

MINUTES

Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Tuesday, February 2, 2021

The Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission met in a scheduled session on Tuesday, February 2, 2021, in the Washoe County Commission Chambers, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada.

No members of the public were allowed in the Commission Chambers due to concerns for public safety resulting from the COVID-19 emergency and pursuant to the Governor of Nevada's Declaration of Emergency Directive 006 Section 1 which suspends the requirement in NRS 241.023(1)(b) that there be a physical location designated for meetings of public bodies where members of the public are permitted to attend and participate. This meeting was held by teleconference only.

The meeting was televised live and replayed on Washoe Channel at:

<https://www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff/Communications/wctv-live.php> also on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/WashoeCountyTV>

Commissioner Chen called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m. She noted Item 9 has been removed from the agenda.

1. Roll Call

Members Present via Zoom: Doug Doolittle, Stephanie Chen, Jennifer Oliver, Darla Lee, Greg Shorts, Heidi Anderson, Thomas Guinn, Chris Nenzel

Members Absent: None

Staff Present via Zoom: Eric Crump, Colleen Wallace Barnum, Kathy Emerson, Katy Stark, Sophia Kirschenman, Alan Jones

2. Pledge of Allegiance – The pledge was recited.

3. Public Comments: There were no requests for public comment.

4. Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of February 2, 2021 (For Possible Action) Motion by Commissioner Oliver to approve the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of February 2, 2021 with the removal of Item 9. The motion was second by Commissioner Nenzel which carried unanimously.

5. Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of January 5, 2021 (For Possible Action) Motion by Commissioner Shorts to approve the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of January 5, 2021. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Anderson which carried unanimously.

6. Election of the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Vice Chair for a term of January 1, 2021 thru December 31, 2021 (For Possible Action)

Commissioner Doolittle nominated Heidi Anderson for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Anderson nominated Greg Shorts for Vice Chair. Commissioner Guinn seconded the motion to nominate Greg Shorts for Vice Chair. There were no requests for public comment. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Acknowledgement and recognition of Park Operations staff for their outstanding service and contributions to Washoe County.

There were no recognitions this month.

8. **Eagle Scout Presentation**

There were no Eagle Scout Presentations this month.

9. **Presentation on Truckee River Water Shed Project (Steamboat Canal)** - Elizabeth Spaulding, Langdon Group

This item was removed from the agenda.

10. **Update on Seasonal Salary Adjustments Due to Minimum Wage Increases – Colleen Wallace-Barnum, Parks Operations Superintendent**

Colleen Wallace-Barnum provided some background information about minimum wage changes for upcoming seasonal hires.

Commissioner Doolittle asked if Ms. Wallace-Barnum has done the analysis of what will work best - having less staff or less hours. He asked if she had any insight on that. Ms. Wallace-Barnum said it depends on the situation. She said aquatics will handle it differently than park maintenance and park rangers and seasonal guides at the museum. She said she will allow those supervisors and managers to make the best decision for their work units. She said some will be reducing hours, and some will be reducing the number of staff. Commissioner Doolittle asked if that would come back to her for review. She confirmed it will.

Chair Chen thanked her for explaining the process.

11. **Presentation, discussion, and possible recommendation to Community Services Department staff to apply for a special use permit to construct a one-million-gallon water tank and associated infrastructure at Hidden Valley Regional Park for the storage and distribution of treated effluent water from the South Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility. (For Possible Action).**

Sophia Kirschenman, Parks Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Commissioner Doolittle asked about daily construction equipment access. He asked if it will be through the gate on the south end, on Park Drive, or the gate off the homes on the south side.

Alan Jones, Sr. Licensed Engineer with Washoe County, said access will be on the south side to minimize exposure and to provide safe access. He said they are willing to do whatever is best. Commissioner Doolittle said access would be through residential on either side. He said he hopes that is mitigated with the neighbors.

Commissioner Doolittle asked when the treated water would come on-line for the parks. Mr. Jones said we are in the process of getting a BLM granted easement. Some of the pipeline goes through BLM land. He said if we are able to get that granted by June, it would be on-line by next summer. If it's not granted by June, it could be on-line by summer 2022.

