



Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
WORK SESSION
January 19, 2023

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board held a Work Session meeting on January 19, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall Council Chambers, 700 N. Main, Las Cruces, NM.

Members Present:

- Cassie McClure - District 1
- Stan Engle - District 4
- Kenneth Coppedge – District 2
- Aracely Tellez – District 3
- Eric Montgomery - District 5
- Laura Haas - District 6
- Fred Raish – At large member

Others Present:

- Robert Nunez, Interim Director, Parks and Recreation
- Phillip Catanach, Recreation Services Administrator, Parks & Recreation
- Hazel Nevarez, Senior Office Manager, Parks & Recreation
- Sergio Esparza, Project Specialist, Parks & Recreation
- Claudia Chavez, Interim Youth Services Deputy Director, Parks & Recreation
- Greg Shervanick, Public
- Becky Baum, Recording Secretary, RC Creations, LLC

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Work Session Meeting of January 19, 2023, at City Hall Council Chambers, 700 N. Main, Las Cruces, NM was brought to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair McClure and recognized the meeting as having a legal quorum.

1. Introduction:

Board Members introduced themselves and stated the district they represent. Attending staff introduced themselves.

2. Board Orientation:

- **Role**

Robert Nunez, Interim Director for Parks and Recreation, stated they wanted to review some various items for the advisory board and introduce the items offered within Parks and Recreation.

- 1 • **City Clerk**
- 2 • **Open Meetings Act**
- 3 • **Robert's Rules of Order / Basic Motions**

4
5 Christine Rivera, City Clerk stated the City Clerk's office oversees the boards
6 and committees. The Board received packets from her office. According to
7 the Municipal code this is a standard board, which means that each City
8 District is represented on the board. Nonstandard board means they are just
9 not District specific. All Board Members are required to live within the City
10 limits. The duties of this board are to review, recommend, and apprise the
11 City Council of all park operations and goings on. The board needs to meet
12 at least quarterly. Attendance of least 75% of the meetings held need to be
13 attended by the board, otherwise removal from the board.

14
15 All boards are run by Robert's Rules of Order, unless the board has its own
16 bylaws. What is covered are motions, moving and seconding, roll calls. Also
17 tabling and postponing is used. Something tabled indefinitely means that
18 item is killed and cannot bring it back. Postpone and bring back date specific,
19 have to remove them from the table, so that is another motion. Also
20 suspending the rules, which is for discussing two items concurrently.

21
22 Open Meetings Act is called the Sunshine Law as this is a public body and
23 doing everything out in the open and need to be transparent. This law is by
24 the Attorney General who also monitors complaints. This board is a public
25 body and has to do everything in open. Closed meetings are rare and for
26 specific exemptions. When developing policy, discussing rules and
27 regulations, discussing public business, then it needs to be done in the public.
28 The public is allowed to attend, but the board is not required to allow the
29 public to speak, but it is generally allowed as a curtesy, and nice to hear
30 constituents opinions. Public is allowed to video/record meetings. Notice
31 requirements which is the agenda. Agendas have to be very specific in the
32 items that are listed so that the public knows exactly what is being discussed.
33 Meetings need to be posted on the City's website 72 hours before the
34 meeting. Only things on the agenda can be discussed. Items can be
35 removed, but no items can be added at meeting, nor added after the 72 hour
36 mark before the meeting.

37
38 All boards and committees are required to take minutes which are approved
39 at the following meeting. Those will be filed with the clerk. Minutes at a
40 minimum have to have date, time, place, members who are attending and
41 those absent, and a substantive amount of information. Also be sure of a
42 correct record of the votes.

43
44 Lastly, rolling quorums. This is basically when a quorum of members are
45 discussing business, not necessarily together. An example: one board
46 member talks to someone about this, who then talks to another board

1 member, who then talks to another board member, who then talks to another
2 board member. They all decide individually they are going to vote no on an
3 item. They just established a rolling quorum, because now all four know
4 about this item and have decided to vote no on it. Another example is all
5 board members receiving an e-mail and then each board member replying
6 all to that email.
7

8 Discussions with other board members on topics other than Parks &
9 Recreation, do not qualify as rolling quorum. A quorum is four, so be sure to
10 stop at three. In the packet given to the board members, there was mention
11 of reporting to City Council. Parks and Receptions used to do it at work
12 sessions of the City Council. After the pandemic this fell to the wayside. It
13 was encouraged the board members keep in touch with the Councilors on
14 what is being done on the board. Violations of the Open Meetings Act is a
15 \$500 fine. Review and present community recommendations. Question
16 asked about how much power the board has. Generally it is a
17 recommendation as staff has to report to management.
18

