Commissioner Shaw asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the February 25, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Kelley motioned to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Ahrens seconded the motion. Motion carried 6 to 0 with one abstention by Commissioner Young.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

(This portion of the agenda is set aside for the public to address the Commission regarding an item that is not listed on the agenda for discussion. However, the Commission cannot engage in discussion regarding any item that is not officially listed on the agenda for discussion and/or action (A.R.S. 38-431.02(H).) Comments are limited to a 5 minute time period.)

None.

OLD BUSINESS

A. MONTHLY REPORT INFORMATION FOR MAY 2020

Commissioner Shaw asked everyone to review the reports for May. Hearing no questions regarding the monthly report, she commented on the cost recovery report. Seeing the drastic reduction in cost recovery due to the facility closure, her hope is that this situation is taken into account when asking the department to reach a 75% cost recovery for this current fiscal year.

Mr. Teel stated that the goal of 75% cost recovery has been set aside for the meantime. City Administration realizes the facility will not meet those numbers, especially as it was closed for 56 days.

After discussing this further, Mr. Teel added that they will be striving for this goal for the future and they will make decisions accordingly. The group discussed this further.

NEW BUSINESS

A. PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND WAYFINDING MASTER PLAN STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The Norris Design team introduced themselves via video chat. Mr. Sager stated they are presenting a progress update of the ongoing Master Plan project. The objective of the presentation is to bring the Commission up to speed on where they are in the process, to present what has been presented to the public, and make sure they are aware of the team's process and progress.

Mr. Sager reviewed the project team leads, which included himself, Mr. Weaks and Ms. Wood from Norris Design, then Mr. Rodriguez, Mr. Teel and Trisha, the tourism manager, from the city. He then reviewed the timeline stating that they are still on track for a late summer delivery. They've accomplished data recovery and analysis, held stakeholder and public meetings, and a second public meeting via Zoom. They received 300 responses from the online survey. Now they are moving into consolidating the data. He then showed a few infographics from data collected at the public meeting along with Cottonwood population statistics. The purpose of a Master Plan is to help guide decision making. They are looking for existing use patterns, potential uses, and all the ways they can facilitate growth and help the city accommodate future growth and make sure the city system meets the needs of the residents. They will ultimately develop a prioritized action plan and present it to City Council. After more information about the community, Mr. Sager showed maps of all city parks, sport fields/open turf, and playgrounds. These maps identified the area that would be included within a ten-minute walk from each amenity. Some circles overlapped showing that more than one park was within walking distance in that area. The map also showed the areas lacking in coverage. This helps them analyze what is being covered and what isn't. They are including some non-city owned parks in their analysis that are open to the public. Mr. Sager also stated they presented a park analysis for each city park at the public meeting. He only presented the one for Riverfront here as an example.

Mr. Sager added that another component of the master plan is for signage and wayfinding. This is

critical because many visitors come from out of town. It helps tie in economic development with parks development. The slide he showed was a map that identified existing gateway and wayfinding signs and proposed gateway and wayfinding signs. Norris Design will dive into the analysis for this in the next two months.

Mr. Sager stated that the website developed for this project is still live, cottonwoodparkmasterplan.com. A recording of the public presentation is available to watch on the site. He then reviewed some of the highlights they learned from the over 300 questionnaire responses. He also stated that they are building on the Trails Master Plan effort. He then asked for input from the commission.

Commissioner Young asked if private recreational areas associated with apartment complexes and housing developments could be factored into the data analysis.

Mr. Sager, Mr. Teel and Mr. Rodriguez discussed this and stated they only considered those areas where the city has agreements that the public may use those facilities. They discussed this with Commissioner Young further adding that larger private developments are required to have parks, trails and open space open to the public.

Commissioner Shaw asked if there were any other questions. She asked Mr. Sager if they had anything else to present.

Mr. Sager said they are planning their last public Zoom meeting July 16 and would share the link to join. He thanked the commissioners for their time and support and added that if anyone had any questions to feel free to reach out to them.

After the Norris team signed off from their video call, Commissioner Shaw shared some highlights from the previous meeting for those who were not able to attend. She listed specific concerns from some of the participating community members. One of the suggestions was to build tennis courts at Riverfront and leave the current facility for Pickleball. The group discussed this idea further. The group discussed these items further.

B. PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION APPOINTMENT – CHRISTOPHER ANDREW YOUNG

Commissioner Shaw introduced and welcomed Commissioner Young. She thanked him for volunteering.

