



PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CITY OF SAFFORD LIBRARY PROGRAM ROOM
808 SOUTH 7TH AVENUE, SAFFORD, ARIZONA
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2021
5:30 PM

In accordance with Section 2.04.120 of the Municipal Code of the City of Safford, and Arizona Revised Statutes §38-431.01 et seq., and §38-431.02 et seq., NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the members of the general public that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee will be held.

MINUTE RECORD

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Michelle Hoshal, Nora Rogers, Pete Gauna, Tim Linden

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Dusti Brantner, Tad Jacobson, Toni Palomino

STAFF PRESENT: John Cassella, City Manager, Matthew Hoshal, Assistant to the City Manager, Jaime Embick, Planning & Community Development Director, Jennifer Surber, Administrative Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

- 1. WELCOME AND ROLL CALL:** The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.
- 2. MINUTES:** Minutes will be approved when quorum is present. Tim Linden is newly appointed.

3. NEW PARK DESIGN DISCUSSION:

Michelle Hoshal: I had a question about the process and how it will work and the money that was given for parks. Is the money in your budget now and once it's gone it's gone or is it replenished every year?

John Casella: As we move forward these projects will get phased. They can develop in different ways. When we put together our package and we have comments on those parks, by the time we get to the point where we actually build them, if they are in agreement with those comments, they may find a way into the final design.

The money will be replenished. The work session I had with council was exactly that question. Are we spending the 1.1M and we're done or is this the beginning of a new level of service? And the answer is it's the beginning of a new level of service, hence, the creation of this body and we get more input from the public so that we get some ideas as we move forward. What is it the people want? It's an ongoing process. The 1.1M is basically for El Paso Park. There will be those new amenities put in there. They'll probably use up all that money because it is relatively expensive. There will be new appropriation as we move forward and depending on the availability of money and the other priorities these recommendations and at the pace at which these parks get built out, in addition to those other two will be predicated on the availability of

money. We've got two constraints: legal and financial. We probably won't run into any legal issues, but we will have financial constraints. Therefore, monies that are available will probably result in parks being phased in over time. There are other opportunities potentially for various kinds of money. ARPA is one of them. There is additional funding for parks if the council wants to go in that direction. ARPA funding has to be planned and spent in a certain amount of time. So, we would need to put something in place for the purpose of planning by 2024 and would have to spend by 2026 if we chose to use it.

Matthew Hoshal: New park design. The engineering department has come up with the designs based off our last meeting. The one on 8th and Discovery Park there is a large parking area and a couple of large ramadas. Those would be for like a flea market or farmer's market. They don't have to be that size, they can make it bigger. There is a big restroom structure in the middle. There is a few smaller picnic tables and a roundabout where people can walk. The workout equipment will be on the path where it was originally designed and there was talk about putting smaller play equipment in there. The band shell is shown with tier seating.

Tim Linden: This place is close to Glenn Meadows and close to La Tierra. What is going to separate these from those? I see you're putting in a band shell. That is different.

Matthew Hoshal: The idea behind these larger ramadas is they are going to be large spaces. The are scaled to 20x40 and can go up to 60x120.

John Cassella: That space will provide an alternative for some of the stuff we do in the downtown area. So, we will have a stage and a place for events we could rent out. There is an area for food trucks which has been an ongoing issue and we want to accommodate food trucks. The large ramadas would give us the ability to have a farmers' market or a flea market and have it covered. It provides room in the space for taking pressure off of some of these events in the downtown. The other one that we will talk about later is designed to more of a low impact place where people can have birthday parties and have ramadas in a quieter kind of atmosphere because of all the residential. There will be small and large picnic areas to possibly reserve. It's going to be a multi-use situation in terms of need like food trucks, bandshell and then covered spaces so that when we're thinking about alternative sites for events that we have in the downtown you have a large covering you get people out of the sun. That is what the theme of that is.

Tim Linden: So, for the food trucks would you do additional power drops for the plugins?

John Cassella: We probably would. It all depends on the final design these are all conceptual. If we design and are for food trucks, we would put in the proper infrastructure.

Tim Linden: Minimum 20-amp circuits individually to run refrigeration.

