

Draft MINUTES

Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission
June 2, 2020

The Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission met in a scheduled session on Tuesday, June 2, 2020, in the Washoe County Commission Chambers, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada.

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

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

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

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

Commissioner Chen called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Stephanie Chen, Darla Lee, Jennifer Oliver, Greg Shorts

Members Present via Zoom: Heidi Anderson, Polly Boardman, Doug Doolittle, Thomas Guinn, Chris Nenzel

Staff Present: Lindsay Liddell, Kathy Emerson, Katy Stark

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

Staff Present via Phone: Commissioner Kitty Jung was present from 2:32 – 3.36 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of June 2, 2020

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

5. Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of March 3, 2020

Motion by Commissioner Doolittle to approve the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of March 3, 2020. Second by Commissioner Anderson. Motion carried.

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

There were no acknowledgements at today's meeting.

7. Eagle Scout Presentation

There was not a presentation at today's meeting.

8. Presentation and discussion on Washoe County's COVID-19 Operating Plan for Regional Parks and Open Space – Eric Crump, Operations Division Director

Colleen Wallace-Barnum provided an update on Washoe County's COVID-19 Operating Plan. Parks staff has kept everything open to the public over the last two and a half months. Staff has continuously evaluated the guidelines and regulations while also keeping in touch with partners locally to try to be consistent in what types of services are being provided to the community. The CSD Operational Plan was reviewed – the parks are a critical component of our communities physical and mental well-being. The parks have been busy. Most people were doing a good job of social distancing. Some amenities in the parks, where people could gather, were closed such as group picnic areas, playgrounds. All closures were in line with the Governor's directive. With the directive for the "roadmap to recovery" for Nevada, (after May 9th phase 1), some amenities opened up such as restrooms and trash pick-up. Areas where people could gather in numbers greater than 10, were still closed. Tennis, Pickle ball, basketball courts, skate parks, horse arenas were reopened. Dog parks were always open. Golf courses, archery and shooting range were opened with modified operations. They moved into Phase 2 on June 1st. Group sites are available for groups of 50 or less, in line with the directive from the Governor's office. There were a lot of reservations that were cancelled by the people reserving the spaces due to the size limits and timing of their events. CDC guidelines were followed for all of the classes, etc. Phase 3 is estimated for June 21st. Staff has regular Zoom and Teams meetings to try and be ready for the next phases of re-openings. Staff will make sure that they are following the guidelines for everyone's safety. Aquatics programs for the 2020 season will remain closed. Staff is using this time to make necessary repairs to the facilities so they will be ready for next season. All COVID-19 updates are on the website. Ms. Wallace-Barnum thanked all of the Park's staff.

Commissioner Doolittle asked if there has been any vandalism during this period of time. Ms. Wallace-Barnum answered that there has been a lot of vandalism in the last two weeks. There has been graffiti tagging at many facilities. Commissioner Doolittle asked if Parks or the Sheriff's Office has the resources to help? Ms. Wallace-Barnum replied that they can ask for additional patrols if they know of a particular area that is going to be hit. Also, seasonal staff works from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm most days.

County Commissioner Kitty Jung thanked Ms. Wallace-Barnum and Park's staff for the great work and for staff being flexible, changing their work habits and work-life balance. Commissioner Jung said she would like each department to be ready with a re-closure plan should we see a spike occur at any time in the future. She said the department has learned a lot from closing and reopening and would have a better idea of where the facilities would fall. The Governor sets the minimum that we have to do but the County can always go tighter in certain situations. She specifically will want to know turn-around times so we can communicate specifically and succinctly to our citizens. Commissioner Jung also requested to see the repair work plans, cost and timelines for the aquatic facilities. This should be given to the County Commissioners and the Parks & Open Space Commissioners. Mostly, this is a pivot to help the commissioners to get the message out as to what Parks is doing while the facilities are closed. She would like Parks to take the time to do things right, rather than quickly because of all the community pressure. Government has to be the model for safety. Great work.

9. Presentation and discussion on FY 20 and FY 21 Budget and Impacts from COVID-19 response – Eric Crump, Operations Division Director

Eric Crump gave a presentation on the FY 20 and FY 21 budget impacts from COVID-19. The slides are largely comprised of slides directly taken from a presentation to the Board of County Commissioners in May. The FY 21 budget has been approved by the County Commission and has been submitted to the State. There are a lot of unknowns as far as the budget is concerned. They are estimating a General Fund impact/deficit for FY 20 and FY 21 combined at roughly \$65 million. Washoe County's goals are to: Maintain Services, Keep Employees Working, and to Use Reserves Wisely. Washoe County is currently in a hiring freeze. All potential hiring is reviewed by a

Financial Impact Review Committee (FIRC). All large purchases over \$10,000 are reviewed by that committee as well. There are no carryforward expenses into FY 21. The revenue from the C-Tax is estimated at nearly a 30% decrease. A Parks -specific project to make ADA improvements at the South Valleys Regional Park was approved as part of the General Fund Capital Improvement Project. FY 21 Parks Capital Fund projects have been approved and will carry forward – these are non-general fund.

FY 20 Impacts to Parks: reduction in seasonal park aide ranger/maintenance; reduction in seasonal recreation/aquatic positions; reduction in infrastructure preservation budget; expenses limited to essential purchases, aquatic facilities closed for season. FY 21 impacts to Parks: continued hiring freeze; large purchases reviewed by FIRC; Continued reduction in seasonal park aide ranger/maintenance staff; reduction in seasonal recreation/aquatic positions; aquatic facilities closed for the season. The need for additional cuts are unknown. As of now, the FY 21 budget is the same as the FY 20 budget.

Dave Solaro, Director of Community Services, added for the record that the discussion Mr. Crump just had regarding the Capital Improvement Projects have not officially been approved or recognized by the Board. That information has been provided to the Board of County Commissioners but they have not yet acted upon an official budget for the capital improvement or the projects themselves. That will come later in July.

Commissioner Shorts asked if changes to special events, like the balloon races and events like that, are calculated into the budget already or is that still up in the air. Mr. Crump answered that there is little expense and revenue associated with the larger events. Revenue is received indirectly through people visiting the area. Parks co-sponsors the Great Reno Balloon Races and Hot August Nights. There are very little expenses or revenue associated with these so there is very little budget impact specific to Parks. Depending on how those events move forward and if people come and visit the area, there will be some impacts mostly through C-tax. Commissioner Shorts asked whether this affects staff? All special events are required to provide most of their own staff.

Commissioner Jung added that another special event that the County sponsors is Artown which is pretty much revenue neutral. The Parks Commission and the County Commission historically approve these events. The County Commission subsidizes these events because they believe they are important to the community. Everything is up in the air right now. In addition to the hiring freeze, any raises that the Board of County Commissioners has direct control over and discretion about are being denied. The goal is not to lay people off. We don't want to impact the very taxpayers who pay for their own jobs. The largest group of taxpayers is at Washoe County. They are in the lower to middle class and pay sales tax. They are homeowners and pay a great deal of property tax.

Commissioner Jung suggested that the Regional Parks & Open Space Commission have a retreat to go over the budget which they know will have to be opened up again. She thinks the budget approved in May will need to be changed drastically. What she wants from this board is for them to get together before August or September at the latest. She needs this board to get into the Parks budget and prioritize where they want the County Commission to be looking when they have to tighten up the belts more. She also added that the Commission needs a whole new training in open meeting law, what your goals are, go over the bylaws. She said she will do whatever needs to be done – make photocopies, do research. She said we have the documentation that parks are needed now more than ever. She needs the board as advocates to make sure the cuts that are made are

what people believe are their priorities. Commissioner Jung said she has campaign money and funds in her commissioner discretionary fund, she can help with expenses.

Commissioner Doolittle commented that the important things now are that the parks, trails, and regional parks are maintained and kept open where people can enjoy them and still social distance and get out of their homes and enjoy themselves.

10. **Presentation, discussion, and possible recommendation to Community Services Department staff to negotiate a stormwater facilities easement and an amendment to an existing sewer line easement on Betsy Caughlin Donnelly Park, as well as appropriate mitigation for said easement and easement amendment, with Mayberry Gardens, LLC for review and possible approval by the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners – Sophia Kirschenman, Park Planner (For Possible Action)**

Sophia Kirschenman, Park Planner gave a presentation on the requests to amend an existing sewer line easement and grant a stormwater facilities easement on Betsy Caughlin Donnelly Park.

