

**CITY OF PHOENIX
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD SUMMARY
MINUTES
August 19, 2026**

Virtual meeting hosted on Webex.
Parks Board meetings are recorded.

<u>Board Members Present</u> Tony Moya, Chair Emma Viera Aubrey Barnwell (virtual) Rick Naimark Leon Thomas Jessica Fotinos <u>Board Members Absent</u> Sarah Porter	<u>Staff Present</u> Dustin Cammack Martin Whitfield Brandie I. Barrett Todd Shackelford Joe Diaz Tannia Ruiz Cindy Peiz Jana Krcek Dalia Adams Danielle Poveromo Lance Gray Bob Adams Tony Salinas	<u>Community Members</u> Chelsey McHale Paul Davenport Jeremy Thacker Tim Sierakowski
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1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Moya called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. with Board members Thomas, Viera, Naimark, Barnwell and Fotinos in attendance.

2. CONSENT ITEMS

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

2a. Parks and Recreation Board Summary Minutes – June 25, 2026

2b. Event and Vending Request at City Parks

2c. Community Engagement Request for 9/11 Art Project at Hance Park

2d. Ratification of Sponsorship Agreement with Phoenix Suns/Phoenix Mercury Foundation for Jr. Suns Program and Court Improvements at Verde Park, Kids Street Park and Harmon Park

2e. Agreement with Ahwatukee Little League and Phoenix Pony League to Utilize Park Facility at Mountain Vista Park

2f. Donation from Parasol US Foundation Inc. for Improvements at Esteban Park

Board member Viera moved to approve consent items 2a through 2f, with Board member Thomas seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Board Member Barnwell had technical issues online and did not vote.

3. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Discussion and possible action items are for information, discussion, and possible action.

3a. Renaming of Cesar Chavez Park and Community Center

Assistant Director Brandie I. Barrett presented an overview of the renaming process for the park and community center at 35th Avenue and Baseline Road, explaining that the City Council had approved actions on March 25, 2026, to begin renaming all City facilities bearing the Cesar Chavez name. She noted that staff received authorization on March 26 to begin the formal renaming process and later conducted a community survey from May 15 to June 14. She also reported that a Citizen's Petition to rename both facilities to Jesse Owens Park and Community Center was submitted on June 17, leading the Parks and Recreation Board to table the item on June 26 while awaiting the City Council's decision. On July 1, the City Council denied the petition and returned the matter to the Board.

Assistant Director Barrett explained that the park at 35th Avenue and Baseline covers more than 181 acres and was designated as a regional park with a five mile service radius. She noted that community input guided both facility improvements and the potential renaming of the park and community center. To support this effort, the Department created an electronic survey with six name options. The name options included: Arizona Sunset, Desert Oasis, Aguila, Laveen, Holstein Heritage, and Farmworkers. These options were selected for their cultural or historical significance relevant to the area. She reported that staff promoted the survey through QR code signs, flyers, digital signage, extensive email outreach, and social media. The survey ran from May 15 to June 14, 2026, received just over 1,800 responses. She concluded the presentation letting the Board know that Aguila Park and Community Center received the highest number of votes and recommended the Board approve the new name.

Chairman Moya opened the floor for public comment.

Jeremy Thacker highlighted his petition to rename the park after Jesse Owens, explaining that although some council members acknowledged Owens, their concerns centered on the existing name of César Chávez Park rather than opposition to his proposal. He noted that a public records request he submitted yielded only minimal information about the renaming survey, which he believed reflected a lack of transparency. Thacker advocated for the Jesse Owens name based on concerns about fairness in the process and expressed that the approach had become overly generic, potentially diminishing the significance of the renaming effort.

Tim Sierakowski questioned the reliability of the recent survey, noting the low response rate compared with the large number of emails sent. He asked whether outreach extended beyond online distribution and whether any follow-up was conducted. Tim expressed frustration over the lack of discussion by the Parks Board and requested to review both the survey and the methodology behind the limited participation.

Chairman Moya opened the floor for questions to the Board members.

Board member Naimark inquired about Brandie's updates regarding the council's recommendation to rename certain facilities in memory of Jesse Owens. He asked if any

progress had been made on that front or if they were waiting for a vote to initiate the process.

Director Whitfield confirmed that Vice Mayor Hodge-Washington was the council member who directed staff during the July 1st council meeting to rename a city facility in honor of Jesse Owens. He confirmed that his initiative was a city-wide effort, not solely limited to the parks department. He mentioned that the parks department had proposed a few amenities to be named after Jesse Owens and that they would collaborate with the City Manager's office and council for this effort.

Board member Fotinos moved to approve item 3a, with Board member Naimark seconding the motion. The motion passed, 4-1

Board member Barnwell had technical issues and did not vote.

4. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Chelsey McHale described how the loss of her brother on Camelback Mountain motivated her to advocate for stronger safety measures. She noted that despite repeated efforts to have a damaged safety sign repaired, it remained unaddressed. To promote safe hiking, she created an educational program for middle school children, with plans to expand to more students, and emphasized the importance of park rangers visiting schools to teach safe hiking practices.

Paul Davenport, a Board member of the Arcadia Osborn Neighborhood Association, asked the Parks and Recreation Board to add an item to a future agenda concerning the proposed use of City parkland for a private driveway connected to a planned gated community of sixty homes. He noted that residents were concerned about the driveway crossing Old Cross Canal Park and questioned whether proper coordination with city departments had occurred. He emphasized the need to review the project's compliance with city standards and shared that the zoning attorney indicated the proposal would go before the Camelback East Village Planning Committee in September.

Jeremy Thacker raised concerns about the trailhead schedule change at Echo Canyon, which was moved from 4:30 AM to 5:00 AM. He noted that there was no public notice or explanation provided, and while the 30-minute shift may seem minor, it has created dangerous situations due to a lack of communication. Additionally, this change has led to traffic issues, as people are waiting in their cars, blocking the entire lane while the gates are closed.

Tim Sierakowski emphasized the need for proper public notification before any changes are made. He questioned those who approved of recent changes at Camelback Mountain and raised concerns about the overall management of the parks.

Chairman Moya opened the floor for questions to the Board members.

Board member Fotinos requested an update from the parks staff about the sign mentioned by Chalsey McHale regarding her brother.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Moya adjourned the meeting at 5:29 p.m.