

MINUTES

Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission June 2, 2015

Commissioner Jim Nadeau called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

1. **Roll Call.**

Members present: Ed Harney, Janet Davis, Jim Nadeau, Thomas Guinn, Nathan Daniel, Al Sheakley and Anne Buckley

Board of County Commissioners Liaison: Jeanne Herman

Staff present: Dave Solaro, Jennifer Budge, Eric Crump, Deputy District Attorney Michael Large, Cheryl Surface, Dennis Troy, Andy Mink, Christina Craves and Joanna Schultz

2. **Public Comment**

No public comment

3. **Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of June 2, 2015**

Commissioner Nadeau said there is only one Eagle Scout present at this time.

Motion by Commissioner Guinn to approve the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of June 2, 2015. Second by Commissioner Harney. Motion carried

4. **Presentation by Eagle Scout Ethan Andelin on his project to paint the dinosaur playground in the Nevada Farms and Families area located in Rancho San Rafael Regional Park**

Andy Mink, District Manager, introduced Eagle Scout Ethan Andelin.

Eagle Scout Ethan Andelin gave a presentation.

In response to Commissioner Harney regarding the Troop number, Eagle Scout Andelin said 710.

Eric Crump, Division Director of Operations thanked Eagle Scout Andelin. He had some very vivid slides and the area is very popular.

Commissioner Nadeau said we will move to item #6 and return to item #5 when Eagle Scout Alden Keele arrives.

6. **Introduction of new staff members: Recreation Coordinators Christina Cravens and Samantha Szesciorka**

Andy Mink District Manager introduced Christina Cravens, Recreation Coordinator. She will be responsible for overseeing aquatics, water parks, and amphitheater programs at Hawkins

amphitheater. Once the summer is over she will be given free rein to hopefully lead us forward to rebuild what used to be a vibrant recreation division within Parks.

Christina Cravens said she came from Summerset having worked there for 9 years running the recreation and pool facility. Her duties included fitness, private and public events. She is very excited about this opportunity to give back to the community.

Eric Crump, Division Director of Operations said Samantha Szesciorka was not able to make the meeting because Mr. Crump forgot to tell her. Samantha worked for Parks under contract for about 1 ½ years. We were able to fund a permanent position within the May Center with the assistance of the Wilbur May Foundation.

5. Presentation by Eagle Scout Alden Keele on his project to restore the log playground in the Nevada Farms and Families area located in Rancho San Rafael Regional Park

Andy Mink, District Manager introduced Eagle Scout Alden Keele.

Eagle Scout Keele gave a presentation.

Commissioner Guinn said thanked both scouts on their projects. With the projects and hours the scouts put in, they are really helping Parks and we do appreciate it.

7. Presentation by Nevada Recreation and Parks Society of the Elmer H. Anderson Parks Excellence Award for the Ballardini Ranch Trailhead project

Andy Bass, Vice President of the Nevada Recreation and Parks Society presented the Elmer H. Anderson Parks Excellence Award for the Ballardini Ranch Trailhead project as well as presenting certificates to the partners of the project.

Cheryl Surface, Park Planner accepted the award. Ms. Surface said this has a been long time coming and something the community has been hoping to accomplish since the 1980s. The acquisition of this project came from Washoe County Bond 1 funding as well as funds from the Southern Nevada Public Lands Act to purchase 121 acres for the Angie Persighl family. The design of the project was started in 2006 and in 2013 went out to bid for construction of the project with the project being completed in December of 2014. There are currently 3 miles of inner loop trail and just beginning the design phase for the connection to the Thomas Creek Trail.

Ms. Surface thanked all of those who were part of the project: Design Workshop, Wood Rogers, property owner Angie Persighl, and Spanish Springs Construction.

Commissioner Nadeau thanked Ms. Surface and Lynda Nelson, former Planning Manager.

Commissioner Daniel thanked Ms. Surface for spearheading this project through. It took a long time and she has done a great job. Commissioner Daniel has hiked the trail several times; it has great views and well designed.