C. EFFECTS OF NOVEL CORONAVIRUS ON DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES

Mr. Teel wanted to get the commission up to speed on the effects the virus has had on the department. They closed the facility March 20 due the Governor's Executive orders and concerns for the coronavirus. They were able to keep part time staff working for another week cleaning the facility. All part time staff were furloughed at the beginning of the following pay period. Many of the almost 50 employees start coming back to work the week of June 28. The facility is still not

entirely open. Some areas are closed due to social distancing requirements and maximum numbers allowed within a given space. They are not allowed to have group activities with more than 10 people, so classes and other group activities will not return until that ban is lifted. The response to the virus meant the facility was closed for 56 days from March 20 through May 14. They put all memberships on pause so no one lost paid time. This was adjusted prior to reopening so members would be welcomed back in without having to wait to check their membership status.

Mr. Teel reviewed the list of programs that were cancelled due to restrictions related from COVID-19. During the closure time, the programming team promoted family activities through Facebook including a Goose Chase scavenger hunt and daily hashtag challenges. Aerobics classes started being streamed through Facebook Live.

Mr. Teel explained that since the recreation center reopened, they have been operating with just full timers. They are currently opening 6 am to 8 pm, Monday through Friday instead of 4:30 am to 10 pm. Weekend hours have been the same, 6 am to 8 pm. He listed the areas closed to the public to reduce cooling and janitorial costs, touch points that were cleaned every 30 minutes or 2 hours, and discussed the current mask policy.

D. RECENT & UPCOMING PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS/SPECIAL EVENTS

Mr. Teel stated that they are preparing to have the fireworks display for the Fourth of July but they have canceled the rest of the daytime and evening events due to physical distancing requirements. The funds are available and city departments have worked together to make sure this is happening safely. The fairground parking lot will open at 7 pm. The ground level fireworks displays were exchanged for higher aerals so they will be move visible from a greater distance. They are encouraging people to view from home or other parking areas around town to allow for greater physical distancing.

Mr. Teel reviewed events that were scheduled during the winter and spring. The After School Program and Summer Day Camp have been canceled due to the limits on group size. Youth basketball leagues completed normally in March serving 250 youth. The basketball and volleyball camps scheduled for June were canceled. The adult volleyball league was canceled days before it was to begin. The Easter Egg Hunt and Cottonwood Vintage Run were also canceled.

Mr. Teel stated they held a drive in movie June 11 at Riverfront Park. They had 39 vehicles for approximately 100 people attending. They partnered with Jennifer Griffin of State Farm Insurance, who paid for the movie rights, the Verde Drive-In to provide the screen system, and Yavapai Broadcasting to provide the sound system. He hopes to have more of these types of community events once the part timers are back working and the programming team has more time to dedicate to these efforts.

Mr. Teel stated they would be opening the outdoor pool Sunday for lap swimming and water exercise classes. They will not be offering recreational swimming. He reviewed the daily schedule noting that they will have only eight people swimming in the pool at a time. The classes will be

maxed at nine participants.

Mr. Teel asked for assistance in deciding whether to open the indoor pool or not. He explained that the width of many areas within the pool are six feet or less. He doesn't know how they can realistically open the pool while providing for social distancing, as wearing facemasks is not practical in the water.

After discussing costs of running the indoor pool, possible options for how to allow members to use the indoor pool safely and what other communities are doing, Commissioner Shaw stated she thought they should keep it closed for the summer at least. She doesn't think it is worth the risk.

Commissioner Hulse added that he also felt they should leave the indoor pool closed until the viral numbers decline significantly.

After continued discussion regarding reasons to open or not open the indoor pool area, Mr. Teel reviewed the local swim team use of the pool. He then thanked the commission for their input stating that he and staff agree that it would be best to keep it closed for now. They will look into the feasibility of allowing rentals.

Commissioner Hulse asked about Thunder Valley Rally.

Mr. Teel stated that the 2020 event has been cancelled and discussed the event's possible future.

E. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM SUGGESTIONS

Commissioner Shaw asked for a marketing update.

Mr. Teel stated that traditionally, they do not have a July Commission meeting. With having to miss three meetings this spring, he asked the commissioners if they would like to have a July meeting or keep to the historical schedule.

After discussion, Mr. Teel stated they would email commissioners regarding this next month.

Commissioner Shaw added the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Open House review as a suggestion for the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kelley motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Hulse seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 6:51 pm.