

**Draft MINUTES**  
**Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission**  
**May 24, 2023**

**The Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission met in a scheduled session on Wednesday, May 24, 2023, in the Washoe County Commission Chambers, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada.**

**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>**

**Kevin Joell called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.**

**Brandon Roman requested Zoom participants turn their cameras on so those in Chambers know who is speaking.**

### **1. Roll Call**

**Members Present:** Kevin Joell, Nicholas Martin Kearney, Stephanie Chen, Timothy Dake, Doug Doolittle, Lisa Rode, Miles Gertler, Mariluz Garcia

**Staff Present:** Colleen Wallace Barnum, Eric Crump, Dave Solaro, Lindsey Liddell, Brandon Roman, Adriana Albarran

**Absent:** Maxwell DiNatale, Omer Rains

### **2. Pledge of Allegiance**

The pledge was recited by Commissioner Doolittle.

### **3. Public Comment**

Public comment by Jay Howard. Mr. Howard stated he was in support of a Parks District involving Washoe County, City of Reno, and City of Sparks on behalf of Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation and Truckee Meadows Trails.

### **4. Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of May 24, 2023**

No public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Doolittle to approve the agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of May 24, 2023. Second by Commissioner Dake. Motion carried unanimously.

**5. Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of March 22, 2023**

No public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Dake to approve the minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of January 25, 2023. Second by Commissioner Doolittle. Motion carried unanimously.

**6. Resolution to acknowledge Doug Doolittle for his 7 years of service and contributions as a Park Commissioner.**

Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent stated that Commissioner Doolittle served 8 years.

Chair Joell read the resolution.

Commissioner Doolittle said he was humbled and thankful to be able to serve on the Commission and in a different capacity. Commissioner Doolittle stated he recommends anyone to serve that is interested.

Chair Joell thanked Commissioner Doolittle for his service on the Commission and for his guidance as Chairman.

Eric Crump, Director of Community Services, thanked Commissioner Doolittle for all his work and leading staff through the recession and for his guidance.

Dave Solaro, Assistant County Manager, thanked Commissioner Doolittle for his guidance as a director and creating the Community Services Department and a park commissioner.

Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent, thanked Commissioner Doolittle for his leadership on Park Commission and for his support of parks and staff.

No public comment.

Motion by Chair Doolittle to adopt the resolution to acknowledge Doug Doolittle for his 8 years of service and contributions as a Park Commissioner. Second by Lisa Rode. Motion carried unanimously.

**7. Resolution to acknowledge Stephanie Chen for her 4 years of service and contributions as a Park Commissioner.**

Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent, stated Commissioner Chen served 5 years on the Park Commission and it is correct on the resolution.

Chair Joell read the resolution for Commissioner Chen.

Dave Solaro, Assistant County manager, thanked Commissioner Chen on behalf of the Community Services Department for all she's done for Parks.

Commissioner Chen stated she was honored and humbled to be a part of the Park Commission for so long.

Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent, thanked Commissioner Chen for her service on the commission and stated the connection between the Parks and Health District is stronger because of her and hopes to see that continue.

Commissioner Garcia stated she has known Commissioner Chen for several years and is excited to see someone local so involved and thanked her for her service.

Commissioner Doolittle thanked Commissioner Chen for stepping up in every capacity, continuing to make meetings while working full time and for being a park advocate.

Chair Joell thanked Commissioner Chen for her work on Park Commission and in the Health District and for her guidance when he was new to the commission.

No public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Dake to approve the resolution to acknowledge Stephanie Chen for her 5 years of service and contributions as a Park Commissioner. Second by Commissioner Doolittle. Motion carried.

**8. Presentation, discussion, and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve a Grant of Easement granting a permanent, nonexclusive easement (totaling ±60 square feet) to United States Geological Survey (USGS) on APN 049-752-08 in the Southwest Truckee Meadows Planning Area, for the placement of stream gage housing instrumentation to support the existing stream gage located on Whites Creek**

Faye-Marie Pekar, Park Planner gave a presentation. Curtis Schmitt, Field Office Chief with USGS was available for questions as well.

In response to Chair Joell's question about vandalism, Curtis stated the location was chosen to minimize visibility which will minimize vandalism.

In response to Commissioner Doolittle's question about liability, Curtis stated any vandalism would be the responsibility of USGS. Faye-Marie added that USGS staff will visit every 6 weeks so would be aware of any vandalism. Curtis stated they are also aware of vandalism if the panels stop transmitting.

