The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting was held on August 15, 2019 at the Parks and Recreation Conference Room, 1501 E. Hadley, Las Cruces, NM.

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Marylin Zahler (by telephone)
Cassie McClure
Stan Engle
Megan Schuller
Eric Montgomery
Eli Guzman

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:
Robert Harrison

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
James Woods, Keep Las Cruces Beautiful
Wayne Huber, Alameda Depot
Barbara Clarke, Alameda Depot
Lamaia Vaughn, Alameda Depot
Connie Voisie, Alameda Depot
George Radnovich, Sites Southwest
Peter Livingstone, Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance
George Pearson, Alameda Depot
Jeff Anderson, Alameda Depot
Philip Simpson, Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance
Cathie Fern, Resident

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Vice Chair McClure 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 Mr. Engle. Motion carried unanimously.
2. Conflict of Interest

No Conflict of Interest.

3. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Engle moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Ms. Schuller. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Schuller moved to approve the minutes of July 18, 2019 as presented, seconded by Mr. Engle. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment

There was not public comment.

6. Action Items
   6.1 Pioneer Women’s Park Master Plan (Tabled) – Cathy Mathews

Ms. Mathews reported the Women’s Pioneer Park Master Plan was tabled at the June 2019 Board meeting and several edits were recommended by the public and members of the Board. Ms. Mathews said the edits have been completed. Ms. Mathews introduced Mr. George Radovich of Sites Southwest, Consultant on the Project, who was present to make the presentation, discuss the process, and final master plan.

Mr. Radovich informed the Board Sites Southwest was commissioned by the City of Las Cruces to do the Master Plan for Pioneer Women’s Park. Mr. Radovich made a presentation to the Board of the processes gone thru to develop the Pioneer Women’s Park Conceptual Master Plan Report, and reviewed the changes decided upon for the Pioneer Park Conceptual Master Plan Report. He said the plan is not final until the plan is presented to City Council.

Ms. Lamaia Vaughn asked about the stone walls. Mr. Radovich said there are stone walls that are on each of the corners and there are little culverts about six to eight inches wide underneath each one that he believes is a remnant of when the park used to be flood irrigated. He said it is being recommended to keep the stone walls and refurbishing.

One public resident asked if it could be considered to change materials of the walkways rather than concrete. Mr. Radovich said the material being shown isn’t concrete, but some kind of a paver so it would be a permeable surface.
Mr. Engle asked where it says fixed modular seating and picnicking, what is meant by modular. Mr. Radovich said the benches and tables are movable. Mr. Engles said his preference would be that the seating and tables be fixed.

A member of the public asked if there are any grills. Mr. Radovich said they don't typically get to that level of detail in the master plan. Ms. Mathews said this is a design decision.

Mr. Radovich added Mr. Jeff Anderson (NMSU Horticulturist) helped with changes to the plant list, which was included in the master plan but is more of a recommendation than a specification. He also added a lighting plan was done for even density of lamination to the park.

Ms. McClure asked if the pergola was being added as a historical piece or if it was a request by residents. Mr. Radovich said it was resident’s request because of the historic reference to the way it was at one point in time.

Mr. Jeff Anderson, who lives two blocks from the park, said he was one of the ones to get the ball rolling for this master plan. He said he is really interested in the plants and wanted the Board to know that the City has a Landscape Architect, Cathy Mathews, a Forester, Jimmy Zabriskie, and he (Mr. Anderson) is very willing to help. He said he works for New Mexico State University and is the Horticulturist for the County. He commented that he hears at the meeting, the Board ask questions of people who don’t know what they are talking about in the way of trees and shrubs. He said when it gets to the tree and shrub input, the Board should listen to the people who have a background in it. Mr. Anderson thanked the Landscape Architect for doing this plan as it is really nice. Mr. Radovich added that he failed to mention he is a Landscape Architect as well.

Ms. Connie Voisie, who lives on Reymond St., said she was the person who really spoke out against the event street. She said she wants to thank her community for listening to her concerns and is very grateful for the changes that have been made. Mr. Radovich added Ms. Voisie was the only voice about the event street in the beginning, but by the end of the meeting, there were multiple voices against the event street, showing the power of persuasion and what the community really wants.

Ms. Lamaia Vaughn said she lives one block from the park and walks in it every day. She thanked George Radnovich and Sites Southwest, Cathy Mathews and Sonya Delgado for the wonderful job done in moving this plan forward. She said she went to every public meeting and they were well designed and beautifully conducted. Mr. Radovich mentioned that Lamaia was the person who talked about the history of the park for the Historical Society at the very first public meeting and thanked her for that.

