



Minutes Desert Conservation Commission Sept. 20, 2022

Minutes of the Desert Conservation Commission meeting held on Sept. 20, 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
Ricardo Juan Leonard
Shereen Lerner
Laura Stewart
Jane Neuheisel
Elba Quintero

Members Absent:

City Staff Present:

Craig Hayton, Staff Liaison - Deputy Community Services Director – Parks and Recreation/Interim Community Services Director
Joy Higgins, Management Assistant II – Arts and Culture Division
Savannah Harrelson, Public Information Officer

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 Jan Neuheisel to approve the Aug. 2, 2022 meeting minutes.

Seconded: Laura Stewart

Decision: Motion Approved, 8-0

Ayes: Laura Stewart, Shereen Lerner, Kimberly Gaffney-Loza, Donald Burt, Hassan Elsaad, Jane Neuheisel, Elba Quintero and Ricardo Juan Leonard

Nays: n/a

Abstain: n/a

Absent: n/a

Agenda Item 3 – Public Information Officer Introduction

Craig Hayton introduced Savannah Harrelson, Community Services Public Information Officer. Commissioners asked Savannah's help with marketing the new commission once the goals and priorities are finalized. Craig Hayton indicated that the commission could have a separate conversation with Savannah once the goals and priorities are finalized. Craig indicated that Savannah plays a key role in the preserve management planning process.

Agenda Item 4 – Outgoing Commission Member

Vice-Chair Erika Acorn, moved and is no longer able to serve on the Board. Kim Gaffney-Loza indicated we would be looking to fill the Vice-Chair position and asked if there was any interest from the Board to serve. Laura Stewart express interested but would need to see if there would be a conflict of interest due to her company responding the Preserves Management Plan RFP.

Agenda Item 5 – Annual Report

Craig Hayton presented the drat 2022 Annual Report. Commissioners requested to add priorities to each goal. Staff

Agenda Item 6 Commission Goals & Priorities

Craig Hayton provided an update on the goals and priorities. He indicated goal one is complete and that the commission needs to further refine goals two and three. Additional conversation around the goals and priorities are updated in the content below.

1. Identify and establish partnerships (Complete)

- Other Commissions: PRGDBC, Historic Preservation Commission, Sustainability & Resilience Commission, Tempe Transportation Commission
- Volunteer organizations: Keep Tempe Beautiful, Clean-up Papago, Site stewards, Scouts, Master Naturalist
- Government organizations: 4 Cultural Committee Tribes, City of Phoenix, Maricopa County, Arizona Forward, Game & Fish, Cooperative Extension Service
- Recreation community: Bike/BMX, fishing, running, hiking
- Ecological organizations: Audubon Society, Arizona Native Plant Society, CAZCA/Desert Defenders
- Tempe Organizations: Tempe Chamber of Commerce, Tempe Leadership, Downtown Tempe Authority, Tempe Tourism
- Service organizations: Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club
- Organizations proximate or within preserves: ASU, SRP
- Other groups/organizations: schools (community college/K-12) & education programs, religious organizations, Care 7
- Protect, restore and enhance existing assets (cultural, natural, historical, etc.).
- Promote native biodiversity and abundance, for example, through quality habitat.
- Promote use of native plants and removal of invasive species.
- Encourage cultural use and understanding of native plants and wildlife.
- Comprehensively map preserves, as needed, for appropriate internal and external uses.
- Encourage and support appropriate community volunteer activities.
- Add, maintain and update inclusive signage.

2. Increase awareness (of the preserves [generally & specifically]) through education.(Updated)

- Educational & recreational organizations:
 - Schools, youth organizations, etc.

- Hike into history (schools)
- Adaptive opportunities
- Interpretive programs & elements (touch, sound, etc.)
- Design & planning efforts (Management plan)
- Cultural & historical organizations:
 - Have Resolution R2021.08 spark ideas
 - Historical and traditional uses of area and honor those uses (look up first boat/s location on Salt River)
- Service organizations:
 - Volunteerism (KTB, Clean-up Papago, etc.)
 - Site stewards
- City sources:
 - Water bill, Tempe 11, website, Tempe Opportunities, History Museum, Reach screens, social media, Water Conservation, other technology (such as direct messages via cell)
- Information center, signage & maps (on signage or online):
 - Riparian areas (unique sub-zones w/in preserves)
 - Outlined and describe the parameters/boundaries of the preserve, connections points or links off the maps to other areas
 - Replace existing ones that are in need (Loma del Rio needs work)
 - Add new signage (trail guidance, education,
 - Add signage that tied to specific elements like plants, history, rules & regulations, etc. (with QR codes)
- Data:
 - Identify and work with partners to gather and share relevant data to help manage the preserves.
 - In order to learn about native plants, species.
 - How we conserve and remove the ones that are not native.
 - Why native plants are so important.

3. Participate in planning and design efforts. (Updated)

- Planning efforts (within & outside preserves):
 - Preserves Management Plan (cultural, archaeological, biological, geological, etc.), Character Area, Rolling Hills, Rio Salado master plan, Hayden Flour Mill, etc.
- Design projects (within preserves):
 - Moeur Park, E. Hallman lake edge restoration
- Budget:
 - Capital Improvement Program (CIP), operating & maintenance, grants
- City & regional outreach, events & meetings:
 - Desert Defenders, iNaturalist, Council (RCM/WSS), etc.

Agenda Item 7 – Interest in Preserves Visit

Donald Burt indicated he was happy to lead a hike on the preserve. Craig Hayton said it would not be a problem, we only need to provide notice of the hike. Staff will send out a doodle poll for date/time availability.

Agenda Item 8 – Operational Items

Craig Hayton provided an update on several items:

- Preserve Volunteer Supervisor – Gabriel Sabori will start as the new volunteer and preserves supervisor on Sept. 26. He will manage physical spaces within the preserves and volunteers for parks. We will introduce Gabe at a future meeting.
- Mauer Park – Plans are complete. Engineering is working with a job order contractor to start bidding out with subcontractors. More information to come.
- Preserves Management Plan – We are working through scoping process. The plan will likely have to go to Council as well. We will provide an update on timeline once available.
- Volunteer Projects – There were a lot of volunteer projects this week. Two in the preserves, Indian Bend Wash and Tempe Beach Park. We will let Commissioner know of future preserve volunteer opportunities.

Agenda Item 9 – Future Agenda Items

- Annual Report
- Tempe Tomorrow 2050 General Plan

Agenda Item 10 - Upcoming Public Meetings & Announcements

- Next meeting is Tuesday, Dec. 6 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 - Parks and Recreation,
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