



## PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CITY OF SAFFORD LIBRARY PROGRAM ROOM

808 SOUTH 7<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, SAFFORD, ARIZONA

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

5:30 PM

*In accordance with Section 2.04.120 of the Municipal Code of the City of Safford, and Arizona Revised Statutes §38-431.01 et seq., and §38-431.02 et seq., NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the members of the general public that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee will be held.*

### MINUTE RECORD

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Michelle Hoshal, Pete Gauna, Marvin Rios, Nora Rogers, Dusti Brantner

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:** Tad Jacobson, Marie Arbizo

**STAFF PRESENT:** John Cassella, City Manager, Matthew Hoshal, Assistant to the City Manager, Jennifer Surber, Administrative Assistant, Victoria Silva, Library Director

1. **WELCOME AND ROLL CALL:** The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.
2. **RULES OF PROCEDURE:**

Matthew Hoshal: Resolution 21-021 was adopted at the August 9, 2021 City Council Meeting. They approve the Rules of Procedure documents. Moving forward, this is what will govern us. The first section is going to be the purpose of the committee. You will be making recommendations to the City Council. Those recommendations might be near term or long term but ultimately, you'll be taking these recommendations to City council for them to decide on the whether or not they say yes we'd like to recommendation or no, we're not going to go that direction. All this is within the availability of funding. The decisions you make will have fiscal constraints.

John Cassella: That doesn't mean that there's things that we can't achieve in long term. There are some specific areas that we do want to look at and we'll put some ideas out there for you guys so let me give you some guidance on direction, but we also do want to have some latitude, so maybe that some of those short-term things like specific amenities or specific parts will be things you want to build. We want to provide guidance so you guys have a sense of direction, but you also have wide latitude if there are things that you want to see recreationally, we can add those in as part of the recommendation, even if it's not immediate, in our conversation with the council.

Matthew Hoshal: Some of the other key things in this document is a quorum. For this committee to be able to bring recommendations to council there needs to be a quorum present. This

committee is made up of seven members so quorum will be four. If only three members show up to a meeting, there still can be discussion but no voting or action can be taken for recommendations to the council. So that's why it's important that the majority shows up so that if we do need to make recommendations, we can take those to council.

It was decided that Wednesdays at 5:30pm – 7:00pm would be a good date and time. The duration initially will be every other week. A calendar invite via email will be sent out before the meeting.

### 3. **REVIEW VISIONING EXERCISE SURVEY:**

Matthew Hoshal: When asked to categorize the Visioning Exercise List from most wanted to least, we only had three responses. I think it's important to have everybody's responses so I can get more of a broader picture. If you haven't given them back to me, please do. Participation is going to be important with this committee. Hopefully I can get all the responses so that the next time we meet I can present it with everybody. We'll just we'll skip over that one for now.

Pete Guana: I can probably put a top five, and then after that to me it's hard to put them in an order after that all the way to 30 or so. If you're okay with that like ranking my top five, and maybe not trying to do the whole list.

Michelle Hoshal: I really felt like you could categorize them into main categories and then some of the other little things went underneath like in the parks. I did more broad categories with some of them being bullets, underneath a certain category so that might help you. That's just some feedback.

John Cassella: We're going to talk specifically about how we might want to populate those parks, and what kind of amenities we put in there, maybe we do the visioning exercise is a broader exercise as an umbrella exercise. That gives us something more long term and paints a broader picture. Number as many as we can, but then maybe we sit around, and we perform an exercise like the one you're saying where we regrouped that information then create a broader picture that would be a part of the recommendation that would supplement the specifics that we would do in the park.

Marvin Rios: That's what I kind of started with parks and what falls under park and under recreation center. I came up with two categories and not necessarily 34.

John Cassella: Therefore we always raise the issue of resource limitations. The idea that funds availability will drive having to prioritize. So you try to decide where you want certain things to go but at some point, you got to draw the line. Maybe it's not something we do right now but we want these other things. It's good feedback. We can have a session or two with that and really come up with some interesting kind of broad strokes in terms of recreation in general. Revisit your packet and there's some stuff in there about our general plan on parks and recreation.

Dusti Brantner: That's why I didn't do mine because it seemed redundant, when it was talking about walking paths, we have walking paths that are lit. We already have a lot of these things.