Commissioner Shorts asked more specifically where the proposed areas for the water and electric power are? Kurt Stitser, one of the property owners, showed some drawings of the property which showed the locations for the utility, sewer and stormwater locations. This is proposed to be a professional office park with five office buildings. Commissioner Shorts asked whether the power lines that will be available to Parks would follow the sewer lines? Mr. Stitser answered yes. Everything that they are proposing for Park property is contained within the easement and can be taken and distributed from there onto Park property by Reno Food Systems or Washoe County Parks in the future. Commissioner Nenzel asked whether all of the construction is going to happen west of what is currently leased to Reno Food Systems. Mr. Stitser said that is correct other than the utility improvements within the easement on the north side of Reno Food Systems. Commissioner Nenzel also commented that the primary reason for adding the additional utility extension is to provide utilities for Reno Food Systems or the remainder of the park? Mr. Stitser said that is correct. Commissioner Doolittle asked if there has been a cost determined for the connection of the water and electric to Reno Food Systems? Mr. Stitser said he (the developer) is covering all of the costs of connecting to the water line. Once the water is there, it is Reno Food System's job to pay for extending the water line to where they need it. They will also be installing the electric conduit that gets it to that location. From there, they (RFS) would work with NV Energy to set a meter and enact the power service. Commissioner Doolittle said that in light of the budget woes, one consideration to think about is covering the cost of the water connection fees when Reno Food Systems or Washoe County Parks are ready. He asked if that is something that the developer would consider. Mr. Stitser said he would have to get a better understanding of what he means by water connection fees. Commissioner Doolittle sought clarification from staff as to what he understood to be additional water connection fees. Ms. Kirschenman said it is her understanding that when you set up water service with TMWA, there is a connection fee. She does not know what that fee would be at this point. Commissioner Doolittle asked if that would be considered by the developer. Mr. Stitser said he would be happy to pursue that and get clarification on exactly what the connection fees is and within reason he would be happy to absorb that. Commissioner Doolittle said he appreciates that Mr. Stitser would look into it with staff and see if it's doable. Mr. Stitser showed some preliminary renderings of what the new buildings might look like.

Commissioner Shorts asked if they will keep the goats? Mr. Stitser said the goats belonged to an employee of Reno Food Systems. Commissioner Doolittle said it his understanding that staff is working out the details of a deed restriction and clearing those up before this goes forward? Ms.

Kirschenman said that is correct. These would need to be finalized before the item goes to the County Commission. Eric Crump, Operations Division Director, added that in working through a possible amendment to the deed restriction, there are several restrictions in the spirit of keeping the area realistic with the area of farming and ranching. They don't want to change those but there are some restrictions that were in place due to the fact that there was a residential component within the park space. That is now changed and there is a commercial component. Those are some of the deed restrictions that they would be looking at amending.

Commissioner Nenzel asked whether the cows would be on the pasture this year. Ms. Wallace-Barnum replied that she would anticipate cows on the property this year.

Commissioner Oliver asked if there is any part of this contingent on approvals or has it already been approved? Mr. Stitser replied that everything has been approved. They are expecting approval of site development and improvements in a couple of days. Permits for the new buildings are expected in the next week. They already have construction permits for the remodel improvements and additions onto the existing farmhouse structure. That construction is underway.

Motion by Commissioner Oliver to recommend to Community Services Department staff to negotiate a stormwater facilities easement and an amendment to an existing sewer line easement on Betsy Caughlin Donnelly Park, as well as appropriate mitigation for said easement and easement amendment, with Mayberry Gardens, LLC for review and possible approval by the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners. Second by Commissioner Shorts. Motion carried.

11. **Discussion and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve the Blackstone Park Maintenance Agreement between Washoe County and Blackstone Estates Homeowners' Association – Sophia Kirschenman, Park Planner (For Possible Action)**

Sophia Kirschenman gave a brief overview of this item. In September 2019, the Park Commission recommended that the County Commission approve the park construction agreement. The BCC did approve that agreement. The developer requested to utilize the residential construction tax funds generated through the development of the Blackstone Estates and Sugarloaf Ranch subdivisions for construction of a neighborhood park in the area, east of Pyramid Highway and north of Calle de la Plata in Spanish Springs. Per the construction agreement, the park will be owned and maintained by the Blackstone Estates Homeowner's Association (HOA) in perpetuity. When the park construction agreement was approved, the HOA had yet to be formed, so that agreement stated that when the HOA was formed, the HOA and Washoe County would enter into a maintenance agreement. This maintenance agreement lays out the terms and conditions for maintaining the park in perpetuity.

Motion to approve the maintenance agreement by Commissioner Shorts. Second by Commissioner Doolittle. Motion carried.

12. **Presentation, Update and Discussion on the River Bend Boundary Line Adjustment on Washoe County's parcel #038-100-34 in Verdi, NV, to obtain additional riverfront property along the Truckee River for future trails and river access – Sophia Kirschenman, Park Planner**

Sophia Kirschenman gave an update on the River Bend BLA. This proposal was presented to the Park Commission in June 2019. At that time, the Commission recommended that staff move forward and negotiate this agreement. Ms. Kirschenman presented completed steps in the process and listed the next steps in the process.

