

CARSON CITY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the September 19, 2006 Meeting

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A regular meeting of the Carson City Parks and Recreation Commission was scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 19, 2006 in the Community Center Sierra Room, 851 East William Street, Carson City, Nevada.

PRESENT: Chairperson Donna Curtis
John Felesina
Tom Keeton
Pete Livermore
John McKenna
Glenn Tierney

STAFF: Roger Moellendorf, Parks and Recreation Director
Scott Fahrenbruch, Parks and Recreation Director of Operations
Vern Krahm, Park Planner
Larry Werner, City Engineer
Stacey Giomi, Fire Chief
Walter Sullivan, Planning Division Director
Mary-Margaret Madden, Senior Deputy District Attorney
Kathleen King, Recording Secretary

NOTE: A recording of these proceedings, the commission's agenda materials, and any written comments or documentation provided to the recording secretary during the meeting are public record, on file in the Clerk-Recorder's Office. These materials are available for review during regular business hours.

CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM (5:31:13) - Chairperson Curtis called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. Roll was called; a quorum was present. Vice Chairperson Hoffman and Commissioners Bauman and Davis were absent.

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS (5:31:50) - None.

1. ACTION ON APPROVAL OF MINUTES - August 15, 2006 (5:32:20) - Commissioner Livermore moved to approve the minutes, as presented. Commissioner Keeton seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

2. MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA (5:32:10) - None.

3. AGENDA ITEMS:

3-A. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ONLY REGARDING A PROPOSED NEW SHOOTING FACILITY EAST OF DEER RUN ROAD IN CARSON CITY (5:32:48) - Chairperson Curtis introduced this item, and provided an overview of the format by which it would be presented and public comment addressed. Mr. Moellendorf reviewed the staff report.

(5:35:54) Dennis Crabb, a member of the Capitol City Gun Club ("CCGC") and Volunteer Coordinator for transfer of the facility, provided background information on the Capitol City Shooting Sports Alliance and possible transfer of the facility. He narrated a Power Point presentation, copies of which were included in the commissioners' agenda materials, which included discussion of immediate and long-term goals, commitments and vision, and community benefits. He advised that a sign up sheet would be circulated

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through the audience, with the intent of scheduling a series of neighborhood meetings. He narrated photographs of the existing site, and conceptual photographs of a facility clubhouse. He emphasized the conceptual nature of the plan.

(5:43:54) J.R. Hildebrand, representing the Capitol City Shooting Sports Alliance, reviewed the conceptual site plan which was displayed in the meeting room. He advised of important site considerations, including gun safety, impact to existing neighbors, and maximizing land use to accommodate as many facilities as possible for the benefit of the entire community. He emphasized that the displayed site plan was “the initial thought.” He reviewed the displayed site plan, and pointed out and described the following elements: access; the proposed archery area; the proposed parking area; the proposed clubhouse location which would include a pro shop, a restaurant, and an indoor pistol range; the proposed location for two five-stand fields; the proposed location for a sporting clays field; a proposed paint ball facility; proposed helice fields; and a proposed rifle facility.

Mr. Crabb referred to a conceptual cross-section which showed topography of the site. He reviewed the “next steps” to support and assist with transfer of the facility; to meet with neighbors, City staff, advisory committee members, and other interested parties to identify issues raised by the proposed site plan and to attempt to resolve those issues; and to devise workable mitigation and funding strategies for construction and maintenance. He circulated the sign up sheet through the audience. He introduced CCGC Manager Dave Fiedler and Board Member Paul Laird.

