



## Minutes Desert Conservation Commission December 06, 2022

**Minutes of the Desert Conservation Commission meeting held on Dec. 06, 2022, 3:30 p.m., Meeting held in person at the Tempe Public Library (3500 S. Rural Rd., Library Board Room) and virtually via Microsoft Teams.**

**Members Present:**

Kimberly Gaffney-Loza – Chair  
Hassan Elsaad  
Donald Burt  
Shereen Lerner  
Laura Stewart  
Jane Neuheisel

**Members Absent:**

Ricardo Juan Leonard  
Elba Quintero

**City Staff Present:**

Craig Hayton, Staff Liaison – Community Services Director  
Tanya Chavez, Senior Management Assistant  
Gabriel Sabori, Community Services Supervisor (Parks)

Upon the establishment of a quorum, meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chair Kimberly Gaffney-Loza

**Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances**

No Public Appearances

**Agenda Item 2 – Approval of Meeting Minutes**

There was a Motion made by Donald Burt to approve the Sept. 20, 2022 meeting minutes.

Seconded: Kimberly Gaffney-Loza

Decision: Motion Approved, 6-0

Ayes: Laura Stewart, Shereen Lerner, Kimberly Gaffney-Loza, Donald Burt, Hassan Elsaad and Jane Neuheisel

Nays: n/a

Abstain: n/a

Absent: Ricardo Juan Leonard and Elba Quintero

**Agenda Item 3 – 2023 Chair/Vice Chair & Calendar**

Craig Hayton provided an overview of 2023 meetings dates. There were no faith based holiday conflicts. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of every other month beginning in February 2023. The Commission can reevaluate meeting dates at any time. Tentative dates include:

- February 7
- April 4
- June 6
- August 1
- October 3

- December 5

There was a Motion made by Shereen Lerner to approve Kim Gaffney-Loza as chair and Laura Stewart as Vice Chair and the 2023 calendar dates.=.

Seconded: Donald Burt

Decision: Motion Approved, 6-0

Ayes: Laura Stewart, Shereen Lerner, Kimberly Gaffney-Loza, Donald Burt, Hassan Elsaad and Jane Neuheisel

Nays: n/a

Abstain: n/a

Absent: Ricardo Juan Leonard and Elba Quintero

#### **Agenda Item 4 Commission Goals & Priorities**

Craig Hayton provided an overview of the goals and priorities based on the priorities survey. Updates to the goals and priorities were made based on feedback from the commission.

1. Identify and establish partnerships. (Strong Community Connections, Sustainable Growth & Development)
  - 1) Volunteer & Services organizations: Keep Tempe Beautiful, Clean-up Papago, Site stewards, Scouts, Master Naturalist, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club
  - 2) Government organizations: 4 Cultural Committee Tribes, City of Phoenix, Maricopa County, Arizona Forward, Game & Fish, Cooperative Extension Service
  - 3) Other commissions: Parks & Recreation, Golf and Double Butte Cemetery Commission (PRGDBC), Historic Preservation Commission, Sustainability & Resilience Commission, Tempe Transportation Commission
  - 4) Organizations proximate or with preserves: ASU, SRP
  - 5) Ecological organizations: Audubon Society, Arizona Native Plant Society, CAZCA/Desert Defenders
  - 6) Recreation community: Bike/BMX, fishing, running, hiking
  - 7) Tempe organizations: Tempe Chamber of Commerce, Tempe Leadership, Downtown Tempe Authority, Tempe Tourism
  - 8) Other groups: schools (community college/K-12) & education programs, religious organizations, Care 7
2. Increase awareness for preserves (Strong Community Connections)
  - 1) Educational, Cultural Historical and Recreational opportunities
    - i. Cultural, historical and natural perspectives
      1. Have Resolution R2021.08 spark ideas
      2. Historical and traditional uses of area and honor those uses (look up first boat/s location on Salt River)
    - ii. Schools, youth organizations, etc.
    - iii. Hike into history (schools)
    - iv. Adaptive opportunities
    - v. Interpretive programs & elements (touch, sound, etc.)
    - vi. Design & planning efforts (Management plan)
  - 2) Information center, signage & maps (on signage or online)