Commissioner Oliver asked if there is any connectivity with the Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway? Ms. Kirschenman said that the Bikeway uses Highway 40 but this would not be a thoroughfare. You wouldn't be able to go west of the County parcel but it does provide an area to stop off. Commissioner Shorts said that it will be valuable to get with the Tahoe-Pyramid bike trail to have signage there. He is excited to see that for kayakers and rafters because it is a hard place to turn around. He asked if there are plans to have restrooms? Ms. Kirschenman said there are no restrooms proposed at this time. They are proposing a trailhead with some signage, which would be consistent with the One Truckee River signage. There will also be a temporary loading space. Commissioner Shorts said that this will be a really nice addition to our parks.

13. **Parks Reports**

Colleen Wallace-Barnum highlighted the park reports. In the north region, they hired a Park Ranger I, Gabe Barbato. He works out of the Lazy 5 Regional Park in the Pah Rah District. On March 20, they hired Shane Weckerly, Recreation Coordinator. He has an office based out of Rancho San Rafael Park. He will be responsible for all of the aquatics facilities. He also manages all of the park permitting for the field permits in addition to some other programs that they do over the winter (Come in from the Cold) and also the Robert Z. Hawkins Amphitheater. Ms. Wallace-Barnum welcomed Gabe and Shane to the department.

There are two ongoing construction projects at Bower's Mansion Regional Park. One is improvements to the exterior structure of the Mansion. They are hoping to reopen the Mansion for tours in July. Through a grant from the William N. Pennington Foundation, they are going to increase the pool deck size. There will be two reservable party pavilions right next to each other. They will be reservable next season and will be a good revenue offset for the pools.

The museum, with its closure – they didn't see much business in the Animation Academy exhibit and they are making plans for next year's traveling exhibit, maybe a smaller exhibit if schools are not able to travel with their students. Volunteer services have been delayed because of the COVID response. They are welcoming back the arboretum volunteers. There is a touchless process and a new software system that Denise Evans has been working with called Volgistics. Volunteers can check in online, bring their own tools and go right to the location where they are supposed to help.

Commissioner Doolittle asked when we go into Phase III, has there been any thought about what the indoor operations (wearing masks) will be like? Ms. Wallace-Barnum replied that they are going by the guidelines. They will follow whatever recommendations are given. Currently, they are recommending face coverings for an indoor event for 50 or less people.

14. **Director's Report**

Dave Solaro, CSD Director and Assistant County Manager, said he wanted to put on the record how proud the Commission should be of the Park's staff who have been working for the benefit of the community. Staff has gone above and beyond, they have embraced the opportunity to provide good things for our community during this uncertain time. He wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of the Washoe County Operations staff that have been out there dealing with the public. They have done good work continuing to provide the best park experience.

Commissioner Doolittle said he appreciates Mr. Solaro's comments. Park's staff has always stood up during hard times and done an incredible job maintaining parks and dealing with the public. He thanked Mr. Solaro for speaking up and providing those comments.

Commissioner Lee asked Mr. Solaro if there is an update on what is going on with Wildcreek Golf Course. Mr. Solaro said the current operator of the golf course enacted a provision in the contract to cancel the license agreement that they had. Washoe County hired a maintenance worker to continue to maintain the golf course while they go through the process of hiring a new golf operator. He is currently in negotiations on some finer deal points then he will get with the DA to come up with an agreement. He hopes to get it to the County Commissioners by the end of June so they can open up portions of Wildcreek Golf Course. They have determined not to spend the money to revamp the golf course at this time. He believes they can open the 9 hole, par 3 course and a 6 hole loop. Commissioner Lee asked for clarification about the existing money put aside for the golf course? Mr. Solaro replied that the redesign is complete. The actual project has been put on hold for this year. The money is still safe in the enterprise fund specific for use at the Wildcreek Golf Course property.

15. Commissioner’s Comments

Commissioner Oliver said she would echo Mr. Solaro’s and Commissioner Doolittle’s sentiments about Park’s staff. She has been at a County park almost every day for her own personal work-from-home break/mental health and wellness. She has seen a lot of people at the parks and thanked staff for doing an amazing job.

Commissioner Lee said they have been to the arboretum several times in the past few months and are very thankful that it has been open. She also thanked staff.

Chair Chen thanked the Commissioners and Park’s staff for being present at the meeting.

16. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Meeting adjourned at 4:19pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Emerson, Recording Secretary

Approved by Commission in session on August 4, 2020.

Stephanie Chen, Chair