

**PARKS AND RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

In-Person and WebEx

Location: Government Center, 2001 S. State Street SLC, Utah 84190

September 13, 2023 | 11:30AM-1:00PM

In Attendance

Board Members: Carl Fisher, Connie Burgess, Soren Simonsen, Lisa Dean, Mont Millerberg, Lynette Wendel, John Warnas, Chris Hill, Dan Schoenfeld, Jerry Cordova-Ong

Absent: Nate Salazar, Robynn Masters, Jaren Cooper

Staff: Joey McNamee, Danielle Calacino, Andrea De Paz, Patrick Leary, Doranne Pittz, Ryan Roghaar, Greyson Reynolds, Xoxhi Thomas, Liz Sollis, Walt Gilmore, Jon Ruedas, Jan Donchess, Martin Jensen, Callista Pearson, Julie Peck-Dabbling, David Johnson

Citizen Participation: Steve Van Muren, Joyce Walker, Sandra Haak

CALL TO ORDER

Carl calls for the introduction of all attendees.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comments were made.

BUSINESS ITEM – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve August 2023 minutes. Carl motions to approve, Lynette approves, Soren seconds the motion. Next month's meeting will be rescheduled for a different day than the second Wednesday of the month due to Parks & Recreation staff attending NRPA 2023 in Dallas, TX. A decision is made to coordinate via email with the board to find a new date for October's Advisory Board meeting.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Martin discusses division-wide updates:

- Mentions the Butterfield Trailhead Regional Park ribbon cutting that took place a couple weeks prior, and thanks everyone who had the chance to make it out and be there for the event. He says he would like to coordinate a couple of times to meet the board members out there to see the trails throughout the fall season.
- Discusses finalizing the budget proposals to give to the Mayor's office. Mayor Wilson will be finalizing what she would like to move forward, and the board will be able to provide input while it goes to the Council.
- Has had discussions with Jordan School District to finalize the donation to the South Jordan Recreation Center for the pool expansion. It's moving forward and a consultant has been hired to start the design process. Construction starts in 2024.
- Recognizes and thanks everyone on the Parks & Recreation team; mentions everyone's hard work and what we have accomplished recently.
- Mentions as a division we are heading to the National Recreation and Parks Association annual conference next month.

Lisa Dean mentions that Jordan School District appreciated the cooperation for the pool expansion, and that she is excited for it.

Carl Fisher echoes Martin's remarks on the successful turnout the Butterfield Trailhead Regional Park ribbon cutting had, and how the trails are very important to the community, the County, and that region.

Parks, Trails & Open Spaces Outcomes and Indicators for 2024

Patrick Leary presents the 2024 Outcomes and Indicators for Parks, Trails & Open Spaces; and explains it's an organizational measure of how an organization looks at itself and is historically tied to our budget process. He explains they have been using them internally to benchmark items to see how well they're doing and track responsiveness; but are probably not much interest to the general public.

Discusses that they have proposed new outcomes and indicators in the 2024 budget. It details:

- The number of parks managed, including trails and open space and how they're being used on an annual basis. This is to understand the impact on these spaces, and if our caretaking is where it needs to be.
- Wheeler Farm school tours, and again, trying to understand the use of the farm for educational reasons. How many kids is the farm seeing, and what is that impact on the farm due to that.
- Pavilion rentals, which we have 17 of that we rent out April – September with a capacity over 2000. Again, seeing what is actually being rented and used, and if our caretaking is where it needs to be.
- Millcreek Canyon tollbooth and tracking visitors to the canyon to understand the impact it has, and to pass it onto the Forest Service.

Patrick says that the board can give us feedback if this is something a board member or someone of the public would think is interesting.

Jerry Cordova-Ong mentions that when he drives by a Salt Lake County park or facility, he is not seeing them being under-utilized, but he's noticing the upkeep. He goes on to say that trash is over-flowing, or lights are burned out and asking if we're charging the right amount of money for our rentals, and are they not being taken care of the way they should be.

Patrick says that we are stretched thin workforce wise, but this information is helpful to inform budgetary decisions. We can take this feedback and bring it to chain of command to request more positions, but charging enough money wouldn't necessarily impact the personnel side of things since those funds don't go back into that.

Jerry wants to know what the root cause of the lack of upkeep at our facilities is, is it lack of staff or lack of money.

Joey McNamee asks Jerry how often he notices things like a trash cans overflowing, and Jerry says it's most of the time.

Doranne Pittz says it is challenging due to how spread out all our parks are, and unless we had at least one person staffed at each park it would look like most of the time they are not being upkeep. But she thinks that this is all good information that we need, because parks are the most accessible piece that we offer in our services, and they will never necessarily be a money maker. She mentions that prices have been increased, especially with the fields, because we were able to see how much they are being used.

