

**REGULAR MEETING OF
THE COCONINO COUNTY
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
PURSUANT TO A.R.S. § 38-431.02
October 7, 2021
4:00pm
Internet/Web Based Video Conference Call
Microsoft Teams**

Minutes

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm by Vice Chair Brian Blue. Chair Steve Mongrain was excused. Commissioners Ellen Parish, Howard Brown, Pam Foti, Daniel Heil, and Jean Marie Rieck were present. Commissioner Mary Hendricks was excused. Staff in attendance was Cynthia Nemeth (Parks and Recreation Director) and taking minutes Kayla Cooper (Administrative Specialist II).

2. Parks and Recreation Commission Purpose

The purpose in establishing the Coconino County Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC) is to provide a citizen body responsive to the communities and people of Coconino County and to recommend a policy regarding the development and operations of a well-balanced system of parks, programs, trails, and events.

3. Approval of the Minutes from, Meeting August 5, 2021

August Minutes were approved.

4. Public Appearances/Introductions/Call to the Public

Adam Smath (Parks and Recreation Program Coordinator) and Jessica Simmons (Parks and Recreation Urban Wildlife Planner) were present.

New Business

5. Introduction of New Parks and Recreation Staff

Cynthia Nemeth began the introduction of Adam Smath, the new Recreation Program Coordinator for Coconino County Parks and Recreation (CCPR). Adam recently graduated from Northern Arizona University (NAU) with a master's degree in Parks and Recreation.

Vice Chair Blue then asked Adam to explain his goals and visions regarding his new position and the CCPR Programming. Adam Explained that he has always wanted to manage

recreation offerings to the public and that the vision of CCPR programming is to provide a platform for encouraging recreation and meeting the needs of all our different citizens as their preferences to recreation.

Commissioner Parish then asked Adam to touch on his opinion of video gaming being considered a form of recreation and how he will tackle that new concept. Adam explained that video gaming does not provide exercise, but it does provide beneficial socializing and therefore is a form of recreation that should be explored.

6. Fort Tuthill Land Management Plan

Director Nemeth introduced the CCPR Urban Wildlife Planner, Jessica Simmons. Jessica then gave an update on the Fort Tuthill Land Management Plan through sharing an outline that the CCPR staff has put together. This land Management plan is a more specific and concrete management plan with specific objectives and actions. Jessica began her presentation by listing the guiding principles to keep in mind as CCPR creates the land management plan. The Open Space principles include conservation of natural resources, provision for quiet enjoyment of nature, to create the opportunity for a variety of experiences that connect people with nature, and that its value is intrinsic and from that basis we should approach its use. The Park principles include providing the public with a variety of active recreation opportunities both free and fee-based, hosting events of interest to the community, serving as launch pad for exploration into the forest surrounding us, being Flagstaffs back yard where you can meet with friends, and to lessen impacts elsewhere.

Vice Chair Blue then asked if this plan was superseding or supplemental to the Master plan. Director Nemeth explained that the Master Plan is a different document and that this is a Land Management Plan. This is a decision making and guiding document of how we are using the actual land and if it is spurred by the fact that we have 220 acres of open space.

Next Commissioner Brown asked if the plan would be approved by the Board of Supervisors (BOS), and if this plan is a vision or practical guide. Jessica explained that the vision was in the master plan and that this plan will be more of a practical guide. She added that it will need to be approved by the BOS eventually.

Director Nemeth added that it will also involve stakeholder input and PRC approval.

Next Jessica shared the Fort Tuthill County Park Management Plan Outline Draft with the group. Section one of the draft included the introduction of the park. This introduction included a very detailed description of the park with information on the size, location, history, and policies. It also included information on who manages the park and who the partners and stakeholders are as well.

Section two of the outline touched on the natural resources related to the park such as the vegetation, Ponderosa Pine forests, mineral rights, geology, wildlife, dark skies etc.

Vice Chair Blue then asked if there were some studies going on with NAU within the Ponderosa Forest? Director Nemeth answered yes, we retained a small section of untreated forest in the park that NAU uses in their forestry program to show an untreated forest versus a treated forest which will be also included in this Land Management Plan.

Next, Vice Chair Blue asked if Bats would be in the study. Jessica explained that there are some sensitive bat species but that there are not any specific management actions directly aimed at bats but that keeping the habitat and park healthy will keep them healthy.

