



Minutes

Parks, Recreation, Golf and Double Butte Cemetery Advisory Board

October 9, 2024

Minutes of the Parks, Recreation, Golf and Double Butte Cemetery Advisory Board meeting held on October 9, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Hybrid Meeting- Tempe Public Library (Cottonwood Board Room), 3500 S Rural Rd, Tempe, AZ, and virtual through Microsoft Teams.

Members Present:

Susan Carlson – Chair
Elizabeth Hatch – Vice Chair
Sharon Doyle
Mary Farmer
Thomas Klabunde
Shereen Lerner
Gerardo Lopez
Cory Pechtl
Regina Ponder

Members Absent:

Lane Waddell
Lisa Zyriek

City Staff Present:

Alex Jovanovic, Deputy Community Services Director – Parks (Staff Liaison)
Joshua Bell, Management Assistant II – Recreation
Shawn Wagner, Deputy Community Services Director – Recreation

Other Guests Present:

Tom Bugbee, CourseCo
Desiree Sloat, CourseCo

Upon the establishment of a quorum, meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Susan Carlson.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

Community members advocated for the ability to have a memorial item, such as a tree, statue or other, installed at Mary and Moses Green Park in honor of Jackson Bickler, who passed away. Community members include Abby Bickler, Angela, Armstrong Family, Claudia Kirch, and Kari Ward. Community member Mariam Ephraim advocated for ability to install plaques or other indicators along with memorial trees that are planted to help provide history or background.

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of Meeting Minutes

September 18, 2024

Motion by Shereen Lerner to approve the meeting minutes of September 18, 2024. Seconded by Tom Klabunde. Motion passed on an 8-0 vote.

Ayes: Vice Chair Elizabeth Hatch, board members Sharon Doyle, Mary Farmer, Thomas Klabunde, Shereen Lerner, Gerardo Lopez, Cory Pechtl, and Regina Ponder.

Abstain: Chair Susan Carlson.

Absent: Lane Waddell and Lisa Zyriek.

Agenda Item 3 – Golf

Tom Bigbee from CourseCo provided an update on Ken McDonald Golf Course.

- Two new team members: Head Golf Professional, Superintendent.
- Updates: new benches installed at tee boxes, picnic tables at driving range, virtual tee time waitlist.
- Approximately 73,000 rounds last fiscal year, 2.2% year-over-year growth.
- Capital updates: construction on clubhouse hoping to start 2025, will be meeting with designer for irrigation system replacement.
- Community programming continues, sign up for email distribution or social media for info; successful turnout; outreach to local neighborhoods via social media groups.
- Do attempt to get resident info but not always possible to track.
- Board members asked questions and made comments about:
 - Notice puddles and standing water Tuesday mornings during women's league play
 - Do you break down your data into resident vs non-resident.
 - When will the construction on the clubhouse begin?
 - Have you seen an increase in attendance at community events?
 - Are you in communication with local neighborhood?
 - Can you offer more vegetarian options for the new menu?
 - It would be nice to see new ball washers.
 - Used the virtual waitlist system and it was very useful
 - Staff is very helpful and nice.

Agenda Item 4 – Clark Community Center Update

Shawn Wagner provided an update on Clark Park Community Center and Pool since its April opening.

- Variety of programming offered: youth summer camps, fitness, crochet, and others.
- Variety of user groups reserve rooms: internal, general public, community partners and organizations
- More than 3,000 pool users during the summer.
- Three aquatics technicians responsible for maintenance and upkeep of pools, splash play areas.
- Pool is heated and open year-round; open swim, lap swim, water fitness, learn to swim, training.
- McClintock Pool open year-round, but also used by school; used by swim teams.
- Aquatics memberships offered across centers are being reviewed.
- Pool hours vary by location and dependent on availability of aquatics staff; challenges hiring enough staff; shortages are mostly lifeguards; pay rates offered are competitive with other municipal pools.
- Board members asked questions and made comments about:
 - Is there a fee to reserve a room?
 - Is McClintock Pool year-round?
 - Need coordination between centers; purchased pass at one location but different at another.
 - Heard that hours are limited at pool; what are the hours?
 - Is pool staffing shortages specifically lifeguards?
 - It's a great facility; we've been using it.

Agenda Item 5 – Memorial & Donation Policy

Susan Carlson and Alex Jovanovic discussed the memorial and donation policy with the board and asked the board to decide if they want to assist City staff in developing a policy.

- Alex Jovanovic read letters and comments submitted by community members written advocating for a memorial item, such as a bench, statue, plaque or other, installed in a Tempe park in honor of Jackson Bickler, a community member who passed away. Community members include Abby Bickler, Katrina Burnsed, Samantha Tucker, Cali, Cody, Cora, Christopher and Nadine Armstrong, and Christine

Budnik. Alex also read a letter from Mariam Ephraim, who advocated for a general memorial policy allowing for plaques to be placed with Living Memorial trees.

