



PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CITY OF SAFFORD LIBRARY PROGRAM ROOM

808 SOUTH 7TH AVENUE, SAFFORD, ARIZONA

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 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, Toni Palomino,
Tad Jacobson

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Dusti Brantner, Tim Linden

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. A quorum was present.
- 2. MINUTES:** It was moved by Tad Jacobson, seconded by Toni Palomino and carried unanimously to approve minutes from the September 22, 2021, October 20, 2021, October 27, 2021 and November 10, 2021 Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee meetings.
- 3. PARKS EQUIPMENT DISCUSSION:**
Michelle Hoshal: Asked if pickleball courts would be better used at the El Paso Park. She brought up the idea of expanded the pool by adding grass area, chairs, shade and put a fence around it to keep out the homeless. Idea is to concentrate on the new parks until homeless issue is addressed.

Nora Rogers: Agreed that pickleball court at El Paso Park will be better served since Firth Park is less desirable.

Matthew Hoshal: Changing the design you are more than welcome to add to the presentation and display input on Firth Park and what a committee as a whole you feel is best and what direction you would take with that from a public standpoint.

Jaime Embick: The important part to remember is that any ideas you have are not set in stone so feel free to express to the council. What you are suggesting may or may not happen. If you have a great idea put it in your presentation. Any idea you have is a good idea. You are planting seeds.

Michelle Hoshal: The other thing we talked about was getting more community input from outside of just us. If we could reach out and get more of a community feel as to what they want to see. An expansion of the pool? Or pickleball courts? Room for both? Driving by Firth Park on the weekend there was only 2 kids at the skatepark. Thatcher Park had tons of people this weekend. Is a pickleball court going to attract more people to Firth Park?

Jaime Embick: You could probably do a Facebook poll. Michelle Hoshal agreed.

Tad Jacobson: It is probably the homeless.

Nora Rogers: It seems like a work in progress and something they are broadly aware of. It needs to be worked on from an upper level.

Jaime Embick: Every town has the same problem. Tucson parks -people don't go there because they've taken over.

Nora Rodger: Putting all our energies into El Paso Park or moving it into El Paso Park and making it that much grander is going to speak volumes instead of trying to update Firth Park.

Jaime Embick That idea of you wanting more grassy areas for families to hang out would be easier to maintain inside the fence of the pool.

Tad Jacobson: The way the pool has been set up hasn't been updated in 15-20 years.

Matthew Hoshal: Would you say it was a fairly well utilized space for the community?

Michelle Hoshal: The hours have increased the last two years because we see a demand in attendance, and it continues to rise.

Toni Palomino: The teens have suggested having a movie night at the pool. Maybe a teen night for just teens and a young kids night and show age appropriate movies. This will invite more people.

Jaime Embick: That is the expensive asset we already own so we would just be making it nicer.

Matthew Hoshal: There hasn't been any addition in 15 plus years so is that an area that is being used a lot but neglected because of an upgrade? Do you think there is some way that you can upgrade or expand the pool? The homeless are there now but people feel safe going to the pool because it is fenced in.

Pete Gauna: I don't like the fact that we are having to base any of our decisions on the homeless situation. That is problem that needs to be addressed no matter what goes in there. Someone needs to figure that one out. Whether they need to build something across the street where they can hang out or something.

Matthew Hoshal: We can put that in our dialogue in the presentation to council. One of the biggest issues is that we don't have a place in Graham County for the homeless to go. There is not a way to kick them out of the park.

Jaime Embick: If they are not drunk and disorderly there is nothing we can do. Communities all over the nation struggle with it and has been here since the beginning of civilization.

Matthew Hoshal: There has been talk about a respite center in the county that would be a place we might be able to take them. I don't think a respite center would work for this. It would have to be an overnight stay. It has been talked about with council. It is a known issue with that park. But I think putting it in the presentation with dialogue about how that's an issue and why the public feels hopeless in addressing because there is nothing they can do.

Tad Jacobson: With the pool space there is room for 220 people. You can't have more than 220. There is ample space right now with shade for parents. If we did make it bigger it would be a bigger attraction but not going to house more people unless you make the pool bigger. Not very often does the current pool get maxed out by occupancy.

Pete Gauna: That is high dollar to add to the pool.

Matthew Hoshal: That price gets up there. Just increasing the fence area and not pouring concrete for more pool.

