



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

NOVEMBER 12, 2015

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

SUMMARIZED MINUTES

PRESENT: Robert Frost, Vice Chair
Mike Milillo, Commissioner
Jace McKeighan, Commissioner
Cynthia Wenstrom, Commissioner

ABSENT: James Heitel, Chairman
Con Englehorn, Commissioner
Steve Dodd, Commissioner

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

GUESTS: Mike Nolan
John Holmes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Frost called the meeting to order at 5:13 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

Approval of the Regular Meeting minutes of October 1, 2015

COMMISSIONER MILILLO MOVED TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 1, 2015. COMMISSIONER MCKEIGHAN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FOUR (4) TO ZERO (0).

5. MCDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY UPDATE (Discussion begins at 5:15; approximately 2 minutes into the meeting)

Mr. Nolan reviewed recent activities, which included patrol activities, construction and maintenance projects, Pathfinders' activities, the Citizen Science program, and the Butterfly Count on the nature trail. He noted that Pathfinders are expanding shifts from two to two and a half hours and are experimenting with afternoon shifts, keeping track of trail users to determine when they are most needed.

A regional meeting of open space managers including the Conservancy, Desert Foothills Land Trust, Fountain Hills, the City of Scottsdale, Maricopa County, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Forrest Service met to discuss areas of commonality in Preserve areas and where it could make sense to work in cooperation. It is anticipated that the group will meet on a quarterly or semiannual basis.

6. TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN - 128TH STREET FROM JOMAX SOUTH TO RANCH GATE (Discussion begins at 5:07; approximately 7 minutes into the meeting)

Mr. Basha gave an overview of the Transportation Master Plan, highlighting the area of 128th Street and Dynamite and Ranch Gate. The Transportation Department has recommended that 128th Street be abandoned and instead designated as an emergency vehicle and public bike path access from north of Ranch Gate Road to Jomax. This would include two 8-foot bicycle lanes in each direction. The combination of the bicycle lanes with shoulders will satisfy the 20-foot emergency access requirement.

The Transportation Department is also recommending that a median and a westbound lane be constructed along Ranch Gate Road.

Mr. Basha mentioned that another recommendation being made in the Transportation Master Plan is reducing the recommended number of lanes each way on Dynamite, from 116th Street to 136th Street.

Commission members were given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Basha explained that the right of way on 128th Street will be retained. Mr. Ekblaw added that the area will be identified as "path, trail, and emergency access" in the Transportation Master Plan.

COMMISSIONER MILILLO MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL TO APPROVE REDESIGNATION OF 128TH STREET FROM RANCH GATE ROAD TO JOMAX FROM A MINOR COLLECTOR TO EMERGENCY ACCESS AND PUBLIC PATH AND TRAIL. COMMISSIONER MCKEIGHAN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FOUR (4) TO ZERO (0).

7. IDEAS FOR ENDOWMENT CONCEPT AND FINANCIAL UPDATE (Discussion begins at 5:28; approximately 15 minutes into the meeting)

Mr. Ekblaw reviewed the endowment financial estimates, noting that areas in blue on the handout have been amended. He explained that the projections for land acquisitions decreased from \$58 million to \$48 million because of a proposal to use more cash for purchase which results in less debt service. He discussed: projection estimations if the food tax were removed and current Preserve bonds were paid off; land acquisitions and improvements; projected operations and maintenance costs, noting that funding of the annuity will not be available until FY 2032/33; and the funding for the annuity for Preserve promotion and educational uses which would come available in FY 2033/34.

Commission members were given an opportunity to ask questions and make comments. Chair Frost suggested that the difference between an annuity and an endowment be defined. Mr. Ekblaw explained that the cost of operation and maintenance is estimated currently at approximately \$700,000, but will increase over the 15-year period at a rate of approximately three percent. He noted that once a recommendation is approved, the tables will be put in a clearer format for presentation to City Council. Trails and trailheads are capital assets and would be funded with capital program dollars.

COMMISSIONER MILILLO MOVED TO ACCEPT THE DRAFT PRESENTED BY STAFF AND DIRECT THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR TO WORK WITH STAFF TO DEVELOP PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL AND A TIMELINE FOR A FUTURE COUNCIL WORK STUDY SESSION TO OUTLINE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ENDOWMENT FUND FROM THE EXISTING MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE BOND FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREATING A CONTINUING FUNDING SOURCE FOR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE PRESERVE. COMMISSIONER MCKEIGHAN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FOUR (4) TO ZERO (0).