8. Presentation by Doug Doolittle regarding the need of pickleball facilities in Washoe County.

Doug Doolittle gave a presentation on the need for facilities for pickleball, as well as showed news reports on a sport that is growing locally and nationally.

In response to Commissioner Sheakley regarding playing in the rain, Mr. Doolittle said he has played it in the rain. The primary natural element that competes with pickleball is heavy wind, but can be played in many different elements. A whiffle ball is used for the game so heavy winds can interfere. In winter months most people go indoors to play.

In response to Commissioner Daniel regarding cost estimate of resurfacing or construction of a facility, Mr. Doolittle said in Bend Oregon they are spending about \$250,000 on new construction. For resurfacing for a tennis court complex like at Hidden Valley Regional Park he's guessing around \$25,000. Mr. Doolittle has asked for estimates from a company on several tennis courts.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding are courts constructed same as a tennis court and is it possible to overlay pickleball over a tennis court, Mr. Doolittle said construction is pretty much the same and as for overlaying, they are currently doing that at Hidden Valley Regional Park. However, the more lines on the court, the more confusion. It works well in the short term, but for this community he feels the time is right to develop a permanent facility that is not competing with another sport.

Commissioner Nadeau said staff might start looking at some of the Master Plans to see if we can implement something or see if there is grant money out there to fund a court.

Mr. Doolittle said he encourages staff to meet with them as a group and allow them the opportunity to look at facilities that might be useful and dedicated to pickleball.

Commissioner Buckley with 200 active members and 300 who receive the newsletter, she would be interested to find out how many tennis players play pickleball. Maybe a few of the tennis courts could be converted.

Commissioner Daniel said this is a good example of how parks provide an essential community benefit. This is a health and wellness issue with an aging community and another example of how parks are essential quality of life of this community.

Mr. Doolittle said this Commission has voiced year after year that there is a strong economic impact to parks of any kind. Recreational activities of any kind are needed to get this community moving, staying active, healthy and provide leisure opportunity. When companies come to this community they want to know their families are going to be cared for and accommodated. Leisure and recreation has always been huge in this town in terms of attracting new businesses.

Commissioner Nadeau thanked Mr. Doolittle for his presentation and all he did when he was the Director of the Park Department.

Public Comment

Mark Nelson, USA Pickleball Association Representative for the area said he was asked seven years ago to come here and try to get this sport going. He has been a resident for nine years. He said he loves the feeling of exercise, just doesn't like to exercise, but can go out and play pickleball for hours. He can have a workout without feeling like he's had to do exercise. Pickleball is a great group sport. This morning at the Evelyn Mount Center they had about 40 people show

up to play pickleball on four courts. What we really need is a group of eight courts dedicated to the sport so groups can play. Some of the other cities with dedicated pickleball courts include Las Vegas, Henderson, Boulder City, Auburn, Chico, and Citrus Heights. He would appreciate if this Commission could assist with getting pickleball courts.

Bill Watson said he just relocated in July from New York. He learned pickleball last April when he went back to sell his home. He started playing in the northern New York community of 15-16,000 people when no one knew about it or played it. He knew the mayor and recreation leaders and approached them with a similar presentation Mr. Doolittle made. They welcomed it whole heartedly and they now have over 300 people playing it, a dedicated facility with four courts and three indoor facilities. He did the recreational portion of the senior games this past year and there were 125 pickleball players of 250 participants. Pickleball is a growing sport with the average age of people playing is 65.

Denise Johnson showed the Commission and public a pickleball paddle. She and her husband play a lot of pickleball and no matter where they go they take their paddles. Her husband usually gets on the USPA website to find out where the courts are when they travel. They stopped at St. George which has a population of 73,000, Reno-Sparks has about 315,000, with 70 pickleball courts and most of them are dedicated courts in 11 different locations. Reno-Sparks doesn't have any. The place they were playing had 12 new courts with canopies, benches, restroom facilities and already breaking ground for another 12. The sport is growing like leaps and bounds.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding is Evelyn Mount courts indoor or outdoor; Mrs. Johnson said they have both.

