



**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Wednesday, May 11, 2022 at 6:30 P.M.**

**Avondale City Hall – Sonoran Conference Room
11465 West Civic Center Drive, Avondale, Arizona 85323**

AGENDA

1. ROLL CALL AND STATEMENT OF PARTICIPATION BY THE STAFF LIAISON

Present: Chair Beason, Boardmember Lazo, Boardmember Nielson, Boardmember Espino

Absent: Vice Chair Arellano, Boardmember Rodriguez, Boardmember Johnston, Boardmember Vasquez

Staff Present: Director Bryan Hughes, Assistant Director Corey Larriva, Sr. Management Analyst Dominic DeCono, Recreation Supervisor Stacy Swainston

2. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES

(Time is limited per person. Please state your name.)

3. BOARD TEAM BUILDING EXERCISE

Bryan started off the meeting by asking the board members how they would define adaptive recreation. Boardmember Nielson mentioned she thought that adaptable recreation is recreation that pertains to people of all capacities, especially young individuals, elderly and individuals with disabilities.

Chair Beason mentioned that she believed that adaptable recreation is meant for everyone to participate. It allows everyone to participate in recreational activities.

Boardmember Espino mentioned adaptable recreation is about inclusion, and it's about strategies for individuals who we don't think about until it directly impacts them. That includes inclusive access to playgrounds, sidewalks with ramps and recreational opportunities for the blind. Specifically, on and off ramps.

Boardmember Lazo mentioned she thinks of recreation that is evolving. Specifically, a technology that can be used that is supportive for recreation. Boardmember Lazo mentioned one thing to think about is how do people get access to the knowledge of adaptive recreation.

Stacy Swainston mentioned that a lot of adaptive recreation is meant to address the physical and mental component of recreation.

Corey Larriva then mentioned it's about removing barriers and allowing access for those wanting to engage in activities. Especially being open to new ideas.

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Dominic DeCono brought up the concept of recreation that represents things like the Paralympics and wheelchair basketball leagues. They are great representations of how we view adaptive recreation and there are ways to make adaptive recreation not just for facilities, but for programs as well.

Bryan echoed the comments that all the board members and staff members made where all of the comments fall exactly in line with how adaptive recreation can be reached for all. That includes ADA requirements for programs and facilities that can be accessible for all and the department making efforts within a reasonable effort to provide accommodations for all to participate if they wish.

Bryan also mentioned that part of the reason this topic is being discussed is that the city is considering in the future bringing in staff to specifically focus on this area. This would be in coordination with other efforts that other agencies are making to provide this in the future.

Chair Beason asked if the city does anything special for their sports program. She mentioned that when she was at the library recently and that they do a silent reading time as an example. Bryan mentioned that the city currently doesn't do this, but they are beginning the conversation to help make this accommodation. Stacy used the example of soccer leagues with children that are autistic and being able to provide coaching assistance for those individuals as a reasonable accommodation. Corey then mentioned that the aquatics center will also be a good opportunity. Bryan added that the center will be built to have these accommodations and specifically cited the zero-depth pool where people will be able to enter it.

Boardmember Nielson asked if the pool will be heated in the winter to provide water aerobics activities, which Bryan said that the city is preparing to do that.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will consider the approval of the April 13, 2022 meeting minutes. The Board will take appropriate action.

Motion: Beason

2nd: Lazo

Approved 4-0 w/ amendments

5. RECREATION AND SPECIAL EVENTS UPDATE

Stacy kicked off the update by asking the board members who participated at Avondale Fiesta what their impressions were, to which both Chair Beason and Boardmember Nielson mentioned that very much enjoyed it and got to meet staff members they had never met before. Stacy mentioned that the next events will be Memorial Day and the 4th of July event.

Chair Beason mentioned that the department could use a new prize spinning wheel, which Stacy and Corey completely agreed. Stacy and Corey then showed the recap video of Avondale Fiesta. Before beginning the video, Chair Beason asked if the event can be moved further down Western to accommodate parking, which Stacy confirmed is being looked at.

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She specifically mentioned that the event is growing, and the event has now outgrown the current space and more space will be needed in the future.

Stacy then moved to a staff update regarding Matt Macer, who she mentioned had recently passed his Certified Parks and Recreation Professional exam. Stacy mentioned this is a big achievement as the exam is very comprehensive and shows a true commitment to the field. Matt's achievement now means that there are 7 individuals on staff that have professional parks and recreation credentials.

Stacy then gave an update on regarding the enhanced partnership with Ballet Folklorico, which has included more involvement in events and programming with the city.

Chair Beason asked about the sale of alcohol at events and how they are determined. Stacy then mentioned its usually only at nights, with the exception of Tres Rios which happens during the day, but events like Billy Moore Days and Avondale Fiesta will have them during the evening.

Corey then added that alcohol at events is also partly determined by the target audience of the events. For example, community events like Poppin' in the Park and Eggstravaganza won't have alcohol.

