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.
- City Clerk
- Open Meetings Act
- Robert's Rules of Order / Basic Motions

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

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

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

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

Lastly, rolling quorums. This is basically when a quorum of members are discussing business, not necessarily together. An example: one board member talks to someone about this, who then talks to another board
member, who then talks to another board member, who then talks to another board member. They all decide individually they are going to vote no on an item. They just established a rolling quorum, because now all four know about this item and have decided to vote no on it. Another example is all board members receiving an e-mail and then each board member replying all to that email.

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

3. Parks & Recreation Overview:

- Organization Chart

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

- Special Projects

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

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

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

A question concerning how the funding works and grants. A large percentage of Parks and Recreation budget is General Fund. Special projects works through grants, legislative funds, and some General Funds that are identified
through the Capital Improvement Plan projects. Parks daily operations close to 100% General Fund supported. Mano y Mano is with the Telshor Fund, which is an agreement with Memorial Medical Center. A request for further funding breakdown was made by the Board just for more complete understanding.

- **Youth Services**

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

- **Recreation**

Phil Catanach, Deputy Director for Recreation section. This consists of five areas: athletics, aquatics, recreation programs, community special events, and employee wellness. There are a little over 100 employees. In the recreation program they have a therapeutic inclusion program for people with and without disabilities, about 20 different activities a month, art class, craft class, dances, fitness classes, sports activities, special events. They have a lunch group where they take people with cognitive disabilities out to a restaurant. They get to order for themselves, pay for themselves. And show a movie specifically once a month, and also aquatic time at the pool for them. Also do walking, indoor cycling, cycling on the roads. This also offers Movies
in the Park which is eight to 12 movies during the summer. Provide facility
coverage for the rec centers, Frank O'Brien Papen Community Center, and
East Mesa Center. There is a mobile unit outfitted with recreation equipment
that can bring the recreation, so to schools, parks, different activities. One of
the barriers in Las Cruces is transportation. They do rentals, Kids Expo, e-
gaming, adult game night doing board games.

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

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

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

Special events, including the 4th of July Celebration which includes the
concert, parade, fireworks. Also the tree lighting. Kids Expo. Also provide
support for others groups in the City for special events. There are 17 Music
in the Park Concerts that start at the end of May with the Mayor's Jazz Fest,
and then a concert every Sunday. Bring in local, national, and regional
groups.

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

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

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

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

4. Common Terminology / Topics to Come Before the Board:

- Park Impact Fee (PIF)
- Master Plan
- Fees & Charges
- Agreements
- Resolution / Ordinance

Robert Nunez stated this is for information for what will be coming forward, but
also have open dialogue for the Board to ask questions. District maps and listing
all the parks and other amenities will be provided to the Board in the future. Maps
of the new Council Districts have not been released yet. Park Impact Fees (PIF)
are through the developers who pay the City of Las Cruces. If the developers
create new parks, then that portion of funds can be returned to the developer.
District 5 is booming, moving towards the east more, and now into District 6. PIF
funds are specifically for new builds only, which can be a challenge in some of
the older Districts with limited open space. The Master Plan is on the webpage.
The fees and charges will be brought back to this Board as after the pandemic
need to place the fees back into the policy. Prior to the pandemic the out of
school time program recovering about 70-75%, close to $500,000. There is also
a scholarship program which comes from donations from the community and is
available for youth leagues, athletics, swim lessons, out of school time program.
The resolutions and ordinances come before this Board prior to going to Council
for input. Possibly doing work sessions prior to these come before this Board for
prior review. There are various agreements with HOAs, leagues, El Paso
Electric, speciality use agreements, Renaissance Faire. Agreements are specific
to the parks and special projects area, but also the swim clubs, and other
organizations and nonprofits interested in using City property for the community.
Also agreements internally with Quality of Life Department, Fire Department, Law
Enforcement Department.

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

5. **Adjournment:**

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

Chairperson