Robert Lyle has lived in Washoe County since 1972 coming here immediately after law school to work for the Attorney General's office. He has been actively involved in athletics his whole life having gone through college on an athletic scholarship. He has been an active tennis player since he was a little kid and when he came here they courts were down by the Washoe Golf Course and played on the Plumas courts when they were first opened. He is in his 60s and doesn't play tennis due to some injuries. Physically he can't play tennis anymore, but he can play pickleball because of the size of the court. He teaches and competes in the sport and it doesn't matter if you're young or in your 80s, if you go down to Evelyn Mount on days they're playing you will see a number of 80 year old women playing. Reno/Washoe County is behind the times, there are many communities that have pickleball courts with many local and national events. We urge this Commission and planners to take a look at existing courts or parks to add permanent pickleball courts.

In response to Eric Crump, Operations Division Director regarding a typical number of courts for a tournament, Mr. Nelson said in Arizona they have 24 dedicated courts. They have 4,000 residents with 750 people in the pickleball club, 120 in the tennis club. When they put on a tournament they'll have over 400 players come in and they use all 24 courts. A smaller tournament can be put on with eight courts, the minimum to put on a tournament.

9. Update on Betsy Caughlin Donnelly Park and TMWA easement (requested by Commissioner Nadeau)

Jennifer Budge, Park Operations Superintendent gave a presentation.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding will it be restored to a pasture, Ms. Budge said we do have an active pasture lease with Pete Lazetich who helps us regulate the water. He did not have cattle there this year and we would like to get established at least another year before cattle are brought back.

Commissioner Nadeau thanked Ms. Budge for the presentation. This settles his worries about the area.

10. Overview of County Parklands in Northern Washoe (requested by Commissioner Nadeau)

Jennifer Budge, Park Operations Superintendent reviewed maps of County parklands for the Commission.

Northern Washoe Parklands, Southwest of Pyramid Lake:

- Primarily open space in Northern Washoe
- Sugarloaf Peak was acquired from a development company who donated it to Washoe County and now has a trail system thanks to Park Planner Cheryl Surface
- Acreage to the East
 - 920 acres (not contiguous land) has different parcels that Washoe County owns that are part of the open space program
 - All the areas are ridge lines or wildlife corridors
 - 530 acres which is the Regional Shooting Facility

Northern Washoe:

- Land in green is all federal land
- We have a few 40 acre parcels off of State Route 447
- All the way to the Sheldon Antelope Refuge we have a 40 acre parcel just outside of Vya

The County has worked very hard primarily through our tax delinquent program to acquire lands that are adjacent to federal lands and primary areas for wildlife habitat, especially areas with any kind of water source. We are working with partners like Nevada Land Trust, Nevada Department of Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service on how we can do our natural resource management in the sensitive areas.

Cheryl Surface, Park Planner said near Spanish Flat Reservoir we have several parcels including upper and lower Scott and Mud Springs we are working with Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) to fence those springs as well as adding facilities that will trough the springs. They are being inundated by cattle and wild horses. NDOW and Nevada Big Horns are providing the funding for fencing and spring infrastructures. Outside of the fenced enclosure are primary sage grouse habitat areas so NDOW is very concerned with not only preserving the sage grouse habitat, but providing water for the cattle and horses and still protect the area. Washoe County will provide a couple of cattle guards.

11. Presentation by Nevada Land Trust on their partnership with the Greater Hart-Sheldon Conservation Fund (GHSCF) to acquire lands within the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge and Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge. Discussion and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners regarding possible conveyance of Washoe County

parcel APN 061-110-09, a 40-acre parcel to Nevada Land Trust compliant with NRS 244.284 for wildlife habitat and natural resource management purposes.

Jennifer Budge, Park Operations Superintendent said Nevada Land Trust (NLT) has been a tremendous partner over the years and this a great opportunity for Washoe County.

