

MINUTES

Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission October 6, 2015

Deputy District Attorney Michael Large said that two new Commissioners would be sworn in.

Nancy Parent, Clerk, administered the Oath of Office to Doug Doolittle and Austin Olson.

Commissioner Daniel called the meeting to order at 2:33 pm

1. **Roll Call:** Austin Olson, Janet Davis, Nathan Daniel, Al Sheakley, Anne Buckley and Doug Doolittle. Ed Harney had an excused absence.

Board of County Commission Liaison: Jeanne Herman

Staff: Deputy District Attorney Michael Large, Jennifer Budge, Dave Solaro, Dennis Troy, Andy Brown, Jeff Patterson and Joanna Schultz.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Public Comments:**

Cathy Brandhorst discussed issues of interest to herself.

4. **Administer Oath of Office to newly appointed Commissioners Doug Doolittle and Austin Olson**

Oath administered before the start of the meeting.

5. **Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of October 6, 2015**

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of October 6, 2015. Second by Commissioner Buckley. Motion carried.

Eagle Scout Alden Cocanour is not present for item #6

7. **Presentation by Eagle Scout Patrick Durgin on his project to plant five new trees and replace damaged or blown over trees at Lazy 5 Regional Park**

Jeff Patterson, Park Ranger introduced Eagle Scout Patrick Durgin.

Eagle Scout Durgin gave a presentation.

Commissioner Daniel thanked Eagle Scout Durgin for his project and presentation.

8. Evaluation and possible recommendation of hard court configuration at Hidden Valley Regional Park to consider tennis and pickleball user groups

Jennifer Budge, Park Operations Superintendent thanked everyone in the audience for showing support and interest in the parks system. The William N Pennington Foundation donated \$314,000 for numerous park projects. One of the projects is to resurface nine hardcourts; one of those courts will be the Hidden Valley Regional Park court.

The courts at Hidden Valley are older and could use some resurfacing not only for aesthetics, but to make sure it is a safe facility for the public to use and enjoy. In 2013, the lines were striped for tennis and pickleball based on the ongoing need and recommendations from the public to provide for both sports.

In July, signage was posted notifying the public the courts would be resurfaced and restriped. As a result, we had public feedback from both tennis and pickleball players:

- There is a need for a Rules sign due to conflicts between user groups when there is a line to use the courts
- Pickleball players would also like to have a dedicated facility where they did not have to bring in portable nets
- Tennis players said the dual stripping was also confusing and would like to avoid this as much as possible

We tried to come up with a compromise that would meet the needs of all users and eliminate the dual stripping. Staff is recommending the proposal before the Commission that shows four dedicated pickleball courts and one dedicated tennis court. Staff feels this would be a good compromise and will hopefully reduce some of the user conflicts.

Commissioner Daniel said Commissioner Doolittle is recusing himself.

Commissioner Daniel said he fully supports staff's decision.

Public Comment:

Karen Mazingo said pickleball has changed her life for the better and is a healthier person because of it. The sport has grown in Reno with over 300 players and is the fastest growing sport among seniors in the nation. When she does play there are times she has to wait in line for a while and there is a need for more courts. There are other communities that have dual stripping and it works for them, but, if there have been a lot of complaints, then this is a very good compromise, in terms of catering to both sports.

Bill Pinto said he plays both sports. He went to a grand opening this morning for pickleball at the City. There are eight new courts with play 8am-1pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. With this new layout there are four courts, one for pickleball and the other for tennis. The way it is now there are still four courts, but if there are more than one pair to play tennis and no one on pickleball they could still use that court. He doesn't understand why one of the tennis courts needs to be removed permanently. Neil Road has four indoor and four outdoor courts with limited play time, Mira Loma has two playable courts where he could play tennis on just one, but can play pickleball on both. There are a lot of places to play pickleball. The only complaint he has heard from tennis players is it

would be nice to have pickleball or tennis lines darker than the other with more contrast. The current lines make it harder to read out-of-bounds for either sport.