19 **3. Parks & Recreation Overview:**

- 20
21 • **Organization Chart**

22
23 Robert Nunez stated the packet contained the organization chart from 2020
24 and an update will be provided upon staff completing that. There are 139 full
25 time staff, approximately 25 part time regular employees, approximately 70-
26 plus contract employees, 30-50 lifeguards.
27

- 28 • **Special Projects**

29
30 Sergio Esparza stated their primary mission is to provide project
31 management services for Parks and Recreation, for City Manager's office,
32 Councilors. Priorities are based on an assessment of needs. Develop the
33 master plans and assessment of public needs. They have a three member
34 staff, Cathy Mathews, Sergio Esparza, and Wilfred Martinez. If a project
35 comes up, first to discover if there is funding via grants, PIF, department
36 funding, or Council or City Manager provides funding. Once funding is
37 identified move to procurement code and then put the bid out or request for
38 proposal. After a winning bid or an award, then move forward, or if they got
39 any bids find out from purchasing who the vendor is and do a notice to
40 proceed. Kick off meetings and move the project forward. Generally there
41 are a variety of ongoing projects, and presently there are about 20 projects.
42 Last year they did master plans for Branigan, Gomez, and Frenger. They do
43 playgrounds, electrical projects, upgrades, lighting. Currently working on
44 improvements for Soldados Park irrigation. Also do agreements, plan
45 reviews, construction observations, system familiarizations, acceptance, and
46 transfer of property. Also work closing with other City departments.

1
2 • **Parks**
3

4 Robert Nunez stated there are approximately 150 parks that Franco Granillo
5 and his staff are involved with. This include athletic fields, pocket parks,
6 neighborhood parks, toddler parks, larger community parks, Young Park,
7 Apodaca Park, the Downtown Mall area. Assist with special events, set up,
8 break down, litter control, restroom maintenance in the parks. Hadley
9 Complex, receiving the East Mesa Sports Complex in the near future, Burn
10 Lake Complex, High Noon soccer fields one through five. Behind the Las
11 Cruces Dam are the wetlands which is part of Parks and Recreation. Just
12 over 40 miles of City trails. Speciality field maintenance, RC airport,
13 skatepark, RC track, shooting range at Butterfield. Responsible for various
14 tournaments and leagues throughout the year; baseball, softball, soccer,
15 pickleball. There is a construction maintenance group that works internally,
16 they set up the Christmas Tree, lighting, decorations throughout, in house
17 repairs of fencing, smaller items for playgrounds depending on the damage.
18 They rehab the berms at the shotting range. Work with heavy equipment,
19 carpentry, painting, and welding. Area for right-of-ways, medians, and alleys.
20 Just under 300 City alleys that they maintain. Approximately 500 miles of
21 landscape right-of-way and medians throughout the City. Herbicide
22 application, community events support. Also is community forestry program
23 and forester, which is for tree care of all City parks, roadway areas, tree
24 classes, tree steward program, community gardening management. Tree
25 ordinance that had recently been through this Board and then to City Council
26 work session. Identifying hazardous trees and removal and replacement.
27 Working with numerous contractors that provide services within the parks.
28 They plant over 250 trees yearly. Also the tree health regarding pesticide
29 and application. Mr. Granillo takes care of approximately five different areas
30 within Parks and has four administrators, and works closely with special
31 projects. And identifies parks and needs that he has specifically that he is
32 maintaining and involved with new parks and new construction.
33

34 Parks specifically has 60 full time and utilize approximately 25-30 temporary
35 staff. In the last few years Parks has gained eight positions for the East Mesa
36 Complex, for trails. Still need temporary employees to assist the various
37 areas. They are trying to transition some of the positions into full time
38 positions. Question asked if that included the Mano y Mano program, which
39 with the Community of Hope homeless providing 20 spots per day to work an
40 hour day, 40 hour week, and are compensated. The Mano y Mano program
41 works closely with the right-of-way manager and that contract is through
42 Economic Development. This is a big benefit for the staff.
43

44 A question concerning how the funding works and grants. A large percentage
45 of Parks and Recreation budget is General Fund. Special projects works
46 through grants, legislative funds, and some General Funds that are identified