Lynda Nelson, Acting Project Director for Nevada Land Trust. She retired from Washoe County Parks in December of 2011. This project is a 40 acre parcel in northern Washoe and was acquired by Washoe County through the tax delinquent program.

The Greater Hart-Sheldon landscape spans roughly 853,000 acres across southeastern Oregon and northeastern Nevada. The area encompasses high desert oasis with natural lakes, sagebrush flats, rugged ridge lines, Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge and the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge. NLT for the last two years has been working with the Greater Hart-Sheldon Conservation Fund, a nonprofit group that received funding through the Ruby Pipeline project to acquire inholdings. These are 20, 40 and 80 acre private parcels within the Hart Mountain and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge. The priority of the acquisitions is to work at acquiring those that are located within the existing refuge. NLT is asking through the partnership with Washoe County if their parcel could be donated to NLT who in turn will turn it over to the US Fish and Wildlife for management.

The acquisition before the Commission is a 40 acre parcel located within the Sheldon was acquired through tax delinquent open space. If the conveyance is approved to the NLT they will be able to work quickly with US Fish and Wildlife Service to get this critical parcel included as part of the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge.

In response to Commissioner Daniel regarding is the parcel the one southwest of Fish Spring, Ms. Nelson said yes, it is labeled Washoe County on the map.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding is there a downside to this conveyance; Ms. Budge said she doesn't see any downsides. She thinks it is a great opportunity, someone will actually be managing the land for wildlife habitat. With the resources we have we are not able to patrol on a regular basis or even an annual spot check to see how the vegetation is or is any dumping happening. One protection that can be put in place is a reversionary clause so if it's ever managed in a way that is not in the spirit of natural resource management and wildlife it could revert back to the County.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding do the parcels marked NLT already belong to NLT, Ms. Nelson said yes. NLT owns 80 acres. They are in the process of transferring the parcels through their agreement with Greater Hart-Sheldon Conservation fund to Fish and Wildlife Service.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding is the Washoe County piece accessible by vehicle and is anything on the property now, Ms. Nelson said it is accessible and all sagebrush habitat with no structures.

In response to Michael Large, Deputy District Attorney regarding is there typically a reversionary clauses in case of development, Ms. Budge said yes, we typically include reversionary clauses to protect the land and we would want one for this land. If it is an area that wasn't essential for wildlife habitat we do not typically include one. In NRS 244.284 it talks about a transfer of land to

a nonprofit without consideration. From a staff prospective we are recommending the land be transferred without consideration and to not have funds or appraisal for this property because the appraisal could cost more than the property and limit the resources to NLT to go after additional lands. Washoe County acquired the land through tax delinquency so haven't invested money into the property or toward the purchase.

Motion by Commissioner Daniel recommend to the Board of County Commissioners conveyance of Washoe County parcel APN 061-110-09, a 40-acre parcel to Nevada Land Trust compliant with NRS 244.284 for wildlife habitat and natural resource management purposes. Second by Commissioner Guinn. Motion carried

12. Review, discussion and possible approval of a letter from the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission to the Board of County Commissioners regarding parks funding and allocations in the County's budget.

Commissioner Buckley said the final draft, doesn't see many changes and seems fine to her.

Commissioner Nadeau said in the second to last paragraph it says "the County puts Culture and Recreation low on the priority list". He thinks when it comes to funding there isn't necessarily a desire list and maybe toning it a little differently to temper doesn't sound appropriate to him.

Commissioner Buckley said you want it more polite and is fine with changing it. That's the way they do it and say it's from polls taken, but she objects to the way some of the questions are posed in the polls. Parks and Recreation doesn't have the same lobbying abilities that Public Safety does. There was a report in the paper and the County Manager mentioned what was going to Parks budget and she thought that was slightly misleading as some of the money was Capital Projects that have been promised years ago and that there wasn't any increase in the budget.

Commissioner Guinn agrees with tempering the letter and get a strong point out. The letter the way it was written expresses our point without having the last paragraph.

Commissioner Daniel agrees that we want to project that our priority that parks are important.