No public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Dake to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to approve a Grant of Easement granting a permanent, nonexclusive easement (totaling ±60 square feet) to United States Geological Survey (USGS) on APN 049-752-08 in the Southwest Truckee Meadows Planning Area, for the placement of stream gage housing instrumentation to support the existing stream gage located on Whites Creek. Second by Commissioner Doolittle. Motion carried unanimously.

**9. Presentation, discussion and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve the following easement deeds between Washoe County and the City of Reno to support the Plumas Street and Urban Road Sidewalk and Drainage Improvement Project: a temporary construction easement totaling ±3,044 square feet on APN 019-140-12, part of Washoe Golf Course; a temporary construction easement totaling ±8,004 square feet, a drainage easement ±180 square feet, and a public use easement totaling ±3,423 square feet on APN 019-140- 13, part of the Reno Tennis Center**

Faye-Marie Pekar, Park Planner gave a background on the project and introduced Jonathan Smith, Senior Civil Engineer, with City of Reno. Mr. Smith gave a presentation.

In response to Commissioner Doolittle's question about fence removal, Mr. Smith said they will not have to remove the fence, the sidewalk will be adjacent to the fence and there will be a Keystone wall about 1.5 – 2 feet with railing where required.

In response to Commissioner Doolittle's question about the slope on the ADA compliant path, Mr. Smith stated it would be 8% and will have landing areas at the turning points.

In response to Chair Joell's questions about the design, Mr. Smith stated they will be redoing the maintenance access road, but steps or stairs cannot be placed as the maintenance staff uses the road for park access, but people can use the paved path. Mr. Smith stated it will be on the south side of Urban and the west side of Plumas.

In response to Commissioner Dake's question about restrictions during the project, Mr. Smith said it will not impact the Golf Course or Reno Tennis Center.

In response to Commissioner Doolittle's question to staff about any issues, Faye-Marie stated staff does not see any issues with easements or temporary construction.

Eric Crump, Director of the Community Services Department, stated all permanent easements are located at the Reno Tennis Center which is owned by Washoe County but maintained by City of Reno.

No public comment.

Motion by Chair Joell to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to approve the following easement deeds between Washoe County and the City of Reno to support the Plumas Street and Urban Road Sidewalk and Drainage Improvement Project: a temporary construction easement totaling ±3,044 square feet on APN 019-140-12, part of Washoe Golf Course; a temporary construction easement totaling ±8,004 square feet, a drainage easement ±180 square feet, and a public use easement totaling ±3,423 square feet on APN 019-140- 13, part of the Reno Tennis Center. Second by Commissioner Dake. Motion carried unanimously.

**10. Recommendation to discuss and approve the proposed name, powers, purpose, and boundaries of the proposed park district and recommend the Washoe County Commission 1) adopt a resolution to initiate the creation of a**

**park district pursuant to NRS 318A.070 and 2) direct staff to create a service plan for the proposed district pursuant to NRS 318A.090 to 318A.130.**

Eric Crump, Director of the Community Services Department, introduced Julie Conway, Alicia Roband, and Karen Mullen. Julie gave a presentation, followed by a second presentation by Eric Crump.

Commissioner Doolittle stated this has been in the work for many years and that he strongly advocates for it and will be giving public comment as it moves forward. Commissioner Doolittle stated the Incline Valley and Truckee have done this and it works well to help provide funding.

In response to Commissioner Martin Kearney's question about including arts & culture into the Park District, Julie & Karen stated there has been discussion in previous years to include a full range of services including arts & culture. Karen stated that everything in the service plan is proposed and will continue coming before County Commission and City Counsels to determine what the result will be.

In response to Chair Joell's question about suggestions, Eric stated motion is to initiate the service plan, and is looking for suggestions from Commission to create the scope of work for the Board of County Commissioners to adopt the service plan.

Chair Joell stated he believes the Park District should include City of Reno, City of Sparks, Washoe County, and any other agency that may be interested. Commissioner Doolittle agreed to add other agencies in the Truckee Meadows and start big as it is more difficult to add on later.

Commissioner Gertler thanked Commissioner Kearney for starting the conversation and agrees it should be kept as broad as possible and will find out a long the way if partnerships don't make sense.

In response to Chair Joell's question about revenue, Eric stated this service plan will identify what services are provided and the costs associated with them, how they are funded will come later but taxes may be an option. Karen stated there will be surveys by the public to determine willingness and could be a vote by the people.