Wade Johnson said he has lived here 11 years and started playing pickleball three years ago. Hidden Valley is the place he plays and he also plays tennis. Four courts is not enough. He understands this is a compromise, but would propose putting in the dual lines to increase the courts to six. It is important that they have dedicated pickleball courts and the four would solve part of the problem. There are over 80 dedicated tennis courts, but zero dedicated pickleball courts. This is a start, but Mr. Johnson would like Parks to allow them to paint lines, in whatever color works for the tennis players, on the other two. We would use those only when there are no tennis players on the courts and have six courts to play on. Most pickleball players drive 30 minutes or more to get to Hidden Valley, he doesn't feel it's fair to have to wait to play. More courts are needed, players take good care of the facility and it's just the pickleball players taking care of it. Two of the courts are unplayable after the last rain. Pickleball players cleaned them off but there are two unplayable. The compromise situation would be better than what they have, but he would like to see more lined pickleball courts on the tennis courts, to be used only when there is overflow and not tennis players playing.

Denise Johnson said she plays a lot and travels quite a bit to play pickleball. She and her husband played in Bend, Oregon that has a population of 81,000 and they have 16 dedicated pickleball courts. St. George, UT has numerous facilities with a population of 77,000 with 24 outdoor, dedicated pickleball courts. In two weeks, there will be a tournament that is full and well received that helps with the economy of St. George. Topeka, KA with a population of 128,000 has 18 dedicated courts with permanent fixtures. Eight are new and 10 were converted from tennis courts. Auburn and Meadow Vista with a population of 18,000 has 10 outdoor, dedicated courts. Reno/Sparks has 320,000 with zero dedicated pickleball courts.

Vicki Sharp said she is a former tennis player, now a converted pickleball player. She is an instructor for pickleball with the City of Reno and is in contact with many seniors with stories of how the sport has changed their lives. They have worked with people who are handicapped, or it's the first sport they have ever played. They have taught approximately 150 new players in the last year and all those people are passing it on. It's growing and there is a need for more courts. At the Boys and Girls Club, they have eight new courts, but they cannot play there all summer or school vacations. If the school goes to year-round, they would lose that facility. It's a temporary fix for right now. They travel to several tournaments and see beautiful facilities in much smaller communities with dedicated pickleball courts. Reno needs to catch up.

Robert Lyle said he has lived in Washoe County since 1972. He came to Reno after law school and became a Deputy Attorney General practicing law in this community for over 40 years. He has been a tennis player since 6 years old and continued to play until eight years ago as a result of some physical injuries. Three years ago his wife introduced him to pickleball, a sport anyone can play. People in their 60s and older do not go out to learn to play tennis, but you can see them playing pickleball 3-4 days a week. There are no dedicated pickleball courts. With the configuration shown you can fit 16 people for pickleball, only four for the tennis courts. He supports the proposition to line the tennis courts with pickleball lines. If you go indoors, there are as many as five different sets of lines and people manage it. Lake Tahoe, Incline Village, Squaw Valley, Truckee and South Lake Tahoe have pickleball courts. Reno is way behind the times. A group of them ended up at Hidden Valley after playing at Mira Loma for years because the courts were becoming too dangerous to play on. In 17 months since they lined the tennis courts, he has only observed seven tennis players there.

Most of the good tennis players don't go to that facility. Ms. Lyle thanked the Pennington Foundation for donating the money to resurface and restripe the facilities.

Bill Burgess said has been a resident of Hidden Valley since 1998. He has seen very little usage of the tennis courts since he has lived there. Since the courts have been lined out for pickleball about four days a week you will see at least 12-20 people playing pickleball. The configuration is a lot better for both pickleball and tennis. The way it is structured right now there are four pickleball courts painted on two tennis courts. When they are playing, they are taking up both tennis courts, with the new configuration they would take up one tennis court. The only time they play is when someone who purchased portable nets is there to play. If you want to play pickleball, you have to have your own equipment. The tennis courts have the nets there permanently and can be played anytime. At the facilities in the community to play pickleball, you have to go during the scheduled times. At Hidden Valley people can play anytime they want, if there are permanent, dedicated courts with permanent poles and nets.

Mandy Agerholm said she plays both sports. She meets many people and pickleball is a sport for all ages. It's nice to see a competitive sport for someone who used to be a hardcore tennis player and now can get out and enjoy their lives, in their older years. Sixteen people can be on one court as opposed to 2-4 for tennis. People are out there for five hours and what a healthy way for them to experience their life. It gets them out of the house, socialize and is a really important sport and hopes the Commission would consider not just these courts, but other places as it needs to be permanent so everyone can learn.

Betty Fairchild said she represents the players at Neil Road who range in ages from 60 to mid-80s. There are so many players who want to play, but with only four courts they can only play a game of seven, which they should be playing to 11. She recommends that a lot more courts are dedicated for pickleball players.

Commissioner Daniel said Ulla Burges did not wish to speak, but wanted her comments to be included in the meeting. "I've lived in Hidden Valley since 1998 and have been playing on the courts in HV since before the lines were painted. Now the courts are being utilized 4 to 5 mornings for pickleball every week. Great venue!"

Mark Nelson, USA Pickleball Association Ambassador to the Reno area, said he has been working on getting permanent pickleball courts since 2007. This is exciting that we are getting closer to that goal. Pickleball is a group sport best played with a group of people of similar abilities and they try to schedule different meetings at Hidden Valley. They will have 10-30 people show up to play and having a number of courts is very important to them, so when they have the large groups of players they can have more games going. Mr. Nelson requested that if they could line out the second court, the tennis court, they could still utilize this court and bring in portable nets. That would be the optimum for them. He has painted the courts at Hidden Valley and the green paint was recommended by City of Reno when they were at Mira Loma, so they used that color. If there is a different color that is acceptable to all groups, they would use it, so they could still use the tennis court when it is not in use by tennis players.

Commissioner Buckley is impressed by the numbers of pickleball players who have come out in support of more courts. Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space budget in 2008 was \$9 million and was cut to \$3 million. It has not increased in seven years and if the public wants more pickleball courts, they have to get them to increase the Parks budget. The County is getting ready to

go over budgets and she would encourage the public to be advocates for the Parks budget increase. If we had some money, we might be able to accommodate more pickleball courts.

Commissioner Sheakley said he should start thinking about playing pickleball. Why are there no pickleball courts at the Reno Tennis Center on Plumas? There was an area added with a board to hit balls off of and he thinks a pickleball court could be put there.

Commissioner Davis said she is aware that there are more pickleball courts in the area than just at Hidden Valley. The issue seems to be citywide as well as countywide. She doesn't think the County should take up the entire expense of supporting pickleball.

Commissioner Sheakley added that he belongs to the Reno Elks and they have two racquet ball courts needing improvement, but they don't want to make them racquet ball courts any longer. He suggested pickleball and explained the sport to the person in charge. If he gets his way and starts playing, maybe they will considered making them pickleball courts.

Commissioner Daniel agrees with Commissioner Buckley that everyone is hitting on a larger problem that we have and that is, that we had 80 tennis courts 30-40 years ago. They are dilapidated and falling apart and we need to improve them, or add pickleball court funding, which needs to be increase/restored. This also means we need to look at how we view parks in our community. As Commissioner Buckley said the Parks budget is 1/3 of what it was before the recession. It's an incredible amount of money and resources and staff that are not being invested in every year, so things are deteriorating even though staff is working harder to keep it up, they can't continue this with no resources. This is a quality of life issue and we need to reprioritize that.

Ms. Budge clarified that this is a grant funded project, so we are going to resurface these courts, not out of our operating budget, but through a Pennington Foundation grant. We will also resurface and restripe nine other courts throughout of the community. We are here because of the Pennington Foundation support and recognizing that they want to invest back into the community. Staff fully recognizes that there is a need for additional pickleball courts in the community and can work with the clubs and residents to find other locations where we might have room and Park Tax available.

Motion by Commissioner Sheakley to recommend the hard court configuration at Hidden Valley Regional Park to consider tennis and pickleball user groups. Second by Commissioner Olson. Commissioner Doolittle abstained from the vote. Motion carried.

6. Presentation by Eagle Scout Alden Cocanour on his project to rebuild the bridge at Dorostkar Park

Andy Brown, Park Ranger introduced Eagle Scout Alden Cocanour.

Eagle Scout Cocanour gave a presentation.

Ranger Brown added that Eagle Scout Cocanour's project turned out very nice and is a huge benefit to the park. The bridge that was there was a safety hazard.

Commissioner Doolittle thanked Eagle Scout Cocanour, Parks could not survive without the volunteers.

Commissioner Davis thanked Eagle Scout Cocanour.

9. Discussion and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners on the Fees and Charges Policy (*requested by Commissioner Buckley*)

Jennifer Budge, Park Operations Superintendent, said there has been an ongoing discussion on this topic and Commissioners provided some direction and information for future consideration and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. Ms. Budge will review that information.

The Fees and Charges Policy is one of the few policies brought to the Board of County Commissioners for review and approval. This is our guiding document for the Fee Schedule, facility reservations, reciprocal use, government rates, anything that impacts the parks system and supports the general public.

Ms. Budge reviewed the overview of the budget provided in the packet. The documents show a snapshot for each level of the Fees and Charges Policy, the goal for the cost recovery rate for each program, charges for services (revenue), total expenditures, which is primarily staff wages and benefits and our services and supply budgets.

There has been a lot of questions on how much subsidy is provided for the Bowers Pool operations since this is an aging facility and takes a lot of financial support to keep it running. The pool is a Level II cost recovery and the goal is to be between 10 and 49% cost recovery. It is a little over 70% cost rate, but this does not include utilities, so it is actually a little lower than that. It's difficult at this facility to capture our true utility cost, as we do not have a separate TMWA service. We do have geothermal, so there are a lot of dynamic issues in truly capturing the utility cost of this facility.

Athletic fields use falls under Level III. This was another request from Commissioners on cost recovery. City of Reno and Sparks has another entity that schedules and collects their fees. Washoe County does their own scheduling, so the fees received go back into the General Fund. The cost recovery rate without utilities is 84%. Using South Valleys Regional Park as an example Ms. Budge calculated the cost recovery including utilities, hard cost and labor and we're running about a 69% cost recovery rate.

The Regional Shooting Facility falls under a Level VI. We used to be closer to the 100% cost recovery, but as salaries, retirements and employment costs have gone up our cost recovery rate has gone down to about 86.6%.

The revenue is generated by the fees that we charge, so we want to be fair and equitable with the charges, but we also want to maximize our revenue where possible. It does go back into the General Fund, but the General Fund supports our Park operations almost entirely with the exception of the golf course and some of the May fund.

Staff would like some comments and feedback on the Fees and Charges Policy from this Commission. There is a lot of confusing language in the existing policy especially regarding the Government Use and Reciprocal Use rate. It creates problems at reservation with what fees are waived, or not. There are a lot of events, social and school specific events such as meetings, that happen in the parks that the school district puts on and we would appreciate some direction, so we can take it to the Board of County Commission for consideration.

Commissioner Buckley said to get 70-78% cost recovery for a swimming pool is magnificent because this is one area where it is very hard to recover the fees. This area is short of pools at the moment. We had more pools 30 years ago and our population has increased vastly.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding are there any for profit entities using the youth sports fields, Ms. Budge said that approximately 98% are nonprofits. The ones that are not, are usually the traveling tournaments. They usually work with an organizer to bring in their tournament with the goal of making money off of them. We don't get many of those.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding does the County make a 100% recovery on those tournaments, Ms. Budge said no.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding we should make 100% cost recovery, Ms. Budge said we would have to look at each tournament and the costs to determine this, but for the short amount of time that they use the facilities there is not a huge expense. They do their own lining of fields and maintenance and we also require that they provide portable restrooms and other ancillary things, so they are investing more into the event rather than just in the revenue piece.

Commissioner Buckley said there is a lot of wear and tear to the facility with the large events. We are so short of money that the idea that some people might be making money, at our expense, bothers her.

Commissioner Buckley said that we've had discussions on the Regional Shooting Facility and if the fees are not covering the salaries and other costs that maybe they should. That is a facility for adults and should pay for itself like golf does.

Ms. Budge said if there are fees that you feel are not consistent with the average market analysis, staff could do an analysis of similar facilities in the area and provide a report, so Commissioner could make some recommendations.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding do we have a Joint Use Agreement with the school district, Ms. Budge said we do not.

In response to Commissioner Buckley the school district use, Ms. Budge said under the Government Use Rate it talks about the Reciprocal Use and the school district falls under this category.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding when the County uses school district facilities are they charged, Ms. Budge said they don't charge the County.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding does the County use University of Nevada facilities, Ms. Budge said she is not sure.

Commissioner Buckley said she can understand the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency falling under Reciprocal Use as they don't have a facility, but Truckee Meadows Water Authority is a nonprofit. They are not chartered money and have their own facility. She doesn't see why some of the entities have to be listed. It costs money for them to use the County facilities. Ms. Budge said there is definitely a cost associated with their use such as staff to open and close and janitorial expenses.

Commissioner Buckley said she understands it's a policy issue, but if we have no money and there may not be any for a while, we are subsidizing all these other agencies. She wants to let people know about how little money the Parks has and this is one area she would like to send back to the Board of County Commissioners and see if they can do something about it. She doesn't think all government agencies should have carte blanche to use our facilities at our expense. Ms. Budge said the language reads that our facilities are available to them for trainings, meetings or workshops. It doesn't talk about picnic pavilions for fundraisers, runs and we do get these requests all the time. The policy is very vague, so it is difficult for staff to implement.

Dave Solaro, Director requested direction from the Commission to take a look at the government use piece of the policy and bring it back with some suggested language. At the time this policy was put together, some of these entities did not have meeting facilities. There also might be an opportunity to look at this policy from a more global standpoint, rather than just from the park perspective.

Commissioner Herman left at 3:30pm

Commissioner Doolittle said with many of the facilities it would be difficult to cost recover at 100%. With the Shooting Facility there is a lot of outside use that occurs with a lot of prep time where fees aren't collected. Staff time involved in operating a facility like this is hard to determine unless you make the fees so overbearing on the user groups. At one time, there were approximately 20 governmental agencies utilizing the facility for their training, which may not be the case now. In many cases there will be a level of subsidy, 100% is hard to attain, it should always be the goal in that particular level, but not attainable in all the facilities.

Commissioner Daniel agreed that there is continuum of cost recovery. There is the one side, which is the community benefit side where underserved communities can use the facilities. The goal is not and shouldn't be high cost recovery on those facilities. The other side of this, the individual benefit like at the Shooting Facility where we should be getting as close to 100% or even profit with facilities like this. He agrees that the more we can talk about the overall budget problem Parks is facing the better, but cost recovery is maybe not the best place to be looking especially when we are thinking about the community benefit and the underserved population.

Commissioner Doolittle agrees with Director Solaro's position of looking at the governmental use. Many times there is an imbalance between governmental and joint-use. Looking at the policy and changing language will make it as clear as possible for staff and those entities who utilize the facilities.

Commissioner Buckley said she regards parks as being a public amenity and should be free to the community. The budget is so small that when some items eat up money that we don't have, it bothers her. She has gone to the Board of County Commission meetings and other things to make it apparent how we're counting every penny. If it wasn't for some of the outside grants, Parks would be in worse shape and will get in worse shape, if they don't give us more money.

