

Draft MINUTES
Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission
June 24th, 2024

The Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission met in a scheduled session on Monday, June 24th, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. 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>

Chair Kevin Joell called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Kevin Joell (Zoom), Shawn Hill, Timothy Dake, Mariluz Garcia, Michaelangelo Aranda, Miles Gurtler, Lisa Rode (Zoom)

Neal Jones joined the meeting at 1:35 p.m. via Zoom.

Absent: Nicholas Martin Kearney, Mark Neumann

Staff Present: Christina Thayer, Lindsey Liddell, Brandon Roman, Colleen Wallace Barnum, Aaron Smith, Joanne Lowden, Jennifer Roebuck

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was recited and lead by Commissioner Gurtler

3. Reading of Zoom Instructions

Recording Secretary Brandon Roman read the Zoom instructions.

4. Election of the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Chair and Vice Chair for a term of June 24th, 2024, through January 22, 2025.

Chair Joell stated he would like to poll Commissioners for interest in Commission Chair and stated was willing to continue as Chair if desired.

Motion by Commissioner Rode to nominate Kevin Joell as Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Chair for a term of June 24th, 2024, through January 22, 2025. Second by Commissioner Dake.

No public comment. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Joell polled Commissioners for interest in Commission Vice Chair. Commissioners Aranda and Dake expressed interest in running for Vice Chair.

Motion by Chair Joell to nominate Commissioner Dake as Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Vice Chair for a term of June 24th, 2024, through January 22, 2025. Second by Commissioner Rode.

No public comment. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Joell requested Commissioner Dake continue running the meeting.

5. Public Comment

Public comment by Dave Keyes. Mr. Keyes stated he was a frequent user of South Valleys Regional Park and that the new materials provided covered a lot of his questions from watching the May meeting. Mr. Keyes was glad to see the traffic and parking would be through South Virginia Street and not near the apartments and Wedge Parkway.

6. Approval of the Draft Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of May 22, 2024.

Commissioner Hill stated there were errors in the May 22, 2024, meeting minutes where For Our Fans Foundation is referred to as For Our Friends Foundation.

Motion by Commissioner Hill to approve the Draft Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of May 22, 2024, with the corrections. Second by Commissioner Gurtler.

No public comment. Carried unanimously.

7. Presentation, discussion and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve a Non-Funded Cost Share Agreement between Washoe County and the United States Department of Agriculture,

Forest Service, Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest with an estimated Washoe County non-cash contribution of \$215,510.00 primarily in salary and labor costs over a 5-year period; to allow Washoe County to maintain existing and future trails that cross both jurisdictions along the Sierra Front and to continue maintaining the Whites Creek, Thomas Creek Canyon, and Michael D. Thompson Trailheads. (Commission Districts 1 and 2)

Christina Thayer, Trails Program Coordinator, gave a presentation.

In response to Commissioner Dake's question about the agreement, Christina verified this is an update to include additional areas that have been added to the partnership with United States Forest Service (USFS) since 2002.

In response to Commissioner Dake's question on cost, Christina stated that it was a projected number for five years of labor and salary.

In response to Commissioner Hill's question on what the USFS brings to the trail areas, Christina stated it is a collaborative effort. Park Rangers do a lot of work, but USFS steps up when necessary for major issues and grant funding is collaborative.

In response to Commissioner Gurtler's questions on the approval of new projects, Christina stated these types of agreements are critical to getting new projects approved and can help lay the foundation for future trails and trail heads that Washoe County would need to work collaboratively with USFS on, and the agreements show a level of commitment and partnership from Washoe County and the regional stakeholders as within the planning process. The agreement is critical to upgrade the level of service, way finding and signage.

In response to Commissioner Garcia's question on natural disasters, Christina stated she believes the USFS would likely help out if it was primarily on their land, and Washoe County would not be held entirely responsible for rebuilding the trails on USFS land. Signage and facilities on Washoe County property would be reviewed with USFS.

Chair Joell added USFS funds are typically limited but does get restoration and recovery funds after fires or other natural disasters.

Chair Joell stated he has been involved in many of the projects involving the connecting trails, including being a contractor for Washoe County, and will be abstaining from the vote to avoid any perception of conflict.

