The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting was held on July 18, 2019 at the Parks and Recreation Conference Room, 1501 E. Hadley, Las Cruces, NM.

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Robert Harrison
Marilyn Zahler (by telephone)
Cassie McClure
Stan Engle
Megan Schuller
Eric Montgomery

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:
Eli Guzman

OTHERS PRESENT:
Hazel Nevarez, Senior Office Manager & Recorder
Sonya Delgado, Director of Parks & Recreation
Phil Catanach, Recreation Services Administrator
Robert Nunez, Recreation Services Administrator
Franco Granillo, Park Administrator
Cathy Mathews, Landscape Architect
Dan Carter, Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance
Patrick Nolan, FOMDP

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Chair Harrison and recognized as having a legal quorum.

1. Introductions

Board members introduced themselves and stated the district they represent. Staff introduced themselves and stated their position.

Ms. Schuller moved to accept Ms. Zahler by phone conference, seconded by Ms. McClure. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Conflict of Interest

Ms. McClure stated she is new member of Friends of the Organ Mountains.

3. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Schuller moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Ms. McClure. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Approval of Minutes

Ms. McClure moved to approve the minutes of June 20, 2019 as presented, seconded by Mr. Engle. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment

Dan Carter, President of the Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance, introduced himself and was present to discuss ditch trail improvements in continuation of what was discussed at the July Board meeting and other meetings (one being a trail talk on Monday for which Mr. Carter expressed thanks to those who attended). Mr. Carter presented Board members with a handout of Ditch Trail Improvements (EBID Canals and Drains) summarizing some ideas, talking points and concerns. He said one element of conversation brought up at the Bicycle, Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) meeting was that there weren’t going to be official road crossings, users would be expected to follow the sidewalks, if available, down to the nearest intersection road crossing, cross there, and then double back to the trail. He said this is felt to be an unrealistic expectation of users, as seen by the many accidents with bikes and pedestrians on University Ave. because they just cross where it is convenient to cross. He said safety, road crossing and way finding was believed to be the most important aspect beyond the surfaces, especially because of the limited budget. Mr. Carter said he would like to see this item as well as open space in the city as a discussion item on an agenda for a future Board meeting.

Ms. Delgado informed Mr. Carter that Agenda Item 6.3 for this meeting is a Letter of Support for the Southwest Loop Trail in which Ms. Cathy Mathews will also give an overview of all the trail projects. Ms. Delgado said the crossing is something that has been discussed, and some of the things may or may not be able to be done because of streets and other rules that need to be followed.

6. Action Items

6.1 Friends of the Organ Mountains Agreement – Robert Nunez

Mr. Nunez gave the Board a presentation regarding the Memorandum of Agreement between Parks and Recreation Department and Friends of Organ Mountains – Desert Peaks explaining how a partnership would allow us to expand and enhance programs for youth and allow them to participate in outdoor activities so they can experience this region, as well as receive some educational components. A copy of the agreement was provided to the Board showing what the Friends of Organ Mountains – Desert Peak would provide and what Parks and Recreation would provide. Mr. Nunez informed the Board the agreement has already been reviewed by the City’s Risk Department and is currently being reviewed by the City’s Legal Department for final approval. He said since Risk is housed under Legal, he doesn’t foresee any changes. He said he hopes to have this agreement approved by the Board and signed up through City Administration, to be
able to do some activities before summer’s end. Mr. Nunez opened the floor to questions and informed the Board Mr. Patrick Nolan, Executive Director of Friends of Organ Mountains – Desert Peak is present.

Mr. Montgomery asked if funding is already in place, if additional funding will be needed. Mr. Nolan said no, this is a perfect example of the Outdoor Equity Fund.

Ms. Schuller asked Mr. Nolan if they work with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Game & Fish as they are a valuable resource for the educational component. Mr. Nolan said they work with BLM. He said Game & Fish is a great idea to which Ms. Schuller said she has the connections.

Mr. Montgomery asked if there will be some kind of documentation or way to talk about 1) what youth go back for successive programs to be able to talk about this publicly as a success and a continued want within the community and 2) is there some sort of reporting mechanism that shows x number of participants and if any had to be turned away to show the opportunity for the future. Mr. Nunez said this is something that will be tracked. He said this is all part of Peak Performance, to show the successes and shortcomings. Ms. Delgado asked Mr. Montgomery how often he would want to see the report. Mr. Montgomery said once a year. Ms. Schuller added also to show if it is the same youth that are participating, identifying if a target group is being missed.

Chair Harrison asked which programs are being looked at to participate in this program. Mr. Nunez said the Out of School Time programs and teen population, and kinder up to 17 years. Chair Harrison asked if this could be done without the non-profit involved. Ms. Delgado said there is a staff member who is certified for all outdoor activity types, so there is a lot more extensive safety training, but that program is at its max and Parks and Recreation would not be able to expand. She said the answer to the question is no, Parks and Recreation doesn’t have resources, doesn’t have the expertise Friends of Organ Mountains – Desert Peak has, and doesn’t have the budget for that program. Ms. Delgado said this agreement would be a great opportunity for the youth of our community to experience the outdoor activities and education.

Chair Harrison asked if this would include mountain biking, kayaking, water dependent activities. Mr. Noland said mountain biking would be contingent on finding the funding. Mr. Nolan said it is really just introducing youth to public lands and are willing to expand beyond a hike.

Chair Harrison asked what are the six trips being looked at. Mr. Nunez said currently, hikes and educational components.

Mr. Engle commented this would be a great opportunity for the Youth Board to get involved, to act as Ambassadors for this this program. Mr. Nunez and Mr. Nolan agreed.
Ms. Zahler asked, for these hikes, if accommodations are being made for children or adults coming along with service dogs. Mr. Nunez said would work with the City’s EEOC department to provide those accommodations as needed.

Mr. Montgomery asked how this initiative would fit in with the City hiring an Outdoor Recreation Coordinator. Ms. Delgado said this position is in Economic Development Department and housed in the Visit Las Cruces section. She said the position is currently being formulated and trying to figure out if the role is to talk about what could happen and invite people to be a part of that or if the person would actually perform programming.

Mr. Engle asked if the Friends of the Organ Mountains – Desert Peak will have waivers to be signed. Mr. Nunez said the waivers would be initiated by the City.

Mr. Montgomery asked how many participants are expected. Mr. Nunez said would need to look at transportation, location, and age group, but twenty to start.

Mr. Montgomery moved to amend item 1B from a bi-annual report to an annual report. Ms. Schuller asked for clarification on what bi-annual means. Mr. Montgomery said he still feels it should be an annual report. Ms. Schuller seconded the motion. Mr. Engle said he assumed Mr. Nunez was going to say it would be a six-event minimum, but there could be many more participants for which a report would have to be written on. Mr. Nunez said being the agreement is in its infancy, the minimum was six but anticipates different avenues could be looked at to increase that number. He said he could report quarterly with data. Mr. Engle asked if it were to be semi-annually, would the City be burdened with a semi-annual report as opposed to an annual report. Mr. Nunez said no.

The motion to amend 1B from a bi-annual report to an annual report carried unanimously.

Mr. Montgomery moved to approve MOA with the Friends of the Organ Mountains – Desert Peaks as amended, seconded by Ms. Schuller. Ms. McClure said this is a fantastic program but will abstain from the vote. Motion carried.

6.2 Youth Board Bylaws – Robert Nunez

Mr. Nunez informed the Board they have received in their packet changes to the Bylaws that were discussed at the June 20, 2019 Board meeting - changing the terms to two years. He said he is also requesting to bump the recruitment period to the beginning of a school year to look towards advertising in August, getting Board members within October, and term beginning November 1, odd number years would be eight members, even number years would be eight members. He said currently, there are five members interested in staying for another year. They would be the odd number. An additional 11 members would be recruited this coming year. He said not many applicants have been received and is reason for request to adjust recruitment date, to enlist the Community Engagement office and Las Cruces Public Schools - Administration and Advisors, to get the word out about this program.
Mr. Engle asked if term would begin November 1 as Bylaws shows October 1. Mr. Nunez apologized and said October 1 is correct. November 1 would be when the Chair and Vice Chair would be elected.

Ms. Schuller questioned having 16 members. Mr. Nunez said this past year, were able to get 16 members, with attendance fluctuating. He said through the selection process, making sure applicants understand how much is on their plate is key. Ms. Sculler asked if there should be a caveat of possibly not exceeding 16 but allowing for a board of 12, so quorum allowed would be six. Ms. Delgado said this is a good suggestion and could put language in so quorum could be adjusted, giving some flexibility so business could be conducted.

Mr. Engle said he agrees with Board member Schuller but questioned what implication would be if reduced number of students representing their district but still have an At Large of greater than four, the At Large might hold more power than the students representing their district.

Mr. Montgomery asked if there is a vacancy within a district, could a requirement be made that an At Large become a district representative. Ms. Delgado said this is a great question and isn’t sure on the answer.

Mr. Montgomery moved to approve the Youth Board Bylaws as presented by staff, seconded by Ms. Schuller. Mr. Engle said there could be issues but the Article 4, paragraph one could always be amended to change the Bylaws in the future, so he is ok with going forward with Bylaws as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

6.3 Letter of Support for the Southwest Loop Trail Project HEAL Grant from Paso del Norte Health Foundation – Sonya Delgado

Ms. Cathy Mathews made a presentation to the Board to show how the Southern Loop trail would be completed. She said the City is seeking a $350,000 Healthy Eating Active Living grant from the El Paso del Norte Foundation, to be matched by other donors to complete a 1 ¼ mile trail along the Laguna lateral and there is potential to build along the Mesilla drain, connecting through the California lateral in the town of Mesilla, joining up to the Laguna lateral after crossing Hwy 28 and joining up to Union that can connect to University or future trails on NMSU campus. Ms. Mathews say the grant application is due in November, the grant is currently being written and letters of support are being sought from various bodies including the town of Mesilla, Dona Ana County, other bicycle enthusiasts or groups, and from this Board. A copy of the draft letter to be signed by Chair Harrison was provided to the Board for approval.

Mr. Engle asked if letters from individuals also welcome. Ms. Mathews said all letters of support are welcome. Mr. Engle asked where should letters of support be sent. Ms. Mathews said they can contact her for a template or questions she can put them in contact with the grant writer, or to accept their letter. Chair Harrison asked if same address as on the draft letter could be used and Ms. Mathews concurred.
Public comment from Mr. Dan Carter added that one of the main goals of the Dona Ana County Trail summit is to create this inner jurisdictional proclamation and connectivity of trails and it is encouraging to see this project and shows collaboration.

Ms. Schuller moved to accept the letter as written and have it signed, seconded by Mr. Montgomery. Mr. Engle asked in the letter where it says ……. This project is integral to our ability to realize community identity, as residents have indicated the importance of having running, walking, and biking trails added to the existing trails systems….and if the information added in brackets following this sentence was meant to be added. Ms. Delgado said yes. Motion carried unanimously.

6.4 NRPA Conference / Baltimore, MD September 24-26, 2019 – Sonya Delgado

Ms. Delgado informed the Board if a Board member is interested in attending the National Recreation and Park Association Conference being held in Baltimore, MD, the Parks and Recreation Department will cover hotel, air, per diem.

Mr. Engle said his District is up for election and it is possible he could be off the Board so it would be unfair for him to go. Chair Harrison asked if anyone was going to the New Mexico Parks and Recreation Conference in Hobbs. Ms. Delgado said Board members are welcome to attend the state conference.

Mr. Montgomery moved for Board Member Zahler as the representative to attend the NRPA conference with himself as an alternate, seconded by Mr. Engle. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Discussion Items

7.1 Go Bond Update – Cathy Mathews

Ms. Mathews informed the Board on a number of projects that are moving forward regarding the Go Bond:

- East Mesa Sports Complex design project is under negotiations with Wilson and Co.
- Unidad Playground design project is under negotiation with Dekker/Perich/Sabatini Architecture.
- Sports courts and park improvements is out for proposal – design build project to make repairs and rehabs to sports courts and repairs at Apodaca Park, Young Park, and Desert Trails will have erosion control measures constructed.
- Met today to go over the request for proposal on the Hadley Ave. Sports Complex – this project will consist of irrigation and lighting improvements and improvements to restrooms and concession stands as budget allows. This will be advertised for bid soon.
- Trails project pre-bid just occurred July 17 and will be open for bid early August. Ms. Mathews said three trails are part of the Go Bond which Ms. Mathews pointed out on computer screen. Ms. Mathews said the Go Bond trail projects will be design build with public input. She said there are definitely considerations regarding the crossings and how to make those happen. She said there are different locations where crossings will be of great concern and will be carefully worked out going thru the design process. She said there is also discussion on the trail surfacing, what should the trail surfacing be and how to meet access obligations for ADA compliance while serving the desires of the public.

Mr. Montgomery asked for future projects, would more east/west direction of trails be able to be seen. Ms. Mathews said north/south is easy because that is how the laterals run, how EBID ditches run. East/West is difficult because of blockages in the “natural” trails with the exception of arroyos east of the dam.

Public comment from Mr. Dan Carter was that this was a very good observation by Mr. Montgomery. He said that under his graduate research, those east/west connections only exist with sidewalks, potential road facilities and laterals, which don’t go east/west, and until you get to east of the dam, as the Triviz Trail does, unofficially. He said it is really important to 1) preserve the open space to the east of town and 2) improve the connectivity and continuity of sidewalks and road facilities.

Chair Harrison said funding is available to also help ease some of the access of trail to or away from the school.

Ms. Schuller said the Mayfield and Las Cruces High School cross country teams utilize the trails a lot. She said on the east side, like Onate High School, they don’t have access to trails and is something to consider for an expansion purpose.

Chair Harrison said there would have to be a happy medium regarding the surface. Mr. Carter agreed but would like to see that the proposals take into consideration other ADA surfaces and not default to asphalt.

Mr. Engle asked what the Go Bond expansion amenities would include. Ms. Mathews said dealing with the surfacing, crossings, signage and paint, some trash receptacles, benches, shade structures. Mr. Engles said he was asking, because in speaking with the Gravalers riders, they are big proponents of permeable surfaces. He said in short term, they brought up signs and lights to make it safer in the dark. Mr. Engle asked if these trails would be day only, and Ms. Mathews said lighting had not been considered in their cost estimates. She said this would be a point of discussion, especially with existing neighbors.

Chair Harrison asked what is there now to cross the tracks to La Llorona. Ms. Mathews said the current option is to take your bike to the nearest intersection where there is a road that crosses the tracks and then come back on the roads to the trails. She said Public Works is currently in discussion with the Railroad. Ms. Delgado said the Railroad
does not want us crossing the railroad and doesn't know what the final answer will be. Ms. Delgado added there is a lot of public opinion and input coming and will be handed over to the design team, once on board. She said the design team will be meeting with the Board, asking for input. She also said budget impact will be big.

Chair Harrison asked what the relationship is with EBID regarding the laterals. Ms. Delgado said an agreement will be made with them, but their agreement to Parks and Recreation is that Parks and Recreation maintain it.

Chair Harrison asked if the ditch riders regulate the laterals in the City as they do when they are irrigating in the valley. Ms. Mathews said they do and coordinate with EBID as to which side the riders want to use.

Mr. Engle asked if one side is the City’s, could we come to some agreement with EBID about access to their side for the Gravalercs, that would essentially make the problem go away. Ms. Schuller’s comment to this is the least of their concerns. Mr. Carter said it would probably continue the way it has continued for so many years since there hasn’t been official use. He said 95% of the people who have asked about the laterals ask if the laterals can be officially used and where can they get on them and so is important for signage to encourage and invite usage.

8. Staff Member Comments

Mr. Phil Catanach informed the Board the 4th of July event, in partnership with NMSU, went great and wanted to thank City staff from several departments for their help. The parade had 56 floats and over 100 vehicles. It was estimated over 7,000 people viewed the hour and a half parade, 1.5-mile area. The parade marshal was Tommie Lackey, Navy Vet and two tour/ Afghanistan and Iraq. For the 4th of July concert, ukulele virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro was brought in along with Night Ranger with an estimated 4,000 – 5,000 people in the field. Christian Flores sang the National Anthem. The Mayor and the Chancellor spoke, and the firework show lasted a little over twenty minutes, with about 20,000 people watching from throughout the City. Planning for next year event is underway.

Mr. Catanach said currently going on in the Athletics section:
- Little Sluggers T-ball and Coach Pitch league with over 300 youth finishes next week.
- Youth soccer is in its third week with 24 teams and 240 youth.
- Adult basketball started this week, five leagues with over 400 adult players.
- Cheer and flag football registration is finishing up and will start in August. There will be over 400 players in flag football and about 50 cheerleaders.
- Adult Sand Volleyball with over 600 players and Youth Basketball with 62 teams and between 600 - 800 players are getting ready to start.

Mr. Catanach also reported there has already been seven Music in the Park concerts with about 7,000 people in attendance and informed the Board of the upcoming concerts.
Mr. Catanach said Movies in the Park are averaging 400 – 600 people in attendance, and he informed the Board of upcoming movies.

Mr. Catanach announced there is a table tennis tournament on July 20 at Frank O’Brien Papen Community Center. He added Special Event’s last event for the summer is Kid’s Expo, August 3, 9 am – noon and will do National Night Out with the Police Department on August 6.

Mr. Catanach added he wants to thank his for all the stuff they do in the summer.

Ms. Mathews informed the Board the Youth Conservation Corp program is underway with 15 youth, ages 16-21, and are working out well.

Mr. Nunez informed the Board the Juvenile Citation Program just received notice their subcontract was approved thru Children’s Youth & Families Department (CYFD) and is looking forward to getting the FY20 contract this coming year in the next two weeks.

Mr. Nunez informed the Board KLCB program received an additional $6,000. He said their Team Up to Clean Up Event for District 1 is July 20, based out of Valley View Park.

Mr. Nunez informed the Board the Out of School Time program, Weed and Seed, and Teen Connection has almost 300 youth daily with staff doing an amazing job. Last day for the summer program will be August 2. The Afterschool program will begin August 8 at seven locations in the public schools and a couple of city facilities.

Mr. Granillo informed the Board Young Pond is currently being filled and staff will work with Game & Fish to restock in a couple of weeks. He said hopefully will be able to get a fishing event there.

Mr. Granillo informed the Board of construction projects:
- Pond
- Calle Abuelo Park
- ADA issues at Butterfield Shooting Range and Airport

He added:
- Parks and Ballfields – turf is looking good without use of any post emergence chemicals for weeds.
- Regular maintenance is going well
- Burns Lake is up and running for soccer since June. Turf looks good there as well.
- Staff helped with 4th of July event and the four-day baseball tournament the same weekend with between 90-150 teams.
- Bigger events coming up for the second half of the year are Renaissance Fair and Plaza support.
- Clean sweep, alleyways, medians, right of ways, and landscape areas are going well.
• Park Operations District Manager position applicants are currently testing, and
  position should be filled soon.

Ms. Delgado showed the Board the hard copy of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan
and Appendix and informed them the plan will be available electronically and will be on
the web any day.

Ms. Delgado said she will be coming to the Board to start working on naming process
for parks. She said staff is currently working on getting a list of parks that do not have
official names by district. She said she will hold open meetings to get suggested names
which will be brought to the Board to narrow down.

Ms. Delgado informed the Board League Agreements will be coming forward to them.
The stipend process will also be brought forward to the Board.

Ms. Delgado informed the Board FY19 just ended and will let them know next month
what the expenditures were and what is coming forward. She said staff will also be
prioritizing what park amenities need to be replaced with Board’s assistance.

Ms. Delgado informed the Board Parks and Recreation Facilities are used as cooling
stations when temperatures reach the three digits.

Ms. Delgado informed the Board the Las Cruces Public School (LCPS) Agreement is still
with Legal. Once released will take it to LCPS and then to the Board for approval before
taking it to Council.

Ms. Delgado informed the Board staff is working on some land acquisitions – property
north of Legends West and north/northwest of Burn Lake. This will be brought closer to
the Board as it gets closer.

Ms. Delgado said other projects coming up are the community pool and Go Bond
projects.

9. Board Member Comments

Ms. McClure said KUDOS to staff at East Mesa, her son is enjoying the beginning of
Gymnastics.

Mr. Engle said good job to staff on 4th of July and good job on everything else.

Ms. Schuller said for staff to keep doing what they are doing.

Mr. Montgomery said he really appreciates the numbers. He is incredibly impressed with
the trash and appreciates the input level of professionalism of staff every single time as
these meetings.
Ms. Zahler said she was supposed to meet with Ms. Delgado and Ms. Woods of the
Veteran Board regarding the service dog monument and was unable to but hopes to
have an action plan in the next couple of months to present to the Board.

Chair Harrison said the Electric Light Parade was good but seemed long. He asked who
the concessionaire for the tournaments at Apodaca over the 4th of July? Mr. Granillo
said Ms. Terri Trujillo is the concessionaire, but he thinks she was asked to be removed
from the tournament so the tournament could bring their concessions in.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Schuller moved to adjourn meeting, seconded by Mr. Montgomery. Motion carried
unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Hazel Nevarez, Recording Secretary

Robert Harrison, Chair

Cassie McClure, Vice Chair