Commissioner Nadeau suggested the revision sentence should be something along the line that the County was placed in financial straits that created a situation where they created priorities of which Parks and Recreation has placed on one of the lower levels.

Commissioner Harney agrees, but doesn't like the terminology "the County". It's not the County, it's the Commissioners, so if we do something along those lines and address it to the Commissioners, not the County, and it would be a little more appetizing for them.

Commissioner Davis said if we turned it around and said that public sentiments reflect that we should be high on the priority list.

Commissioner Sheakley agrees.

Michael Large, District Deputy Attorney said we need to look through the full language, have the letter drafted and brought back to this Commission for approval and then it can be sent off.

Motion by Commissioner Guinn to draft the letter as noted and bring back to this Commission as requested. Second by Commissioner Buckley. Motion carried.

13. Presentation on Program/Park of the Month featuring the Regional Archery Facility

Andy Mink, District Manager gave a presentation.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding do we receive monetary consideration from users, Ranger Mink said yes, we receive a portion of the league fees from Silver Arrow Bowmen.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding would the compensation received come close to the amount of materials and staff hours, Ranger Mink said most of the materials were purchased from the north trails grant. If you took the staff time used he believes the payment from Silver Arrow Bowmen would not cover this and the public does not pay to shoot. The only fees receives in return from this facility is from the club when they do their shoots.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding how many people utilize the facility in a year, Ranger Mink said the club has a membership of about 100 people. We are seeing a dramatic increase in use, especially women, kids and families. He doesn't have a number of users, but they will see 30-40 cars out there on a Saturday.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding all the resources are for the recreation of 50-100 people, Ranger Mink said no, he would say per week. A lot of people do return, but we are seeing that it is growing in use. Archery is another one of the fastest growing sports. Some members of the club we've talked to work at Sheels, Cabellas and they are seeing an increase in archery sales. It started with Hunger Games and has seen a lot of young women becoming interested and staying in the sport.

14. Park Reports

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding the reports are on record and is there anything to highlight, Eric Crump, Operations Division Director said no. The May Center report was handed out today and staff is here to answer questions.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding he noticed a decrease in volunteers and was there a reason, Jennifer Budge, Park Operations Superintendent said weather was one factor, but the previous month had an increase in numbers and were groups that normally come later in the year.

15. Director's Report

Dave Solaro, Community Services Director said Parks is working on securing a donation from the Pennington Foundation to resurface nine tennis courts, reconstruction of one court and replacement of a playground at Lemmon Valley Park. This item will go directly to the Board of County Commissioners for acceptance of the donation.

We are reducing water consumption at the Washoe Golf Course by 42% and was featured in today's news. This is due to the shutdown of the ditch water. The Highland Ditch was shut down as well and affects the multiuse pasture at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park. Washoe County is

doing their part by managing the lack of water in the area to be good stewards of the water resource as well as trying to maintain our assets.

16. Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Buckley said she may or may not be under the mistaken idea that it's the philosophy of the County to subsidize youth recreation, but not adult recreation. We provide facilities, but as far as we can, we try to recover costs. How much are we prepared to subsidize groups? She has said this before when it came to the shooting facility that players of these sports expect everything for free. She doesn't know what the philosophy is, but would like to have a discussion/report on the County's stance. Mr. Solaro suggested Commissioner Buckley request staff to bring an item for the next meeting to discuss the fees and uses policy that has been adopted.

Commissioner Guinn said the Wilbur D. May Foundation is in a lot of the reports for Parks and he feels they should be acknowledged for all the money and time they donate to the community.

Commissioner Nadeau said the application process to recruit Park Commissioners will open soon.

17. Public Comment

Michael Large, Deputy District Attorney said this would be Commissioner Nadeau's last meeting and thanked him for his service. However, based on the reading of the statute, Commissioner Nadeau will remain on the Commission until an appointment is made to replace him. We are opening that process to fill two spots and if anyone knows of anyone who wants to apply to let them know.

Meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm