



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Virtual Meeting – [Join Teams Meeting](#)

10/18/2021 4:00 p.m.



Draft Minutes

Members Present

- | | |
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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Ryan Martin (Chair) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Austin Kerr |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Richard Conway | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Aurelia Yazzie |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Stephen Parsons | |

Councilmember / Liaison to the City Council

- Councilmember Regina Salas

Staff and Others Present

Michael Abeyta – Acting Recreation Manager
Shannon Anderson – Deputy City Manager
Cathy Guetschow – Administrative Specialist
Amy Hagin – Parks Manager
Rebecca Sayers – Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Events Director
Jennifer Kottra – Flagstaff Pickleball Association and other pickleball and tennis users (see Addendum)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Conway, Kerr, Martin, Parsons, and Yazzie were present for roll call.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 16, 2021 MEETING MINUTES**

A motion was made by Commissioner Parsons to approve the August 16, 2021 minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Yazzie. Motion passed unanimously with five (5) yeas.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No public participation.

4. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

A. **Commission Membership**

Rebecca Sayers, Director of Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Events (PROSE) reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission is currently down to five Commission members out of the seven positions. Applications for the Parks and Recreation Commission can be found on the City website at <https://www.flagstaff.az.gov/> Co-Chair Martin has agreed to fill the position of Chairperson until January 2022 when elections will be held.

B. **City Reorganization – Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (and Events) Division**

Ms. Sayers reported that on October 7 the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Sections became their own Division as suggested by the City Manager and approved by City Council. The new Division is called the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Events (PROSE) Division.

C. Pickleball Options, Costs and Funding Possibilities, and Further Discussion

Amy Hagin, Parks Manager, gave a presentation on the possibility of building new pickleball courts within Bushmaster Park. She encouraged innovation, outreach and collaboration by all stakeholders working together for community benefit. While there is currently no funding for the project, nor any capital funds available at this time for any parks projects, staff and collaborators can research and apply for grant opportunities if the Commission recommends that staff move in this direction.

The estimate for adding four lighted pickleball courts at Bushmaster Park would cost approximately \$523,000 whereas six courts would cost approximately \$780,000 which includes design, permitting and construction.

Public comments included:

- There are no pickleball courts in Flagstaff as compared to other cities in Arizona. Pickleball tournaments would bring revenue to the City and enhance it. Likes that staff has investigated adding pickleball courts instead of taking away tennis courts to build them. Would like to see eight courts built.
- We love the idea of bringing tournaments to Flagstaff. It is nice to see multigenerational people playing. They also play tennis but prefer pickleball and would like to see more pickleball courts.
- I sponsor six of the top pickleball pros and feels that pickleball could offer a good economic and social impact. Has also looked up pricing, with most conversions being a one (tennis court) to four (pickleball court) conversion. He reported that Dobson Ranch in the City of Mesa is converting two tennis courts into eight pickleball courts at a cost of \$165,000 but understands construction is costly at this time.
- I am involved with the tennis community and has served on the Parks and Recreation Commission in the past. Flagstaff does not have enough infrastructure for any type of sports and is already strapped for courts. His concern is how to make the pie bigger, so everyone benefits. Giving up any tennis courts would be detrimental to the tennis community. His main concern is to see how they can help get the pickleball community the courts they need and maintain/grow the tennis courts. Would like the Commission to look at a way to add courts instead of taking away existing ones.
- I feel that Flagstaff is behind the curve on building courts that would serve the community, noting that pickleball is cross generational and not only for those who can't play tennis anymore. She likes the idea of tournaments but feels that it is inappropriate for the Bushmaster Park neighborhood due to the traffic and parking issues it would cause. Would it be possible to build a pickleball facility on the outskirts of town? She feels that the estimated costs are high and suggests getting multiple bids to bring the cost down.
- My children love playing pickleball and he appreciates the Commission for looking into solutions for permanent courts. He feels that 20-24 courts are needed and would be heavily used. Converting Bushmaster Park tennis courts would be a nice short term temporary solution instead of having to wait for new ones to be built but looks forward to seeing more pickleball courts built and holding tournaments.
- I am a long-term tennis player and court advocate, stated that there is a shortage of tennis courts. Most of what can be said about pickleball can also be said of the tennis courts and comes down to finances. All sports are worthy, but tennis shouldn't be negatively impacted by the needs of pickleball. She likes the staff's innovative thoughts and hopes that innovative solutions can solve all their needs. Is there a pickleball organization that could help with

- funding or assistance? Feels that Bushmaster Park is not an option for playing tennis anymore since it is taken up with pickleball.
- Jen Kottra, on behalf of the Flagstaff Pickleball Association reported that they have been working with the City and Ms. Sayers for the last 2 1/2 years to get pickleball courts built in Flagstaff. Currently there are only two courts in town that are located at Ponderosa Park. Without the volunteers who set up and take down the nets at Bushmaster Park, pickleball would not exist there. She explained that the Association has a short, intermediate, and long-range plan. The short-term plan is to convert the lined tennis/pickleball courts at Bushmaster Park to permanent pickleball courts. Flagstaff needs to build a dedicated pickleball complex on 3 ½ acres that would allow for growth and not become land locked. This would be beneficial not only for tournaments, but also for clinics and personal use. Ms. Kottra presented the Commission with data on how much use and the times that the tennis and pickleball courts are used at Bushmaster Park. She feels that the conversion of the tennis courts to pickleball is needed at Bushmaster Park.
 - I am speaking on behalf of college students in Flagstaff stating that they do play and love pickleball. She is interested in the long- and short-term solutions.
 - Allison Bates-Caputo is the Northern Arizona League Coordinator for the United States Tennis Association and has spent time trying to find and reserve available tennis courts around Flagstaff for those who are not aware of the locations of tennis courts. What she hears a lot of is that tennis players at Bushmaster Park are confused about the times of pickleball play and when the shared courts are available for tennis. She stated that their group reserves courts and pays for them to secure time slots but is unaware if other user groups do the same.
 - One person commented on a previous statement about tennis courts. He questioned when the Hal Jensen Recreation Center's (HJRC) tennis courts were refinished if there was a six-inch slab poured over the existing courts and if not, why does it need to be done at Bushmaster Park. Ms. Hagin reported that the courts at HJRC were demolished and reconstructed. At Ponderosa Park when they were first considering resurfacing the existing tennis courts with a six-inch post tension overlay on top of the existing concrete court the cost would have been \$59,000. When it was recently changed to pickleball courts the cost of the project was \$64,000 for two courts, noting that concrete and construction costs continue to increase in Flagstaff and across the nation. The commenter asked if the same construction methods would be applied at Bushmaster Park if they were to remain tennis courts. Ms. Hagin explained that staff have found that when only using a surface coating on any of the courts, there tends to be cracking due the weather in Flagstaff, so the ideal way for longevity and the most effective solution is to do a six-inch post tension concrete overlay. It was mentioned that most courts and sports fields are public funded with an opportunity for grant funding.

Chair Martin stated he recognizes that there is a need for pickleball, and it is understood that something needs to be done. The Commission is now at the point of how to do it and how to fund it. Ms. Sayers reported that there is no capital funding available for this current fiscal year. Funding for the Ponderosa Park pickleball courts came from reallocated funds that were to be used towards other projects that are now currently deferred. Chair Martin asked Councilmember Salas if she had any comments about funding options from the City Council.

Councilmember Salas reported that Council held an infrastructure retreat where they discussed the needs of wastewater that has a need of \$30 million-\$180 million in the next 5 to 10 years, storm water flood mitigation \$12 million-\$18 million and for public safety to replace outdated radios will need \$2.75 million, an extension ladder truck for the Fire Department at \$2.35 million and an equipment truck for

Wildfire would cost \$1.8 million. The City Manager is putting together a citizen advisory committee to identify recommendations for housing, carbon neutrality and city infrastructure ballot questions.

Commissioner Parsons commented that there is a need for pickleball courts and would like the Commission to concentrate on options for adding more courts in the community and work within the budget that they currently have. This could mean going ahead and converting the two tennis courts at Bushmaster Park or at Thorpe Park to pickleball courts. Ms. Sayers stated that staff is looking at ways to add more courts without removing other amenities that would affect other user groups. There are grants available and staff are committed to applying for them, but currently there are resource issues in terms of staff being available to write them. She commented that if any of the Commissioners or the public in attendance at the meeting would like to volunteer their time in helping write a grant, their assistance would be welcome.

Commissioner Kerr agrees that they should not eliminate current amenities and should build a facility for pickleball. Ms. Hagin reported that a lot of thought went into choosing Bushmaster Park for building new pickleball courts. The Park has existing infrastructure such as existing lighted courts, permanent restrooms and parking availability. The current lines on the existing shared courts would remain. Commissioner Kerr is in favor of building new pickleball courts at Bushmaster Park.