Boardmember Nielson asked if you have to have a license to fish at the fishing ponds, which Bryan confirmed you do have to. The fish come from Arizona Game and Fish and if ponds are stocked with a variety of fish, which includes catfish and bass.

Bryan and Corey both mentioned that the Garden Lakes neighborhood is a catch and release source of fishing and is not part of the urban fishing program. This was in response to a comment made by Chair Beason regarding her observation of the lakes.

6. NAMING OF THE RENOVATED COMMUNITY CENTER

Bryan started off this topic by saying the community center will be renovated in 2022 and the purpose of the facility will be to help with dance classes, activity spaces, meeting rooms, an eSports room and will be renovated to look significantly better both inside and outside the building. The facility will have office space, a conference room will have a much more open lobby where teens and kids can come in and actively use. The hope is that it becomes more of a community gathering place in the neighborhood.

Bryan mentioned that the hours of the facility will likely be 8am-8pm Monday through Friday and possibly 8am-1pm on Saturdays and would be closed Sundays. Bryan mentioned the purpose of the renaming of the building is to help enhance the image of the facility to think more of as a community center rather than a senior center. Bryan mentioned this isn't an action item, but for the board to think about for next month's meeting.

Chair Beason asked if the city has asked around the neighborhood what their views are, which Bryan mentioned it is very likely the next step in the process. Bryan mentioned it is the original park of Avondale and there is a lot of neighborhood pride surrounding the park.

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Chair Beason then followed up saying she believes that the city should approach the neighborhood to ask their opinions about name suggestions. Bryan said the city can coordinate with the neighborhood family services department to assist with that inquiry.

Boardmember Nielson asked if the community center building is going to be completely torn down and rebuilt or if it will be renovated with the existing structure, which Corey confirmed its renovation not a complete rebuild.

Boardmember Espino made mention that the center is a step in the direction of what was and will become because of the families that are there. Bryan mentioned that the dedication plaque that is part of the building will be mounted somewhere inside.

Boardmember Nielson asked if the building will be completed by November, to which Bryan confirmed it will be. Bryan mentioned that a contractor has been selected and designs are nearly finalized and ready to go.

Corey then mentioned that the demographic breakdown of the area around the center is mostly Hispanic and it is a lower income area that is underserved. Corey also mentioned this would be the first major indoor recreation space that the city programs with its own staff.

Chair Beason mentioned that there is a small black community around this area that Corey mentioned could be a valuable partner in helping foster the facility to be a welcoming site.

Stacy mentioned that this site will be able to help bring partners with the city to a more dedicated space for those activities.

Boardmember Nielson asked if there will be adequate parking, which Bryan mentioned is being enhanced as part of the renovation project.

7. BOARD PARK OBSERVATIONS – MOUNTAIN VIEW PARK

Chair Beason started off by asking how large the park, is which Bryan said is 10 acres. Chair Beason mentioned that there is a large ramada with lots of picnic tables and a volleyball court with empty nets. She then mentioned that she saw that there were benches dedicated to an individual. She also mentioned that there were two fully built basketball courts.

Boardmember Nielson mentioned that she thought the park would be a good idea to have a frisbee golf course at the park if the space accommodates. Boardmember Nielson also recommended active fitness recreation pieces.

Boardmember Nielson asked if a splashpad could be put in where the water tank will be taken down as well as a bathroom.

Boardmember Espino mentioned that there are lots of trees to provide shade but wanted to know more about the open space that is in the south part of the park, to which Dominic replied it is a multi-purpose field that is rented to the public daily at its peak in the spring and fall.

Bryan then responded to the observations made about the park, by first with a history lesson of why the park was named for what it was originally for.

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Bryan made mention that the facility did receive an upgrade within the past few years that included upgrading the basketball court, sports lighting and other facilities within the park. Bryan mentioned that a bathroom once was at the park but was taken down at some point. He then mentioned that the park had received Land-Water-Conservation Funds which require the park to remain a park in perpetuity and will need to have a bathroom reinstalled in the future as part of the conditions of receiving the grant funds.

Corey and Bryan then showed designs of the facility after the water tank comes down that include a bathroom and other facilities such as ramadas and more shade.

Boardmember Nielson asked if a drinking fountain is at the park, which Bryan mentioned there currently isn't but it's being looked at. One solution is to add a water drinking station that is refillable for water bottles rather than just a standard drinking fountain.

Bryan then mentioned the project has been budgeted and the department is hoping to have construction started in the fall and have the renovations at Mountain View Park possibly completed by the end of the year.

Corey then mentioned that the park had a close down for 45 days recently to do a deep clean of the facility and to help alleviate the homelessness issue that had been around the park. Corey also mentioned that the new facilities should bring higher activity to the park and a higher point of pride within the neighborhood.