Commissioner Doolittle asked the cost estimate for the retrofit to the existing irrigation system in the park. Mr. Jones said they have to investigate and look into it. There might be some changes that might need to be made and that would be on the utility. Commissioner Doolittle said he assumes you will have to do some retrofitting in that regard. Mr. Jones said yes, and signage in regard to reclaimed water.

Commissioner Shorts asked if there are other uses of this water beside the park. Mr. Jones said as Sophia mentioned in her presentation, we are expanding our large facility behind Rattlesnake Mountain and looking at other facilities to send effluent as we grow. He said since we are a zero-discharge facility, the only places we can send our reclaimed water is for irrigation. We are looking to expand out into Hidden Valley. Other customers may be Hidden Valley Golf Course or tying into Reno system and sending water to them. He said we have a lot of options. This tank is our backbone. It has emergency storage. He said customers have reclaimed water when they need it.

Commissioner Shorts said it sounds like a needed project. Mr. Jones said it is and they look forward to getting started.

There were no requests for public comment.

MOTION: Commissioner Anderson moved to recommend that Community services department staff apply for a special use permit to construct a reclaimed water tank and associated infrastructure at Hidden Valley Regional Park for the purpose of expanding the use of the County's treated effluent water while preserving existing potable water resources. Commissioner Doolittle seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

12. **Presentation, discussion and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve an Agreement for License and Professional Management Services at Washoe Golf with Bell-Men Golf, Inc. (For Possible Action)**

Eric Crump, Operations Division Director, provided a staff report presentation.

Greg Ferraro, applicant representative, introduced Darin Menante and Greg Wenzel, PGA. They provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Commissioner Doolittle said he appreciates the opt out every three to four years. He said he thinks that is very appropriate. He asked about capital. He asked how capital will be funded - would it be shared with the County or so much per year by Bell-Men. Mr. Crump said Bell-Men golf is responsible for collecting the capital, holding it in trust for the County so it doesn't flow through the County. On an annual basis, they submit a capital improvement program which is reviewed, discussed, and ultimately approved by the County. He said they might want to fund a particular project from one current year and leave a balance for the following year for a bigger project. That will be reviewed on an annual basis at the very least. There would be an opportunity to review mid-year if something came up and we needed to adjust. They collect, hold, and submit the program and reporting after the project.

Commissioner Doolittle asked about reviewing future projects that are planned. Mr. Crump said the funded piece is reviewed every year, but there are projects that we recognize such as the cart barn and the HVAC system which has been in the plan for multiple years. Commissioner Doolittle congratulated Darin and Staff for making this a viable project in the future.

Commissioner Shorts asked who is in charge of golf operations in the County. Mr. Crump said Assistant County Manager Dave Solaro and himself split those duties. He said Mr. Solaro has been managing the Washoe Golf contract since its inception. He said Mr. Solaro is taking on other roles and couldn't be on the call tonight. He is playing incident commander for County's COVID-19 response. Mr. Crump said he is stepping in. He said he is administering the contract at Sierra Sage. Commissioner Shorts asked if it's considered a bad golf course in the area or a good golf course. Mr. Ferraro said we consider it an excellent golf course. Commissioner Shorts asked why the fees are so low. Mr. Ferraro said he can defer to Greg and Darin, but he said they are competitive. Greg said they are keeping the fees low in relation to other properties. He said we are the affordable golf course in Reno. He said when you look at us compared to Lakeridge; Lakeridge is a little nicer. He said its \$90 versus \$50 and that is the decision of the golfer to make. He said Duncan golf property fees have gone up a lot in the last year. He said they have gone up \$15 dollars a round. He said our current contract states the most we can increase is 10% in green fees. He said when we raise our rates a dollar, our customers let us know. Some are on a fixed income and we want to make sure we stay affordable for them. Commissioner Shorts asked if they have conducted any surveys to learn if they will lose customers if the fees goes up or if their customers are on a fixed income. He said he looks at the numbers and there is a loss of \$650,000 a year by not keeping up with fees. He asked when the last time they raised their fees was. Greg said they raise their fees every year and usually stay around a 3% increase. Commissioner Shorts said the only private course that is close is Red Hawk and Eagle Valley in Carson. He said he is looking at a nice course and doesn't look like that course could be held to such a low compensation for using it. He said he understands golf is not a low income sport in general.

