

DRAFT MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parsons called the February 26, 2024, meeting at 4:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

NOTE: One or more Commissioners may be in attendance through other technological means.

Parks and Recreation Commission

Stephen Parsons (Chair) - Present
Austin Kerr (Vice Chair) - Present
Sandy Heath - Absent
Autumn Layden - Present
Ryan Martin - Present
Micah Smith - Absent
Josh Stackhouse - Present

Open Space Commission

Wm. Michael Wilson (Chair) - Absent
Bruce Applin (Vice Chair) - Present
Bruce Fox - Present
Mary Norton - Planning & Zoning Representative - Present
Jacqueline Thomas - Present
Lina Wallen - Present
Nat White - Present

Councilmember Deborah Harris - Council Liaison - Present

Staff Present: Robert Wallace, Rebecca Sayers, Amy Hagin, Sarah Holditch, Haley Reynolds, Sylvia Struss, Gino Leoni, Cathy Guetschow

Others Present: Charlie Silver, Alexis, Michele James, Desert Mulford, Rick Steve, Jacqueline Thomas

3. Land Acknowledgment

Chair Parsons read the Land Acknowledgement.

4. Public Comment

Open Space Supervisor Robert Wallace introduced Desert Mulford the new AmeriCorps Environmental Literacy Corps.

5. Open Space Commission Update

Open Space Supervisor Robert Wallace made a presentation in Chair Wilson's absence, on the Commission's authority, mission, history, and goals, including:

- Assist to bring about an expanded, integrated Open Space System,
- Realize sustainable long-term funding for the Flagstaff Open Space system, and
- A goal is to have an open space, park, or natural area within a 10-minute walk (1/4 mile) from every Flagstaff resident's front door.

Recent accomplishments: Completed updated Strategic Plan, McMillan Mesa Rezone, receiving several grants: Heritage Grant for Open Space Educator, AZ State Parks grant for trails at Picture Canyon, Invasive Plant Grant for Observatory Mesa Natural Area.

Current projects: Observatory Mesa Trail Plan, progress toward 10-minute access goal; open space preservation and acquisition, and Ft. Tuthill FUTS connection.

Future projects: PROSE Master Plan recommendations, review projects/proposals affecting OS (Open Space), city code updates, progress toward interconnected Open Space system, and achieve sustainable funding sources.

How the commissions can partner: Identify where priorities overlap, coordinate trails, sustainable funding such as Bed, Board, Beverage (BBB) Recreation tax funds or future bonds, and communicating our overall goals to the community.

Mr. Wallace answered questions about how OS is typically acquired, how OS works with FUTS, staffing needs, open space education efforts, and the Observatory Mesa Trail Plan.

6. Parks & Recreation Commission Update

Chair Parsons provided an update pertaining to some recent projects discussed with the Commission: Thorpe Park Annex & Indigenous Community Cultural Center planning, west-side park development, and the Buffalo Park grant-funded project. Parks and Recreation fees have been evaluated by the Commission to support a request for a rate study.

Assistant PROSE Director Amy Hagin gave an overview of what the Parks and Recreation Commission's goals, strategic planning and advisory of funds encompasses. Included was an overview of the infrastructure of both Parks and Recreation and the associated responsibilities. Ms. Hagin also provided an in-depth overview of recent capital projects, improvements to Parks and Recreation facilities, current capital projects and the future as per the 5-Year BBB Recreation Capital Plan. Through the strategic planning efforts of the Parks and Recreation Commission, plus a prioritization exercise performed in 2022, projects were developed into the 5-Year BBB Recreation Capital Plan. These projects consist of an annual playground equipment replacement, the Bushmaster Parksportscourts project, the future, HVAC inside the gymnasium at Hal Jensen Recreation Center, Cheshire Park expansion, Continental Regional Park Expansion for the design of a girls softball complex, and the renovation of Ponderosa Park after post-flooding improvements. Over this past year, many mechanical repairs and improvements have occurred in our recreation centers, working closely with Facilities Maintenance.

7. BBB Fund Allocations and Budgeting

PROSE Director Rebecca Sayers presented the five-year plan for BBB Recreation funds. She noted that city code allows BBB funds to be used for Parks and Recreation, Beautification, Arts & Sciences, Tourism, and Economic Development. Parks and Recreation receives 33% of BBB tax revenue. The five-year plan will be shared with Commissioners and the public by being posted as an attachment to the agenda item on the website. Revenue from the BBB Recreation fund balance includes the capital improvement projects discussed in the previous agenda item, planned expenditures over time, deferred maintenance projects, play structure replacement, parks and recreation operations, and FUTS maintenance.

Ms. Sayers discussed the potential for updating language in the city code relating to BBB Recreation to include open space in and update the two commissions' authority for reviewing the use of these funds.

Commissioners agreed they would support a joint meeting once per year, likely in February, to determine the health of the BBB fund, progress on projects, and talk about any joint projects.

There was discussion about the BBB tax being up for renewal and clarifying the roles of commissioners and staff in that process. Renewal will go to voters in 2024, and if it fails, there will be another chance to renew it in 2026 before it expires in 2028. Together with the Economic Vitality Division, there will be a campaign to inform and educate people about the BBB tax and how the city uses these funds.

8. City Council Liaison Report - Councilmember Deborah Harris

Councilmember Harris thanked the Commissioners for their work. In response to a question from a Commissioner about when fees may be reviewed by the City Council, Ms. Sayers explained that a consultant has been contracted by the Management Services Division to develop a city-wide Cost Recovery Policy, after which Divisional fees will be reviewed.

9. Reports -- Monthly highlights of Parks and Recreation, Open Space, and Events

Amy Hagin was congratulated for her City Manager Award for communication. Mr. Wallace gave an update on the Switzer water main pipeline project.

10. Informational items to and from Commissioners and Staff

There was discussion about how ball fields and FUTS trails were graded. Commissioner Norton gave a Planning and Zoning Update: At the January 10, 2024, meeting, there was a presentation on the Land Availability and Suitability Study, and Code Analysis Review for Developable Land that is being managed by the Planning Section in the Community Development Division. Of particular interest was a large parcel of state land in the JW Powell corridor purchased by developer Symmetry in November 2022--they bought a portion of it, and the rights to purchase the rest. Ms. Norton is concerned about Open Space having a seat at the table when ecologically sensitive areas come up for purchase. She also noted there was a public hearing on a code amendment to allow high density housing in public facilities (PF) zones.

11. Discussion for Future Joint Meetings

It was proposed to have a joint meeting once or twice per year, unless something comes up where a special joint meeting is needed.

12. Adjournment

The February 26, 2024, Joint Parks & Recreation Commission and Open Space Commission meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.