Chair Beason asked how much use of the parks are being used and how we know that. Bryan answered that we know through facility reservation data the park has high usage in the evenings during weekdays during the spring and fall and falls off a bit in activity during the summer as the weather gets warmer.

Chair Beason asked if the parks experienced waves of homelessness, to which Bryan replied the city does see it in waves but it doesn't happen for more than a week at any given time. Bryan specifically mentioned that the worst park is Dessie Lorenz park along the railroad tracks and at times at the ramada at Mountain View Park.

Bryan did mention there are a few abandoned homes in the neighborhood that have facilitated homeless had contributed to that, but code enforcement has dealt with the issue. Bryan also mentioned that new housing development around the park is helping to bring new life into the area.

Boardmember Lazo then brought up a point of if homelessness could be something people in general can live with, to which conversation steered towards the balance of the public's ability to assist people who are homeless compared to those who are homeless who choose to be homeless.

Corey mentioned that the department has done trainings to help assist and deal with homelessness when they need help, but they will also deal with enforcement if bad behavior is taking place.

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Boardmember Lazo then asked if there is signage that could be included in any new facilities around the city that could provide resources to homelessness, which Bryan did say the city does offer now.

8. PARKS AND PROJECTS UPDATE

Bryan kicked off the update stating that the Donnie Hale project is at 85%-90% completed and will hopefully be completed in the next month or so.

Bryan then discussed that Friendship Park has undergone major renovations, which include new rules signs, a new playground and a renovated splash pad. The renovations are about 95% completed.

The next park mentioned was Alamar Park which is also 95% complete, but similar to Donnie Hale is at risk of running behind schedule because of power issues. The opening is hopeful for some time in late summer or early fall of 2022.

Bryan then added the morning of June 9th will be the groundbreaking ceremony for the aquatic center.

9. DEPARTMENT LEVEL OF SERVICE S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Bryan started this topic off with mentioning that the department is doing a staff retreat on Thursday, May 11th and wanted to get feedback from the board to incorporate their feedback into the analysis.

One strength that Boardmember Espino mentioned was that the city is able to acknowledge weaknesses and work on fixing them.

Boardmember Nielson mentioned that one strength is the volume of programs being offered and Boardmember Espino mentioned that the pricing could be a turnoff and maybe is a weakness. She also mentioned there might be some conflicting information in the RAVE versus what is offered in the actual programs.

Boardmember Lazo mentioned that she also agreed that it might helpful for Avondale to advertise the resident rate versus the non-resident rate to help encourage more participation.

Chair Beason mentioned one of the strengths of the city is the staff and the ability of the staff to involve the advisory board.

Chair Beason then mentioned that a weakness is the marketing of parks and recreation activities and opportunities and that the department can add more ways to discuss the things ongoing.

Boardmember Lazo mentioned a strength of the department was how inclusive the group was. Specifically, having the leadership to make someone feel safe to share their opinions.

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Boardmember Espino echoed those comments that the city has a feeling of inclusivity and is a high point of pride and a strength in general.

One opportunity mentioned is the staff make up can be more reflective of the community and staff agreed.

Chair Beason mentioned the growth of the community, which was recognized as both a strength and a threat.

Boardmember Espino mentioned that supplies and labor shortages are an absolute threat because they are a challenge to overcome.

Chair Beason then mentioned that the planning being done in the older the parks is a huge strength in terms of equity within the department. She then mentioned that a language barrier was a mentioned weakness and Bryan said it is still a continued weakness that the department is taking steps to continue to improve.

Chair Beason followed up with a question regarding whether or not there is a plan in the next five to ten years to build a large indoor facility such as the American Sports Center, to which Bryan said there is not because the need is not there.

Boardmember Lazo asked about if there is additional help that can be provided to the parks specifically in the area of maintenance around parks that are minority-majority, which staff said it is something that is being worked on to try and improve.

Bryan then followed up with staffing saying it was a weakness in the past but has gotten better as the staffing levels have filled through opportunities provided by the department.

Chair Beason followed up with a question about teen work opportunities, which Bryan mentioned the AviTemp program.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Nielson
2nd: Lazo

Approved 4-0

Members will attend either in person or by telephone or video conference call. Individuals with special accessibility needs, including sight or hearing impaired, large print, or interpreter, should contact the City Clerk at 623-333-1200 or TDD 623-333-0010 at least two business days prior to the Meeting.

Los miembros participaran ya sea en persona o por medio de llamada Telefonica o por vídeo. Personas con necesidades especiales de accesibilidad, incluyendo personas con impedimentos de vista u oído, o con necesidad de impresión grande o intérprete, deben comunicarse con la Secretaria de la Ciudad at 623-333-1200 o TDD 623-333-0010 cuando menos dos días hábiles antes de la junta.

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Janet Beason

Janet Beason (Jul 14, 2022 10:10 PDT)

Jul 14, 2022

Dominic DeCono

Dominic DeCono (Jul 13, 2022 10:51 PDT)

Jul 13, 2022

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