

MINUTES

Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission August 4, 2020

The Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission met in a scheduled session on Tuesday, August 4, 2020, in the Washoe County Commission Chambers, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada.

No members of the public were allowed in the Commission Chambers due to concerns for public safety resulting from the COVID-19 emergency and pursuant to the Governor of Nevada's Declaration of Emergency Directive 006 Section 1 which suspends the requirement in NRS 241.023(1)(b) that there be a physical location designated for meetings of public bodies where members of the public are permitted to attend and participate. This meeting will be held by teleconference only.

The meeting was televised live and replayed on Washoe Channel at:

<https://www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff/Communications/wctv-live.php> also on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/WashoeCountyTV>

Commissioner Chen called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

1. **Roll Call**

Members Present: Stephanie Chen, Darla Lee, Chris Nenzel

Members Present via Zoom: Heidi Anderson, Thomas Guinn, Jennifer Oliver,
Greg Shorts

Members Absent: Doug Doolittle

Staff Present: Lindsay Liddell, Katy Stark

Staff Present via Zoom: Dave Solaro, Eric Crump, Colleen Wallace-Barnum, Sophia Kirschenman,
Joanne Lowden

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

4. **Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of August 4, 2020**

Motion by Commissioner Nenzel to approve the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of August 4, 2020. Second by Commissioner Lee. Motion carried.

5. **Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of June 2, 2020**

Motion by Commissioner Guinn to approve the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of June 2, 2020. Second by Commissioner Shorts. Motion carried.

6. **Acknowledgment and recognition of Park Operations staff for their outstanding service and contributions to Washoe County**

There were no acknowledgements at today's meeting. Eric Crump, Operations Division Director, said that they were hoping to bring staff recognitions to the Commission in person but not knowing when that will be able to happen, they will try to bring the recognitions to the next meeting.

7. Eagle Scout Presentation

There was not a presentation at today's meeting. Commissioner Shorts said he saw a staff Facebook post about a project someone did at North Valleys. He wondered if there would be a chance for a make-up time on those? Eric Crump said that they can easily have these presentations through zoom. Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent said that the project was not an Eagle project. It was a project that was part of a KTMB community clean up. Staff is doing a good job acknowledging these projects and clean-ups whether it's a Scout project or something else. She said she will ask staff about getting some of the Eagle Scout presentations scheduled for the meetings through Zoom. Commissioner Shorts asked if there was a process for the Commission to send them a thank-you letter. Eric Crump said yes if he wanted to send a letter from the Commission, he would work through the Chair and get an item on the agenda. He could also contact the individual Park Commissioners.

8. Election of the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Vice Chair for a term of August 4, 2020 thru December 31, 2020 (For Possible Action)

Motion by Commissioner Chen to elect Commissioner Oliver as Vice Chair. Second by Commissioner Guinn. Motion carried.

9. Discussion on future Open Space and Regional Park Commission Workshop to Include Date, Time, Location and Topic(s).

Eric Crump, Operations Director, said this is a follow-up to a recommendation made by Commissioner Jung. They are hoping to do a workshop in person but as of now, the Governor has issued that these mandatory zoom meetings are indefinite so they are not sure when they can meet in person again. Staff would like to know from the Commission when they would like to have a workshop and specifically what topics they would like to discuss. Commissioner Jung's recommendation was that of funding. Commissioner Shorts asked if there is a time period that would be most valuable for what they are trying to do. Mr. Crump replied that budget season kicks off in October/November. They have good information in the Master Plan update and also from stakeholders and a community survey they did in terms of what is important to them. Staff would like to hear what's important to the Commission. The next fiscal year is going to be fairly competitive and they may have to make decisions as to where to put their resources. It's worth knowing what is important to the community and what is less important. September/October would be a good time. Commissioner Nenzel asked if this is something that a few members should attend and then report back to the Commission at a regularly scheduled meeting or if all of the Commissioners should attend. Mr. Crump suggested it would be good for all of the Commissioners to attend. DDA Liddell clarified that if the Commissioners are in attendance, this would technically be an open meeting and would require an agenda and a physical location depending on what the directives look like at the time. Chair Chen suggested sending a Doodle poll with several dates to the Commissioners. It was determined that a date did not have to be determined during this meeting. It was determined to poll a few dates and times outside of a regular meeting time and see what works for the Commission. Commissioner Nenzel said if an action item comes up out of the workshop, it can be added to the next regular meeting agenda. Commissioner Guinn suggested another topic – he would like an understanding of the grant funding. Vice Chair Oliver suggested another topic would be AB 178 regarding additional funding opportunities and what that might look like if that's still viable. Commissioner Anderson said she would like to hear information on

any CARES Act funding and parks & recreation funding that may be coming. Chair Chen said if the Commissioners think of anything else to add to the agenda, email her or Kathy. It was determined that Kathy Emerson would send out the poll.