Pete Gauna: I like El Paso Park the way it is designed now. My thought is that I don't think pickleball courts and splashpad, playground jive together. Splashpad, playground you have kids screaming. Then you have pickleball. Who plays pickleball? Older kids and they don't want that noise.

Michelle Hoshal: So we don't want El Paso Park to be a multi-generational park? We had talked about having something at 10th and 10th for all ages. El Paso is for little kids essentially.

Jaime Embick: You can't have the pickleball court and basketball court interchangeable?

Matthew Hoshal: No they have different surfaces. The pickleball court would cost more than a basketball court because you have fencing associated with it.

Nora Rogers: There was a high demand for pickleball courts so they have to go somewhere.

Jaime Embick: What if we put them at 10th and 10th?

Matthew Hoshal: One of the things we need to look at our asset inventory. We already have basketball court at La Tierra Park and on 8th Ave. We do not have any pickleball courts.

Tad Jacobson: The school is hopefully going to get some pickleball courts. I can see what Pete is saying but if we cut off the splashpad at a certain time and have lights out there at the pickleball courts. If we put them farther apart at El Paso Park. Which brings me to the dog park being taken out of El Paso Park.

Nora Rogers: What if we put the pickleball courts at the city annex under the pecan trees? Tad Jacobson: Tree sap not good for the court.

Toni Palomino: I thought we were putting like 3 at Firth Park. Are we only doing one now? The teens are excited about the pickleball, so I think we need more than one. Tad Jacobson: There is a lot of people who want pickleball.

Michelle Hoshal: What about 10th and 10th? That is geared toward teens.

Matthew Hoshal: 10th and 10th is a blank slate that you can populate with whatever. I would suggest putting the pickleball courts there.

Pete Gauna: I agree. Another point is teenagers can drive themselves to 10th and 10th. El Paso Park & La Tierra you are getting all the local kids and is geared more for families to walk to the park or kids to walk to the park and play. If you are saying not at Firth Park then I would say 10th and 10th. I would still like the fit core equipment we talked about last week at 10th and 10th.

Michelle Hoshal: Yeah we would definitely want to keep the fit core equipment at 10th and 10th. The point I didn't realize was that pickleball was for more like older teens, adults and you are not scared of the homeless population so having them at Firth Park would be okay.

All Inclusive Park Video – Harpers Playground <https://youtu.be/asyHKKxsL2A>

Nora Rogers: Would like to put something like this at Discovery Park & 8th Ave. I work with kids with disabilities and can see their perspective of parks. Parks needs to be inclusive and include everyone. If we are ADA certified, then United Way and other grants are more prone to donate.

Toni Palomino: We should be putting that equipment everywhere.

Matthew Hoshal: Lance Henrie said this would cost less to build.

Tad Jacobson: I saw this park that had machinery, but kids could operate it like dumping sand and they sit and actually work a bull dozer. Kids would like that because that is what dad does

Nora Rogers: We initial thought of having something like Harper's playground at Discovery Blvd & 8th Ave since it so natural out there and we have 15 acres to work with.

Jaime Embick: I saw the one that was build by volunteers. I wonder if that is possible.

Toni Palomino: It would be nice to see some of the ADA equipment at El Paso Park. Nora Rodgers: We should be putting that equipment everywhere.

Matthew Hoshal: The public works director loved the idea of the footprint from Harper's Park. It is easy to do and doesn't cost a lot of money. Everything in that park was financially responsible and seemed really easy to do.

4. **COUNCIL PRESENTATION SUMMARY DISCUSSION:**

Michelle Hoshal: We added the pictures we wanted to go over in the bare bones of the power point we sent.

Nora Rogers: I found pictures of a permanent structure of the cornhole and ping pong. It would be bring your own bags and paddles.

Pete Gauna: That is how it would be for pickleball too, bring your own equipment.

Michelle Hoshal: We want to make sure the zipline at El Paso Park is like the ones that is picked out. At 10th & 10th and El Paso it is really important to incorporate that circular seating especially for teens to hang out, study and charge their devices.