1 through the Capital Improvement Plan projects. Parks daily operations close
2 to 100% General Fund supported. Mano y Mano is with the Telshor Fund,
3 which is an agreement with Memorial Medical Center. A request for further
4 funding breakdown was made by the Board just for more complete
5 understanding.
6

7 • **Youth Services**
8

9 Claudia Chavez, the Interim Youth Services Deputy Director. This is for out
10 of school time, which consists of five areas; Youth Diversion Program, Keep
11 Las Cruces Beautiful, Afterschool Program, Teen Program, and Weed and
12 Seed Program out of Safe Haven. Two are grant funded; the Youth Diversion
13 Program through CYD, and Keep Las Cruces Beautiful through the State.
14 Team Up to Clean Up, each District is represented, 2023 calendar was
15 recently released. They have the five sections, 40-45 employees which
16 includes full time, part time, and contract and temp employees. The Youth
17 Diversion Program, also known as JCP - Juvenile Citation Program, offers
18 youth that have resources for different topics including mental health, alcohol
19 and drug abuse and prevention, bullying, continuing education and
20 employment, self-esteem, teen dating. The goal is to decrease the incidence
21 of delinquency in the community and help steer the youth in the right
22 direction. Keep Las Cruces Beautiful, Team Up to Clean Up, hosts eight big
23 events throughout the community. One is the roll-aways provided to
24 community members to bring trash, junk, whatever needs abatement. Graffiti
25 is also addressed and beautifying those areas in the community. Afterschool
26 Program is for kinder through 6th grade, and has a summer recreation
27 program. Work with the Public Schools District and offer six different schools
28 and community centers throughout the summer. These programs are free.
29 The Teen Program is for middle and high school students which is housed at
30 the Frank O'Brien-Papen Community Center. This program includes field
31 trips, tutoring, and partner with other sections in the department and provide
32 different resources for teens. The last is Weed and Seed and is housed out
33 of Safe Haven. Offer family events and a variety of different resources.
34

35 • **Recreation**
36

37 Phil Catanach, Deputy Director for Recreation section. This consists of five
38 areas: athletics, aquatics, recreation programs, community special events,
39 and employee wellness. There are a little over 100 employees. In the
40 recreation program they have a therapeutic inclusion program for people with
41 and without disabilities, about 20 different activities a month, art class, craft
42 class, dances, fitness classes, sports activities, special events. They have a
43 lunch group where they take people with cognitive disabilities out to a
44 restaurant. They get to order for themselves, pay for themselves. And show
45 a movie specifically once a month, and also aquatic time at the pool for them.
46 Also do walking, indoor cycling, cycling on the roads. This also offers Movies

1 in the Park which is eight to 12 movies during the summer. Provide facility
2 coverage for the rec centers, Frank O'Brien Papen Community Center, and
3 East Mesa Center. There is a mobile unit outfitted with recreation equipment
4 that can bring the recreation, so to schools, parks, different activities. One of
5 the barriers in Las Cruces is transportation. They do rentals, Kids Expo, e-
6 gaming, adult game night doing board games.

7
8 The athletics program is at the Meerscheidt Recreation Center. This includes
9 youth basketball, T-ball, coach pitched baseball, teen basketball league,
10 adult basketball, outdoor and indoor volleyball for adults, youth flag football,
11 basketball camp in the summer. Oversee sports officials who referee the
12 games. They have two racquetball courts and a weight room. Roller hockey
13 rink for roller derby and in-line hockey. Youth indoor and outdoor soccer,
14 cheer program for the little ones, daily activities of pickleball, volleyball, and
15 basketball for adults. Do nontraditional sports when there is time within the
16 schedule, tech ball, double ball, kickball, horseshoes, tri-ball which is three-
17 way volleyball. Indoor volleyball has over 50 teams with over 500
18 participants.

19
20 Aquatics area oversees the regional Aquatic Center, Frenger Pool, East
21 Mesa and Laabs outdoor pool, and a new 50-meter community pool that will
22 come on board last April/early May. Staff provides swim lessons, fitness area
23 at the Regional Aquatic Center. Offer fitness classes in land and water and
24 currently there are 14 instructors offering about 16-17 different classes.
25 Oversee the splash pads; Metro Verde Splash Pad, the Interactive Fountain
26 downtown, in March have the Unidad Splash Pad. They also oversee special
27 events, teen splash, pumpkin patch splash, the world's largest swim lessons.
28 The Regional Aquatic Center is the second busiest building in the City,
29 besides City Hall.