Mont Millerberg mentions that he sees prices and wages have gone up, but these parks belong to the people that live in Salt Lake County, and we should keep them as inexpensive gathering places for families to use. He said he would hate to see the fees being raised on them which would keep people out.

Jerry clarifies that he didn't mean we should raise all our prices, he just wants to know the root cause of the lack of upkeep.

Chris Hill discusses the outcomes and indicators to clarify their purpose. He asks about the top part of the handout being existing standard operating procedures and are things we expect to be done as part of the job, but the indicators are an opportunity to measure things and see how things are used year to year. Patrick confirms that is the purpose.

Sandra Haak asks if we have a way to capture additional users, outside of reservations and rentals. She gives an example of tracking the use of a pavilion when it's not been reserved, and how we can take that information along with reservation information to assess the needs of another pavilion at that specific park. Mentions at a trail system years ago, they performed a gate check to track how many people were using the trails.

Patrick replies with a yes and maybe, and we will be tracking all kinds of different metrics, in those methods and in others.

Joey highlights Jerry's concerns and states that the patron experience is important. Mentions that the libraries have QR codes for patrons to scan and provide feedback in real time.

Liz Sollis confirms we do have QR codes for patron feedback surveys in our recreation centers and are working on getting them out into our parks as well.

Chris asks how we evaluate our park caretakers and the tasks they're assigned to do on the job.

Patrick says the way we hear about it is when we receive comments from the public.

Connie Burgess mentions she had a conversation with a neighbor who was upset about garbage at a softball field, and she says knowing people are assigned to clean those, how do we know whether it's being done often enough.

Chris mentions that maybe as part of our rental application we provide the renter with a check-list questionnaire asking questions on the quality of the space and things to really hear good feedback.

Patrick mentions we are in the process of revising our reservation system, and that is a great idea that we could implement into the system.

Doranne discusses more experiences she had when she worked in parks previously.

Patrick adds that more trash cans isn't always the answer and uses an example from a constituent who asked us why we don't have recycling bins in the park, with our answer being because they end up being used for trash and not their purpose of collecting recycling materials.

A discussion is had that there is now a mentality among the public where they don't feel the responsibility to pick up trash.

Jerry mentions that most cities now require renters to manage the trash and bathroom maintenance that the renter's event produces.

Lynette echoes that it is a user issue and highlights a Taylorsville City custodian that has been there for years and takes pride in her job of cleaning up the pavilions at different Taylorsville City parks and asks if maybe there could be a cleaning deposit put on the user; but acknowledges that the public always has access to these spaces, so anything can happen overnight.

Doranne thanks everyone for their feedback on this topic.

Carl Fisher asks looking forward and at budgets, would we want to look at something like having staffed regional parks.

Patrick mentions that starting two years ago, we moved to having that type of model, and will continue moving in that direction.

Jon Ruedas adds that we have started incorporating maintenance buildings dedicated to the parks, so equipment is kept there.

Carl thinks we could start engaging the community to take ownership and stewardship in these spaces, and Liz mentions that we are currently communicating with emails, signs, and our citizen advocacy work; and we are doing what we can.

Community Engagement Updates

Liz Sollis presents on current community events, upcoming and recent, including:

- The current campaign called Talking Trees taking place at Wheeler Farm, that is a partnership with Flood Control. She explains that there were longstanding flood control measures that needed to be taken care of at Wheeler Farm, and it consists of removing trees that are within the dam embankment. These trees are none we have planted but are either dead or overgrown. She mentions there is a whole webpage on the County website detailing the campaign, and that we have been contacted by many constituents, and some constituents have also reached out to the news directly. Liz says those that reached out to the news were helpful because we want the public to know why these efforts are happening, and the media representation has been positive. She also mentions that Tree Utah has been a great partner.

Jerry Cordova-Ong mentions that he did see the news story about the Talking Trees, and Soren Simonsen mentioned they also had a Jordan River Commission Get to The River promo on Fox13 that project manager Dustin Wiberg attended.

- Pumpkin Days at Wheeler Farm, from September 22-October 31. Liz mentions that last year Wheeler Farm had an Employee Day for Pumpkin Days and invites the board to participate as well.
- Tri-Canyon Trails Plan in collaboration with the Forest Service. Liz mentions that they have been reaching out to more minority groups in the community to give feedback on the Tri-Canyons Masterplan and are holding a meeting at Handlebar on September 19 from 4-6 pm, if the board would also like to attend. She says that they are reaching out to outdoor groups they don't always hear from, such as Outdoor Afro and Outdoor Latinos.

Joey McNamee thanks Liz and her team for their hard work with the Butterfield Trailhead Regional Park ribbon cutting.