Matthew Hoshal: If we do have a bathroom there, we have to bring the sewer all the way up there because that is the closest one and that is on this design. They actually put in the width of Discovery Park Blvd as it is going to be in the future four lanes with a sidewalk and 8th Avenue will be two lanes with a turning lane all the way thru.

Tim Linden: The property adjacent to that to the south is owned by Owens property. I thought that would be a good area to put the dog park if they could obtain that property.

Nora Rogers: The large area across was talked about at previous meetings to put in a full fairgrounds area with fields and lights.

Tim Linden: I'm on the Boys and Girls Club board as well and we need a new facility for the Boys and Girls Club someday. If we could tie that facility in with what Adam from United Way wants to do and have an area for small meeting spaces and small offices for micro businesses. I suggested why don't we put the Boys and Girls Club in there because that brings in that whole pool of money on the nonprofit side just on the whole facility. It could be a regional kind. But you have to look how far away from the schools and all the additional busing they would need. But the whole point was you can tie their money into it. If you do a shared use facility like Thatcher's facility but have it multi use for Boys and Girls Club maybe shared entrance and it would help fund it. The you could say Safford, Graham County, Thatcher all these resources of funding.

John Cassella: So, keeping in that theme with event type stuff is there anything else we could put in that area that has a lot of space on the other side of the amphitheater and even down on the other side. We can get a general plan of what we want to do and it will evolve. What we're doing is recreating a conceptual idea about what generally it is we are trying to do in that space and what kinds of things we want to put there and would eventually come up with a final design. This is very preliminary. Trying to get the aesthetic and the kind of use cases down.

Matthew Hoshal: We also have the one on 10th and 10th.

Tim Linden: That is going to need to be soaked in a lot of water. I saw when Rhodes owned it, he dug up the whole thing with two loaders and didn't compact it. Every time I have coached there is never enough small fields to practice on, so any grassy area is needed.

John Cassella: I met today with AJ and we got somethings that we are going to roll out. We've got to finalize the preliminary version of it but practice fields play a big role. Hopefully we can have more of those available. Recreation is hot right now, so we are coming at it from a bunch of different directions.

Matthew Hoshal: Parks & Recreation is big across the nation. Everyone is thinking about doing these parks and recreation projects and these outdoor use facilities.

Michelle Hoshal: Are we thinking about what more to add to this?

Matthew Hoshal: When we came up with these designs the premise was what would you put into it and then give up the bare bones of what we can put in there. From there suggestions of what we would add on to these. 10th and 10th we have the parking, we have the ramadas and the bathroom with a retention area. We could put in this cornhole area.

Michelle Hoshal: We did talk about putting in a big climbing tower.

Matthew Hoshal: They did not put any of those bigger playground equipment amenities. This is the bare bones this is what we need to have in order to make it function then we can add in from there.

John Cassella: You got all this open area and grass but maybe you have more ramadas around the outside with grills and stuff and then the interior you put climbing amenities and things like that. So that would be lower-level use during the day. We would be renting out the ramadas. So very different theme from Discovery & 8th where you would have something loud and boisterous going into the night. 10th & 10th would be more low impact so we thought about putting solar power charging stations and funding for fiber optic to make Wi-Fi ready. It would

be more of a picnicking area with some other climbing features. Other thing would be a walking path around it. We talked about grills, swing sets or permanent cornhole type of thing.

Matthew Hoshal: Since 10th and 10th is so close to the schools it would be a perfect spot for kids to hang out and study.

Tim Linden: I always thought that was a perfect spot for the Boys and Girls Club because it's so close. It's all part of getting those folks to use these parks too. It could become just like El Paso park probably with limited resources even if you're going to plan it out later and just put grass for now.

Matthew Hoshal: It's a start and they can use the retention area for parking.

Michelle Hoshal: Can we fit another soccer field in that area?

Matthew Hoshal: The total acres is 5 for 10th & 10th and 15 acres for Discovery & 8th.

Nora Rogers: So, are we wanting to talk about details that we're putting in on each of these? I think right now 10th is going to be more accommodating to teenagers. Is that the road we were going? And try to find play equipment to put there?

