



APPROVED 10/6/16

**MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION
APPROVED MINUTES - SPECIAL MEETING
Thursday, September 8, 2016
Florence Ely Nelson Desert Park
8950 E. Pinnacle Peak Rd
Scottsdale, AZ 85255**

PRESENT: Chairperson Bob Frost, Commissioners Bobby Alpert, Steve Dodd, Jace McKeighan (arrived at 5:20 pm) and Cynthia Wenstrom

ABSENT: Commissioners Vice-chair Mike Millilo and Con Englehorn

STAFF: Kroy Ekblaw, Scott Hamilton, Yvonne Massman, Robert Graves, and John Loleit,

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Frost called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Members present as noted above.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comment cards were submitted.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Wenstrom moved to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2016 Commission meeting as submitted. Commissioner Alpert seconded and the motion carried with a vote of 4-0.

5. **MCDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY UPDATE**

Mike Nolan of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy provided an update to the Commission. He noted the Conservancy offices have moved. Mr. Nolan provided an update on the upcoming orientation, the next meeting of the Conservancy, the 25th Anniversary Celebration, the Discovery Getaway, the new website, and hiring of a part-time marketing manager. The Steward Kickoff will be September 28th; the Tour de Scottsdale is October 9th, and the Conservancy 25th Anniversary Dinner will be November 4th.

Chairperson Frost was hoping to get some copies of the 25th Anniversary Magazine. Mr. Nolan said he would get some for the Commission.

6. ECOLOGICAL RESOURCE PLAN (ERP)

Scott Hamilton outlined the recommendation being requested and introduced Melanie Tluzeck, who presented the final Ecological Resource Plan to the Commission for final review and a recommendation.

Commissioner Alpert moved to send forward a recommendation in support of the Ecological Resource Plan (ERP) to be submitted to the City Council. Commissioner Wenstrom seconded and the motion carried with a vote of 4-0.

7. PROMOTION PLAN UPDATE

Kroy Ekblaw updated the Commission on the proposed Promotion Plan and requested approval of the plan. This is a follow-up to what was presented to the Commission in the spring. Staff will develop a yearly report format and will also do a mid-year update, with a target of February.

Chairperson Frost asked if there are any budgeted numbers in the Preserve budget for publicity and promotion next year. Mr. Ekblaw indicated there were budgeted funds but he didn't know the exact amount at this time. Chairperson Frost noted what he didn't see in the goals is awareness of the Preserve. There was interest in getting publicity and awareness. Mr. Ekblaw said that we have information on the City's and Conservancy's webpages and inserts in the utility mailer, the Desert Discovery Guide has information. Ms. Massman said those are widely distributed. Chairperson Frost wondered if the Preserve has a Facebook page. Mr. Ekblaw indicated that information can be gathered on that and brought to the Commission.

Commissioner Wenstrom moved to approve the plan as submitted. Commissioner Dodd seconded and the motion carried with a vote of 4-0.

8. SPECIAL USE REQUEST FOR TRAIL RUN – MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN FRENZY

Scott Hamilton reviewed for the Commission the Special Use Request for a Trail Run. The Special Use Guidelines were provided to the Commission. The user has been granted permits in the past and the Commission and Conservancy recommended the issuance of those permits. Mr. Hamilton outlined the routes to be used for the race.

Commissioner Alpert noticed the "leave no trace" clause and asked, do they buy a bond and have insurance. Mr. Hamilton noted they do meet the insurance requirements as set by the City's Risk Management Department.

Commissioner Alpert asked if they clean up after themselves. Mr. Hamilton indicated that they do and outlined the process.

Commission Alpert said it doesn't impact the Preserve that much. Mr. Hamilton said that the routes are considered carefully and contained to the lesser traffic trails in the Preserve.

Commissioner Wenstrom asked what the participation in previous years? Mr. Hamilton said in 2015 they had a total of 122 runners. This year the estimates have been increased to 130. Commissioner Wenstrom asked if the \$3.50 per participant is in line with other localities. Mr. Hamilton said that it is what the City's approved Fees and Charges calls for and is in line with other agencies. These fees are regularly reviewed.

Commissioner Dodd moved to approve the Special Use Request as presented. Commissioner Wenstrom seconded and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0.

9. LAND ACQUISITION UPDATE

Kroy Ekblaw updated the Commission on the State Land Auction on Wednesday, September 21, 2016, for Parcel 1 and Parcel 1A for a little over 415 acres. Minimum bids remain the same – a little over \$2 million for Parcel 1A and \$28.2 million for Parcel 1.

Chairperson Frost said that would bring us to 30,500+ acres. Mr. Ekblaw said that was correct.

Commissioner Alpert asked if staff expects any competition. Mr. Ekblaw said that is hard to predict but we will be ready.

10. STAFF UPDATES

Kroy Ekblaw noted that Liz Hildenbrand has retired and her position has not been filled to date.

- Trails Update

Kroy Ekblaw provided an update on the Phase III Trail Plan. The current Master Plan has been refined and doesn't look radically different from previous versions. Staff is working with many user groups. This will be brought before the Commission in October and November. Public meetings may start in October, including one that may follow the October commission meeting. Many sites are being considered.

Chairperson Frost indicated that he feels the fewer trails the better. It's good to create trails but we don't need to overdo it. Mr. Ekblaw noted that these corridors use existing trail or are close to existing corridors.

Commissioner McKeighan said that philosophy has been discussed in the meetings. There have been weekly meetings for some time and there are knowledgeable and dedicated people and they are keeping in mind that this is a Preserve and the interest and right of all users. There is a lot of debate and discussion.

Commissioner Wenstrom noted the discussion was very in-depth and the group was impressive.

- Tom's Thumb Area Plan

Scott Hamilton noted of the 7 or 8 items laid out in July, item number 1 was accomplished and the remnants have been removed from the cave-like structure. Staff will be getting into more in-depth items.

- Fraesfield/Granite Mountain

Kroy Ekblaw noted we are close to having consultant ready to plan the project, leading to the public process then into the other stages of the project. On the Pima/Dynamite trailhead, if we are successful on the 21st there could be an RFP ready to go for a consultant. All are budgeted from the Preserve Tax and the City's CIP Budget.

Chairperson Frost noted the Commission had concerns about the location of the Pima/Dynamite trailhead. Mr. Ekblaw indicated we would have consultant come in and come up with options to present to the Commission.

- Drone Status

Kroy Ekblaw noted the Drone Ordinance went to Parks & Recreation Commission and is on the City Council agenda for September 20th. With approval it will take effect in 30 days and signage will be installed to outline the regulations.

- Naming Policy

Kroy Ekblaw noted, with the passing of the Honorable Carolyn Allen, there will be a request to rename the amphitheater at the Brown's Ranch trailhead. Staff expects to have the request before the Commission at the October meeting and then on to the City Council for final approval.

11. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Alpert noted he is proud of being a citizen scientist and a steward for 11 years and would like it noted that Melanie did a remarkable job and kudos to the Conservancy and the Field Institute.

12. **AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Possible October 6, 2016 Meeting Items:

- Land Acquisition Update
- Fraesfield, Granite and Pima/Dynamite Trailhead Planning Process
- Memorial Flag Update
- Desert Discovery Center
- Phase III Trails Plan
- Amphitheater Naming

Other Future Items:

- Sunrise Parking and Restroom Evaluation
- Conservation Open Space (COS) Ordinance Amendment
- Preserve Land Rezoning to COS
- Endowment Proposal Update

13. **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Alpert moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Wenstrom seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

With no further business to be brought before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Johnson, Recording Secretary