Mr. Wayne Huber, who lives on Melendres, said he agrees with Lamaia on the whole process. He said he was at every single meeting that he possibly could be. He said he likes the idea of the tree sculpture area, taking the dead trees and creating an interesting sculpture garden and the idea that they may be used for benches. He said Las Cruces
used to have trees down the center of Main Street and were cut down. He said one
woman who had an art shop asked that they cut the trees into segments, and they had
an art show at Branigan Cultural Center of all the sculpture made from her favorite tree.
Mr. Huber reiterated he agreed with Lamaia on the process and appreciates the input of
everybody. Mr. Huber told Jeff Anderson he appreciated his input. He said Jeff had
some beautiful visual ideas from the very beginning, he knows so much about plants and
trees and hopes he is always consulted during this process.

Mr. Dan Carter, who lives on East Las Cruces Avenue, asked on the green storm water
infrastructure, if it's like street water harvesting to help with the flooding and irrigate trees
that way. Mr. Radovich said a grading plan wasn't done but it could actually happen
and that's a great idea. Mr. Radovich said a drawing was included that shows for the
newer trees, the trees could be helped along by having some subsurface storage to help
hold the water in place and use for those trees for a longer period.

Ms. Vaughn added she sent an email to Sonya and the engineer, Mr. Cortez, who is the
engineer and designer for the street refurbishment on Court Avenue that is happening
right now. She said they are going to replace the sidewalks on the Court side of the
park. Ms. Vaughn said she was distraught because the masterplan is almost here, and
the City is spending money on refurbishing Court Ave. and thinks why couldn't the master
plan and refurbishment be put together. She said her email was asking about the safety
of the trees and the curb structure and was pleased to hear that a special curb bump out
was designed on the southwest corner to not damage a tree. She said she is concerned
about them pulling out the sidewalk sections out now between the trees and how they
are going to manage all that and also if this master plan is accepted and then want to do
grading on streets and curb structure, will waste the money being spent now or
incorporate what is done on Court and do it on the rest of the four sides.

Ms. Delgado said the project can't be stopped but they are doing their best to take care
of the trees.

Mr. George Pearson, who lives on West Las Cruces, said he had concerns about the
Court Street reconstruction back when, during public input. He asked if five-foot
sidewalks could be put in, and he received confirmation today that they are. He said
there was a French drain over by the WIA being removed and storm drainage is being
put in. His other comments on the master plan were he appreciates the changes made
from the previous draft, and has let Cathy know of some picky things to be corrected, he
is looking forward to the plan being approved by City Council so can start asking them
for money because gazeebo needs to be worked on.

Mr. Wayne Huber asked if this is approved, how soon will the City make the decision to
approve this plan. Ms. Delgado said once the recommendation is made by the Board to
send forward, staff will start the process to put the paperwork together (Resolution to
City Council). She said right now it takes 30 days to get everything in, so looking at the
last meeting in September or first meeting in October. Once approved, will start the
process of finding a funding stream. Mr. Huber asked that once the City approves this
plan, is there any way designer of this plan and designer of the street can work together. Ms. Delgado said the street project could possibly be done by this time Mr. Huber said he understands the street project being done is phase 1 to be finished the end of December. Ms. Delgado said that once the plan is finalized, it will be shared with streets.

Mr. Engle moved to approve the master plan as presented, seconded by Mr. Schuller. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Discussion Items

7.1 Open Space Discussion – Dan Carter

Ms. Sonya Delgado introduced Mr. Dan Carter of Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance who requested to place open space discussion on the agenda. Mr. Carter said this was a good time to discuss open space since it is on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan has just been approved and is mentioned in Elevate Las Cruces.

Mr. Carter reviewed with the Board a map developed during the Dona Ana County Trail Summit initiative located at: https://blm-egis.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=89f9f892504f4241a8f9c9978d7c8f37
He pointed out land on the East Mesa, where there is a lot of state trust lands that are a good connector. He pointed out the Las Cruces Arroyo in between the Munson Center and a park on Espina and continues up to Lohman and Walnut. Mr. Carter said he wanted to point these big areas to bring to the attention of Parks and Recreation, along with the conversation with the state land office on leasing state lands for use. He also pointed out another area outside of the City limits, managed by the BLM, which local users call the sand box. Mr. Carter said there’s been conversations with the State Land Office and the BLM to incorporate this into the City’s open space.

Ms. Delgado added that Mr. Carter mentioned in the very beginning and one of the goals in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is an open space plan. She said funding needs to be found to put together an open space plan. Park impact fees can’t be used because some of this open space is outside of the city limits. Ms. Delgado said this is something she has already discussed with her supervisor and it is also coming up in Elevate Las Cruces, which is the Las Cruces Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Delgado said that once the Comprehensive Plan gets approved which should happen before the end of the calendar year, this will help solidify going forward in putting together an open space plan.

Ms. Schuller said in working thru this open space plan, to keep in mind that there is a BLM fence that runs from Hwy 70 to probably the A Mountain that is leased on the other side by ranchers who run cattle thru there.

Mr. Carter asked if park impact fees could be used to purchase leases from the State Land Office. Ms. Delgado said no.
Ms. Vaughn asked regarding trails, to a newcomer, are they a walking as well as bicycle trails. Mr. Carter said the trails are equestrian, bikes, and pedestrian. Ms. Vaughn added, regarding horse property, in other communities, it is advantageous to the property owners for the land to be seen as a horse owner neighborhood as it elevates the property value. She said she thinks this should be encouraged rather than discouraged.

Mr. Engle said he sees the Las Cruces Arroyo as an east-west connector.

Mr. George Pearson said part of this is outside city limits so in order to do the planning, can some support from the MPO be sought, and he’s not sure what the County does for planning. He said the MPO has a trails priority plan. Ms. Delgado said there would need to be lots of people at the table to make this happen.

7.2 Keep Las Cruces Beautiful (KLCB) – James Woods

Mr. Woods shared numbers for the end of the fiscal year with the Board to show how successful Keep Las Cruces Beautiful program was. He said there was a total of 4,778 volunteers from all cleanups throughout the year – Team Up to Clean up, Toss No Mas, Great American Cleanup, and all youth cleanups. Total number of hours was 19,244. Total of $24.14 rate per hour for volunteers (national Rate) came out to $469,347.82 for volunteers, with in kind of $18,126.00. Over 105,000 pounds of trash was collected, totaling 52 tons of trash total – litter pick up and roll off containers in different areas.

Mr. Woods said 31 Libby presentations, where Libby the Green dog goes out to educate the youth about litter and recycling, to different classes throughout the public schools, speaking to 640 some odd youth. He said they also go out to the City’s After School programs, visiting over 14 sites and did activities with over 458 youth.

Mr. Woods said they are at 13 Adopt a Spot locations, which continues to grow monthly.

Mr. Woods informed the Board a new project is Team Up to Clean Up, with the last one being in July for District 1, where two tons of trash was picked up and had over 40 volunteers. He said the next event is August 17, 2019 for District 5. Mr. Woods provided the Board a brochure on Team Up to Clean Up.

Mr. Woods said throughout the year, graffiti was removed from a total of 604 locations – walls, irrigation ditches, culverts, light poles, mailboxes, trash dumpsters.

Mr. Woods said that as far as volunteers, our program is probably number one in the state, and it continues to grow every year.

Ms. Delgado added there are opportunities for groups who want to do some fund raisers in the Keep Las Cruces Beautiful program.
Ms. McClure suggested that if doing green waste or yard waste, to put it in clear bags and not black, so it will be put into the mulch.

7.3 Leagues / Associations Requirements (Draft) – Sonya Delgado

Board members were provided with a draft agreement for Leagues and Associations to review, with changes made outlined in yellow. Ms. Delgado informed the Board she will be asking for action on this at the September Board meeting. Ms. Delgado said Legal is also reviewing the agreement. Ms. Delgado said she will be meeting with all the Presidents of the Associations between now and next Board meeting. Ms. Delgado said she wants the agreement in place to start the new season January 1, 2020, thereby taking the final agreement to leagues in November 2019 when the yearly meeting with them is held. Ms. Delgado said the biggest changes are that a list be provided ensuring background checks are done, making sure ethics pages are signed with coaches, and that sportsmanship training is done. Ms. Delgado said the Board needs to know what the Leagues and Associations are doing because another item Ms. Delgado will be bringing to the Board at the next Board meeting is that if there were to be a major issue the Leagues or Associations could not resolve with their Board, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will oversee that. Ms. Delgado said if the Board has any questions before the next meeting, to feel free to send her an email and copy the Chair.

7.4 Stipends Request Process (Draft) – Sonya Delgado

Ms. Delgado requested this item on stipend requests be tabled until the September Board meeting because she was unable to get some questions answered from another department. She said she will bring a draft to the next meeting for the Board’s review and the following month for action.