Matthew Hoshal: I think that was the suggestion that was given to go with this. So, what kind of stuff would you put there? A climbing rock? The tower? Cornhole? Horseshoes? Let's focus on 10th right now and we can go back. Our plan is to bring our ideas and put it in a presentation packet and present it to council. We would advise them on what we think would be good in these spaces and they decide how much they want to use and what they want to do with it.

Nora Rogers: Will that be El Paso Blvd too?

Matthew Hoshal: Based off the suggestions you guys already gave about the dog park the design has changed. So even though they already approved El Paso Blvd. it's still can change based on the design and stuff.

John Cassella: And with El Paso Blvd & Firth Park they are relatively designed at this point so your impact would be more minimal. We got together and created a vision, we provided comments on that vision list in the beginning, we then went on and looked at El Paso and made recommendations that might make their way into it. Fundamentally they'll be in place, but we can still tweak some things. And maybe some of the comments may alter the way it would play out. As for the 10th & 10th and Discovery Park & 8th Ave you are having more of an impact because you're building from the ground up. You're making suggestions based on these spaces. So, you have more input on the initial conceptual design and at the end we would rap it all up and present it to council. Firth park we ended up putting a couple of pickleball courts in there and I think the only question was did we move them from the initial design location and use more of the grass area? They made better use of that space by the pool by putting two pickleball courts with lights. We are having additional conversations about what could be done to create more shade areas. El Paso Park remains essentially the same except we shrank the size of the dog park and added a zip line feature.

Matthew Hoshal: The budget cycle for the city starts in January, February where we start talking and coming up with what's going to be in the budget that gets approved before we start our new budget year that starts in July. That is why this will be presented to council starting in

January that way we can get it to council so that they can start making decisions on what's going to be in the budget. That is the method behind all of this.

John Cassella: So, if they want to allocate additional funds or even ARPA funding they can put it into the budget for next year. The whole point of convening this body was to provide council with another avenue of input in terms of what citizens want as far as recreational. If you talk to four different people about recreation, they are going to give you four different versions.

Nora Rogers: I like the idea when we were doing the visioning of adding cultural and community like art to our parks. Can we add that at Discovery & 8th? The copper, cotton and agriculture that type of thing.

Matthew Hoshal: I think the park in itself is a big statement for this community because we have a ton of events. We have a lot of those where everybody is involved. Having events there and having a bandshell, a pavilion, I think caters to the culture. But as far as amenities are you thinking copper, cattle, cotton themes?

Tim Linden: I was on the Chamber of Commerce board and their goal was to bring events closer to the community. This actually removes it. If you have a concert, and I'm not trying to be a downer on this but I would almost rather have it at Firth Park. It would be nice to have more events at Firth Park but it doesn't have the space. Thinking along the lines of and trying to bring a lot of people closer to the community and spend money. Taking events from downtown takes away business for the community.

John Casella: That is a benefit is what I'm getting from the business community. They don't find all these events downtown as being beneficial. A lot of them feel that it is blocking them in. So, taking some not all from downtown would alleviate some of that pressure.

Matthew Hoshal: We are not taking away events from downtown only providing another option.

Michelle Hoshal: Like hometown market where you've got a bunch of vendors and there is no space for it now downtown. So, you still have people coming and spending money in the Gila Valley. And that was my thought process when we were designing this. It would be more like making the hometown market bigger because it's expanding and for the events like Salsa Fest, they can still be downtown.

John Casella: You could make those decisions as you go. By having an amphitheater, you may have plays there, show movies, concerts. You're doing things you're not even doing now. What I got out of the Downtown Association is that not all the businesses were thrilled with all the traffic downtown.

Tim Linden: Yeah. I had discussions with business owners down there and my comment back to them if you want more business you want more traffic. Salsa Fest brings in 5,000-10,000 people right in front of your door. It's your job to get them inside.

Matthew Hoshal: Things like Salsa Fest, parade's, Merry Main Street and of course the Light parade will always be downtown but events like Octoberfest could go at the Discovery & 8th Ave park or some of the other event or even bring additional events like John is talking about

Tim Linden: I like having the facility. Don't misunderstand that I just wanted to share.