Mr. Crump said the County and Bell-Man golf have a long history of operating golf courses. He said Commissioner Shorts is right that in some communities, golf is not affordable. He said affordable golf in this

community has continued to be demanded by the community. He said he can remember many meetings when the chambers were filled with folks when the topic was about raising fees, changing contracts. The idea of having affordable golf in this community is the important pieces. Washoe County needs to cover expenses, Bell-Man golf needs to run their business and they have found that sweet spot. He said we are covering our expenses and able to reinvest into the golf course. He said it is slightly different in municipal golf in terms of making profits. Commissioner Shorts said he has a hard time with this. He said we have heard over and over from parks that it doesn't have enough money to do things. He said we do have the ability to raise money because we are far behind. He said he doesn't see the County getting back what it should. These fees need to be closer to market.

Commissioner Doolittle said Washoe Golf Course is the affordable option but also competes not just with Reno courses but Carson and Dayton. He said golfers in this area will drive to get affordable golf. Users of Washoe Golf Course have been using it for 30-40 years. They are generally seniors and like to have that golf club experience at an affordable municipal golf course. They like to be served by people they are familiar with. It's been tough – with private and public courses, it's hard to raise fees. He said he remembers this discussion in Incline Village when they wanted to raise fees by \$.50. That is a premium public course. He said Washoe fees are where they should be. An incremental increase every year is appropriate. You don't want to price out the market of those people who play there year in and year out. You will lose rounds.

Commissioner Anderson said Parks and Recreation are under Community Services Department because we need to provide community services at an affordable price. Just because we can raise prices, doesn't mean we should. She said she agrees with Doug. We are covering our expenses and have hit our sweet spots. That is the point of being here.

Mr. Ferraro said the real change here is Washoe will take on responsibility of long term capital improvement and taking that burden off of the County with regular updates of the status of those improvements.

Commissioner Lee agreed with Doug and Heidi. She said affordable golf is very important for the community; for Washoe and Wild creek. It's important to have people to not face high prices for things they enjoy.

Mr. Crump said Washoe County got out of the golf operation business many years ago. As a government, it's not our wheelhouse to operate the course. We have gone to operators with subject matter expertise to determine how to operate the golf course, where that cost should be, and what type of product should be delivered. He said we make sure we protect our assets and this proposal does that. Staff has been looking at longer term contract with all operations. He said it creates an incentive for the operator to make investments in the course which they wouldn't necessarily do. There's no return on investment on shorter term agreement. He said golf operations reside in a golf funding. That money doesn't go back to other parts of the park. That's not to say that it couldn't at some point in time, but for right now, golf pays for golf. It's a good thing in good times and a good thing in bad times and golf pays for golf. This is a model that has worked for us in the past. We have a longer-term contract out at Sierra Sage and staff feels that this would be a good thing.

Chair Chen thanked everyone for the discussion.

There were no requests for public comment.

Commissioner Doolittle asked if this is a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to approve agreement or negotiate agreement. Mr. Crump said we are looking for a recommendation for staff to negotiate an agreement based on some of the discussion we had here, and we wanted to incorporate that in the resulting agreement and then ultimately take that agreement back to the Board of County Commissioners for approval. He said we are looking for two recommendations: Recommendation for staff to negotiate a contract and take that agreement to the board, and recommend approval of that contract.

MOTION: Commissioner Doolittle moved to recommend that staff negotiates agreements with the professional management services at Washoe Golf with Bell-Man Golf. Commissioner Oliver seconded the motion which passed in favor (7-1) with Commissioner Shorts opposed.

Commissioner Doolittle asked if that covered it or staff needed an additional recommendation. Mr. Crump said we were hoping to take something with your confidence in staff will negotiate a 15-year agreement with the terms that we discussed today and the goals being: cover county costs, reinvestments and protect county assets. He said he included the existing, current agreement in the board packet. All the other terms and agreements in existing agreement are staying the same and similar to the other operational agreements.

MOTION: Commissioner Doolittle recommend to Board of County Commission to approve an agreement for license and professional services at Washoe Golf with Bell-Men Golf, inc. services based on the recommendations of staff. Commission Oliver seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Shorts said he is opposed to the contract going outside without us looking at it or approving it. He said that is his objection. If we set into negotiation, we should look at it before it goes on.