Section three included information on the cultural resources such as the history of the park, the state of artifacts on the park, and management of these resources. In Section four Jessica explained public use and facilities which included scenic values, flooding, noise, new technology, allowed uses, and emergency management.

Vice Chair Blue then stated that he feels that that the hospital is not contemplating the park as an asset to their eventual move and feels that CCPR needs to expand their thinking on how we can benefit the hospital and vice versa. Jessica agreed and added that this is very important and will be discussed in the next section of the outline.

Lastly Section five touched on future planning of the park and the top priorities for the future. These included spelling out the vision of the future as development around the park is increasing especially with the new hospital that will be built.

Commissioner Hiel added that the OHV world is becoming an issue within the forest and that the forest service is being inundated with complaints about their misuse. He added that this issue and possible new legislation may impact the park therefore we should look at this as well. Jessica agreed and stated that with this growing concern that will be looked at by CCPR. This concluded her presentation.

Commissioner Rieck asked if Jessica was considering adding a monitoring plan towards the end of the document; something that would monitor the progress toward goals and objectives. Jessica stated that was not something she was going to add but that it is a great idea and great way to regularly measure the metrics that might indicate success of management actions and that with input this is something that can be added.

7. Update on Diablo Trust

Commissioner Parish updated the group on the Recreation Summit that was held on August 12th, 2021. She explained that at the summit they broke out into 6 different groups to tackle different topics such as, technology solutions, funding opportunities, policy and legislation, a waste management education, incited signage, and ambassadorship. These groups will continue to meet to implement changes and identify issues within Recreation. Commissioner Parish then updated the group on the Arizona Trails meeting that will take place virtually on October 18th and invited all members to attend.

Vice Chair Blue added that the event Commissioner Parish put on was phenomenal; the Sheriff's department was there along with the Forest Service and 70 other attendees.

8. New Chairman Discussion

Vice Chair Blue explained that Chair Mongrain has served as the Chairman of the Commission for the last two years and that at the end of this year, the Commission must come up with a new Chair. Vice Chair Blue then encouraged all the Commissioners to consider the possibility of serving as the next Chair and directed anyone interested in the position to reach out to Chair Mongrain, Director Nemeth or himself to go over the details and responsibilities.

9. Parks and Recreation Commission Goals

Vice Chair Blue introduced the topic of goals for the Commission by asking the group what they think the responsibilities and goals of the Commission are.

Commissioner Parish answered that our mission states that we are the public liaisons, and it is our role to be public liaisons for our region and represent that to the Commissions and he provide feedback as the department staff request.

Commissioner Brown agreed with Parish.

Commissioner Heil stated that he viewed the Commissioners roles as being the eyes and ears for the community.

Vice Chair Blue agreed with Commissioner Heil and added that a responsibility is to go out into the community and seek input and their thoughts. He stated that the Commissions is to provide feedback to staff and their policies and procedures and their activities and then provide recommendations to the board.

Commissioner Howard then asked if the Commission is empowered to set their own goals and objectives or those designated by the BOS.

Director Nemeth answered that the purpose of the Commission is that it is a body that is responsive to the communities and people of Coconino County. Nemeth added that to do this it involves a combination of recommendations from the Supervisors, CCPR and the Commission to be the most responsive.

10. Upcoming Board of Supervisor Agenda Items*

Placeholder Agenda Items*

Pending Date/Time

**Confirm agenda item dates and times before attending. Board agenda is subject to last minute changes.*

Reports

1. Director's Report

Director Nemeth first updated the group on the staffing at CCPR. The Assistant Director interviews were recently conducted and there were 4 great candidates that they are selecting from. Next Nemeth gave an update on the new restrooms at the Bike Park and stated that their will be a ribbon cutting ceremony soon. Nemeth added that The Story Path at Sawmill County Park is ready. It's a book by a local author that can be read on a series of pedestals along the sidewalk path. Lastly Nemeth gave updates on the two Requests for Proposals (RFP); One was for the use of the guard shack next to w Flagstaff Extreme, and the second for the West Building by the Campground. She will give another update at the next meeting.

2. Commissioner's Report

There were no reports.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:23 PM.

Notice:

Next Friends of Coconino County Parks Meeting: October 13, 2021, Microsoft Teams

Next Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting: November 4, 2021, Microsoft Teams

**Coconino County
Parks & Recreation Commission**

**Coconino County
Parks & Recreation Department**

Steve Mongrain

Steve Mongrain, Chair

Kayla Cooper

Kayla Cooper
Secretary to the Commission