John Cassella: We have walking paths. The thought process is, how do I make the walking paths better so that maybe they have a better functionality. Maybe make paths that connect down to the river and there's larger loops for people on bikes. I can tell you from my experience walking paths are a big deal, people use them a lot. People tend to use them readily because it's an easy

way to get out and just take the air, and I know we're also working on putting some drinking fountains in along the existing walking paths making it more user friendly.

Matthew Hoshal: We have people that don't know that the walking paths or parks exist. Getting the information out there and being able to put it so that people can see what we have. That's another role that this committee getting it out the public and public feedback.

John Cassella: Recreation center pops up a lot. Well we already know that there's discussions about a recreation center being built in Thatcher, do we need another one? Probably not, but maybe you guys can talk about that. So, is there a more nuanced conversation that can occur around the recreation center kind of like the walking path? It's part of this idea of redundancy. I don't want to get in the car and drive. And so splash pads and those types of park tend to lend themselves to that, more, whereas a recreational facility that may be something that you're willing to get in the car and drive to right in order to take advantage.

Dusti Brantner: One of the things that might help us a was rebranding Firth Park. Maybe partnering with the Chief of Police or maybe getting them to come to meeting to give us some ideas or see how they can help us. If we want to spend money to rebrand it, there's truly no point if parents aren't going to take their kids because they don't feel safe. The bathrooms are dirty so maybe just bring them into compliance and give us ideas of what we could do.

John Cassella: We applied for a grant at with FMI and just got another \$210,000 to put toward El Paso Park. We're continuing to work on things now, talking with Council as we begin to launch this recreation committee and do work sessions, Firth Park came up, El Paso Park comes up because that's where they've already begun to look at things that they want to do. They have the same reaction that you have on the park, but there's a lot of potential there. There were discussions about some things that we can do to enhance for park in some of that may be as a result of your input, letting them know this idea of safety, do I want my family to go there and so maybe there's ways to coordinate areas or have additional bathrooms. Make it more self-contained.

Michelle Hoshal: Is the splash pad going in at El Paso Park or Firth Park or are they talking about both?

John Cassella: Right now, given the funding and everything I think we're leaning more towards El Paso Park, part of which is because the comments that you're making. It's a fresh start, it's more in the residential area. But there's still things that we may be able to do down there and it may be that down the road eventually maybe there is another one in for a park, a splash pad. But again, you guys should look at that and make comments and think it through and say what you're thinking and what you're feeling, so that becomes part of that stream of information going to the Council.

Michelle Hoshal: I just I feel like the pool is wonderful there and it's all fenced in but I just don't see the purpose in putting the money in Firth Park unless you get a handle on the safety issue. It just seems like a waste of money.

Nora Rogers: The ultimate thing about Firth Park is it's on the highway. So we can't ever get away from that. It just takes a minute for children to run out into the road.

John Cassella: What we're doing is we're creating additional information to flow to the Council. Another avenue for people to have input to the Council to better understand what the community wants. You guys have been convened and selected specifically to play that role. This

is an opportunity, for the kinds of things you're talking about is exactly what the council wants to know. What can we do somewhere else, or can we fix it to make it more attractive to be used? That will be part of the process.

4. **SELECT CHAIRPERSON:** Nora Rogers

5. **SELECT VICE CHAIRPERSON:** Michelle Hoshal

Matthew Hoshal: The purpose of the chairperson is to move the meeting along and to keep on task. The chairperson will be the one that calls the vote if there needs to be a vote. With this Rules of Procedure, it's bare bones for what a committee would need to run. The vice-chairperson would fill in when chairperson is not available.

John Cassella: The chairperson would run the agenda, organize the meeting and guide the conversation but staff is here to help. It's unformal as possible. Matthew would take your recommendations to council and make the presentation and the chairperson or vice chairperson in their absent would answer questions and embellish.

Nora Rogers volunteered as chairperson. Pete Gauna was nominated for vice chairperson but had to decline. Michelle Hoshal volunteered as vice chairperson.

6. **GENERAL DISCUSSION & DIRECTION FOR COMMITTEE INPUT REGARDING RECREATION AMENITIES:**

Matthew Hoshal: You might have these ideas but how to pay for it and how do we get this done. You might not have all the ideas you might not have how to get some of this process done, that's where we can help like applying for grants. Short term as the El Paso, you guys have talked a little bit about the park. The two main, long term, ones that we have or that we know of right now are the park on 8th Avenue and Discovery Park Boulevard, and then 10th Avenue and 10 Street. He can answer questions about design and what is feasible. We want to sit down and design a couple different parks, and then possibly with those designs within the fiscal restraints, we could take them out to the public and say hey, here are three designs for this area.