Commissioner Keeton inquired as to utilities at the site. Mr. Hildebrand advised of a power line at the site, but that there is no water. Commissioner Keeton expressed the opinion that the design was favorable to the shotgun shooters “and everybody else can take second place.” He expressed the further opinion that the design was “not necessarily acceptable” to rifle shooters. He advised of having driven in the area and expressed the opinion that the road will be washed out “half the time.” He expressed the opinion that the proposed plan would provide less for the rifle shooters than what is presently available. He compared the proposed rifle range to the existing range. He expressed the opinion that some pistol shooters may prefer to be outside. He expressed concern over safety accommodations in consideration of weapon ranges. Mr. Crabb expressed appreciation for the input. He advised of having attempted to establish an ongoing relationship with everyone involved to ensure that the proposed design is not only as good as what presently exists but better “from everybody’s standpoint. If that means rearranging the site plan, so be it.” Commissioner Keeton expressed the opinion that the proposal “is not even equal.” He expressed concern over the potential for property damage as cars drive by the paint ball range to access the rifle range. He reiterated that the road is “impossible to work with at this point and will take a very long time to get done.” He expressed the opinion that most of the amenities could not be considered until power and water are available. He suggested cutting a road through from the existing rifle range to the proposed new rifle range.

Commissioner Livermore noted that the rifle range had been moved three or four times over the years, always to a location that was subject to future relocation. He agreed with Commissioner Keeton’s comments, and discussed access issues associated with the existing rifle range. He expressed concern over safety, fire, and litter. He suggested paintball may be more of a fad.

Commissioner McKenna expressed the opinion that Carson City needs a first-class shooting facility, and agreed it could generate revenue. He advised that the School District is supportive of shooting sports. The NJROTC shooting team is nationally recognized. Commissioner McKenna agreed that shooting deserves

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a place in the City's recreational scheme. He expressed the opinion that the real question is over the location of a shooting facility; that it should not be on the east side of town, especially in the wild horse area and near residences. He expressed the further opinion that the shooting facility should be in the Centennial Park area.

Commissioner Felesina agreed with Commissioner McKenna's comments. He advised of having considered the location "just over the ridge from Centennial Park" as a potential location for the shooting facility. He expressed a preference for leaving the subject area open for anyone to access. He agreed that the City needs a shooting facility, but expressed concerns over raising sufficient funding to develop the facility and no outdoor pistol range.

Commissioner Tierney noted that most of the comments didn't have much to do with the proximity of the proposed facility to residences "and the residential type and flavor of life in the area." He agreed with concerns expressed by Commissioner Keeton and other commissioners over the rifle range oriented toward the clubhouse area. He advised of having driven to the area earlier in the day and of walking along the ridge to study the proposed design. In response to a question, Mr. Hildebrand explained helice.

Chairperson Curtis noted that the parks and recreation master plan element references a coordinated shooting facility. She inquired as to whether other sites had been considered. Mr. Crabb advised that original discussions with staff indicated the proposed location. He acknowledged the area would have to be fenced from a safety standpoint. The site would be accessible, "just not in the same way that it is now." In response to a question, Mr. Crabb advised of the concept to keep the various ranges at least a half mile away from existing residences. The concept would be refined during the neighborhood meetings. In response to a further question, Mr. Crabb advised that no funding mechanism had yet been identified. He acknowledged the project would require a great deal of funding. The underlying assumption is that the existing gun club would be sold, the land transferred to Carson City, and a portion of the proceeds from the sale would be used to construct the new facility. Maintenance funding would be generated from site operations. If the concept moves forward, it would be incumbent upon the club to produce a financing plan.

In response to a question regarding topography, Chief Giomi reminded the commissioners that the proposed plan is "somewhere between an idea and a concept." Because it is so nebulous, he was unable to comment on any specifics. Generally speaking, Chief Giomi advised that a great deal of review would be required from the Planning and Engineering Divisions, the Fire and Health Departments, and from law enforcement. In response to a comment, Chief Giomi advised that fire access would require using one of the specialty vehicles designed for fighting wild land fires.