Nora Rogers: We need pieces of equipment at Discovery Park & 8th Ave that are interactive. There are pieces that bring interaction. It's not just one kids playing but five or six interacting. It's socially and emotionally inviting to all kids. It's community. Imaginative play not just a regular park. We are above average for kids with disabilities in our community. That includes sensory, auditory. Giving back to our community in all the ways we can. We have picture of a kid in a wheelchair in a glider swing. He is interacting with normal kids. It's a place for everyone to come together. At Discovery & 8th with the amphitheater and stage like a creative arts area so we can bring in a play area that relates to that. We would have play equipment that is musical and have interactive equipment that all family members can enjoy. Everybody loves music but it also creates imagination and inspires creativity. Also enhancing auditory sensory for children by bringing in the sand. That is the thought for Discovery to be a creative communal place for everyone from little babies to elders. You're going there as a whole family to have fun and there is something for everybody. Tim Linden brought up last week about the communal seating by the food truck area and have fire pits you could bring your own wood. That would be area to get adults together.

Putting in the amphitheater, Harper's playground, communal seating and another type of play area. We have 15 acres.

Pete Gauna: I like the communal seating but for my own backyard. Part of the issue is bringing your own wood. It's a far walk from parking lot.

Michelle Hoshal: Could we have propane?

Nora Rogers: If they leave the propane on it is expensive. The communal seating is relatable to young adults or families that maybe do not have a backyard or cannot have something like that in their yard. But we do have a lot of space to work with.

Matthew Hoshal: One thing you could put is a regulator with how much propane you can put on and it has a timer so it only burns for a short while

Nora Rogers: On Discovery & 8th Ave the workout equipment would go there also so it would be close to the path and people can get a full body workout.

Pete Gauna: That is probably the most utilized part of that whole are is the walking path. So work out equipment would be best right there.

Tad Jacobson: Are we good with the artificial lawn?

Nora Rogers: Yes it will last forever and is low maintenance. Nobody has to water it just show up and play.

Michelle Hoshal: Talked about slide and video in PowerPoint. Would like 10th and 10th to be more teen friendly with Fit core/Ninja Warrior type equipment and some type of charging station and places to hang out.

Matthew Hoshal: You want people to come and visit them. The way you get people to come and visit them is by making them unique.

Nora Rogers: The wood would be a problem in Arizona. The heat just eats it up. They have this new hard plastic.

Matthew Hoshal: One of the things to think about is the plastic. What color? What Jaime found are more geared toward our valley not your primary colors or fluorescent colors. The nice thing about the lighter colors is if they fade, they do not look as bad.

Michelle Hoshal: The slide with hill and hose for kids to climb up or water and spigot could be at 10th and 10th because we want to still have a space for the younger kids. And all parents and grandparents want the swing that they can swing with them. The merry go round that ground level is accessible for a wheelchair so the parents do not have to take them out of the wheelchair they can roll themselves on. All are sustainable. There is also PowerPoint slides of play equipment that are more in nature and not bright and ugly. The last slide is the rock climbing features. It would be on a small scale. Climbing and jumping are huge for sensory children. It helps get their energy out.

Matthew Hoshal: I think the idea behind this is to have a nice park that is all the same theme. It's all tied together and more inviting, so it's not broken up between the different sections of the park.

Michelle Hoshal: I think a lot of the Harper's playground style/theme can be used in both parks. The big play structure on one of the slides would incorporate our culture like we were talking about.

Tad Jacobson: For mining they have the equipment I talked about earlier where they use their hands and feet to dig. Kind of like you're operating machinery without an engine.

Pete Gauna: If Freeport would be willing to give us a bed of a haul truck and we could come up with an idea of what to do with it. If you wanted tires, I'm sure they will give us tires.

Nora Rogers: Maybe we should put that at Firth Park so people know that is associated with Safford.

Matthew Hoshal: One of the ideas John and I talked about is we have these ideas for these parks but none of us know now to design these. There are people who can come in and conceptualize the flow of the design together. Something that you could put in your presentation is that we need a park designer.

Matthew Hoshal: Showed fit core video obstacle course. Tad Jacobson agreed that would go good at 10th and 10th. Pete Gauna: To me it would go good at the Discovery Park & 8th Ave because that is the fitness park with the walking path and equipment. 10th and 10th is more of the cornhole, pickleball and hanging out park. To me we are mixing them too much and there needs to be a theme.

Michelle Hoshal: Discovery Park & 8th Ave has the amphitheater, food truck and area for farmers market with a big gathering space.

Matthew Hoshal: I do agree with what Pete is saying about mixing them too much. I think we need a theme with each. I think having the workout equipment spread out along the walking path instead of one spot is a good idea. Toni Palomino and Nora Rogers agree.