Nora Rogers: Where's our priority? Where are we, what are we focusing on, or is it going to be a group decision where we're going to decide that, or I know that was our list. El Paso Park and the splash already has a lot of money. Right. Is that kind of where we're going to start?

John Cassella: I think I'd like to do this broader visioning conversation so we take that vision list that we created, and we use it again, you can read in here there's the General Plan tab in your resource book, which breaks some stuff down already for you but what I'd like for you to get a sense of what's possible, take the visioning and gravitated towards grouping things. I'd like that to be an exercise which creates this broader and bigger picture of what recreation means for you guys, what you would like to see. The second step of that is going to be how to do this but we've got two pieces of land and that's one of the issues right where do you build a park. If I had these two parks, how do I populate them with amenities. So, you'd have a grouping of equipment and options and amenities that could go in there and maybe you create a couple of versions of the park by grouping those things differently.

Michelle Hoshal: Can the parks and recreation funding be used at the library?

John Cassella: The library has its own funding. We would have to see what specifically it was.

Michelle Hoshal: The kids from Stars at the last meeting talked about a gaming room. Having a video game club. It makes sense if it was at the library. Also, Wi-Fi somewhere where the kids can hang out or study outside.

John Cassella: Wi-Fi outside is something we're working on already. Gaming club would be a longer-term vision where you would have something where they have some computers that they can game on. The video gaming would be more of a higher-level wish list. From a library standpoint, it would be based on availability of space. If we were to do that it would happen somewhere else.

Michelle Hoshal: Mini golf, batting cages, wreck room, all of those would be more for a private business. So, we should be focusing more on other things on that list.

John Cassella: A large part of the parks and recreation program is recreation. And very often recreation takes the form of providing various types of classes and activities. We don't really have a recreation department, at least at this point. That would require additional administration within the city to expand in order to oversee.

Dusti Brantner: The park on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Central Avenue is that not on our focus list? Or are we just funding Discovery Park Boulevard and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 10<sup>th</sup> Street?

Matthew Hoshal: So that is existing. That is one we will need to spruce up.

John Cassella: We are having conversations with the church to see what we can do down there. It's preliminary at this point. It's kind of an underserved area. I would like to see more activity in that area. Some of the ARPA money that has come through the federal government may provide us with an opportunity to do that, we have to find out for sure. I'm trying to do something down there right now using the grant funds.

Dusti Brantner: Is the equipment at El Paso Park going to be taken down? And are there going to be cameras?

John Cassella: Yes and what's going to replace it will be significantly better. There will be cameras. The design we initially had has changed. It's now going to have a splash pad. There are two different drawings in your resource book. And those drawings were done without knowing we were going to get additional funding. People can walk there and use the walking path. The climbing tower was removed. You can see what we started with and how it changed. This is what you will be doing with 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Discovery Park Boulevard and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 10<sup>th</sup> Street. We create a list of the amenities we want, we get the drawings, we get the layouts, you guys take a look at it, say hey, I prefer this one to that one.

Pete Gauna: For El Paso Park, what is going in the grassy area. We need more places to have practices.

John Cassella: There is a gas line under that fenced grassy area on the El Paso Park map so we cannot build on that area.

We are working on an IGA with the school district and practice fields is part of it. We're trying to see if we can make agreements with the school to help them a little bit on maintenance and some things so that we can cost share and make some of the existing amenities that they have available to the general public. It will be at a low cost because it is existing.

Michelle Hoshal: We talked about putting a practice field at 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 10<sup>th</sup> Street as well or a soccer field.

John Cassella: The idea behind the soccer field was if retention needed to be involved. ADA compliant equipment and bathrooms is required.

Michelle Hoshal: That was talked about at the last meeting was making it an all-inclusive park. We've got kids in wheelchairs, and then there is Autism on the rise. You've got sensory processing delays, ADHD. So making sure that there's different types of play equipment and that it's all -inclusive.

John Cassella: The last section in your resource book is exactly that. It's what is an all-inclusive playground would entail. If that becomes something that becomes a focus that we want to make sure that we have areas in those parks that create that ability for those who have physical disabilities, that again will be something that we will put forward.

Dusti Brantner: El Paso Park, is there only going to be those two ramadas? People use those a lot for birthday parties.

Michelle Hoshal: Do we need that much space for parking if it's in a residential area?