- The Final Section of Parley's Trail ribbon that's comprised of two elevated bridges across 900 West and the Jordan River, opening to the public on September 28. Liz mentions that we are "bridging" the gap because the bridges give the public access across sections where they did not have previously. She also mentions that if anyone on the board would like to ride their bike, there will be a group meeting at Fairmont Park that morning at 9 am to ride their bikes into the event, and the media will be there to get b-roll. We are partnering with West Valley City and South Salt Lake on this event, and our table will be set up at the Jordan River Redwood Trailhead Park in West Valley. Liz mentions that Wasatch Adaptive will also be there, and everyone should have received the invite, but Callista will send out an updated flyer.

Soren Simonsen says that those wanting to attend can also take Trax, and the Jordan River station is a block from the park.

Mont Millerberg mentions that on Saturday, October 7, the NICA group will be having a race at the Butterfield Trailhead Regional Park and encourages the board and Parks & Recreation staff to attend if they would like to see how utilized our trail system is. He goes on to mention that he thinks Governor Cox's wife Abby will be attending that day, as she is very involved in unified sports.

Carl Fisher asks how the parking situation is coming along at the Butterfield Trailhead Regional Park, and Jon Ruedas mentions that the main trailhead will still be under construction, but Patrick's team has mowed down the overflow parking area for all NICA event attendees to use.

Joey also gives a shoutout to Patrick's Park Operations team and Walt's Planning team for their work on the Butterfield Trailhead Regional Park project as well.

Introduction of New Staff Members

Doranne Pittz, Associate Director of Recreation, introduces the two newest Recreation Regional Managers, Ryan Roghaar and Greyson Reynolds. She details that they will have different specialty areas; Ryan will be over childcare, and Greyson will be over fitness and adult sports. Ryan and Greyson both introduce themselves, mentioning how long they've been with Recreation and where they most recently came from.

Xochiatl Thomas introduces herself as the new Admin & Fiscal Manager for Parks & Recreation, under Brent Laulusa, Associate Director of Fiscal.

Joey acknowledges Xoxhi's hard work, and how she's been super helpful jumping right in during the middle of budget season.

Callista Pearson introduces Jackie Standing, Parks & Recreation's new Office Coordinator and member of the Community Engagement Team, who will oversee four of the division's advisory and committee boards. Jackie goes on to tell the board about herself and her previous work experience with the County Library System.

Andrea De Paz introduces Danielle Calacino, Parks & Recreation's new Office Supervisor and Executive Assistant, and who will be the new board coordinator for the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. Andrea continues to inform the

board she has moved over to the HR team within Parks & Recreation and is the new Onboarding and Retention Specialist.

Jerry Cordova-Ong asks how the staffing situation is, and both Patrick and Doranne say the staffing situation has improved. Doranne also mentions that temp staff is also increasing but wages need to be worked on.

Jerry mentions that URPA in March also falls on top of March's Advisory Board meeting, and Patrick says when it gets closer we will discuss what we'd like to do for that month's meeting.

Joyce Walker from the Dimple Dell Preservation Community tells the board that she has brought jars of pear preserves from the old trees at the historic Muir Poulsen Homestead in Dimple Dell Regional Park and encourages those who would like them to take them.

BOARD BUSINESS

Carl Fisher discusses a parcel of land for sale in Millcreek near the tollbooth in Millcreek Canyon and wants to make sure it's on Parks & Recreation's radar. He believes it's an important piece of land to take into public ownership, given the challenges there have been with trails, access, and private acquisitions over the years. He thinks that the County needs dedicated land acquisition dollars or a fund to buy important properties within the County.

Soren Simonsen asks who the point person for Open Space is, which Walt Gilmore is identified as that person and Patrick and his team maintain the open spaces as well. Soren continues to say that there is a vulnerable area along the Salt Lake County and Davis County line that would be amazing for recreation opportunities for trail expansion and habitat and wildlife view, which he states is a high priority for county residents. He says there is an application going in for the Great Salt Lake wetland enhancement trust funds.

Carl Fisher proposes that the board drafts a support letter in the next meeting stressing the importance of having dedicated funding for land acquisition.

Chris Hill asks what happens if they have a strong recommendation as the board, where does it go, who leads the charge.

Patrick confirms that Martin would lead the charge on passing along the Advisory Board's recommendations to those in power, and, we have the Deputy Director sitting in on our meetings as well who can take that information back with her too.

Carl says he will prepare a draft letter for the Advisory Board's next meeting.

Jerry Cordova-Ong asks how the feedback has been regarding Bingham Creek Regional Park, and Patrick says the feedback has been good so far.

Carl says it would be nice for the board to see a smattering of constituent feedback.

Liz Sollis says she'd be happy to bring different examples of constituent feedback into the next meeting.

ADJOURN

Jerry Cordova Ong motions to adjourn, Chris Hill seconds the motion.