Commissioner Keeton reminded the commissioners that there is presently free access to the rifle and pistol ranges. In response to a question, Mr. Moellendorf explained the proposal to include the land upon which the trap facility is located in the federal lands bill. Commissioner McKenna expressed a preference for limiting the discussion to whether the land should be included in the federal lands bill and, if so, what should be done with it. He suggested acquiring the land for open space and designating a separate location for the shooting sports facility. He emphasized the need for a high quality shooting facility, and agreed that it will generate revenue. He discussed experiences at shooting facilities in other states.

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Mr. Crabb responded to questions regarding the time table associated with development of the shooting facility. Commissioner Livermore noted that the development would not happen “overnight.” Mr. Crabb agreed that the purpose of the agenda item was not approval of a shooting facility in the subject location. He acknowledged an understanding of the public and permitting processes associated with any such development. Chairperson Curtis provided direction with regard to public comment, and opened this item.

(6:25:45) Eddie Mayo, 115 South Deer Run Road, advised of having lived at his residence for 25 years and in Carson City for 37 years. He provided an overview of his presentation. He expressed support for the City’s quest for a new shooting range site, but disagreement with the proposed site. He advised of having attended the August 3rd and August 21st Open Space Advisory Committee meetings. In response to a question, Mr. Moellendorf was unaware as to the origin of the proposal to consolidate the various shooting ranges at the subject location. In response to a further question, Mr. Moellendorf explained the partnership agreement between the City and the CCGC. In response to an additional question, he advised that the City paid for the property approximately ten years ago, in partnership with the Nevada Department of Wildlife, through a Pittman-Robertson grant. Commissioner Livermore advised that several residential construction tax allocations were applied to the facility over a period of years. In response to a question, Mr. Moellendorf advised that the site is proposed to be identified on the lands bill map for purpose of recreation and / or a shooting sports facility. He agreed with Chief Giomi’s characterization of the proposal as “somewhere between an idea and a concept.” He advised that the proposed plan presented by the CCGC representatives was also conceptual.

Mr. Mayo advised that he was very upset the City would consider a shooting range facility within one-half mile of a residential area. He further advised he is able to hear shooting activities from the range that is one mile and a half from his residence. He advised of being upset that the proposal “has got this far without any discussion with the residents of the area.” He expressed the opinion that it was the responsibility of those proposing the facility to have visited with the residents. Commissioner Livermore advised this was the first time he had heard the proposal. Mr. Mayo advised that current Bureau of Land Management plans for the area call for open space and multiple-use recreation. The area is used by “walkers, runners, mountain bikers, horseback riders, dog walkers and dog drivers, ATVs, motorcycles, sight seers, family outings.” Mr. Mayo expressed the opinion that shooting facilities are single-use recreation and “will eliminate all other uses.” He advised that the area is deer and wild horse habitat, and is not “a wasteland” or “an unoccupied space.” “It is a wonderful piece of open space that the public has been using for many years.” Mr. Mayo described his experiences as a resident of the area over the past 25 years. He described wildlife in the area, circulated photographs among the commissioners, and narrated the same. He expressed concerns over fire. He expressed the opinion that approving the area for a shooting range will turn it into a wasteland. He requested the commission to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to reject the use of this area for a shooting range and to seek another site; and to remove the public lands in the Pinion Hills area from the federal lands bill. He advised that the subject area is already occupied and used as a recreational site. The proposed use is unsafe because of bullets and fire, irritating because of noise, lowers property values, adversely affects the residents’ quality of life, and usurps the community’s right to historic use. He offered to conduct a tour of the area for the commissioners. In response to a question, Mr. Mayo expressed a preference for the property to remain in Bureau of Land Management control. In response to a further question, he advised of no problem with shooting sports provided they are conducted safely and in the proper location.