John Cassella: Something to discuss. The engineers know how to work that out. So that the parking lot is the right size for what they feel would be the attendance because you're going to get a lot of people at the splash pad. Plus it's next to an empty lot, that whole area is going to eventually get built out. What about the fencing?

Matthew Hoshal: The fencing is for the dog park and the extra fencing is for the staging area. The reason there is a dog park there is because there is a gas line and we cannot build.

Nora Rogers: My initial thought was to have the El Paso Park for kid friendly and family with young children. And then kind of use the dog park and football and all with the Discovery Park Boulevard and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and have it for tourists, it connects to the walking paths. If you have family and kids kind of I'm thinking about going to the park with my kids, I don't take my dogs because it's too much. It's like chaos, you know, but also that causes fear from the kids, you know, so maybe we might want to think about using the park area for this one place family.

Matthew Hoshal: What kind of stuff can you build on top of a gas line? That is a question for the engineer. But I don't think we can put a playground on top of that. It would have to be a grassy area.

Dusti Brantner: We could but trellises to separate the park and dog park at El Paso Park.

Pete Gauna: Most people do not use the dog park. They have one at Graham County Fairgrounds and it is hardly used. We have so many other areas we can take our dogs. I don't think dog parks area thing for Safford. I think we need more ramadas also or a grassy area people can lay a blanket down or put up a pop-up tent.

John Cassella: There may be additional areas over in that area that will have maybe some soccer fields to the north. On the other side of that retention basin. We're just not there yet. But those are conversations that we're having. So for right now, where we can be active and design is

what we see. But there may be additional space to the north on the other side of that retention basin, where we may have soccer fields or other things as well.

We've had some interesting conversations, right, and ideas pop up as we had those conversations. Again, don't let it limit your ideas, but let it serve as a guide to how typically and it's the white tab. Typically how things may have been grouped in the past in terms of how the city wants to do things. So there's that component to second component is the development of cars on the intensive 10th, which is us, starting from scratch, how can populate these parcels of land?

The third component, I think, based on what we've talked about tonight is any embellishments on existing infrastructure, whether it be walking paths for the car, even maybe a little bit in El Paso, if there's some ideas there that you may want to put into the mix. I think that gives us a pretty good broad spectrum, in terms of, you know, for what are our intended purposes to give them really a good cross section as regards, you know, recreation in the city.

Pete Guana: I would like to see something done at the Ed Ragland Courts that could be like done tomorrow, really. There's eight basketball courts, there are basketball hoops there. And all eight of them are regulation 10 feet height, which for the younger kids, they can't reach. I don't know why we couldn't take those ones on the east side at least. And lower one to eight and maybe one to six, so that the smaller kids can play while the while the bigger kids are playing on the regulation ones. They do make adjustable hoops.

John Casella: At the next meeting, our focus should be on the visioning list. And let's start with the broad strokes. And come up with ideas that are a broader picture. After that, we'll move into the new parcels. And that'll give us some time to gather information on amenities, costs, and that kind of a thing. And then we can wrap it all up with saying here's some bigger picture stuff that maybe down the road, we look at, you know, that we move on, eventually become. And that may serve as the blueprint for where we go over the coming weeks.

Michelle Hoshal: It is my understanding that the parks we are looking are going to be like a blank piece of paper and we're designing the park with these objects with how much they cost in mind. Is that how it's going to work? And is the city going to print things off for us to look at.

John Cassella: We'll have Matthew start looking at stuff. You guys may want to look at other stuff. We will try to be as comprehensive as we can. If you find things send them to Matthew.

Dusti Brantner: How much of the work can be done with the city workers? Or are we going to outsource and pay externally?

John Cassella: The city is subject to procurement laws. There are laws and processes we have to follow. Companies would have to bid on the projects. Some of the work can be done in house such as design and some of the work. When it comes to construction it is very difficult for the city to do it all because we don't have that many folks. A majority of La Tierra Park was done by city employees. And sometimes if you don't bid it out, it may take longer to build because of the availability of the workers. That is something that we can coordinate with Lance Henrie, Public Works Director.

For the next meeting, prioritize the visioning list. Look at the general plan. Maybe next meeting create a mission statement as a committee in regards to recreation and what it means to you.

7. **NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday, September 22, 2021 5:30pm at the Safford Public Library Program Room 808 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, Safford, Arizona.

8. **ADJOURN:** Meeting was adjourned at 6:11pm