

**CITY OF PHOENIX  
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD  
SUMMARY MINUTES  
January 22, 2026**

Virtual meeting hosted on Webex.

<p><b><u>Board Members Present</u></b>          Tony Moya, Chair          Aubrey Barnwell (virtual)          Jessica Fotinos (virtual)          Rick Naimark          Sarah Porter (virtual)          Emma Viera</p> <p><b><u>Board Members Absent</u></b>          Leon Thomas</p>	<p><b><u>Staff Present</u></b>          Cynthia Aguilar          Dustin Cammack          Martin Whitfield          Brandie I. Barrett          Felicita Mendoza          Rosanne Albright          Scott Coughlin          Tannia Ruiz          Cynthia Peiz          Jana Benson          Ray Ficcaglia          Luzivette Broderick          Dalia Adams</p>	<p><b><u>Community Members</u></b>          Michael Svetz          Jerry Van Gasse</p>
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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Moya called the meeting to order at 5 p.m. with Board members Barnwell, Naimark and Viera in attendance.

**2. INFORMATION ONLY**

No formal presentation on these items. Information only.

**2a. Quarterly Code of Conduct Update**

**2b. North Mountain Park Renovation Update**

Board member Barnwell moved to accept items 2a and 2b, with Board member Viera seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Jerry Van Gasse requested information on the source of funds for the North Mountain Park renovations and questioned the feasibility of the project timeline.

Board member Porter joined the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

**3. CONSENT ITEMS**

No formal presentation on these items. Consent and request for approval only.

**3a. Parks and Recreation Board Summary Minutes – November 17, 2025**

**3b. 2026 NCAA Women’s Final Four Events**

**3c. Barrio Unidos Park - Tonatierra Community Development Institute City Centzomilpan Community Heritage Garden**

**3d. Donation from Phoenix Suns/Phoenix Mercury Foundation for Court Improvements at Rose Mofford Sports Complex and Renovation of the Grant Park Gymnasium**

**3e. Heritage Square Sub-Permit Agreement - Haustgen House**

Board member Viera moved to approve consent items 3a through 3e, with Board member Barnwell seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

**4. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Information and discussion items will be presented verbally to the Parks Board and are for discussion only. No action will take place on these items at this meeting.

**4a. Parks Master Plan Update**

Director Whitfield gave an overview of the Parks and Recreation Department master plan process and introduced Consultant Mike Svez from Pros Consulting. Mr. Svez outlined the master plan approach, progress, and goals, noting that it will guide future park development, facilities, programming, water conservation, crime prevention, and equity efforts. He also explained the statistically valid community survey used in the process, emphasizing that it reflects a random, geographically and demographically representative sample of residents.

Mr. Svez highlighted key findings from the survey across seven major themes. The results show strong community support for the City of Phoenix and recognition that the Parks and Recreation Department reflects local values and enhances quality of life. Survey data also indicate that park visitation in Phoenix aligns with national trends: 78 percent of residents visit a park at least once a year, and nearly half visit monthly. Most park use is self-directed, and the primary barriers to increased visitation are safety concerns and limited restroom availability.

Board member Fotinos joined the meeting at 5:18 p.m.

Respondents identified park lighting, repairs, and restroom maintenance as top facility needs, all tied to overall park safety. While program participation in Phoenix was slightly below the national average, those who did participate rated program quality higher than average, with lack of awareness being the main reason others did not take part. Most residents learn about offerings through the City website or word of mouth. The survey showed no low-priority amenities or programs, and respondents expressed strongest

support for maintaining and improving existing facilities.. Mr. Svetz also presented service-level maps used to identify gaps in recreation centers, parks, and pools, and outlined next steps in the master plan, including updated service-level mapping, park equity analysis, operational assessments, and capital improvement prioritization.

Board member Naimark commended the survey and use of technology to engage the community. He asked about the timing of the project and how it aligns with the upcoming bond process.

Director Whitfield explained the master plan is expected to conclude in late summer/early fall. Departments are expected to submit their bond projects by the end of the calendar year, so the team will work together to incorporate the master plan into those projects.

Board Member Porter commended the survey and noted that its findings on resident priorities differ from the concerns typically raised at Parks and Recreation Board meetings. She emphasized that respondents are generally unconcerned about their distance from parks or transportation access. Porter also referenced the Trust for Public Land survey, which ranks cities based on walkable park access and consistently scores Phoenix low. She concluded by thanking the team for their presentation.

Chairman Moya welcomed new Board members Rick Naimark and Jessica Fotinos, noting that this meeting is one of many updates they will receive on the master plan process and encouraging them to ask questions as they arise. He also asked for information on the number of residents who use City parks annually.

Mr. Svetz responded that 78 percent of residents use the park annually and almost half visit a park at least once weekly.

#### **4b. Urban Farming Project – 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and McDowell**

Director Whitfield introduced the urban farming project at 32nd Avenue and McDowell Road and explained the City's acquisition of the 11-acre parcel in 2005. He noted the current project is a collaboration between the Office of Environmental Programs, Street Transportation Department, Office of Innovation, and the Parks and Recreation Department. He introduced Environmental Programs Manager Roseanne Albright from the Office of Environmental Programs.

Ms. Albright explained that the project site has been fully cleaned and prepared for development, including the removal of underground storage tanks and adjustments to soil pH, with funding provided by the Office of Environmental Programs. She outlined the City's goal of ensuring that all residents have access to healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant food and noted that the proposed urban farm is located within a food desert where it can provide economic opportunities, improved access to fresh food, and stronger community connections. She connected the project to earlier community outreach for the 2030 Food Action Plan, explaining that it addresses four of the ten community identified solutions and helps respond to broader food system challenges. She added that additional community engagement will take place from February to June 2026 within a two-mile radius of the site, with a focus on the Maryvale community.