John Cassella: That is good to have these conversations. We were looking at data on revenue and everyone wanted to save downtown during COVID. We crunched the numbers, and they didn't need to be save their numbers were just fine. These perceptions that kind of perpetuate themselves because people keep saying it. There are other perspectives that might pull you in a different direction. And you may find that this provides you with additional alternative opportunities to do other things that you are not already doing. Like the food trucks. The brick and mortar do not want them near their business so we can have them down at Discovery & 8th Ave. So, it's a complimentary facility. The other part of this, and this was discussed with council, is how much it was costing the city to put these events while other people make money on it. It would alleviate the need to always be blocking in the streets and having police down there and the cost would be smaller.

Tim Linden: We do need facilities. The other side of it is that we had businesses that closed during events because it was too busy.

Michelle: So, along the walking path we are going to beautify a space along our walking path that is accessible to several different neighborhoods we can make it look nicer. And also have a trailhead at Discovery & 8th Ave.

John Cassella: You've got a significant space that efforts you many opportunities. As we develop this you never know what's going to go into these other areas because we have only begun with a basic design. Which then you can develop over time as ideas come up. It is conceptual. As we get closer in the future to make a reality it's going to evolve again there is going to be more discussions, people will have more ideas, they will get more specific.

Tim Linden: On that side of town there is really nothing to look at so that will definitely help.

John Cassella: Councilman Lopez wants to put a power station there. This might be a better idea.

Tim Linden: The power station could go on the other side of the road.

John Cassella: I just want to make sure everybody understands that we're providing some insights and what we think are good ideas. Those will continue to be gathered as things evolve. I know the amphitheater idea was a concept people really liked.

Tim Linden & Pete Gauna: How many will the amphitheater seat? The size of a regular ball field can fit 3,000 to 4,000 people easy and still have lots of room.

Matthew Hoshal: We never had one so we don't really know we would have to go and see. There would be lawn seating and tier it up. About the diameter of a football field.

Pete Gauna: The reason I was going to ask is you have to make sure you have enough parking. If it seats 4,000 and you have parking for 1,000 you know that average two or three per vehicle.

Matthew Hoshal: Currently design shows roughly 60 spaces.

John Cassella: As that evolves there is a lot of open space that can be expanded, and the parking lot could be bigger. We could find accommodations.

Jamie Embick: I'm sure that is the first thing the engineers would do when they design the final is scale the parking to the amphitheater. Since the committee brought up culture maybe they can have a mural on the concrete side of the bandshell or do a copper roof on it.

Tim Linden: I'm sure they will as they design but always leave some overflow because a lot of times those are sunk in and you continue to fit if sloped upwards then you can have additional seating as long as grass and trees are around. Also make sure the stage is not facing directly in the sunset or sunrise.

Nora Rogers: I think it would be a good idea to put in another bridge over the wash.

Pete Gauna: Couldn't there be culverts put in there and completely covered? Kind of what they just did across from the CFA.

Matthew Hoshal: There is one but I don't know if it's cheaper is the question. It might be more expensive to do that instead of putting a bridge there.

Matthew Hoshal: Now to 10th & 10th. It was supposed to be more of an older kid greenspace.

Michelle Hoshal: I was looking up this park in Idaho that was geared toward older kids and adults and they had a large rope climber and a 75 ft zipline and new swings. It gets them moving and climbing like the Ninja Warrior type of stuff.

Nora Rogers: Yes, something more challenging. I looked up some that were age 18 plus and they were like extreme playgrounds.

Matthew Hoshal: They also have parkour parks. The original design for El Paso park had a 25 ft rope climbing structure.

Pete Gauna: Are we not concerned about the possibility of injury and additional liability?

John Cassella: It has always been a concern as we look at these climbing towers. I would have to be something that our insurance would have to accommodate.

Matthew Hoshal: Our insurance the way I understand it is that if everything is in working order the way it is supposed to be then our insurance will cover. As soon as it falls into disrepair or it's a maintenance issue on our part then it becomes a city issue.