Commissioner Oliver said she has confidence in Parks staff and negotiation they would be maintaining County assets and looking at win-win for all parties. Commissioner Doolittle said you have the contract before you that currently exists. If you want to review and provide input to staff, that would be available to you as it would be to any other commissioner. Commissioner Shorts said he disagrees because we are telling them to negotiate the contract. Commissioner Doolittle said as part of the discussion of the negotiation, you can provide your input to staff. Commissioner Shorts said when he started, there were a lot of people talking about having greater input from the commission. A contract without our review doesn't match the desire commission members have expressed in the past. He said it seems wrong procedurally that we don't see the contract before it's given to the Board, given the purpose of the Commission. He said if the Commission members feel differently, they will vote accordingly. He said he has a problem with the idea that some contract, that is the Commission's responsibility, will not be seen by the Commission before given to the Board. He said this has nothing to do with his prior vote, it has to do with the Commission and its responsibilities.

Chair Chen said she knows CSD is knowledgeable on these types of contracts and topics. She said she trusts CSD will go back and take the time to thoroughly look over the contract and vet it out. She said if they did bring it back, she said she doesn't know what she will be looking for to make improvements. She said the support materials and overviews are helpful. She said she believes the current process with Commission discussion is good enough. She said she doesn't believe she can contribute much more if they brought it back. She said she trusts the CSD team's decisions for the final contract.

The motion carried in favor (7-1) with Commissioner Shorts opposed. Greg Ferraro thanked Eric and staff for their hard work.

13. Presentation, discussion and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commission to approve a Special Event Agreement with Artown for events held at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park in July, 2021. (For Possible Action)

Eric Crump introduced the item. He introduced Beth Macmillan, Executive Director of Artown, who provided a PowerPoint slideshow.

Commissioner Oliver said she loves this idea. She said she is curious about how high the fence is going to be. Ms. Macmillan said the fence will be a 6 foot fence with green screen so it will be a private venue. Only people with parking passes will be able to be around the venue. She said she doesn't want to create crowd gathering to tailgate to listen to the music. She said we will run a tight ship. The only reason to leave the pod is to use the restroom or leave the venue. Commissioner Oliver asked about access to the dog park. Ms. Macmillan said the

park will be open, the show will be 7:30-9:30, but dog park has little to do with this. Commissioner Oliver said she was curious about access and making sure they still had the ability to utilize it and it won't be blocked off.

Mr. Crump said the park and normal activities will be open with business as usual. He said there will be security. If people wanted to sit outside the venue, people will be asked to move on, but activities are allowed.

Commissioner Nenzel asked if the entrance at the edge of the reserve will impact access to the dog park. Mr. Crump referenced Ms. Macmillan's map slide. Ms. Macmillan confirmed they leave that open and can fence off at the edge of the grass. Commissioner Nenzel asked how the parking will be managed. He said people use the area designated on their map as parking for the dog park. Mr. Crump said Artown will be utilizing it, so it will be closed for parking. He said he doesn't know what time in the day it will be closed. It will be appropriately posted. Artown will be responsible for security and parking. It will be included in Artown's use of the park. He said playground parking lot and up in the west end will still be available. He said we can provide direction and signage. Commissioner Nenzel said he would like clarification on parking being cordoning off. Mr. Crump said during the day, they will be open. Commissioner Shorts asked if this goes well, will Artown expand outside the month of July. Ms. Macmillan said she doesn't know if they have the bandwidth to expand for longer. It would be an opportunity for someone to continue this venue afterwards. She said we ordered the stage from Kentucky for the month of July. She said she isn't sure if it's available in August. Commissioner Shorts said this is awesome. He wondered if we could contact someone to run it for us.

Ms. Macmillan added all materials are environmentally friendly. Commissioner Shorts asked about park hours. Mr. Crump said the events go beyond park hours; we often have events that go past park hours. It's standard.