Commissioner Yazzie asked if they are going with the direction of converting the courts could the conversion be done in phases which would allow for the work to be started immediately. She questioned if the Pickleball Association could work with Arizona State Heritage Fund grant program or establish a fund raiser account that donors could donate to. Ms. Sayers stated that a cost estimating sheet was provided in the presentation regarding conversion of the courts and can email a copy of it to the Commissioners. The Heritage Fund can be used as a match for federal funds and donations can be accepted from the public which would then be set up under its own City account number. When donating to the City, staff would manage the money in accordance with procurement practices. The Pickleball Association could also accept donations to support a City of Flagstaff project with their donations being separate from the City's.

Chair Martin summarized what he heard from Commissioners. There is consensus that Commissioners are in favor of building new pickleball courts rather than converting the existing tennis courts to permanent pickleball courts. Commissioner Parsons asked if there are other locations worth looking into. Ms. Sayers reported that many park sites have been reviewed, but the main benefit of Bushmaster Park is that the infrastructure already exists there.

Chair Martin commented that the two options available for the pickleball courts are whether there should be four or six of them and the possibility of a phased construction. Also noted was the public comment and their concern with six courts and possible tournaments at Bushmaster Park that could affect the surrounding community. Ms. Sayers stated that it will come down to funding for the construction of four or six courts. Additionally, an essential first step in the process is community and neighborhood engagement.

D. Thorpe Park Annex Public Participation Project Update

Ms. Sayers reported that staff has started the Thorpe Park Annex Public Participation process and have hired Southwest Decision Resources (SDR) as a consulting partner who has partnered with Wheat Design as a sub-consultant to help develop a concept plan for the project. They have met as a core

team and had an onsite meeting to review the property. The first step of the process has been started with the internal stakeholder preassessment interview and will be going out to the external/public stakeholders after the Commission goes through the interview at their November meeting. Staff is hoping to submit and receive feedback from City Council before or soon after their summer break next year (2022).

Ms. Kottra reported that the Thorpe Park Annex is one of the sites that she has considered for dedicated pickleball courts and she would like to be actively involved in the Annex discussion. A benefit of having pickleball courts built at the Thorpe Park Annex will allow for future court growth compared to being landlocked at Bushmaster Park.

E. McPherson Disc Golf Course Expansion Request – Cost Estimate

Ms. Hagin reported that the Flagstaff Disc Golf Association has withdrawn their request to expand the current 18-hole disc golf course at McPherson Park and staff will not be exploring it as an option anymore. She also reported that the Flagstaff Disc Golf Association will be applying for the Worlds Disc Golf Championship and that the last time the event was hosted in Flagstaff was in 2003. If they complete an application package, Ms. Hagin will ask them to approach the Commission and give an update.

F. Parks and Recreation Master Plan Accomplishments Review

Ms. Sayers reminded the Commissioners that a PDF was emailed to them regarding this topic and that it is still a work in progress but would be happy to answer any questions they might have.

5. CITY COUNCIL LIAISON REPORTS – COUNCILMEMBER REGINA SALAS

- The Flagstaff Housing Plan is out for public comment and can be found on the City’s website.
- The Flagstaff Community survey is out and some of the key findings include:
 - High overall quality of life.
 - Housing affordability.
 - Mobility/Transportation options highly regarded by residents.
 - City services were rated highly.
 - Residents feel safe but have some concerns regarding crime.
 - Government performance ratings have room for improvement.
- City Council discussed American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

6. REPORTS – JULY MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS OF PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Commissioner Yazzie questioned if vandalism in the parks has increased over the years and if the cost was a typical amount that Parks spends for repairs. Staff reported that they usually spend \$25,000 per year for vandalism repairs and that vandalism is higher in the summer than it is in the winter months.

7. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS TO AND FROM COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

Rebecca reported that Recreation will be celebrating “Hallow Week” and will have a celebration each day during Halloween week at the different Centers.

8. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NOVEMBER 15, 2021 MEETING

- Thorpe Park Annex Pre-Assessment Discussion with Southwest Decision Resources
- Active Transportation Master Plan – Martin Ince

9. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

Addendum

Public participation for Agenda item 4C, Pickleball Options, Costs and Funding Possibilities, and Further Discussion

Jennifer Kottra, Flagstaff Pickleball Association

“Craig M.”

“Bernice and Ray”

Patrick Sullivan, Jigsaw Health, Scottsdale, AZ

Adam Kaupisch

Susan Fix

David Tomich

Jana Perpich

Autumn Layden

Alison Bates-Caputo

“Randy”