No public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Gurtler recommend approval of a Non-Funded Cost Share Agreement between Washoe County and the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest with an estimated Washoe County non-cash contribution of \$215,510.00 primarily in salary and labor costs over a 5-year period; to allow Washoe County to maintain existing and future trails that cross both jurisdictions along the Sierra Front and to continue maintaining the Whites Creek, Thomas Creek Canyon, and Michael D. Thompson Trailheads. (Commission Districts 1 and 2). Second by Commissioner Hill.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. Presentation, discussion, direction and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commission to approve the Ground Lease and Development Agreements for the unsolicited proposal from Wendy W. Damonte, representing For Our Fans Foundation, a Nevada non-profit corporation, for an outdoor soccer stadium and training facility at Washoe County's South Valleys Regional Park, within APNs 142- 011-13 and 142-011-02. (Commission District 2) (For Possible Action).

Aaron Smith, Division Director of Operations - Community Services Department, gave a presentation. Representatives for the For Our Fans Foundation (FOFF) were available for questions.

Bob Enzenberger, For Our Fans Foundation gave a statement. Mr. Enzenberger stated that Washoe County staff is asking to be allowed to negotiate the final terms of the lease and the amount of rent to be paid by For Our Fans Foundation and Reno USL Soccer for the use of park property. FOFF's goal is to ensure the stadium project benefits the community as a whole and the park itself.

Mr. Enzenberger stated that under the new lease terms, the stadium will be open to the public for events, it will be offered to youth soccer groups, offered to NIAA for state championships, will promote soccer and have merchandise, food and beverage services available at no more than actual cost.

FOFF will use their best efforts to work with DOW Engineering, hired by Washoe County, and will connect bike paths and have bicycle parking. Mr. Enzenberger asked for guidance from the Commission as the extra parking spaces can take over some of the additional space that could be used for future flat fields.

Regarding the rent negotiation, FOF and Reno USL would like to see the rent money restricted to parks and not deposited into Washoe County's general funds and would like to leave money for investors to recoup some of their funds. Financial stability is the goal of FOF and will help ensure the long overdue completion of South Valleys Regional Park.

Mr. Enzenberger stated the proposal needs no additional Washoe County staff, FOF is paying to build facilities, operate and maintain the facilities, and the park's revenue will increase once rent is established.

In response to Commissioner Dake's question on rent, Aaron stated the draft lease is to be determined and will depend on property appraisal.

In response to Commissioner Dake's question about placing conditions on access to the stadium, Aaron Smith stated that the Commission could make that recommendation to staff.

Lindsey Liddell, Deputy District Attorney, stated that Park Commissioner's comments will be brought to the Board of County Commissions and will be helpful as they direct staff on what to include in the agreement.

In response to Chair Joell's request for clarification on the maps provided, Aaron Smith stated the Master Plan is undergoing design and all maps are conceptual, and the proponents would work with the design team to finalize, and issues would be flushed out during the planning and permitting process.

In response to Chair Joell's question regarding the proposal coming back to Park Commission for approval, Aaron Smith, Division Director of Operations - Community Services Department, stated staff is currently requesting Park Commission to give direction and information on whether they support or recommend the stadium to the park, and what they would like to see incorporated to ensure it benefits the community.

Bob Enzenberger, For Our Fans Foundation added the maps are all conceptual drawings from the original Master Plan, Washoe County design team, and FOF

design team. Mr. Enzenberger stated that FOFF cannot move forward to ask for funds from investors and donors until they receive the green light to use the property. Mr. Enzenberger stated the goal is to satisfy all parties and their needs including the need for additional flat and baseball fields.

Lindsey Liddell, Deputy District Attorney, if the Board of County Commissioners approves negotiations, staff would move forward and begin to get appraisals to come back to Park Commissioners with a final agreement, BCC would be required to adopt a resolution. NRS allows Washoe County to lease or transfer property for less than fair market value if it will result in economic development.

Chair Joell added that he typically sees public meetings to gain input from the community, stakeholders, people involved with the leagues and park users to collect ideas before coming to Commissioners.

In response to Commissioner Jones' question on the deed restrictions, Aaron stated they will be hurdles and are not cleared up at the point, but there is a plan to resolve them going forward.

In response to Commissioner Aranda's question on traffic and noise mitigation, Aaron stated access to Virginia would be the most ideal but is early in design to elements to address noise, Commissioners can make recommendations. There will be a full planning and design process that would happen with any park build out, where public input will be gathered, but has not happened yet as this is public/private partnership.

In response to Commissioner Gurtler's concerns about traffic and noise mitigation, and alcohol, Wendy Damonte stated alcohol is planned to be allowed. Ms. Damonte stated that they met with private landowners, Washoe County, City of Sparks and City of Reno and there is no other land available, but that across the countries there are several examples of people wanting to live near a facility like this to work and play within walking distance.

Commission Gurtler stated that because the facility was not originally included in the Master Plan, the community hasn't given input and didn't intend to live in area with this type of facility. Ms. Damonte added that they are focused on South Virginia Street and will work to make sure that it is the primary entrance and exit.

In response to Commissioner Rode's questions on revenue and ticket sales, Wendy Damonte stated with previous Reno soccer team, attendance averaged 3400-3600

people at each game, but expects more for this facility and average ticket price is \$24.

In regard to Commissioner Rode's question on potential revenue for Washoe County Parks, Ms. Damonte stated that it would have to be negotiated and could not give a number currently.

Ms. Damonte was not aware of any possibility of building special walls to mitigate the noise and has not heard of noise complaints happening near other facilities.

In response to Commissioner Rode's question about other locations where these facilities are seeing success, Ms. Damonte stated in Rhode Island, The Star in Dallas, Texas, NHL in Arizona and several others in the USL League.

In response to Commissioner Dake's and Commissioner Rode's questions about support from Washoe County staff, Aaron Smith stated he is in support of the project and brought forth the recommendation to Park Commission and sees the benefit for the community economically and for the opportunity to expand and build out the park.

In response to Commissioner Jones' question about construction, Aaron stated construction is accounted for as to impact park users, Wendy Damonte stated the stadium will take less than a year as it is modular. The stadium will be built elsewhere, shipped and put together.

Chair Joell commented that residents in the area may not be in support of the stadium due to the larger number of public comments and concerns, and lack of supportive comments.

In response to Chair Joell's question about billing for staff time, Aaron Smith stated he cannot answer that question at this time, but potentially further down the line.

In response to Commissioner Hill's question on the assessment process and a public input component, Aaron Smith stated the current processes allows a final agreement and sign off on the relationship between Washoe County and FOFF and would give authorization to use the property and develop the land. From there, the traditional process would take over, including planning, permitting, and stakeholder input. Staff is currently looking for direction to move forward and

negotiate the terms of the agreement. Public input would happen after the contract is signed.

In response to Commissioner Gurtler's question on signing the contract before public participation, Aaron stated that staff is looking for direction and recommendations from the Commission, the item will be brought to the Board of County Commissioners for their direction and would take public comment at that point. If approved, staff would take the direction to proceed to negotiate the final terms of the agreement and the item would be brought back to the Board of County Commissioners and would take additional public comments.

In response to Commissioner Gurtler's question about the public being against the facility after the agreement was signed, Aaron stated FOFF would have to be able to fulfill the obligations of the permit, and that land usage is one part, but the permitting and building is an additional process.

In response to Commissioner Rode's question on the typical season, Wendy Damonte stated the season would begin in March and go through September depending on the number of wins. There would be at least 17 up to 21 professional games.

In response to Commissioner Aranda's question on examples of stadiums built in suburban areas, Wendy Damonte gave examples in Rhode Island, Lowden, Antelope Valley, Orange County, New Mexico, Jacksonville, Roswell, and Charleston.

In response to Commissioner Gurtler's question on another sign he has seen advertising Major League Soccer, Aaron Smith stated he has limited knowledge but stated it was a proposed stadium near Jan Evans Juvenile Detention Center but does not know the status. Wendy Damonte stated it was not associated with a professional team, FOFF is associated with USL to bring professional soccer to the community.

In response to Chair Joell's question about the failure of the minor league soccer team, Reno 1868. Ms. Damonte stated that the owner of the team let it go after Covid hit and that the community greatly supported the soccer team, but there were never extra resources committed to the team. Ms. Damonte also stated average attendance was about 3400 people at the games.

Public comment by Dave Keyes, Mr. Keyes stated felt more informed but would like to see the stadium shown on a diagram to see where it can go and what is left of the park to build on.

Aaron Smith stated that the proposed stadium is approximately the size of 2 of the existing flat fields at South Valleys Regional Park and reviewed the maps. Aaron confirmed that if the item is moved forward, Parks staff would be involved in fine tuning the site layout and parking and how to create the most long-term value for the community as a whole.

In response to Commissioner Dake's question on future developments, Aaron stated it could be a part of the agreement to have requirements to build out flat fields, but the value is not known to negotiate those requirements yet.

In response to Commissioner Dake's question about restroom availability to the public during the off season, Ms. Damonte stated it is preliminary but is being discussed as an option and is a good opportunity to benefit the public.

In response to Commissioner Gurtler's question on who would own the Stadium, Aaron Smith stated that Washoe County would own the stadium and would have a ground lease development agreement with FOFF. Mr. Enzenberger added that Washoe County will always own the land, and at the end of the lease, the stadium would revert back to Washoe County. Capital improvements and maintenance would be the responsibility of FOFF.

Commissioner Garcia stated the Board of County Commissioners will see Commissioner comments and questions, as well as public comments and questions. Board of County Commissioners will want to know if Park Commission feels that the stadium is a good use of park land, and does it appeal to Park Commission to engage in a public private partnership where the stadium will be paid, operated and maintained by FOFF. The Board of County Commissioners will listen to input and there are many steps along the way to dial in more details.

Commissioner Hill shared the positives and negatives of the stadium. The positives being that Washoe County staff is making the recommendation to Park Commission which should be taken seriously, the stadium would bring dollars to the development of South Valleys Regional Park that are not currently in the budget, there would be an economic benefit to the parks, as well as a social and recreational benefit to the community. The negatives are the concern for the loss of flat field areas and the negative public comment from residents in the area.

Chair Joell stated that there are several unanswered questions and would be open to directing staff to continue negotiations but would like to see some staff time recovered. He would not like to vote as proposed without public meetings and ideas and to see a more final conceptual design.

Commissioner Gurtler shared Chair Joell's concerns. Commissioner Gurtler stated he would be willing to recommend moving forward, with the requirement that there is a more robust public engagement before it goes to the Board of County Commissioners.

Ms. Damonte stated FOFF has been working on this proposal for well over a year and has met with GBYSL, High Sierra Lacrosse, Washoe Little League, and they are all supportive, but has not yet taken it to the residents as they are not far enough in the process.

In response to Commissioner Rode's question on investors, Aaron stated they do not have anything to invest in yet, the process currently is negotiations to use park land for this purpose. Ms. Damonte added that FOFF does have investors lined up and they are all from within the community.

Commissioner Aranda stated he agrees that there should have been more public engagement with the residents and not just the agency. He would like to see the people who will be directly impacted more engaged and informed.

Commissioner Jones stated that he believed there was approval to move forward at the previous May 22nd, 2024, meeting.

Commissioner Dake stated the Commission requested additional information be presented so an additional meeting was agreed to, which is today's meeting.

Commissioner Hill stated that he believes the intent was to have staff continue working on the process but to come back to Park Commission with more information, but by letter of the vote, it does appear that it was approved to begin stage two.

In response to Commissioner Rode's question on stage two, Aaron Smith stated that stage two is the process where staff would bring the item to the Board of County Commissioners with recommendations for their approval to move to final

negotiations, negotiating the land lease and development agreement conditioned on meeting permitting and planning process.

Commissioner Aranda stated that the motion he had restructured at the last meeting was to direct staff to continue the process due to the time contingency but was not intended to be an all-encompassing approval to go to the next steps.

Chair Joell stated that he does not feel that all questions from prior meeting were answered sufficiently to justify a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners but understands the proponents desired timeline.

Chair Joell suggested a letter of support from the leagues FOFF met with can be added to the packet.

Motion by Chair Joell to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners that staff continue to work with the applicant on the final details and negotiations with recommendations that cost recovery is included, at least one public meeting occur at south valleys library to be easily accessed by residents to provide comments, and results of continued work with staff and public meeting, continued design finalizations that are worked out come back to Park Commission to decide if fair tradeoff for what was intended to be a park.

Commissioner Dake stated Commissioners are still hesitant and have concerns. Aaron stated Park Commissioners are voting on whether or not they agree with the concept and to explore it, not approving the final.

Commissioner Jones stated the motion as approved last month was to move forward with phase 2. Commissioners are requesting more public input, letters of support and more information to support whether or not to move to phase three.

Request by Commissioner Dake for Chair Joell to restate his motion.

Motion by chair Joell to approve staff to continue negotiations with project proponent with the following three recommendations, look into cost recovery of staff time, at least one public meeting be held with noticing of residents in the area of this project, and future design ideas and or contract negotiations are brought back to Park Commission for review and or approval with recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. Second by Commissioner Rode. Motion carried

9. Commissioner Request for future agenda items

No items

10. Public Comments

No public comment.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:27pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Roebuck, Office Specialist