8. FRAESFIELD/GRANITE MOUNTAIN TRAILHEAD CONCEPT PLANNING UPDATE (Discussion begins at 5:44; approximately 45 minutes into the meeting)

Mr. Hamilton discussed the conceptual site planning for Fraesfield and Granite Mountain trailheads. During initial concept planning with Smith Group JJR existing trailheads and facilities were analyzed, site planning, environmental impacts, and programming ideas were considered. Possible amenities would include potential for 150 to 200 parking spaces, equestrian parking and staging with a water trough, Pathfinder storage location, restrooms, maintenance storage, drinking fountains, shaded gathering area, and interpretive signage. Public meetings are scheduled for December 5th at Rio Verde Horsemen's Association holiday bazaar and Loloma Vista Farm; December 10th at Florence Ely Nelson Desert Park; and January 16th at Fraesfield Trailhead and 23rd at Granite Mountain Trailhead. It is anticipated that construction would begin in 2017, at the earliest.

Commission members were given an opportunity to ask questions.

9. **LAND ACQUISITION/ASLD ZONING UPDATE** (Discussion begins at 5:53; approximately 40 minutes into the meeting)

- Pima and Dynamite Idea

Mr. Ekblaw gave an update on the State Land zoning case and the City Land acquisition. The State Land Department is expected to finalize their revisions within the next few weeks, at which point the City can move forward with public meetings on the zoning case in the January/February/early March timeframe.

Mr. Ekblaw discussed the plan for a trailhead on the 294-acre parcel north of Dynamite and east of Pima Road. He noted that there is a substation, two major power line corridors and old maintenance yard within the site.

It was consensus of the Commission to bring the Pima and Dynamite zoning item forward as an action item at a future meeting.

10. **STAFF REPORTS** (Discussion begins at 6:00; approximately 47 minutes into the meeting)

- DDC Process Update

Mr. Ekblaw said that the Desert Discovery Center update is anticipated to go to City Council on January 11th, 2016. Staff anticipates scheduling a special MSPC meeting or joint meeting with the Tourism Development Commission in December for a DDC update and discussion.

- Cultural Resources Master Plan

Mr. Hamilton said that final edits and stakeholder review of the Cultural Resources Master Plan should be completed and ready for consideration and recommendation by the MSPC by February.

- Preserve day 2015

Ms. Hildenbrand presented photographs of the Preserve Day 2015 event and briefly discussed participation in the hikes, safety presentation, demonstrations by the Salt River-Pima Maricopa Hahugam Ki Museum, the safety presentation, and Sonoran Sunday.

- Messaging Campaign

Ms. Hildenbrand gave a brief presentation describing the trailhead signs, which have two panels available. The bottom sign will display standard information and the top sign will consist of a variety of rotating messages for Preserve users.

- Deer Collaring Update

Mr. Hamilton said that the collars have been purchased. Game and Fish will collect data for two years on 16 male and 16 female deer.

- Regional Cooperation

Mr. Ekblaw mentioned that the topics of discussion during the Regional Preserve meeting were Valley wide messaging campaigns, science based management, and overall visioning and connectivity. He commented that regional cooperation is a positive step towards managing the growth of recreational use within the Preserve.

- Trail Planning and Development Activity

John Holmes spoke about the importance of doing proper assessments when planning trails, and considering the balance between the interests of humans and nature in the Preserve.

Mr. Ekblaw updated the commission on trail construction activities. He noted that the trail contractor is in the field and doing a demonstration on corridor 8 and will also be working on corridor 5. Construction work on corridors 6 and 8 will begin after the first of the year. Corridor 7 will begin once corridor 8 is completed.

12. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Possible January/February agenda items include:

- Ordinance and Policy Review
- Bylaws
- Trails – Corridor 8 Update
- Sunrise Trailhead Ideas
- ASLD Zoning/Land Acquisition Update
- Priorities for Promotion Plan
- Elect Chair and Vice Chair for 2016
- 2015 Activity Report to City Council
- Endowment Concept and Conditions Follow-up
- Cultural Resource Master Plan Recommendation
- DDC Process Update

Other future Items:

- Earmarking Funds from commercial Outfitters
- Drones
- Dogs in Preserve
- Priorities for Promotion Plan
- Fraesfield/Granite Update of Concept Planning
- DDC Process Update

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

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