



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
McDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

April 2, 2015

**Florence Ely Nelson Desert Park
8950 E. Pinnacle Peak Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85255**

SUMMARIZED MINUTES

PRESENT: James Heitel, Chairman
Robert Frost, Vice Chairman
Con Englehorn, Commissioner
Jace McKeighan, Commissioner
Fred Klein, Commissioner
Susan Wheeler, Commissioner

ABSENT: Mike Milillo, Commissioner

STAFF: Bill Murphy
Kroy Ekblaw
Scott Hamilton
Liz Hildenbrand
Yvonne Massman

GUESTS: Mike Nolan
Paul Slaiter
David Hay
Dan Gruber
Jim Elfline

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Heitel called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present as noted above.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Klein suggested that under the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy Update it should read "hike attendance has increased by 42 percent" and under item seven in places where it reads "over 34" the verbiage should be "35 and over."

Commissioner McKeighan suggested in item six regarding the City food tax replacing the word "impact" with "reduce."

COMMISSIONER MCKEIGHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 5, 2015 MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED. VICE-CHAIR FROST SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A VOTE OF SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). COMMISSIONER MILILLO WAS ABSENT.

5. MCDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY UPDATE

Mr. Nolan said that approximately 650 people including six City Council members attended the Kovach Family Nature Trail dedication. The event included wildflower hikes and other activities. He distributed the new Kovach Family Trail brochure to the Commission.

The Steward recognition dinner had approximately 160 in attendance. Stewards were recognized for their achievements including new leads, master stewards, and acknowledgement of volunteer hours. In calendar year 2014 over 48,000 volunteer hours were contributed by stewards.

Mr. Nolan noted that he spoke about the Steward program as part of a Desert Botanical Garden discussion panel.

MSC has three new program chairs: Tony ValleE as patrol chair, Gene Eiler as Pathfinder chair, and Lisa Miller as citizen's science chair.

The MSC is working with Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community on a proposal for the Community to install an exhibit at Brown's Ranch next season. The next meeting with them is scheduled for Wednesday, April 8th.

The final new steward orientation for the year is scheduled for Saturday, April 11th. There are four more spots available.

The Field Institute gave a presentation at the Science for Parks, Parks for Science Conference about the Citizen Science Program and the overall steward program. The conference was celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Park Service.

Commission members were given an opportunity to make comments. Mr. Nolan noted that the Kovach Family Nature Trail dedication was primarily put together by Scottsdale Leadership. Ms. Hildenbrand said that Scottsdale Leadership invited Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts to help with the cleanup.

6. REFINEMENT OF IDEAS FOR ENDOWMENT CONCEPT AND CONDITIONS

Chair Heitel said that the endowment concept and conditions will be a continuing discussion. The legal department is working with Election Law and Bond Council to work through any issues.

Mr. Ekblaw noted that one issue that had not been studied in detail is how the bond holders would be affected by any changes. It must be ensured that any changes to the statute would not place any legal liability on the City.

Chair Heitel asked that Commission members forward any suggestions to staff prior to next meeting.

Commissioner Klein suggested that areas where it says "promotional/advertising" be changed to read "educational/promotional" so that the document will align with the language in the Statute.

The Commission requested that discussion regarding the 50%, 44%, 6% allocations be agendaized for a future meeting.

7. COMMERCIAL MOTORIZED TOURS

Mr. Ekblaw noted that there have been no formal requests made by operators to extend the use permits for motorized jeep tours. The discussions are in preparation for a possible request based on the past two years history of temporary permits. Future discussions could include information about the possibility of allowing wagons and horse-drawn carts.

Staff anticipates that the Tonto National Forest will have their final selections within the next few weeks and selected operators should be operational by summer.

8. SPECIAL EVENTS AND COMMERCIAL USE POLICIES

Ms. Hildenbrand said that events are not prohibited in the Preserve Ordinance. In 2010, the MSPC established the special use permit guideline. Staff is proposing that the permitting approach be refined. The current process is for each case to be considered based on the potential impact on the Preserve and the general public and competitive events require input from both the MSC and MSPC.

Discussion ensued regarding the definition of competitive events versus passive recreation, the special use permitting process, and use categories.

Ms. Hildenbrand proposed that refined guidelines be established so that the regulations and requirements are clearly outlined. A draft of the proposed guidelines will be presented to the Commission during the next meeting.

9. STAFF REPORTS

- Land Acquisition

Mr. Ekblaw said that communication with the State Land Department is ongoing. There will be public meetings from April through summer and the zoning cases are anticipated to go to Planning Commission in June/July and to Council in August. An auction would be set two to four weeks after Council approval.

Mr. Ekblaw outlined the areas on the Gateway Master Plan where approximately 325 parking stalls have been built. Based on evaluations, an additional 75 stalls might be installed over the summer.

The transportation department and the Scottsdale Unified School District are working on a plan for enhanced access to Anasazi school, which could improve access and parking for the Preserve in overflow situations. Mr. Ekblaw will give an update in May.

During the recent Desert Discovery Center study session, City Council gave direction to move forward with a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) beginning with a concept, programming development, and initial cost estimates. The RFQ is expected to go out within 30 days.

Mr. Ekblaw reviewed the progress on trails noting that areas 6, 7, and 8 are scheduled for completion next year and will be more challenging terrain for users. During the summer old trails will be evaluated and mapping and signing of the completed trails will begin.

Ms. Hildenbrand thanked the MSC volunteers for helping with the replacement of signs in the southern areas.

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Klein reiterated his request for a regular online presence for the Preserve monthly between October and March, as was approved by the Commission last year. He said it is the MSPC's statutory responsibility to develop educational and promotional programs and feels that staff has a responsibility to help in this regard. He asked that a discussion item be placed on the agenda for a future meeting, opining that in order to be ready for October, work needs to start in June.

Commissioner Wheeler suggested having a "Friends of the Preserve" site or page on Facebook so that people would have the opportunity to post pictures. Ms. Hildenbrand said that the MSC has a Facebook page as well as an Instagram site.

Commissioner Wheeler mentioned that the Verde Vaqueros had a ride over the weekend with 188 riders. Commissioner Frost added that half of the riders were local ropers.

11. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Possible May agenda items include:

- Naming policies

- Ideas for endowment concept and conditions follow-up (as needed)
- Special events and commercial use policies follow-up (as needed)
- Jeep tours follow-up (as needed)

Other Future Items:

- Earmarking funds from commercial outfitters
- ERP
- Drones
- Dogs in Preserve

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
A/V Tronics, Inc. DBA AVTranz.