John Cassella: The other thing is do we want to put like workout equipment in there that is made of metal? It will hold up over time and put a rock-climbing feature in the middle and some free space to throw a frisbee or something.

Matthew Hoshal: I think if they left is open with all that being grass so people could not have the soccer net or baseball things. They could set up their cones or play flag football.

Pete Gauna: I like that idea of that being open.

John Cassella: That is another thing we could have is putting greens. This park will be a little more techie. It's got fiber optic out there and some solar charging stations. Some ramadas with grills you could rent. Some green space, a climbing feature.

Jaime Embick: We'll still throw one little kids' area in case the parents want to play cornhole or take their kids and the kids can play.

Matthew Hoshal: My thought was having the ramadas where kids can go and have wi fi and sit on their laptops, tablets, whatever or can sit under these covered areas and do their schoolwork and have charging stations.

Nora Rogers: A sand volleyball court would be cool there.

Michelle Hoshal: There is a cool fitness type obstacle course.

Matthew Hoshal: Price is 100,00.00

Nora Rogers: I want one of those merry go rounds the spinning ones that have the little seats with seat belt. Two of them so autistic kids can use them.

John Cassella: And that's a point we really haven't talked about is the ADA component.

Jaime Embick: ADA needs to be part of the narrative for every new park design.

Michelle Hoshal: Swings are the biggest thing. It helps calm them. It doesn't have to be extravagant but maybe some with straps for those who do not have muscle tone to hold one.

Jaime Embick: Or a bucket seat or ones we talked about where you can swing with you child and face them.

Tim Linden: If you are talking about more of adult swings, we could do an octagon swing for two with a firepit in the middle. That would go good at Discovery & 8th Ave.

Michelle Hoshal: I would say even replace one of the ramadas with something like that would be way cooler. I like that a lot.

Nora Rogers: It could be made out of iron so it wouldn't rot.

Tim Linden: It would have to be make your own fire. You wouldn't want someone to leave the propane on.

Michelle Hoshal: I feel that if we are going to pick out equipment that it is accessible to all children. There needs to be a swing set there that is accessible to all children.

Nora Rogers: I think the swing set needs to be at Discovery & 8th Ave. And why not have a play a family area like we talked about putting there. When you have little ones, and you want to go to a concert. They don't want to sit so having something for them to play on and not be right by the road.

Tim Linden: Are you able to add more parking?

Matthew Hoshal: I thought about that and we can add it.

Jaime Embick: We could be modern and building a parking structure and build up.

Michelle Hoshal: I don't know if that fits the theme. We could but a community center on top.

Matthew Hoshal: Discovery & 8th Ave doesn't show a smaller play area section. You guys are talking about putting a smaller play area there with the swings and the merry go round? I think

moving forward in the parks when we update amenities like playground equipment and stuff that having the inclusive parts as well is important.

John Cassella: I think we need to revisit this idea of the ADA whether it's merry go round or swings.

Jaime Embick: ADA needs to be part of the narrative for every new park design.

Matthew Hoshal: That is in our vision.

John Cassella: Jaime is looking into themed equipment we talked about like the covered wagon and different color schemes. She gave out hand outs at our last meeting.

Nora Rogers: All-inclusive Merry Go Round with seat & seatbelt & ADA swings should go at Discovery & 8th Ave. Something that speaks to families and meeting all groups of people. You want to show up with your family and have a good time and autistic kids are going to use those.

Matthew Hoshal: I think with having the food trucks there they are going to eat and sit down and let the kids play in the play area.

Michelle Hoshal: I think the ADA compliant stuff is going to come when we start looking at actual playground equipment.

Jaime Embick: This should be written into paperwork that goes forward for the next people buying equipment. This should be a forever process.

Nora Rogers: We haven't had new equipment in like 40 years.

John Cassella: Depending on whatever council decides to do you could see some movement where they're going to phase some of it over time. I know a lot more are supportive of it with the budget.

Matthew Hoshal: The parking area alone is probably one million dollars. Just the asphalt alone. The little area at Firth Park was \$100,00.

Michelle Hoshal: Would you start it just as a gravel parking lot so you could do some of the other more productive work?

