

SUMMARY MEETING MINUTES
PHOENIX PARKS AND PRESERVE INITIATIVE (PPPI) OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
January 30, 2023

Phoenix City Hall, 200 W. Washington St., 16 Floor, Conf. Rm 16 E & Virtual on WebEx

Committee Members:

Patricia Duarte, Chair
Ira Feldman
John Furniss
Sarah Porter
Gary Kaasa

COP Staff:

Cynthia Aguilar
Martin Whitfield
Tracee Hall
Michael Blea
Todd Shackelford
Theresa Faull
Mary Alejandro
Tannia Ruiz
Sara Del Valle
Paul Li
Inger Erickson
Danielle Poveromo
Ken Haack

Others Present

Rachel Ormsby
Jeremy Thacker
Jerry Van Gasse

Absent:

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Patricia Duarte called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

Chairperson Duarte introduced herself, followed by introductions from members of the Phoenix Parks and Preserve Initiative (PPPI) Oversight Committee, the City legal representative, Parks and Recreation Department staff and public present in the conference room.

Chairperson Duarte mentioned appreciation to Tom Chapman, former Chair of the PPPI Committee, for his years of service.

2. Approval of January 25, 2022 Minutes

Public Speaker Jeremy Thacker expressed disagreement with the minutes as presented. Chairperson Duarte asked Mr. Thacker to submit discourse in writing to staff following City protocols. Mr. Thacker agreed that he would submit them in writing.

Committee Member Sarah Porter recommended to table approval of minutes.

Chairperson Duarte agreed to table action on the minutes with no further discussion.

No motion taken on this item.

3. Approval of the BKD 2022 Independent Certified Accountant's Report on Management's Assertion Regarding Compliance

PRD Management Services Deputy Director Theresa Faull stated BKD had a merger and the company was now called Forvis. She introduced Rachel Ormsby with Forvis to share her findings.

Ms. Ormsby reviewed the 2022 Independent Certified Accountant's Report. She confirmed finding the Parks and Recreation Department (PRD) in compliance with the usage requirements of the PPPI funds as established in Proposition 101 amended by Proposition A on July 1, 2008. She stated the examination was completed in accordance with attestation standards required by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

In response to a question by Committee Member Feldman, Ms. Ormsby explained that testing was performed on randomly selected samples of transactions. She believed 30 samples were tested and all were found to have no violations, issues or findings. Regarding the percent of transactions this represented, PRD Director Aguilar added that staff would need to verify the number but could then provide it to the Committee.

Public Speaker Mr. Jeremy Thacker had several inquiries and concerns regarding the report.

Chairperson Duarte deferred Mr. Thacker's inquiries and concerns to Paul Li, Assistant City Attorney IV for direction on responses. Mr. Li requested Mr. Thacker to submit his inquiries and concerns regarding the report findings in writing following the City's proper protocols for public records requests.

PRD Director Aguilar added that staff will work with Mr. Li to ensure all of Mr. Thacker's questions and concerns are answered. She confirmed that responses will work through the City Communications Office and Committee members will also receive a copy of the responses.

Chairperson Duarte reminded the Committee and attendees that PPPI funds are voter approved to be used for overall park enhancements and that the role of this Committee is to oversee that funds are used in this manner.

Committee Member Furniss stated Mr. Thacker's questions, although valid and should be answered by staff, did not cause him any concern to approve the report as presented.

Committee Member Porter concurred with Committee Member Furniss.

With the conclusion of this discussion, Committee Member John Furniss made a motion to approve the report. Committee Member Ira Feldman seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

4. Review of FY 2021-2022 PPPI projects and overview of planned projects for FY 2022-2023

Deputy Director Theresa Faull presented PRD's inventory data which included flatland parks, preserve acreage, trails, facilities, pools, play structures, athletic fields and lighting data:

She shared that 52 parks were built in the 60s and 70s and the oldest park, Verde Park, was built in 1907. She also stated the Stevens House was 120 years old. She explained the 36,000 preserve acreage did not include desert parks, which totaled over 5,000 acres and highlighted that South Mountain will be experiencing its 100th anniversary in 2024. Deputy Director Faull then introduced Parks Development Deputy Director Todd Shackelford to continue the presentation.

Deputy Director Shackelford presented the list of PPPI projects both completed and currently underway. Completed projects in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 included the following:

- Cholla Trail Improvements
- Cielito Park
- Perry Park Skate Plaza
- Phoenix Zoo Parking Lot
- Mountain Vista Playground
- Nuestro Park Renovation
- Aquatic Infrastructure Improvements

Deputy Director Shackelford highlighted some of the current projects underway in FY 2022-23, which included the following:

- West Plaza Park Improvements
- Splash Pads at El Oso Park and Mariposa Park
- New Cesar Chavez Community Center
- Circle K Park Improvements
- Little Canyon Park Improvements
- Paradise Valley Park Improvements
- Phoenix Mountains Preserve – Piestewa Peak Dreamy Draw Improvements

Assistant Director Whitfield thanked and recognized staff for their work over the last year. Director Aguilar added that the events to commemorate completion of projects were exciting. She acknowledged that these projects have been successfully completed due to the PPPI funding and that even through COVID, the projects were able to be completed.

Chairperson Duarte added that the Nuestro Park community is especially happy for the park renovation. She shared that she is aware of how important neighborhood parks are to their surrounding communities. She also inquired about the City's prioritization of projects.

Director Aguilar provided information on how projects are prioritized based on rating/scoring system conducted by Parks Development staff.

Committee Member Feldman inquired about the zoo parking lot. Director Aguilar explained that the property is owned by the Parks and Recreation Department and the zoo is a tenant and the operator of the facility and responsible for the operational costs.

Public Speaker Jeremy Thacker commented on the Committee's role and expressed there should be more oversight by the Committee of PPPI funded expenditures.

5. Chairperson's report

Chairperson Duarte welcomed new Committee Member Gary Kaasa. She shared that she is excited about the Super Bowl game coming to town and that it will allow Hance park to play a huge part in this experience and also showcase the many other parks across the City. She thanked staff for their work and commented that she looks forward to the responses from legal regarding concerns stated by public speaker Mr. Jeremy Thacker.

Public Speaker Jeremy Thacker commented on the Committee's role and oversight of PPPI funded expenditures.

6. Comments from the Committee

Committee Member Feldman commented that Tatum Boulevard lacks a crosswalk near Reach 11 and it appears to be dangerous for the public crossing this street. He asked if staff could look into this area. PRD Director Aguilar responded that staff would investigate this further and would also share these concerns with the Street Transportation Department.

Referring to the earlier discussion surrounding the approval of the examination report, Committee Member Furniss suggested a statement from staff that defines why these findings are acceptable standards would be helpful. He further suggested more information to educate the public on what the purpose of the PPPI Oversight Committee is and its role.

Committee Member Feldman added that staff should define the difference between an audit and examination for better understanding.

Committee Member Porter suggested the same information would be valuable for the Parks and Recreation Board. Chairperson Duarte also suggested that staff show the impact PPPI funding has had to public/ voters/residents so they can see how dollars have been used.

Public Speaker Jeremy Thacker questioned whether a Committee Member resided in Scottsdale, in which the Committee member responded no.

7. Call to the Public

Public Speaker Thacker commented on his concerns with the audit/ examination and the Committee's role.

8. Adjournment

Chairperson Duarte adjourned the meeting at 10:09 a.m.