



Minutes Desert Conservation Commission February 6, 2024

Minutes of the Desert Conservation Commission meeting held on February 6, 2024, 3:30 p.m., Hybrid Meeting- Tempe Public Library, 2nd Floor Board Room, 3500 South Rural Road, Tempe, AZ. and virtually through Microsoft Teams

Members Present:

Laura Stewart – Chair
Kelli Cholieu – Vice Chair
Donald Burt
Kimberly Gaffney-Loza
Dushawn John-Armenta
Ricardo Juan Leonard
Shereen Lerner
Elba Quintero

Members Absent:

Jane Neuheisel

City Staff Present:

Alex Jovanovic, Staff Liaison- Deputy Community Services Director – Parks
Alex Cortese, Community Services Manager
Craig Hayton, Community Services Director
Bobbi Lloyd, Management Assistant II
Shelbie Meyer, Management Assistant II
Josh Rutherford, Economic Development Special Project Admin
Gabriel Sabori, Community Services Supervisor- Maintenance/Operations

Guests Present:

Cameron Espinoza, Papago Trail Builders Association
Patrick Panetta, ASU Senior Director, Special Projects

Upon the establishment of a quorum, meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chair Laura Stewart.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of Meeting Minutes

December 5, 2023

Motion by Kimberly Gaffney-Loza to approve the meeting minutes of December 5, 2023 as submitted; seconded by Elba Quintero. Motion passed on an 7-0 vote.

Ayes: Chair Laura Stewart, Vice-Chair Kelli Cholieu and commission members, Donald Burt, Kimberly Gaffney-Loza, Dushawn John-Armenta, Shereen Lerner and Elba Quintero.

Absent: Jane Neuheisel

Abstained: Ricardo Juan Leonard

Agenda Item 3 – New Commission Member

New commission member Dushawn John-Armenta was welcomed, and introductions were provided.

Agenda Item 4 – Hayden Flour Mill Project

Josh Rutherford presented to the commission a PowerPoint presentation on the Hayden Flour Mill Project. Presentation included the following:

- Spirit of collaboration & communication
- Vision
- Open space & trailhead concept plan
- Development schedule
- Questions

Commission members asked questions and made comments regarding the following:

- Where are the railroad tracks located?
- Will the park be under city or developer control?
- How is there room to build D in front of A?
- Will there be a fence added at the public park area?
- Will someone start using the west side after this is completed?
- Great opportunity to do education to prevent usage and to stay on enhanced paths.
- Add signage to stay on paths to help regrowth on spider trails.
- Silo has package of flour on it, will that be lost?
- Will lighting be added?
- Will park area include ADA/walk/bike friendly trails?

It is anticipated that the project will take 3-5 years to complete.

Agenda Item 5 – John McCain Library

Patrick Panetta presented to the commission a PowerPoint presentation on the John McCain Library. Presentation included the following:

- Site location
- Location & conceptual buildings

Commission members asked questions and made comments regarding the following:

- Doesn't look like much parking is included in the plan.
- Are the existing buildings going away?
- Is there a possibility of going to the east? If so that digs into the desert and takes trails away.
- When coming up to landscape design use mature landscape to match existing where you can.

Agenda Item 6 – Operational Items

- Preserve User Groups: Papago Trail Builders Association
 - Cameron Espinoza from Papago Trail Builders Association attended meeting to provide information and Q&A as needed by the Commission on the BMX/Bike jumps area. Following due discussion, it was suggested by Chair-Laura Stewart for members and users to come up with list of things the groups would like to see implemented, ideas how might remedy and list of acceptable uses in order to come together.
 - Map of area to be provided and site visit set up for members who want to see in person.
- Projects: Management Plan
 - First survey
 - 241 responses
 - Use: hiking, biking, climbing
 - Needs: trails, signage, maintenance, jumps, climb, water & shade (Hayden Butte)
 - Staff to follow up and send out public input results from first survey
 - Submit feedback online January 31-February 14
 - Draft Plan: late spring
- Upcoming: Future Workday
 - Set up site visit to the BMX/Bike jumps area and workday in the preserve to remove stinknet
 - Commission to come back with additional ideas

Agenda Item 7 – Future Agenda Items

- Name change to park
- Different user groups to present for educational purposes
- Budget process- possible recommended support from commission

Agenda Item 8 – Upcoming Park Public Meeting Notices & Announcements

- Last vacant Lead Park Ranger position filled and will help to support preserves

Meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Prepared by: Bobbi Lloyd, Management Assistant II, (480) 350-8352

Reviewed by: Alex Jovanovic, Deputy Community Services Director – Parks, (480) 350-5811