

**Draft MINUTES**

Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission  
September 25, 2020 – Virtual Workshop

The Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission met on Friday, September 25, 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 was 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>

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Commissioner Chen called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**1. Roll Call**

**Members Present in Chambers:** Darla Lee, Greg shorts

**Members Present via Zoom:** Stephanie Chen, Heidi Anderson, Doug Doolittle, Thomas Guinn, Jennifer Oliver, Chris Nenzel,

**Staff Present:** Lindsay Liddell, Kathy Emerson, Katy Stark, Donna Fagan,

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

**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 Workshop of September 25, 2020**

Motion by Commissioner Oliver to approve the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Workshop of September 25, 2020. Second by Commissioner Shorts. Motion carried.

**5. Presentation and discussion on the 2019 Regional Parks and Open Space Master Plan**

Sophia Kirschenman provided a presentation on the 2019 Master Plan.

- Ms. Kirschenman responded to Commission Chair Chen's question regarding updates on plan implementation progress stating that routine updates will be made to the Washoe County Parks Commission.
- Ms. Kirschenman responded to Commissioner Doolittle's question noting that a concept plan for redistribution of parks area districts will to be brought back to the Washoe County Parks Commission in the next couple of months.
- Ms. Wallace responded to Commissioner Oliver's question on the number of seasonal staff members. The equivalent of 17 FTEs are hired in a normal seasonal year.

- Commissioner Doolittle responded to a request for consideration of a different funding distribution for Parks that considers increase use in trails and open space from Director Eric Crump. Ms. Kirschenman responded to Commissioner Doolittle's concerns with funding and combination of parks districts and the concurrence with stakeholder feedback. Additional community feedback will occur prior to amending parks districts.
- Commissioner Shorts requested a breakdown of Districts funds for consideration during budget.

**6. Presentation and discussion on past, current and future grant funding opportunities related to park development and operations.**

Joanne Lowden provided a presentation on grant funding for Parks and Open Space program.

- Ms. Lowden addressed budget question from Chair Chen that there is nothing in the budget dedicated to matching grants or open space management.
- Coleen Wallace-Barnum, Parks Operations Superintendent, responded to Commissioner Doolittle and noted that Washoe County has not received Robert Z. Hawkins funds for two years. The resource is generous and has supported project specific opportunities in the past.
- Commissioner Oliver questioned the statement that the main priorities are ongoing maintenance and open space management. Ms. Lowden noted that maintenance for open space is a missing component. Director Crump confirmed and noted that the budget review will include priorities including the topics addressed by Commissioner Oliver. Commissioner Doolittle affirmed the ongoing maintenance challenge. Ms. Wallace-Barnum affirmed that we are not alone across the Country in supporting ongoing maintenance.
- Commissioner Shorts asked about fire abatement projects outside of Arrowcreek. Ms. Lowden, Ms. Wallace-Barnum and Ms. Kirschenman noted that they have been coordinating efforts with Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District and United States Forest Service to complete fuels reduction at other parks and open space locations across Washoe County.

**7. Presentation and discussion on Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space budget.**

Ms. Colleen Wallace-Barnum provided a presentation on the Parks and Open Space Operations budget.

- Commissioner Doolittle asked about contingency plans for COVID-19 operations running into next year. Ms. Wallace addressed CARES ACT Funding to include cleaning and sanitation supplies to help with future requirements. Director Crump noted that expense sides were also reduced for the 2020 Summer to account for reduced community services (pools closed, etc.).
- Ms. Wallace-Barnum clarified that 404 funds is a combination of grant funding and taxes and a non-general fund in response to a question from Commissioner Oliver.
- Assistant County Manager Dave Solaro responded to Commissioner's concerns regarding community support noting that the community has dedicated a special tax to parks and operations and that our employees are important to maintaining our parks. He reiterated that the priorities are: first is employees, second is infrastructure and third is components of the master plan.

**8. Presentation and discussion on Nevada Parks, Trails and Open Space District Act (Nevada Revised Statutes Chapter 318A)**

Karen Mullen and Julie Conway, former Parks Directors presented information on Nevada Parks, Trails and Open Space District Act.

- Commissioner Doolittle expressed community interest is in parks that are available, safe and serve community needs and they do not care which jurisdiction maintains a park. Expressed support for a regional district.
- Commissioner Shorts requested information on Reno or Sparks interest in regional districts. Ms. Conway reviewed short history of interaction between City of Reno and City of Sparks Councils.
- Commissioner Oliver requested a timeline for a service plan to be constructed. Ms. Conway noted 6-8 month process including the Citizen Engagement component of the program.
- Commissioner Anderson expressed support for the presentation and program.
- Commissioner Doolittle noted that this is not a new idea and has occurred in the past and across the nation.
- Commissioner Shorts requested information on budget support for developing a service plan. Director Crump noted that this was a recommendation of master plan process but not earmarked as a budget item.
- Commissioner Oliver asked what was holding Washoe County back from moving forward? Ms. Mullen noted leadership to bring forward to decision making body and dedicated funding. Ms. Conway noted involving partnering agencies would be beneficial for this project to progress.
- In response to Commissioner Shorts question, Ms. Conway noted \$75,000 to \$125,000 is estimated amount necessary to create a service plan dependent on the size of the service plan and the number of agencies that want to get involved.
- Commissioner Oliver requested the topic be placed as an action item to make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. Commissioner Doolittle supported Commissioner Oliver adding that the Board of County Commissioners will need more specifics for the presentation.
- Director Crump responded to question from Commissioner Shorts regarding interest from other regional partners noting that staff conversations have been supportive.
- In response to Commissioner interest, Director Crump confirmed that this item could be discussed with all three parks commissions at a joint meeting.

**9. Presentation and discussion on Washoe County CRF-CARES Act Award**

Director Eric Crump provided an update on the Coronavirus Aide and Relief and Economic Securities Act (CARES)

10. Commissioner's Comments: (This item limited to announcements or topics/issues proposed for future workshops/agendas.)
- Commission Chair Chen, Commissioner Oliver, Commissioner Doolittle, and Commissioner Shorts shared their support of staff, highlighted the quality of the presentations and noted the limited budget.

**12. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

Meeting adjourned at 3:31pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Emerson, Recording Secretary

Approved by Commission in session on December 1, 2020

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Stephanie Chen, Chair