10. **Parks Reports**

Colleen Wallace-Barnum highlighted the park reports. They opened outdoor and indoor facilities with no more than 50 people. They reopened the campgrounds with group campgrounds for 50 or less. Bower's Mansion and pool are both still under construction. Parks staff has been busy with the increased use of the parks. They have been able to hire their seasonal staff which helps to stay on top of everything. The Hawkins Amphitheater has not been reopened. On July 17th they were told they had to reduce the numbers for social gatherings to 25 or less. Staff had to reach out to people who had reservations of more than 25 – they could cancel with a full refund, reschedule or reduce their group size to 25. They had a few groups who chose to go forward with their event with the caveat of the reduced number. Two reservations had over 100 people attend the event. Staff was disappointed and have noted it on paperwork that the groups were in violation and would not receive their cleaning/security deposit. Staff is keeping track of those. They are hoping to reopen Bower's Mansion in the next week or two for tours in a modified fashion – face coverings required, small group sizes, possibly not more than 10. The arboretum is seeing about a 28% increase for the months of June and July. They are working on a design plan for a new succulent garden funded by the May Arboretum Society. They have received funding for two positions through Manpower which will be helpful for them to stay on top of their work. The May Museum reopened to the public on June 24th. The numbers have been steady, not busy or crowded. Compliance with face coverings has been excellent. They had an art exhibit, America the Beautiful, which was well received. It was one of the few Artown events that took place. The volunteer program has been modified, the arboretum gets volunteers regularly. Small groups of 1-2. Commissioner Lee asked how they keep a count of how many visitors they have at the arboretum. Ms. Wallace Barnum answered that there is a counter at both of the gate entrances.

Joanne Lowden, Natural Resource Planner, updated the Riverbend project – they have been working on a new trailhead along the Truckee River out near Verdi. Sophia Kirschenman, Park Planner, is working on the Boundary Line Adjustment for the project. The preliminary site plans have been completed. City of Reno issued a special use permit for the project. They hired a contractor to prepare an environmental assessment for the project. It is currently on the Park's website for comments. They will be accepting comments until September 2nd. They applied for a land & water conservation fund grant. If they receive final approval, they should have funds around March 2021. They also submitted a 2nd project for a land and water conservation grant that was also approved, for the Rancho all-inclusive playground. Resource Concepts Inc. completed the Integrated Vegetation Management Plan for Truckee River Parks in June. Construction began on the Lower Thomas Creek project in July and is expected to be completed in early August. The project includes trail maintenance, signage, and a new bridge crossing. They accepted a grant from NDOW for the Regional Shooting and Archery Facilities that will be used to create a Master Plan for the Archery Range and facility, road, and drainage upgrades at the Shooting Range.

Commissioner Lee asked how many parking spaces would be at the Riverbend project? Ms. Lowden answered that there would be 10 including one ADA with a large area for a turnaround and loading area. Commissioner Lee asked if that would be enough? Ms. Lowden answered that they were constrained by the size of the site and the City of Reno Code and that's how many spaces they could have. Commissioner Lee was concerned because the parking at Lake Tahoe was not sufficient for the number of people. Commissioner Lee asked if there was any additional parking besides the 10

official spaces. Ms. Lowden said there is additional parking along Highway 40 and parking across the street.

Sophia Kirschenman, Park Planner, added that the Regional Archery Facility Master Plan Request for Proposals is complete and they are in the process of posting that on the web. They will start requesting proposals at the end of this week or next week. The request will be open for three weeks.

They are moving forward on all of the steps that have to be completed for the Riverbend Boundary Line Adjustment. The Blackstone Estates Maintenance Agreement was approved by the Board of County Commissioners. This is for the construction of a neighborhood park within the Blackstone Estates Subdivision. The developer submitted their application for a building permit on June 1st so construction should be started soon. The Betsy Caughlin Donnelly Park easements and mitigation were also approved by the Board of County Commissioners. The property owners who requested the easements have filed an application with TMWA to connect water to the park. The developer is ready to start construction on the project next week.

