



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE  
MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, February 11, 2021  
Meeting held electronically**

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Steve Dodd, Vice-Chair Cynthia Wenstrom, Commissioners Steve Coluccio, Laurie LaPat-Polasko, and Marsha Lipps

**ABSENT:** Commissioners Mark Hackbarth and Tawana Parker

**STAFF:** Kroy Ekblaw, Preserve Director; Scott Hamilton, Preserve Manager

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Dodd called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL**

Members present as noted above.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were submitted.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of the Regular Meeting minutes of November 19, 2020

VICE-CHAIR WENSTROM MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 19, 2020 MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER LIPPS SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR DODD, VICE-CHAIR WENSTROM, COMMISSIONERS COLUCCIO, LAPAT-POLASKO, AND LIPPS VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

**4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

CHAIR DODD NOMINATED CYNTHIA WENSTROM FOR THE POSITION OF CHAIR OF THE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION. COMMISSIONER LIPPS SECONDED THE NOMINATION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR DODD, VICE-CHAIR WENSTROM, COMMISSIONERS COLUCCIO, LAPAT-POLASKO, AND LIPPS VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

CHAIR WENSTROM NOMINATED LAURIE LAPAT-POLASKO FOR THE POSITION OF VICE CHAIR OF THE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION. COMMISSIONER COLUCCIO SECONDED THE NOMINATION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR WENSTROM, COMMISSIONERS COLUCCIO, DODD, LAPAT-POLASKO, AND LIPPS VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

#### **5. REVIEW COMMISSION BY-LAWS**

Mr. Ekblaw noted that the City Attorney's office is reviewing some minor administrative changes to ensure that the by-laws are in compliance with state law. He suggested tabling the item until the March 4th meeting.

VICE-CHAIR LAPAT-POLASKO MOVED TO TABLE APPROVAL OF THE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION BY-LAWS UNTIL THE MARCH 4, 2021 MEETING. COMMISSIONER COLUCCIO SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR WENSTROM, VICE-CHAIR LAPAT-POLASKO, COMMISSIONERS COLUCCIO, DODD, AND LIPPS VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

#### **6. 2020 COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT**

COMMISSIONER DODD MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2020 MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT AS PRESENTED. VICE-CHAIR LAPAT-POLASKO SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR WENSTROM, VICE-CHAIR LAPAT-POLASKO, COMMISSIONERS COLUCCIO, DODD, AND LIPPS VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

#### **7. McDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY UPDATES**

Justin Owen said that thanks to the quick work of City staff, the Conservancy received information regarding the aerial fireworks legislation and was able to mobilize stewards to send emails to the Legislature opposing the proposal.

The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary on January 21, 2021. Social media campaigns and website campaigns highlighting the work of the Conservancy will be posted throughout the year in recognition of the milestone.

The Conservancy is continuing to follow non-public facing activities due to COVID-19. Activities that are continuing with social distancing include patrolling, construction and maintenance projects, and scientific research.

Expedition Days online program is scheduled to launch in March. To date, approximately 1,300 students are signed up to participate. In-person programming is expected to resume in 2022 and the online version will continue indefinitely.

The site stewardship program is in the process of working with City staff and the State Historic Preservation Office to monitor culturally sensitive sites.

The Conservancy is focusing on engaging stewards during the COVID-19 restrictions through virtual activities. Over 55,000 hours of volunteer service was recorded for 2020, which is pleasantly surprising during the pandemic compared to the 64,000 logged for 2019.

#### **8. 1-GP-2021: DRAFT SCOTTSDALE GENERAL PLAN 2035**

Taylor Reynolds, Project Coordination Liaison, gave a presentation outlining recommendations relating to 1-GP-2021: Draft Scottsdale General Plan 2035. The presentation included an overview of the recent history of Scottsdale's General Plan update, including the 2012 special election process; the Citizen Review Committee (CRC) process and timeline; CRC plan organization and legislative edits that occurred as a result of their meetings; and areas of special interest to the MSPC. He highlighted the areas of particular interest to the Commission, including the open space element, conservation element, land use element, and updated trails and trailheads map. He mentioned that Howard Myers submitted comments, which will be included as part of the public record and will be highlighted during presentations with the Planning Commission and City Council. A citizen input link is available through the City's website. Citizens who are interested in attending the virtual town hall that is scheduled for February 18, 2021 should register through the city website.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to make comments and ask questions. Mr. Reynolds said that a November 2021 election would be a special election and it is likely that the General Plan would be the only item on the ballot. Commissioners expressed concern about the text being amended in OS 2.3. Mr. Reynolds explained that based on recommendation from the City Attorney's office, the Citizen Review Committee determined that the text relating to areas adjacent to the Preserve should be broadened. Mr. Ekblaw explained that while many areas surrounding the Preserve are already developed, there are still state lands that the city may have interest in acquiring. Approximately 2,000 acres of the roughly 30,000 acres of Preserve land are privately owned and protected in perpetuity by a number of mechanisms. The General Plan language is intended to identify that protection of the Preserve and open space land can occur through a number of different mechanisms.

#### **9. ENDURANCE HORSE RIDE SPECIAL USE PERMIT**

The Endurance Horse Ride special use permit application has been withdrawn.

#### **10. STAFF REPORTS**

- Wildland Fire Projects

Mr. Ekblaw announced that wildland fire crews will begin clearing the north area on Pima Road on February 22, 2021. He reviewed the process of last year's clearing and shared before and after photographs.

Mr. Ekblaw said that the Legislative Committee put the proposed aerial fireworks item on hold, which means it will likely die. The City's Intergovernmental Liaison will keep an eye on the legislation and report to the City if aerial fireworks legislation returns in any form.

Mr. Hamilton gave an update on the January 25, 2021 snowfall in the north area. He said that thanks to the "snowmageddon" of 2019, the city was prepared to act quickly to close the

appropriate areas and station stewards at the entrances to divert hikers to trails that were still open. Because of its higher elevation, Tom's Thumb was closed through January 27th.

Mr. Hamilton gave an update on Pima/Dynamite Trailhead and presented photos of the progress. The majority of connections have been built and temporary signs have been installed. Construction is expected to be completed by the middle of July 2021.

Discussion about Area K will be agendaized for the February 18, 2021 MSPC meeting.

## **11. UPCOMING MEETING DATES, LOCATIONS AND AGENDA ITEMS**

All dates listed are tentative and subject to amendment:

- February 18, 2021 – (Virtual Meeting)**
  - Policy Process Update
  - Trails Update in the Pima/Dynamite Trailhead area
    - Possible Field Tour to Revisit Trail Area K
      - Feb 19, 20, or 21?
- March 4, 2021 – (Virtual Meeting)**
  - Arizona Game and Fish
- March 2021 thru June:**

<u>Regular meetings</u>	<u>Special meetings</u>
April 1 <sup>st</sup>	March 18 <sup>th</sup>
May 6 <sup>th</sup>	April 15 <sup>th</sup>
June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	May 20 <sup>th</sup>
	June 17 <sup>th</sup>
- Possible Field Tour of Policy Items - Date – April?

## **12. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Chair Wenstrom thanked Commissioner Dodd for his leadership as chair of the Commission and for his participation on the Citizen Review Committee.

## **13. ADJOURNMENT**

COMMISSIONER COLUCCIO MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER DODD SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR WENSTROM, VICE-CHAIR LAPAT-POLASKO, COMMISSIONERS COLUCCIO, DODD, AND LIPPS VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Recorded and Transcribed by eScribers, LLC.