Matthew Hoshal: That is what we talked about. Maybe phase 1 is without the parking lot. Just getting the pavilion area, the bathrooms, the smaller remodels and small children's park. From there phase 2 would possibly be parking lot. But who knows it might go a completely different direction with that space.

Michelle Hoshal: Do you think city council will agree with us?

John Cassella: I think they will see a lot of this and understand that's why we did it. You don't know what they are going to do or if it even will be the same city council. It may tweak some things but I think we got a good start.

Matthew Hoshal: I brought up the point about the budget cycle earlier because that leads into our next thing on the presentation and the summary. We want to put together the packets so that we can bring them before the council before they start talking about next fiscal year's

budget. They can say hey, we saw what the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee brought to us about parks, and we want to put X amount of dollars in the budget towards Parks and Recreation. Or we don't want to do anything with it at this point. But we have what the recommendations are.

Tim Linden: So, with Freeport and the Community Investment Foundation committee they have help fund quite a few of these already. I was on the community for the last three years. We didn't do anything last year because of COVID. But we can keep tapping into that as well.

John Cassella: We just hear that there was another large appropriation made for infrastructure. If that money becomes available, we can apply and may have an opportunity there which would accelerate some of these projects.

Tim Linden: I think United Way would contribute if your point was to include all inclusive parks in your development.

John Cassella: I think we've covered a lot of ground and the next step is going to be to add a few more amenities on these new parks. Then to begin work on a narrative which we can start to write in outline form and bring back to you and allow you to read it and make sure there is ADA and we put down any other ideas you had and make sure we get those out on the table. Then we go to the council in December or January at the latest and show them everything we did from the original vision list to creating a vision statement to making recommendations. You guys made comments on Firth Park and the fact that there is limited usability due to the transient and the homeless. It's an important point and one we struggle with. When you make those kinds of comments it provides the political impetus for a solution which what we are working on right now. Don't take for granted the importance of what you're doing and the energy you put in the final product.

Matthew Hoshal: At the next meeting on the 17th, we will talk about equipment. Then we will give Lance Henrie a chance to finalize the design and we will have an outline for the presentation on the December 1st meeting for you to look at before we present it to council. We will need someone to be present at the council. We can do a mock run to present to council.

Michelle Hoshal: It's just a suggestion but I was thinking if in an email you made clear what the goal was and our objective for the next meeting. So, we can come prepared and what to focus on. Then we know at the end if we were productive. It says discussion on the agenda but what is our goal?

John Cassella: Our goal in December is going to be to encapsulate, in that meeting, a document that conveys all the work that we put in from the original brainstorming session through the visioning to the comments on existing parks to the creation of new parks.

Nora Rogers: If we knew we were going to pick out equipment for Discovery Park & 8th we would have come prepared with pictures.

Michelle Hoshal: Can we send pictures to Matthew and have him print them? So, let's just focus on 10th and 10th. What are we proposing? Bring pictures. Let's vote after everyone presents what they like so council doesn't order some random piece of equipment. They will know specifics.

John Cassella: Understand that whatever specifically you pick may not end up in the park.

Michelle Hoshal: Most don't know that there are swim sets geared toward autistic kids or down syndrome kids or kids in wheelchairs. We will have pictures to show them and can explain what it is for.

Matthew Hoshal: For the next meeting, why don't you guys email me all your ideas for stuff, and I will get with Lance to get a rough outline. When we do the final presentation, we will have the actual pictures and we'll say this is the amount that we're planning on these locations.

John Cassella: Why don't we have a meeting on the 17th that is all about specific amenities so we can get them put into the park and then make it part of the presentation.

Nora Rogers: That will be a great idea because it's also including what we're trying to say. We want things that are going to last.

Michelle Hoshal: So, all of our homework would be to send pictures to Matthew and we can vote on them.

4. COUNCIL PRESENTATION SUMMARY DISCUSSION:

November 17th meeting – focus on specific equipment.

December 1st meeting – Matthew will draft council presentation for committee review.

5. NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, November 17th, 2021, 5:30pm at Safford Library Program Room.

6. ADJOURN: 6:50pm