Director Whitfield presented the timeline for the community outreach and a goal of issuing a request for proposals in July 2026. He noted that the Department is looking to secure funding to bring water to the site.

Board member Porter inquired whether the garden beds will be raised.

Ms. Albright replied that there may be a combination of raised beds, greenhouses, vertical farming, storage containers, and in-ground farming as the site is in an SRP irrigation area.

Board member Porter clarified that the Groundwater Management Act requires that newly irrigated lands be raised and prohibits newly irrigated in-ground agriculture.

Chairman Moya referenced the project timeline and highlighted the importance of obtaining cost estimates for bringing water to the site and securing sustainable funding.

Director Whitfield replied that cost estimates for the infrastructure to bring the water to the site are ongoing.

Chairman Moya emphasized that while securing sustainable funding can be challenging, it is also a vital step toward ensuring the long-term success of projects like this. He expressed optimism that with the right support, the project can continue to grow and avoid any risk of interruption.

#### **4c. 2023 General Obligation (GO) Bond – Aquatic Facility Renovations at Maryvale, Marivue and Holiday Parks**

Assistant Director Brandie Barrett explained that Maryvale, Marivue and Holiday parks were selected for major pool and splashpad improvements funded by \$14.35 million from the voter-approved 2023 General Obligation Bond program. She introduced Deputy Director Scott Coughlin and recognized the design partnership with CVL Consultants.

Deputy Director Coughlin shared that Maryvale will receive an upgraded regional pool, while the existing pools at Marivue and Holiday will be transformed into modern splashpads designed to conserve water, increase shade, and reduce heat. He also highlighted the extensive community engagement process, which included public meetings, school visits, postcards, emails, social media outreach, and QR codes placed in the parks to gather feedback.

Deputy Director Coughlin noted that residents were given three design options for each site. The community selected a design for Maryvale that includes three pools, one of which will be heated, along with a double slide, a relocated equipment room, and expanded shade and tree coverage. The Marivue splashpad will replace the current pool and feature eight to twelve spray elements and shaded areas. The Holiday splashpad will include an interactive dump bucket, shaded seating, and a ramada with picnic tables. He added that splashpads offer longer operating seasons and extended daily hours, remaining open from eight in the morning to eight in the evening from Memorial Day through October. The project timeline includes six to nine months for final design, followed by nine to twelve months of construction and celebratory grand opening events.

Board member Porter asked if the splashpads are accessible without paying a fee.

Deputy Director Coughlin confirmed they will be free to the public with no surrounding gate to enter.

Board member Viera recommended that the design consider using solar panels, which can also provide shade and energy for lighting. She also asked if there will be non-asphalt materials used for parking to address heat mitigation.

Deputy Director Coughlin responded that the projects will not affect the parking lots and the design team can look into solar panels.

Board member Naimark commended the staff and spoke about the difficulties related to ongoing pool maintenance. He expressed gratitude for the community support of the conversion of pools into splashpads, which he considered a better use of capital investments. He praised the accessibility of the splashpads.

Chairman Moya asked if there will be City staff at the splashpads.

Deputy Director Coughlin answered there will be no lifeguard or City staff at the location, but there will be a call box that connects to the front desk operator who can dispatch staff. There will also be an emergency stop button if needed.

Chairman Moya inquired about the distance between the three parks.

Deputy Director Coughlin replied less than two miles.

Chairman Moya questioned the age of the pools that will be converted.

Deputy Director Coughlin explained these pools were constructed in the late 1970's or early 1980's. He highlighted the opportunities the Maryvale pool will create to provide access to a mini-water park for \$1 and with the heated pool, the opportunity to train lifeguards on the city's west side.

Chairman Moya thanked the team for the level of community engagement.

## **5. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

There were no public speakers.

## **6. BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Chairman Moya congratulated the two new board members, Director Whitfield, and Deputy City Manager Aguilar on their new positions. He highlighted the free morning yoga class offered at the Encanto Park Clubhouse on the second Saturday of each month. He also announced the upcoming 30th annual National Trail Trek, a 15.5-mile hike across South Mountain Park on Saturday, February 21, 2026.

## **7. BOARD COMMENTS/REQUEST**

Board member Viera congratulated the team on the informative and comprehensive presentations to start the year.

Board Member Naimark noted that the Code of Conduct report was thorough but challenging to absorb in its current format. He asked for a graphical breakdown showing the types of violations over time to make the information easier to understand. He also requested a response to the public inquiry about funding for the North Mountain Renovation Project.

Director Whitfield responded that the team will provide graphics to support the code of conduct data and information on the Phoenix Parks and Preserve Initiative funding.

## **8. DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING**

Assistant Director Barrett highlighted the Hike with a Firefighter, Hear from a Park Ranger event, which will be held on Saturday, January 31 at South Mountain Park and Preserve. The event is free and open to all members of the public. She described the 38th Annual APS Electric Light Parade, which occurred in December and drew over 400,000 attendees. She thanked the Northeast Division and staff across the Department that made the event a success.

Director Whitfield displayed photos from the 2026 Itty Bitty Golf Open, in which over 100 children aged three to five participated. The event taught kids golf skills and provided each with a free set of golf clubs donated by the Junior Golf Association of Arizona. He discussed events to celebrate the birthdate of Martin Luther King Jr., which included the annual Living the Dream Awards Breakfast and the commemorative march from Eastlake Park to Margaret T. Hance Park.

Assistant Director Barrett announced the retirement of Special Operations Division Deputy Director Coughlin in February.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Moya adjourned the meeting at 6:23 p.m.