In response to Commissioner Rode's question about what a special district is and who would oversee and assess, Eric stated that the Park District is an agency that oversees parks & recreation that will take three entities and become one. Tax

assessments may not be the way they are funded, the service plan is only to determine what is being done and what the cost is, how it is funded will come before the Board later. Julie added the Park District would be a five-person member board that will represent the constituents from each boundary, the individuals would be elected within the boundary. Special districts typically appoint a citizen group to advise the board.

Commissioner Gertler stated he would be hesitant to limit any powers, the service plan gives the opportunity to conduct public surveys and focus groups to see what the public would like and what they would be willing to pay. Chair Joell agreed nothing should be ruled out but wants to ensure public knows this does not necessarily mean a tax increase.

Commissioner Mariluz Garcia said she was in support of the Park District and will be supportive at the Board of County Commissioners level.

No public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Doolittle to approve the proposed name, powers, purpose, and boundaries of the proposed park district and recommend the Washoe County Commission 1) adopt a resolution to initiate the creation of a park district pursuant to NRS 318A.070 and 2) direct staff to create a service plan for the proposed district pursuant to NRS 318A.090 to 318A.130. Second by Commissioner Dake. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Doolittle thanked Alicia, Karen, and Julia for a great job. Julie Conway stated there is a July 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of City of Sparks and are in communication with both cities.

## **11. Presentation and discussion on Washoe County's Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2024**

Eric Crump, CSD, gave a presentation on the final budget.

In response to Commissioner Joell's question about population increase, Eric stated population has increased 20% and staff has decreased 1%.

No public comment.

## **12. Presentation and discussion on Community Services Department Budget related to Parks and Open Space, including but not limited to, operating budgets, staffing, organizational and financial structure.**

Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent, gave a presentation.

In response to Chair Joell's question about the Peavine Budget and water costs, Colleen stated the Rancho San Rafael does pay for water through the Highland Ditch Company but utilizes ditch water for irrigation.

In response to Chair Joell's question about the items that were not approved, Eric stated they did not make the cut to get into the County Manager's Budget. Colleen stated that the trails budget was not cut, but that no additional funding was approved.

Commissioner Dake thanked Eric & Colleen for their presentation.

In response to Commissioner Rode's question about the Natural Resources Coordinator, Colleen stated that the Natural Resource Planner is responsible for the integrated vegetation management plan, weed abatement on open spaces, coordinating field hazard reduction, and will supervise the Trails Program.

In response to Commissioner Rode's question about grants, Colleen stated the Natural Resource planner also writes all the grants and they come from different agencies at Federal and State Level as well as a private grants. Colleen stated she doesn't have the amount of budget for grants that has been used or is currently left but can get that information to the commissioners.

No public comment.

## **13. Parks Reports**

Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent, stated Expedition Dinosaur at May Museum ended in April and received \$170,000 in revenue. Dragon Lights Reno is returning to the May Arboretum June 30<sup>th</sup>-August 13<sup>th</sup>, and VIP/County/May Arboretum Society will be held June 29<sup>th</sup>.

No public comment.

## **14. Director's Report**

Dave Solaro, Assistant County Manager, gave highlights from Board of County Commission Meetings from February 28<sup>th</sup> to May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024.

The Board of County Commissioners rejected the bid for Ellen's Park in February due to irregularities and to ensure it is following all Nevada Revised Statutes, it was approved on May 9<sup>th</sup>. On March 28<sup>th</sup>, the Board of County Commissioners approved all leases with little leagues for concession stands. On April 18<sup>th</sup>, the Board accepted \$2300 in donations from various entities to Parks.

On April 25<sup>th</sup>, the Board executed a 3-year sponsorship agreement with Great Reno Balloon Race at Rancho San Rafael. The public trail easement for Browns Creek was completed.

On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Board approved the compensation increase for seasonal employees as well as amended the agreement to allow general funds to pay up to \$30,000 for water at Sierra Sage Golf Course.

Dave stated that the weather is warmer so parks and maintenance staff will be very busy and to please thank them if you see them out.

No public comment.

### **15. Commissioner Requests for Future Agenda Items**

No commissioner requests for future agenda items.

Chair Joell stated that the International Trails Summit in mid-April was a huge success and was the largest trail gathering recorded with a final county of 930 attendees from over 20 countries and over 40 of the 50 US states.

### **16. Public Comments**

No public comment

### **17. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 3:47pm.

**Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Roebuck, Office Assistant III.**