(6:41:59) Mark Hunstiger, 101 Deer Run Road, advised that he is a neighbor of Mr. Mayo’s. He further advised that the proposed shotgun range appears to be roughly 1800 feet from his bedroom window. He described the area of Deer Run Road as a “natural amphitheater.” He described the distances between his

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property and the existing shotgun and rifle ranges. He advised that he is a member of the National Rifle Association, a hunter, a fisherman, a retired police officer and firearms trainer. He noted that the subject area is residential in nature. His home was built over 30 years ago. The quietness of the area is “one of the great values” to his property. He expressed concern over the noise associated with the proposed facility. In response to a question, he advised of not knowing enough about either agency to express an opinion with regard to the property remaining in BLM control or being transferred to City control. He deferred to Mr. Mayo’s opinion.

(6:46:00) Eddie Melenyd, 1650 Deer Run Road, expressed concern over additional traffic in the area and discussed traffic safety issues associated with the intersection of Deer Run Road and Laurel. He expressed concern over automobiles with guns and ammunition driving through a residential area. He discussed concerns over fire safety.

(6:47:40) Jeanne McCraw, 1677 Quail Lane, advised of having been a resident of the area for 39 years. She described her family relationships and advised that she and her children ride horses in the area every day. She agreed with concerns over existing traffic issues in the area, and expressed concern over additional traffic. She is a retired firearms instructor from the Nevada Department of Public Safety. She expressed concern over lead issues associated with wildlife in the area. She expressed support for a shooting facility, and advised she is a hunter and fisherperson. She owns firearms, but expressed opposition to the proposed location because of children, animals, and fire safety concerns.

(6:50:05) Merlyn Paine, a twelve-year resident of the Pinion Hills area, circulated maps among the commissioners. She advised that the Pinion Hills area has over 200 homes. She agreed the area is a natural amphitheater. She advised of being able to hear the noise from the existing shooting facilities. She expressed concern over the “one way in / one way out” access to the canyon, and blocking access to the River. She narrated the maps. She discussed concerns over fire, water access, insurance, and wind. She expressed support for a shooting facility. She requested an alternative site and that the subject property be removed from the lands bill. She expressed a preference for the land to remain under BLM control.

(7:02:44) CCGC Manager Dave Fiedler advised the proposal is for a state-of-the-art facility “where there is no clear sky.” He expressed an interest in input from other sport shooters. He advised that a great deal of research has been conducted with the NSSF. He explained the “no clear sky” design and responded to questions regarding concerns over ricocheting bullets. He discussed design of the facility to address concerns over noise, fire, and water.

(7:07:20) Ken Watters, a CCGC member, advised that the CCGC is a “very highly organized and regulated shooting facility that engages only in shotgun sports.” He advised of the need for a great deal of input from other recreational shooters. He expressed appreciation for Commissioner McKenna’s support of a regional shooting facility.

(7:09:17) Scott Dutcher, 1310 South Deer Run Road, described how his family uses the subject area. He expressed support for the operations at the existing gun club, archery and shooting facilities. He expressed support for City acquisition of the subject property to be used as open space. He expressed concern over the Deer Run Road, Pinion Hills, and Mexican Dam areas which are clearly posted against shooting firearms within a certain distance of the river. He inquired as to how the proposed use would fit with the City’s ordinance. Mr. Moellendorf advised that if the proposal moves forward at the subject location, it will be submitted to an extensive and exhaustive permitting process, which will consider areas where shooting is allowed within the City limits. Mr. Dutcher inquired as to the extraordinary merits of the

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proposal to set aside a City ordinance. Mr. Moellendorf expressed the belief that the strength of the proposal represents an effort to combine all types of shooting activities to create a multi-use facility with regional and national attraction. Mr. Dutcher expressed the belief that the reason for the City's ordinance against shooting in residential areas is public safety. He noted that the area is residential in nature. He expressed the opinion that if the gun club is truly concerned about safety, such a facility would not be proposed for a residential area or near the River.