Washoe County Engineering is doing some testing at the Hidden Valley Regional Park. Washoe County operates the South Truckee Meadows Wastewater Reclamation Facility, which is pretty close to the park. They are looking for potential locations in the County to distribute effluent water from the facility. It's a long process and many tests have to be performed to determine whether the park could be a suitable location for the distribution of effluent water. If it is found to be a good location, effluent water could potentially be used to support some future park amenities. One idea is the creation of a wetlands trail area. Any changes would most likely entail a Hidden Valley Master Plan update. This would be a long process that would take a couple of years. It would be a nice collaboration between Washoe County Parks and Washoe County Engineering.

There are also a couple of right-of-entry applications in from the NV Division of Forestry. They are interested in doing some fuels hazard reduction projects at Galena Creek Regional Park, Davis Creek Regional Park and at several other open space properties. This would consist of clearing dead shrubs and revegetation efforts.

Washoe County has also received an easement application from NV Energy for a new easement on a parcel in Verdi, which is a little bit east of the River Bend property. This will be coming before the Commission at the next meeting.

Dave Solaro, Assistant County Manager, gave the Commission an update on the golf report. The Commission has reports from Washoe Golf Course and Sierra Sage Golf Course which are pretty standard. He has noticed on the Sierra Sage report that they do a good job of showing historical dates for numbers of rounds, going from 2012 to present. The last two months have been record breaking months for Sierra Sage, well over 6,000 per month. A lot of that is attributed to the value of our parks and open space and recreation opportunities, especially during this COVID time. The Board of County Commissioners have entered into a limited agreement with Mike Mazzaferri to operate the Wildcreek property. That consists of the Par 3, 9-hole course, as well as the Creek 6 which is 6 holes associated with the old 18-hole course. It is an experiment to see what kind of sustainable course we can have. There are designs for another 9-hole full length course but as they lost the golf operator due to COVID they have had to shift gears. They have entered into a trial period to see how a 6-hole course and a 9-hole, Par 3 work out. He said if any of the Commissioners are golfers to go ahead and give it a try and let him know how it goes.

Commissioner Lee asked about the length of the contract. Mr. Solaro said it runs through November 15th. Commissioner Lee asked if the course will be open through November and closes for a time? Mr. Solaro said yes, they wanted to take some time to evaluate the performance, revenue, and expenditures, so they can craft another agreement. There are some provisions to extend the life of the agreement, weather permitting. They are running a tight balance with revenue and expenditures and weather is going to play a role in that. He would like to leave a little flexibility for an opportunity to shut down a course so they don't hemorrhage money out of the golf fund while they make sure they can sustain the golf facility. Commissioner Lee asked about the redesign plans. Mr. Solaro said the plan is to start next year. They will make a decision around December after the 4 ½ month time period.

Commissioner Shorts asked whether this should have been brought before the Commission for their input? Mr. Solaro said normally he should bring everything before them for advice before taking it to the County Commissioners. In this instance time was of the essence and he made the choice to go directly to the County Commissioners just knowing through conversations with this board in the past the importance of that property and wanting to keep it green and viable. He thought that was the best course of action.

11. **Director's Report**

Dave Solaro, Assistant County Manager, said that Sophia Kirschenman and Joanne Lowden had covered quite a few of the County Commission updates regarding the Riverbend property, the archery and shooting facility grant and the Blackstone Estates agreement. He added a couple of things that are very important. During the second quarter of calendar year 2020, the Board accepted about \$8,600 in cash and in-kind donations to the park program. He thought it was very important that the Commission know of the donations of time and value from the community. Also, on July 21st the Board approved a \$320,000 donation from the Wilbur May Foundation. This is a donation they receive pretty regularly from the May Foundation year to year. \$220,000 is restricted for operating support for the Wilbur D. May Center and \$100,000 goes to support temporary exhibits at the Wilbur D. May Center. Without these donations from the Wilbur May Foundation, Washoe County could not operate that facility. It's important to understand the input they get from the Foundation.

12. **Commissioner's Comments**

Commissioner Guinn said thank you for the donations. During these crazy times, they are well appreciated. Also, they had a major fire by his house up Mt. Rose Highway and he wanted to thank all of the firefighters as well as Washoe County – police, public works and parks. Also, he was able to see the new Tahoe Trail from the water. He said it was absolutely amazing. He thinks it's up for a national award for public works throughout the United States. Congratulations for the coordination efforts.

13. **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

Meeting adjourned at 3:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

K. Emerson

Kathy Emerson, Recording Secretary

Approved by Commission in session on September 1, 2020.

Stephanie Chen

Stephanie Chen, Chair