Ms. Schuller moved to table the Stipend Request Process until the September Board meeting, seconded by Mr. Engle. Motion carried unanimously.

7.5 FY19 Budget Recap / FY20 Budget – Sonya Delgado

Ms. Delgado provided and reviewed with the Board a summary of the FY19 budget and what the FY20 budget looks like. Ms. Delgado said the revenue budget was increased because the Youth Programs and Adult Programs have shot thru the roof. The Recreation section is doing a good job in pulling those programs together. The After-School Program is growing and the programs in the Youth Services section are also adding lots of numbers. Ms. Delgado said the Parks and Recreation Department is one of the few departments that has grown consistently for the last four years. Ms. Delgado let the Board know that if they have any questions after further review of the budget summary, to send her an email.

Ms. Zahler asked what percentage of the total budget is used for marketing and public relations. Ms. Delgado said there isn’t a set amount in one area as it is spread out throughout the programming. Ms. Delgado said she will have to get back to Ms. Zahler
with a firm dollar amount because advertising is done for all Parks and Recreation. A lot of advertising is done for the 4th of July, Movies in the Park, Music in the Park and the dollars aren’t in one area. Ms. Zahler said she doesn’t need a dollar amount, just a percentage.

7.6 Median Phase 1 Update – Cathy Mathews

Ms. Mathews informed the Board the City Bond Median Landscape Project Phase 1 has completed design and has gone out to bid. She said staff is in the process of contracting. Ms. Mathews said each council district will each have at least one median that will be landscaped. Ms. Mathews displayed a map showing medians that will be landscaped during Phase 1 which should start in September or October. Phase 2 design will be starting with similar budget and funding will be distributed similarly throughout the districts to address the needs throughout the city for additional landscaping. She said District 5 and District 6 tend to have the most un-landscaped medians, but each District does have some medians that require landscaping.

7.7 Projects Update – Cathy Mathews

Ms. Mathews presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Board summarizing Capital projects that are Park Impact Fee (PIF) funded, FY20 Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) Other Funded Projects, G.O. Bond Projects, and None-CIP projects. Ms. Mathews reiterated to the Board that there are Capital Projects that are on the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), Capital projects that are not on the CIP, and Go Bond Projects.

Ms. Delgado said Ms. Mathews mentioned some of the land acquisition opportunities and said staff is in the process of potentially buying some property to get more land for soccer.

8. Staff Member Comments

Ms. Nevarez encouraged Board members to notify her before each Board meeting if they will be in attendance so she knows if a quorum will be present and she can inform the Board with enough time if the Board meeting will be held.

Mr. Catanach informed the Board there are three concerts left for Music in the Park Movies in the Park has ended. He added leagues that are underway are Adult Basketball, Flag Football, Cheer, and getting ready for Youth Basketball and Outdoor Sand Volleyball. Summer Recreation has ended, and the swimming pools are finishing up with the outdoor pools season ending in two weeks. Mr. Catanach said staff is getting ready to push forward some public meetings for the new 50-meter community pool, with a public meeting with the Board in October. Mr. Catanach said a debrief meeting was held with New Mexico State University on the 4th of July, with the word being it was a very good show, everyone enjoyed it, and it looks like it will continue in 2020.
Ms. Mathews informed the Board she will be going to the National Recreation and Park Association Conference in September and is looking forward to learning about parks and landscape architecture. She said she hopes to report some of what she learns back to the Board.

Mr. Nunez informed the Board the Youth Board will be recognized on August 29, 2019 and an invitation will be sent to the Board via email. The recognition will be at City Hall, 2nd Floor, 5:30 pm – 7:00 p.m.

Reporting for Ms. Ceci Vasconcellos, Ms. Delgado informed the Board the survey to find out how Parks and Recreation is doing has been completed and will be launched on Survey Monkey August 26, 2019 and will close September 29, 2019. The survey will be promoted by press releases, Facebook page, google adds. Ms. Delgado asked to pass this information on to their district to participate. Ms. Delgado said information received will be used to make any necessary adjustments.

9. Board Member Comments

Ms. McClure asked who the fence that connects Apodaca Park to the new medical area belongs to. Ms. Delgado said it is theirs.

Ms. Zahler said Vice Chair McClure did a good job this evening.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Schuller moved to adjourn meeting, seconded by Mr. Guzman. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Hazel Nevarez, Recording Secretary  Robert Harrison, Chair