

**CITY OF PHOENIX
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
SUMMARY MINUTES
September 26, 2024**

Virtual meeting hosted on Webex.

<u>Board Members Present</u>	<u>Staff Present</u>	<u>Community Members</u>
Kelly Dalton Tony Moya (Virtual) Ed Zuercher (Virtual) Dorina Bustamante (Virtual)	Jon Chan Cynthia Aguilar Martin Whitfield Todd Shackelford Tannia Ruiz	Michael Norton Jerry Van Gasse Nicole Dizon Ginnie Ann Sumner Julia Taagart Gee Gee Entz Tom Harrell Jes Dobbs Timothy Sierakowski Jerry Van Gasse
<u>Board Members Absent</u>		
Aubrey Barnwell Sarah Porter Emma Viera		

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Dalton called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. with Board Members Moya, Zuercher, and Bustamante in attendance.

2. CONSENT ITEMS

No formal presentation on these items. Consent and request for approval only.

2a. Parks and Recreation Board Summary Minutes- August 29, 2024

2b. Multi Year Event License Agreement with McDowell Mountain Music Festival, Inc. at Steele Indian School Park

2c. Requests to Vend at Steele Indian School Park

Chairperson Dalton made a motion to approve consent items 2a through 2c. Board Member Bustamante, seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 4-0.

3. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEM(S):

3a. Parks and Recreation Department Capital Improvement Program Update

Deputy Director Todd Shackelford presented an update on the five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP), highlighting various completed projects. He explained the CIP's funding sources and its focus on new park designs, facility upgrades, and safety-based improvements, using a three-tiered rating system to assess the lifespan of amenities. Over 150 projects are currently managed, including ADA-accessible playgrounds, shade structures, and park renovations. Notable projects include the Encanto Park Playground, Momo Park, Harvest Park, Roadrunner Park, and new

cricket pitches. Mr. Shackelford also discussed widespread maintenance efforts across the city's parks, including repairs to parking lots, sidewalks, LED lighting retrofits, and fountain replacements. Director Cynthia Aguilar commended Shackelford and his team for their work over the past six months

Chairwoman Kelly Dalton thanked staff for the presentation and diversifying different funding sources.

Chairwoman Dalton opened the floor for public comment on this item.

Jerry Van Gasse commented that he would like to see updates on existing parks, information on preserve projects and more frequent updates on CIP projects.

Michael Norton commented that he would like focus placed on opportunities for raising additional funds to activate undeveloped properties. He also stated he would like a list available of the undeveloped and vacant properties provided on a regular basis.

Board Member Zuercher requested a future agenda item addressing planned capital improvements for water conservation, shade, and funding for undeveloped properties.

Board Member Moya emphasized the delicate balance between allocating funding for maintaining existing park infrastructure and developing new parks. He noted that a discussion is needed to determine the primary focus moving forward.

3b. Parks and Recreation Department American Rescue Plan Act Update

Assistant Director Marty Whitfield provided an update on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) projects, detailing the \$2.9 million allocated in June 2022 for park improvements, including adaptive playground elements, athletic court refurbishments, and WalkPHX paths and fitness stations. He highlighted the installation of adaptive playground features at several parks to accommodate children with diverse physical and sensory abilities, as well as the refurbishment of sports courts to enhance safety. ARPA funding is also supporting new WalkPHX paths and fitness stations across multiple parks, all set to be completed by the end of the year.

Management Assistant II Tannia Ruiz discussed the Park Activation Neighborhood Grant Program, which allocated ARPA funding for grants to neighborhood groups and nonprofits for hosting community events or programming to activate parks. With over 200 events planned or held in 37 parks, the program is transforming parks into community hubs, promoting health, fitness, and cultural engagement while creating safer, more inclusive spaces. These efforts reflect the City's ongoing commitment to improving park accessibility, safety, and community involvement.

Chairperson Dalton opened the floor for public comment in this item.

Nicole Dizon, a member of the 44th Community Alliance Steering Committee and ARPA Grant recipient, spoke about the significant impact of the grant program on her community. She highlighted Pierce Park, which had previously been one of the top five

parks for code of conduct violations, as a key site where grant funds were used to host a celebration with entertainment, food, and games. The event brought neighbors together, creating a lasting positive effect that has continued. Dizon emphasized that the park is now being used for its intended purpose and expressed hope for continued funding opportunities to further benefit the community.