(7:12:28) Marsha Burgess, a resident of the Pinion Hills area for over 40 years, advised of having raised her family in the area and of having used it for recreation over the years. She expressed support for her neighbors' concerns. She advised of having served on the Northern Nevada Railroad Foundation for the last twelve years. She discussed funding allocated to the railroad project, and advised that it will "bring over 400,000 riders per year" representing a great economic benefit to the City. She expressed opposition to putting the "V&T ridership in jeopardy because of a gun club or perceived shots being heard around the railroad." She expressed the opinion that the railroad project needs to be considered in association with other facilities in the area.

(7:13:57) Vice President of the Carson Rifle and Pistol Club Chris Hill provided background information on his club. He advised of not knowing "who the Capitol City Shooting Sports Alliance is." He expressed concern and advised that the Carson Rifle and Pistol Club serves as the steward of the existing rifle range. He agreed with Commissioner Keeton regarding the infeasibility of a rifle range "down in that canyon." He expressed concern over the proposal because of never having been consulted. He expressed the understanding that the rifle range is secure for its present use. He expressed a preference for staying in the present location. He expressed a willingness to work with other shooting clubs to identify a central location suitable to everybody.

In response to a question, Mr. Fiedler discussed attempts to contact representatives of other shooting clubs. He requested contact information from Mr. Hill.

(7:17:09) Brian Doyal, an "access advocate", expressed concern over the proposal in that it would close existing trails. He requested that if the land is acquired by the City, it remain in open space.

(7:17:52) Betty Kelly circulated photographs of wild horses which use the area. She expressed a preference for the land to remain in BLM control.

(7:20:11) Kirby Nish, 6230 Pursia Road, advised that he purchased his home over thirty years ago, because of the residential character of the neighborhood. He expressed the opinion that residents of the area oppose the location for the proposed shooting facility. He suggested that zoning is the "striking" issue, and that the proposed facility is in "glaring contrast" to the residential area in the "fringe of the county." He discussed the compact growth theme of the comprehensive master plan in recognition of the freeway bypass. He expressed concern over emergency service access, and reiterated his opposition to the proposed location of the shooting facility.

In response to a question, Mr. Moellendorf advised that the subject property is designated as BLM open space in the comprehensive master plan. Two pathways are designated for the perimeter of the property in the unified pathways master plan element.

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(7:26:19) Bill Ferguss, Christmas Tree Drive, expressed the opinion that professional assistance is needed to determine an appropriate location for the shooting facility. He advised that the WNCC baseball facility is near his residence, and suggested “there is no reason ... our City can’t find some sort of facility that serves this community in a way that is not offensive to the neighbors.” He described his recreational use of the subject property, and discussed inappropriate uses of the land. He suggested there should be alternatives to the proposed location.

(7:28:55) Jocelyne Helzer advised of having lived at her residence on Deer Run Road for thirteen years, and described her recreational use of the Pinion Hills area. She read prepared comments into the record. She encouraged the commissioners to walk along the power line road, the western edge of the proposed site to see for themselves “one of the most gorgeous panoramic viewpoints in Carson City.” She expressed the opinion that the best and highest use of the area is “open recreational space to be protected and enjoyed by everyone.” She suggested the area may be appropriate for a rim trail in the future. She expressed the opinion that “noise is an extremely important issue,” and pointed out that the freeway bypass “had to meet noise standards.” She advised of “ongoing complaints from the residents near the training facility at the south end of town.” She expressed the opinion that the “sharp, erratic, frightening pop of bullets would destroy our quality of life.” She expressed concerns over safety, and stated that the proposal is reckless. She expressed the opinion that using the lands bill for “a group to relocate their club and to build a restaurant sets a bad precedent.” She requested the commissioners to consider the residents’ continued peace, safety and use of the Pinion Hills, to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that Deer Run Road be eliminated from the lands bill, and to seek an appropriate shooting facility site. She noted the Open Space Advisory Committee’s charge “to preserve and protect the quality of the natural environment,” and expressed the hope that they would consider this issue again and make a similar recommendation.