She feels there should be more pools that should not cost too much for kids to swim during the summer, as well as enough soccer fields, because there is a shortage. We need more, but we've been talking about the money for about two years now and don't seem to get anywhere and why she is nickel and diming so much. Looking at the fees and making the public aware that we are looking at the fees, makes them aware of the shortage of the funding. The Board of County Commissioners say

all the time that the parks and public facilities are not a priority with the public, but they are. They want them, they use them and feel people would be prepared to pay for them.

Michael Large, Deputy District Attorney reminded the Commission this item, which is the discussion and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners on the Fees and Charges Policy and not a policy on how we want to address any type of future budgetary issues.

Commissioner Daniels agrees the school district joint-use issue is a complicated issue.

Motion by Commissioner Doolittle accept staff's recommendation to changes to the policies and procedures as red-lined in the draft and follow the Director's advice regarding looking at governmental use and bring it back to this Commission. Seconded by Commissioner Buckley. Motion carried.

Commissioner Daniel said he believes under NRS Statute Park Commissions can approve fees and charges policies, but not sure, if at the Washoe County level, it can be done. He would like to see this Commission empowered to approve those and take some of that burden off of the Board of County Commissioners.

Director Solaro said that is in Chapter 95 and something he will update the Commission on in the Directors Report.

10. Program/Park of the Month: Presentation by Park Ranger Andy Brown on park activities and programs in the Truckee River District

Andy Brown, Park Ranger gave a presentation.

Commissioner Doolittle thanked Ranger Brown for a great presentation. It's good to see some of the programs people enjoy coming back.

In response to Michael Large, Deputy District Attorney regarding was there an issue with the fencing to keep the goats in and away from the road, Ranger Brown said they put a lot of work into fencing the area. The trail has a barbed wire fence on either side, with some adjoining properties that butt up against the trail. He went out and spoke with the neighbors to see if we needed to make alterations to their fence, so the goats wouldn't venture onto their property. They had an agreement with neighbors that they would be able to do that at least temporarily. They didn't have issues with goats leaving the park or other livestock intermingling. They kept it pretty contained and the reason it took 2 ½ weeks was because they had to keep moving the fencing.

Jennifer Budge, Park Operations Superintendent thanked Ranger Brown.

11. Parks Reports

Jennifer Budge, Park Operations Superintendent highlighted reports.

Dennis Troy, Park Planner highlighted the Planning report.

12. Director's Report

Dave Solaro, Director said we are working through, with the direction of District Attorney Large, a process where this Commission, through Chapter 95, as the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission make the final say on the Fees and Charges and other Parks items.

With the reduction in irrigation at the Washoe Golf Course he has been monitoring other locations throughout the County. We've made some really good strides over the years of reducing turf and have gotten great feedback on turf reductions and saving water from the community. Staff has some other ideas on turf reduction in Parks that we don't think will impact users of the parks and will bring those forward to this Commission for review and approval.

Director Solaro recommended working with the Chair to determine if the November meeting is necessary or not. We have met the quota for meetings required for the year and a couple of the Commissioners have said they will not be present at that meeting.

Commissioner Doolittle said there is a lot of work that needs to be done on Chapter 95 and will take some time to filter the information and get everyone up to speed. The recommendation for the fees and charges to come to this Commission is long overdue, as are other changes in that code so he is excited to see work being done on it.

13. Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Buckley said she would not be present for the November and December meetings. If we have one of the meetings she will take a look at the agenda and forward any comments, if she has any.

Commissioner Sheakley said the Washoe Golf Course is looking good and that he enjoyed the tour of the Galena Creek Regional Park.

Commissioner Doolittle complimented staff on the conditions of the parks. He is a big user of the parks and they are looking great.

14. Public Comments

Cathy Brandhorst discussed issues of interest to herself.

15. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:15pm.