30
31 Employee Wellness is recreation specialist who does recreation activities for
32 the City employees to help work to home quality of life. There are 400-500
33 of the 1,400 employees registered for year. There are free fitness classes
34 and weight room as part of the employee benefits. There are tournaments
35 throughout the year with the various departments in volleyball, basketball,
36 dodgeball, softball. There are wellness workshops throughout the year. This
37 Thursday they are having a physician from Mountain View Regional Medical
38 Center to talk about feet health. There are talks about diabetes, smoke
39 cessation, etc. throughout the year. There are other programs, Stick To It,
40 Transformation, and Ziggy Challenges where staff meet fitness goals and are
41 given incentives of gift cards, money, days off, t-shirts, water bottles, etc.

42
43 Special events, including the 4th of July Celebration which includes the
44 concert, parade, fireworks. Also the tree lighting. Kids Expo. Also provide
45 support for others groups in the City for special events. There are 17 Music
46 in the Park Concerts that start at the end of May with the Mayor's Jazz Fest,

1 and then a concert every Sunday. Bring in local, national, and regional
2 groups.

3
4 Also responsible for the Parks and Recreation website, social media,
5 Facebook, and Instagram. Also he oversees the Health Policy Review
6 Committee and the Vaccine Task Force. Also they cover large things
7 happening, like the asylum seekers and COVID, getting information out, etc.
8

9 Question on the fees charged. The fees and charges for the adults tries to
10 cover 100% of the costs. Youth covers 85%. Youth sports is \$45 including
11 a jersey, or \$35 if the child has their own jersey. This covers referees,
12 staffing, and uniforms. Break in youth indoor soccer, volleyball, flag football,
13 and baseball do not have to have sports officials so not paying that extra
14 expense. Prices are probably low, especially compared to private leagues.
15

16 Question whether the department has considered a portable climbing wall,
17 as it is noted the City is using NMSU.. They have looked into it but not
18 purchased. It was suggested that this would "fund itself." Recently people
19 came to discuss a hiking program that had been done, but currently do not
20 have the staff with that expertise.
21

22 They appreciate members of the community coming to the activities and see
23 what they do. The Board was also invited to come to the activities and see
24 what they do.
25

26 **4. Common Terminology / Topics to Come Before the Board:**
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- 28 • **Park Impact Fee (PIF)**
- 29 • **Master Plan**
- 30 • **Fees & Charges**
- 31 • **Agreements**
- 32 • **Resolution / Ordinance**
33

34 Robert Nunez stated this is for information for what will be coming forward, but
35 also have open dialogue for the Board to ask questions. District maps and listing
36 all the parks and other amenities will be provided to the Board in the future. Maps
37 of the new Council Districts have not been released yet. Park Impact Fees (PIF)
38 are through the developers who pay the City of Las Cruces. If the developers
39 create new parks, then that portion of funds can be returned to the developer.
40 District 5 is booming, moving towards the east more, and now into District 6. PIF
41 funds are specifically for new builds only, which can be a challenge in some of
42 the older Districts with limited open space. The Master Plan is on the webpage.
43 The fees and charges will be brought back to this Board as after the pandemic
44 need to place the fees back into the policy. Prior to the pandemic the out of
45 school time program recovering about 70-75%, close to \$500,000. There is also
46 a scholarship program which comes from donations from the community and is


1 available for youth leagues, athletics, swim lessons, out of school time program.
2 The resolutions and ordinances come before this Board prior to going to Council
3 for input. Possibly doing work sessions prior to these come before this Board for
4 prior review. There are various agreements with HOAs, leagues, El Paso
5 Electric, speciality use agreements, Renaissance Faire. Agreements are specific
6 to the parks and special projects area, but also the swim clubs, and other
7 organizations and nonprofits interested in using City property for the community.
8 Also agreements internally with Quality of Life Department, Fire Department, Law
9 Enforcement Department.

10
11 Question of if there is a program for memorializing people with trees, benches.
12 The City does offer that program. Come into the City to work and find a location,
13 and then pay the fee.
14

15 **5. Adjournment:**

16
17 Board Member Montgomery moved to adjourn the Parks and Recreation Advisory
18 Board Work Session Meeting, seconded by Board Member Raish. Motion carried
19 unanimously.
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Chairperson