Amy Ramirez, the Camelback Community Association President, shared as recipients of an ARPA grant, they were able to introduce family friendly and culturally inviting events to their neighborhood. She explained the events made people feel safe and lessened negative activity encouraging the community to utilize parks more. She stated they were grateful and looking forward to partnering with the city in future park activation projects.

Board Member Zuercher thanked staff for the update. He shared his hope for additional funding in the future and recognized there is a high demand for resources. He also thanked the residents that shared about their usage of ARPA grant funds.

Chairwoman Dalton shared that the response and number of applications for the Park Activation Neighborhood Grant Program was incredible. She also said she hopes that additional funds will be available in the future to use as a jump start to communities. She recognized the importance parks can bring to communities.

3c. Parks and Recreation Department General Obligation (GO) Bond Update

Director Aguilar provided an update on the GO Bond program, highlighting that \$64 million from the \$500 million bond passed by Phoenix voters will fund 10 projects for the Parks and Recreation Department over the next five years. The Neighborhood Parks Enhancement Program, allocated \$1.5 million, will support minor capital improvements across council districts, with applications open in fall 2024. Additionally, new centers, park enhancements, and pool conversions are planned, including the transformation of Maryvale and Harmon Park Pools into regional pools. Esteban Park and Estrella Civic Space will receive significant development, while South Mountain Park and Margaret T. Hance Park will see key improvements. Aguilar also discussed criteria for project selection, prioritizing community demand, safety, and existing amenities to maximize funding and avoid duplication.

Board Member Moya inquired about the Neighborhood Parks Enhancement Program, asking if there will be an online application and how it can be accessed.

Director Aguilar confirmed that the applications for the Neighborhood Parks Enhancement Program will be available online from September 27 to November 8, 2024. The program will be promoted through the Parks and Recreation social media platforms, shared with council offices, marketed to neighborhood groups listed with Neighborhood Services, and highlighted through community engagement efforts.

Board Member Zuercher expressed his support for the transformation of the pools, noting how pool usage and staffing needs have changed. He emphasized that having fewer, higher-quality, more exciting, and attractive pools is preferable to maintaining a

larger number of less appealing ones. He also commended the conversion of pools to splash pads as a forward-thinking and creative solution.

Chairwoman Dalton expressed her appreciation for the presentations and for receiving detailed information about all the projects the Parks Department is working on. She emphasized the importance of staying informed about the department's efforts and plans.

4. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Tom Harrell, President of the Echo Canyon Homeowners Association, expressed his opposition to the suggestion to change hours at Echo Canyon. He cited safety concerns for hikers in the dark, as well as issues related to increased noise, traffic, and crowds affecting local residents.

Gee Gee Entz, a resident near Echo Canyon, voiced her opposition to the proposed change in hours, citing concerns about increased noise and safety issues related to lighting.

Jessica Dobbs requested expanding and clarifying hiking hours, saying that sunrise is too vague of a statement.

Julia Taggert commented on safety concerns at Norton and Palma Parks.

Timothy Sierakowski commented on the popularity of hiking at Echo Canyon. He suggested a shuttle system as a way to reduce traffic and congestion concerns.

Jerry Van Gasse commented he would like increased hours for hiking and stated he would continue working together with neighbors as it has been efficient in the past.

Ginnie Ann Sumner thanked the Parks Department for their participation in the 44th Community Alliance GAIN Event and for the Park Activation Neighborhood Grant Program. She also expressed her enthusiasm and appreciation for the activation of the 24/7 Code of Conduct answering service.

5. BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairwoman Dalton thanked the people that came out in person and those who come regularly. She also thanked staff for the informative presentations.

6. BOARD COMMENTS/REQUESTS

Board Member Bustamante commented she would like information on the City's respite program and how it might impact the park system and if there can be future planning, awareness, and coordination.

7. DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING

Assistant Director Whitfield shared information regarding the PHXTeens attendance at a Phoenix Mercury Game, the University Park Homework Club, and the start of Fall Programming.

Director Aguilar shared information on the launch of the 24/7 Parks Code of Conduct Answering Service, the Pinpoint Interactive Social Map, the Gila River Lookout winning a 2024 MCDI Disability Awareness and Recognition Event award, and preparations underway for the 37th Annual APS Electric Light Parade.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairperson Dalton adjourned the meeting at 6:18 p.m.