Nora Rogers: Having the fit core at 10th and 10th. It fits more in that age group for our teens.

Matthew Hoshal: We talked about 10th and 10th having cornhole, pickleball. 13 plus activities. A large green space area and some type of child's equipment-we talked about doing that slide. And we are going to do a path around 10th and 10th also. People can walk around on their lunch breaks, it's more center in town. Asphalt or concrete.

Pete Gauna: I was thinking more of a ninja warrior type for older kids/adult at Discovery Park & 8th Ave and a teenage phase fit core at 10th and 10th.

Nora Rogers: There were a few to choose from with age groups. If you would like to look and bring a picture from the website.

Tad Jacobson: I think fit core at 10th and 10th. More high schoolers/middle schoolers would use it as they walk home from school. The work out equipment needs to be at Discovery Park & 8th Ave. Toni Palomino: Yeah that was my thought.

Matthew Hoshal: The layout for 10th and 10th with pickleball, fit core area, cornhole area, small hill playground that spirals up so it is all inclusive because it has ramps. There will be cinderblock walls on west and east side to create a barrier between the neighborhoods there. We can put a mural on it.

Tad Jacobson: Can we put soccer goals in the retention basin? I like where it is going. It makes more sense.

Nora Rogers: There is a picture of a steel post at the top of the soccer fields that goes up and it's multifunctional.

Matthew Hoshal: We will take these ideas back and have the Public Works Director update the designs for our presentation.

Jaime Embick: And that might eventually go to a designer. So where we put things on there isn't necessarily where they will stay.

Matthew Hoshal: I will create a rough draft of the presentation for the next meeting. You can pick it apart and we will edit it and get ready for council meeting. It would be nice if you were all present. Michelle Hoshal & Nora Rogers: Invite people who care and have input to come to the meeting and show support. The nice thing about this is at the time we are bringing it to council is when we are talking about budget.

Michelle Hoshal: So the pickle balls are not going in at Firth Park right? How long will it take. El Paso Park was created over a year and a half ago.

Matthew Hoshal: The money has already been allocation for El Paso Park. Nothing has for Firth Park so if you bring your suggestion to not put any money into Firth Park until the homeless situation is addressed and putting that possible funding toward 10th and 10th. Unfortunately,

things do revolve around the budget cycle. El Paso Park we added a splash pad and went out and got more funding for it. So when a new idea comes in it changes how the progress is going.

Nora Rogers: Safford is due for some good parks. Our taxes need to go back into Safford. Our parks have not been updated since I was a kid. If you have family members or people who care have them come promote at the council meeting.

Matthew Hoshal: It's not just the parks it's the beautification. Just planting trees to make it look nice, make it look alive.

Michelle Hoshal: How does Thatcher just make things happen and get things done? Why are we dragging our feet? How do we make that happen?

Tad Jacobson: It's their culture. They have more money. They care about looks and are very competitive. The citizens give donations and they put it into their town. And we are trying to change that.

Matthew Hoshal: The big part of putting this committee together was to gain public input. We want to make a difference.

Pete Gauna: I think the problem here has been why should I donate? I don't see where it's going. I have not seen any improvement in years.

Nora Rogers: But when we start making changes and start showing the community, we're investing in our community then people are going to start backing up.

Pete Gauna: Absolutely I agree 100%. If we are going to do this do it right. Don't just put up a table with shade over. Let's do what all these pictures show. People will start getting excited.

Tad Jacobson: I'd rather not spread us thin and just do whatever we need to do to make one right. With El Paso park make that a nice place and people will get excited and we can say we have more in the works. The proof is they can see something.

Nora Rogers: Ask businesses to donate. Curtis Landscaping to donate trees. Safford High School has a tree house project that actually plant trees, they get them for free and plant them.'

Matthew Hoshal: We could get community involved with volleyball or baseball teams. The city doesn't have a big recreation department. So when we do these parks inhouse to cut costs, it takes time because we have to pull from other departments.

Nora Rogers: I would like to add on Discovery Blvd & 8th Ave we have a room to add a playground structure. We could add more things and put it in the power point. If you have pictures bring them.

December 1st meeting – Matthew will draft council presentation for committee review and will do a run through of the presentation.

5. **NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday, December 1, 2021, 5:30pm at Safford Library Program Room.

6. **ADJOURN: 6:53pm**