Chairperson Curtis advised that the federal lands bill would be agendized for review at the October 17th commission meeting. In response to a question, Mr. Moellendorf expressed the belief that, based upon the commissioners’ and public testimony, the plan needs some work. Dialogue needs to take place between the various recreational shooters. Mr. Moellendorf agreed that a first-rate shooting facility is needed which can accommodate all forms of recreational shooting. He further agreed that such a facility would be a valuable community asset, including economic development in terms of regional and even national tournaments. He expressed the belief that the residents’ concerns must be carefully considered. He reviewed the various issues over the proposed design, fire safety, access, etc., and advised that they will have to be addressed. He emphasized that the proposal is not a “done deal,” but a plan brought forward by the Carson City Shooting Alliance for the purpose of discussion with the commission and to receive input.

In response to Chairperson Curtis’ request for input from the commissioners, Ms. Madden cautioned the commission against deliberation toward a decision on an item which was not agendized for action. In response to a question, Mr. Moellendorf suggested that the citizens continue to contact staff and elected officials to make their opinions known. He reiterated that the entire federal lands bill would be agendized for the October 17th commission meeting. He provided contact information for the local officials. Commissioner Keeton thanked the Carson City Shooting Alliance representatives for their presentation. Commissioner Livermore thanked the citizens for their attendance and participation. Chairperson Curtis recessed the meeting at 7:43 p.m. and reconvened at 7:53 p.m.

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3-B. UPDATE ONLY ON FLOOD DAMAGE AND SCHEDULED REPAIRS TO THE DRAINAGE CHANNEL IN MILLS PARK (7:53:17) - Mr. Fahrenbruch reviewed the staff report. In response to a question, he advised that the east entrance to the park will be re-landscaped once all construction activities are completed. He described the work to be done as part of the project. He acknowledged that FEMA funding is paying for the project. In response to a comment, he expressed the hope that the project has been engineering in such a way as to avoid future erosion. In response to a question, he advised that the project extends across Saliman Road; that sediment will be deposited in the fields to the east.

3-C. ACTION REGARDING SETTING A DATE FOR A TOUR OF CARSON CITY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES FOR THE COMMISSIONERS (8:03:56) - Mr. Moellendorf reviewed the staff report. Chairperson Curtis requested that potential future park sites be included in the tour, if possible. She entertained a motion. **Commissioner Livermore moved to set the date of September 30th for the annual park and recreation facility tour for commissioners. Commissioner Keeton seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.**

4. NON-ACTION ITEMS:

STATUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM STAFF (8:07:10) - Mr. Krahn provided background information on the Fuji Park urban fishing pond project, and advised of funding awarded through the Sierra Pacific Power Company Resource Foundation and the Nevada Department of Wildlife's Question #1 allocation. He reviewed the project time table, and thanked the Sierra Pacific Power Company Resource Foundation and the Nevada Department of Wildlife. In response to a question, he reviewed construction costs in light of the available funding. He responded to additional questions regarding background on the urban fishing pond. Mr. Moellendorf complimented Mr. Krahn on his efforts associated with the urban fishing pond project. Mr. Fahrenbruch advised of a volunteer Carson Rifle and Pistol Range clean up day scheduled for Saturday, September 30th.

COMMISSIONERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION (8:15:26) - Chairperson Curtis requested staff to distribute the June 26, 2006 Question #1 subcommittee minutes to the commissioners. She requested copies of the August 3, 2006 Open Space Advisory Committee minutes as well. Commissioner Livermore requested copies of the Parks and Recreation Department organizational chart. In response to a question, Mr. Krahn explained the process by which the master plan can be amended.

5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

6. ACTION ON ADJOURNMENT (8:19:35) - Commissioner Keeton moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m. Commissioner Felesina seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

The Minutes of the September 19, 2006 Carson City Parks and Recreation Commission meeting are so approved this 7th day of November, 2006.

DONNA J. CURTIS, Chair