- Policy would be an internal policy that's implemented and part of Parks and Recreation operations.
- Living Tree Memorial program, work with Urban Forester to pick a tree; planted and maintained by City; honorary bronze leaf is mounted on tree plaque; leaf is not currently offered to be mounted alongside memorial tree, may have been done in previous year; some community members have installed their own memorials without City guidance or approval, which may be removed by City staff due to maintenance or safety issues.
- Suicide awareness benches could be included as part of policy development but would also be something that doesn't necessarily need to be tied to parks specifically and could apply to other areas.
- Concern expressed and awareness of a bench's maintenance lifespan and who would be responsible, whether the original donor could choose to re-donate or would City inherit responsibility.
- Board members asked questions and made comments about:
 - Would the policy that's developed with the board's assistance be implemented by Tempe Parks and Recreation or sent to Council for approval?
 - What is the policy now? Can you get a memorial tree? Could you previously have a leaf placed on site with memorial tree?
 - Would suicide awareness benches be considered along with other memorials in policy?
 - How many benches is too many? Could be considered during development of policy.

Motion by Gerardo Lopez for the board to draft a policy for honorary memorials. Seconded by Shereen Lerner. Motion passed on an 8-0 vote.

Ayes: Chair Susan Carlson, Vice Chair Elizabeth Hatch, board members Sharon Doyle, Mary Farmer, Thomas Klabunde, Shereen Lerner, Gerardo Lopez, Cory Pechtl, and Regina Ponder.

Absent: Lane Waddell and Lisa Zyriek.

- Board members asked questions and made comments about:
 - Shereen will be working on an initial draft; feedback from other board members can be sent to Joshua Bell and Alex Jovanovic.
 - Elizabeth should send her thoughts previously shared.
 - Could already existing benches be converted?

Agenda Item 6 – CIP Update

Alex Jovanovic provided an update on Parks Capital Improvement Plan.

- In addition to Parks items, Recreation has additional CIP items not included in presentation: Aquatic Infrastructure CIP, Tennis Center, Community Services Asset Restoration
- Most park projects have two rounds of public outreach, designs may include elements of first outreach
- Charter & Design includes initial steps for design and construction; average process seven months long
- Bids and Council Approval is who is selected to do the job.
- Construction timeline can vary depending on project.
- Currently creating design documents to be used by contractors for Ken McDonald clubhouse.
- Dog park at Kiwanis Park has been escalated due to delays with other projects.
- CIP works in 5-year planning cycle that's shared with public; new additions added to fifth year; projects can be accelerated; funded in one year increments; Park CIP plan is available to public online
- Board members asked questions and made comments about:
 - Could public outreach go more than two rounds or be longer than four months?
 - Ken McDonald Clubhouse was part of CIP process?
 - CIP is important in funding large projects, competitive among departments

Agenda Item 7 – Board Operational Updates

Susan Carlson discussed with the board goals, next steps and opportunities.

- **Goals**
- **Next Steps**
- **Opportunities**
- Memorial and donation policy will be important moving forward.
- Voting on Chair and Vice Chair will be happening; anyone interested notify Joshua Bell.
- Diamondbacks-supported ballfields are primarily used for Little League.
- Annual Report draft will be available at next meeting; board will need to consider 2025 meeting dates.
- Susan would like Statement of Advocacy considered by board and included in Annual Report.
- Board members asked questions and made comments about:
 - Would like information about rentals and usage at Kiwanis Park; prices are pretty high and do not see much usage.
 - Would like to know about ballfields at neighborhood parks that are not maintained like ballfields at Tempe Sports Complex; how many exist, what is their condition, what would need to happen to maintain them?
 - Do we have Diamondbacks-supported fields?
 - Would like an update on what has been accomplished at Rolling Hills Golf Course.

Agenda Item 8 – Future Agenda Items

None

Agenda Item 9 – Public Meeting Attendance, Notices & Announcements

Alex Jovanovic and Shawn Wagner informed the board of some upcoming events.

- October 9 at 5:00 p.m. rededication of Sister Cities Garden at Library; relocated from Kiwanis Park
- Kiwanis Park Dog park groundbreaking at 5:30 p.m. on September 20; construction likely to be completed late spring or early summer.
- Other: Arts in the Parks, Movies in the Park, Escalante Fall Festival, Roller Derby exhibition at Museum
- Board members asked questions and made comments about:
 - Volunteers needed for National Make a Difference Day on October 26 from 9:00-11:00 a.m.; cleanup at Curry Elementary School and Selleh Park; would like Park Rangers involved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Prepared by: Joshua Bell, Management Assistant II, (480) 350-8676

Reviewed by: Alex Jovanovic, Deputy Community Services Director- Parks, (480) 350-5811