

## **June 16, 2022 MEETING MINUTES OF THE PARKS, RECREATION, & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION**

The Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Commission (PRCA) of the City of Farmington met in a regular session on Thursday, June 16, 2022, at 6:15 p.m. in the Executive Conference Room at City Hall, 800 Municipal Drive, Farmington, NM. Roll call was taken with attendance as follows:

**Members Present:** Deb Cutler, Chair; George Golombowski, Vice Chair; Evan Noels; Ken LaCasse; Leslie Thompson; Patricia Baca; Richard Griffiths

**Members Absent:** Carla Stimac; Larry Hilliard; Thomas Hawkins; Melissa Mortensen;

**Also present were:** Shaña Reeves, PRCA Director; Natalie Spruell, PRCA Assistant Director; Linda Harris, PRCA Administrative Aide; Greg Anise, Guest; Michael Darmody, Guest; Laurie Chacon, Guest

### **APPROVALS**

- ✚ Mr. Golombowski called the PRCA meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of April 21, 2022. A motion was made by Leslie Thompson, seconded by Patricia Baca to approve the minutes; upon vote, the minutes were approved as presented.

### **OPEN MEETINGS ACT - ACTION**

Shaña Reeves explained the Open Meetings act. Members considered Mr. Noel's suggestion to change the time of the meeting. After a brief discussion it was determined to keep the same meeting time of 6:15.

- ✚ A motion was made by Patricia Baca, seconded by Leslie Thompson to approve the Open Meetings Act as presented. Upon vote the motion passed.

### **DEPARTMENT REPORT**

Shaña Reeves, PRCA Director reported on the critical staff shortages city wide and some positions even nationwide; she described the unprecedented challenges of recruiting, hiring and retaining qualified workers. She affirmed that city management is actively exploring creative and alternative ways of attracting dedicated applicants.

Ms. Reeves stated the State of New Mexico has not awarded funding for the Northwest New Mexico Seniors program. A decrease in funding is expected.

Ms. Reeves happily announced that two department projects are complete. Farmington Aquatic Center re-decking is complete and looks great. The Pickleball Courts at Brookside Park are now open and have been well received by users. Delivery of the windscreens are delayed; security cameras and court signage will be installed soon. The courts will be available on a first come, first serve basis while court reservations will be taken for large tournament play. Pinon Hills Golf Course construction is still underway and going smoothly with only minor delays. The anticipated re-opening will be the end of August. While PHGC is closed for construction, staff is taking the time to give Civitan Golf Course some much needed maintenance to the grounds and pond.

Ms. Reeves informed members that Riverfest drew, by count, at least 21,000 people to the riverine this year. The department is gearing up for a busy July 4th weekend. Celebrations to name a few are the Ice Cream Social at E3 Children's Museum, Summer Terrace concert at Farmington Museum and the Chevel concert at the Civic Center. During that same weekend, two large athletic events include a large baseball tournament and a New Mexico United Soccer event. She also reported that hotel accommodations will be a

challenge the last week of July as the Connie Mack World Series, a 14U tournament as well as a large rodeo will all be taking place simultaneously.

Ms. Reeves reminded members to give their feedback on the All Abilities Park design (sent by email) and to share the link with others to participate; the design is 30% complete.

#### **COMMISSIONER ITEMS**

Mr. Golombowski expressed concern regarding the need of ensuring park restrooms are unlocked in a timely manner. He also suggested a safety railing for Lehmer's Lookout and restroom facilities at Among the Water's Trail. Ms. Thompson voiced her concern regarding equitable Pickleball Court usage, and alternative methods for gaining more lifeguards. Ms. Reeves assured members that she would continue to work toward reasonable solutions to the expressed concerns. Regarding the safety concerns of Lehmer's Lookout, Ms. Reeves is not against a barrier of some kind, but she is not prepared to add a safety railing at this time. She ensured members that a portable toilet will be set near Among the Waters Trail.

7:21:57 Ms. Thompson cooperative efforts suggested reaching out to the college art students to submit interpretive signage; shana said that would be helpful if members could spearhead that. ???

#### **ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR**

Mr. Greg Anise expressed his appreciation for the City's commitment to expanding the river trail system; he briefly summarized his past involvement toward the same goal. He indicated that ten years have passed since his \$60K donation toward development of the Animas North Trail Extension; all that has transpired from his donation is a \$20K plan for a trail. Mr. Anise asked that the remaining \$40K of his contribution be used to gravel a trail. He continued to state that he would pay for the interpretive panels in order to preserve the history of the area. Mr. Anise added the original thought was to cross the trail at some point to the south side where the City of Farmington owns property; this would circumvent any objections from property owners up river.

Ms. Reeves explained that the project remains on the capital improvement list and will come up again for discussion with city management in August or September. Ms. Reeves suggested a presentation on this project for the commission meeting in July. Ms. Cutler recommends that a tour of the area come after the presentation of the North Trail Extension. After the CTED meeting determines where this project will fall, the commission can update Mr. Anise.

#### **MICHAEL DARMODY**

Mr. Darmody, employed at San Juan College and longtime resident, is also involved with the River Reach Foundation. Mr. Darmody stated he is a big fan of Berg Park and wanted to report some of his concerns. He was told by Donna Thatcher, the Education Coordinator at the Riverside Nature Center (RNC) she would be retiring at the end of the month. Mr. Darmody is troubled that her job position has not posted to the city's website yet. Ms. Reeves explained the reason her position is not posted is not that the RNC operations are not valued. She continued, any time an employee resigns, their position goes through an evaluation process during which many aspects are reviewed. There are numerous volunteers and part time workers who have worked with Donna over the years and the department is working to cover their hours.

Mr. Darmody voiced his distress that more than half of the recently planted tree samplings in the RNC area are dead. Ms. Reeves explained there are replacement plans for the samplings that did not survive the drought but the re-planting is on hold because of the possibility of expanding the footprint of the barn and RNC area. There was some community ill feeling regarding the fire mitigation and the disruption to the wildlife and their habitats in that area; so it is not surprising that there would be some miscommunication about the results of the project. Ms. Thompson suggested signage in areas to inform the public what projects are taking place in the area. Ms. Reeves assured everyone the department would look into these issues as well as removing the dead samplings.

Mr. Darmody explained that he had formed a committee to commission public art for Berg Park and raised funds for the wind forest and calendar. He expressed his gratitude for the re-installment of the wind forest; he is happy with how much sturdier it is now.

7:21:45

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no other discussion, Ms. Cutler called for adjournment, Ms Thompson moved, Mr. Golombowski seconded, the meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm.



Deb Cutler, Chair



Linda Harris, PRCA Administrative Aide