- i. Riparian areas (unique sub-zones w/in preserves)
    - ii. Outlined and describe the parameters/boundaries of the preserve, connections points or links off the maps to other areas
    - iii. Replace existing ones that are in need (Loma del Rio needs work)
    - iv. Add new signage (trail guidance, education,
    - v. Add signage that tied to specific elements like plants, history, rules & regulations, etc. (with QR codes)
  - 3) City sources
    - i. Water bill, Tempe 11, website, Tempe Opportunities, History Museum, Reach screens, social media, Water Conservation, other technology (such as direct messages via cell)
  - 4) Data
    - i. Identify and work with partners to gather and share relevant data to help manage the preserves.
    - ii. In order to learn about native plants, species.
    - iii. How we conserve and remove the ones that are not native.
    - iv. Why native plants are so important.
  - 5) Service organizations
    - i. Volunteerism (KTB, Clean-up Papago, etc.)
    - ii. Site stewards
3. Participate in planning and design efforts. (Strong Community Connections, Quality of Life)
- 1) Planning efforts (within & outside preserves)
    - i. Preserves Management Plan (cultural, archaeological, biological, geological, etc.), Character Area, Rolling Hills, Rio Salado master plan, Hayden Flour Mill, etc.
  - 2) Budget
    - i. Capital Improvement Program (CIP), operating & maintenance, grants
  - 3) Design projects (within preserves)
  - 4) City & regional outreach, events & meetings
    - i. Desert Defenders, iNaturalist, Council (RCM/WSS), etc.
4. Identify appropriate uses and prioritize needs in alignment with the Commission's mission.
- 1) Protect, restore and enhance existing assets (cultural, natural, historical, etc.).
  - 2) Promote native biodiversity and abundance, for example, through quality habitat.
  - 3) Promote use of native plants and removal of invasive species.
  - 4) Encourage cultural use and understanding of native plants and wildlife.
  - 5) Comprehensively map preserves, as needed, for appropriate internal and external uses.
  - 6) Encourage and support appropriate community volunteer activities.
  - 7) Add, maintain and update inclusive signage

**Agenda Item 5 – Annual Report**

Craig Hayton provided an overview of the Annual Report. Staff was requested to make changes to the goals and priorities section based on the changes made at the meeting.

There was a Motion made by Donald Burt to the 2022 Annual Report.

Seconded: Laura Stewart

Decision: Motion Approved, 6-0

Ayes: Laura Stewart, Shereen Lerner, Kimberly Gaffney-Loza, Donald Burt, Hassan Elsaad and Jane Neuheisel

Nays: n/a

Abstain: n/a

Absent: Ricardo Juan Leonard and Elba Quintero

### **Agenda Item 6 – Report back from Preserve Visit**

Donald Burt provided a brief PowerPoint Presentation on the preserve visit.

### **Agenda Item 7 – Introduce Preserves/Volunteer Supervisor**

Gabriel Sabori was introduced as the new Parks Community Services Supervisor overseeing desert preserves and volunteer initiatives for parks.

### **Agenda Item 8 – Operational Items**

Craig Hayton provided an update on several items:

- Tempe River Bottom
  - Phase 1: shelter people
  - Phase 2: clear debris
  - Phase 3: address vegetations
  - Phase 4: on-going Maintenance
- Preserves Code Updates
  - 3 additional prohibitions:
    - Illegal drug use & paraphernalia
    - Blocking access to amenities/damaging landscape
    - Use of ramadas for longer than 4 hours, other than with reservation
  - Administrative implementation in various parks (September/October)
  - Code change required to implement in all parks
  - 1st public hearing at Oct. 20 regular council meeting
    - 2nd public hearing & approval at Nov. 3 regular council meeting
    - New code in effect starting Dec. 4
  - Stickers will be installed on existing park/preserve signage
- Moeur Park Improvements
  - Going to Council for approval for construction
  - Anticipated start date of construction is end of February early March
  - Staff will keep the commission up to date
- Preserves Management Plan
  - Finalization of contract on hold until the new Parks Deputy is hired.

### **Agenda Item 9 – Future Agenda Items**

- River Bottom Update
- Discussion regarding saguaros

- Further discussion on goals and priorities

**Agenda Item 10 - Upcoming Public Meetings & Announcements**

- Next meeting is Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 3:30 p.m.

**Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.**

Prepared by: Tanya Chavez, Senior Management Assistant, (480) 858-2215

Reviewed by: Craig Hayton, Community Services Director  
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