Commissioner Doolittle asked how irrigation will be handled without impacting what Beth wants to do. Mr. Crump said Beth has met with Parks staff and Parks maintenance. There will be an impact with month long events. He said turf will grow back. This area was designed for parking and can withstand impacts. He said the event is only 7:30-9:30 p.m. and will be able to water that area at night except for the stage area. He said we will have impacts around the stage but will work with Artown to mitigate. Commissioner Doolittle asked about mitigation set up for the impact around the stage. He said it won't get water and will be impacted. Mr. Crump said in the agreement, Artown is responsible for it bringing back to normal. He said wear and tear is accepted. He said we will have to go into the fall to reseed on the 40x40 area. We don't have the exact layout. They have agreed to re-sod or re-seed. Commissioner Doolittle wished her good luck.

Commissioner Anderson asked how many other events have utilized this space. Mr. Crump said the only reason this event can happen because Dragon Lights has officially cancelled for 2021. He said the event is relatively short every day. He said picnic areas will still happen, arboretum and museum will still be happening. He said we haven't had 4th of July events in quite some time. There aren't significant impacts to other events.

Commissioner Lee asked about cost for pods. Ms. Macmillan said they will be \$15-25 a pod. She said they are looking to put a scholarship in place to ensure access for community members. She said they are working with RTC to get closer access to the park for more accessibility.

There were no requests for public comment.

MOTION: Commissioner Oliver moved that the Board of County Commissioners approve a request for sponsorship of the 2021 Artown Festival; waive park facility rental and use fees [\$66,340] in consideration of Washoe County being recognized as a Sponsor; and approve an agreement with Artown for the Artown Festival 2021 events to be held at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park, July 1-31, 2021. Commissioner Shorts seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Chen thanked Ms. MacMillan. Ms. MacMillan thanked the Commission and complimented the staff.

14. **Program/Park of the Month – Wilbur D. May Museum Exhibits and Programs presented by Samantha Szesciorka, Recreation Coordinator**

Samantha Szesciorka, Assistant Curator at Wilbur May Museum, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Chair Chen said she is happy to hear about the successes. Commissioner Shorts congratulated them on their successes considering the challenges this year.

15. **Parks Reports**

Colleen Wallace-Barnum noted that Gabe Barbato was promoted from Park Ranger I to Park Ranger II. She congratulated Gabe. She hopes the commission can meet him someday. Ms. Wallace-Barnum reported another employee was moved into a fulltime position: Eduardo Aguilar.

She provided an update of the Christmas tree recycling program. She said they received their highest amounts of trees this year. She said she was glad to see the community support that KTMB recycling event.

There were no requests for public comment.

16. **Director’s Report to include updates on Board of County Commissioners actions, future meeting locations/Commissioner field trips, community sponsorship requests, department updates and community partnerships.**

Mr. Crump stated Assistant County Manager Dave Solaro has taken on another role as incident commander for the County’s COVID response.

He highlighted BCC actions since last month: On January 12, the BCC received a grant for \$100,000 from NV Division of Forestry for Parks and Open Space weed management and revegetation. The board also recommend approval for first addendum of the State Route 28 Corridor operations and maintenance local agreement between agencies within the basin in regard to East Shore Trail.

17. **Commissioner’s Comments: (This item limited to announcements or topics/issues proposed for future workshops/agendas.)**

Commissioner Doolittle said he received an email and understands Christy is retiring or leaving Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful. It would be prudent of the Park Commission to do an acknowledgement of some type to recognize her for her clean-up efforts for the parks for over 10 years. He said she has brought many volunteers for every type of need for the community to Keep Truckee Beautiful.

Commissioner Shorts said he won’t be here next month. He thanked staff. He said we went through an awful year with COVID, and he said he appreciates seeing all the bright lights that we have been able to be put on. He said he includes golf in that. He said he wants to give his appreciations for all the bright lights.

Commissioner Nenzel said he was hoping to have a discussion on the agenda for the Steamboat Ditch enclosure. He asked if that will be rescheduled. Commissioner Shorts said the project got delayed. Commissioner Oliver said the funding got pulled possibly due to public outcry.

Commissioner Oliver echoed the sentiment to staff. With COVID, it was quite a year.

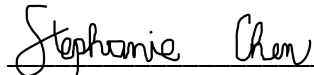
18. **Public Comments:**

There were no requests for public comment.

19. **Adjournment** – the meeting was adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Misty Moga, Independent Contractor.

Approved by Commission in session on March 2, 2021.


Stephanie Chen, Chair
