CITY OF PHOENIX
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD SUMMARY
MINUTES
September 24, 2026

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

Board Members Present	**Staff Present**	**Community Members**
Tony Moya, Chair	Dustin Cammack	Jeremy Thacker
Emma Viera (Virtual)	Martin Whitfield	Michael Norton (virtual)
Aubrey Barnwell	Brandie I. Barrett	Dana Chappell (virtual)
Rick Naimark	Todd Shackelford	Judy Maltz
Leon Thomas	Danielle Poveromo	Jerry Van Gasse
Jessica Fotinos	Regina Iversen	Thomas Kresge
	Felicita Mendoza	Tim Sierakoswki
Board Members Absent	Michael Svetz	
Sarah Porter	Tannia Ruiz	
	Cindy Peiz	
	Jana Krcek	
	Isaac Pina	
	Sierra Hernandez	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Moya called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. with Board members Thomas, Viera, Naimark, Barnwell and Fotinos in attendance.

2. INFORMATION ONLY

No formal presentation on these items. For information only.

2a. Code of Conduct Update

3. CONSENT ONLY

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

3a. Parks and Recreation Board Summary Minutes – September 24, 2026

3b. Request to Enter into an Agreement for the Operation and Maintenance of Papago Archery Range

3c. South Mountain Communication Towers-Approval of California Internet L.P. DBA Geolinks Sub-license on the Vertical Bridge CC FM, LLC (CT51390)

3d. Request to Vend at City of Phoenix Parks

3e. American Indian Veteran's Memorial at Steele Indian School Park

Board member Naimark moved to approve consent items 3a through 3e, with Board member Thomas seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Chairman Moya opened the floor for public comment.

Jeremy Thacker requested a review of the tower contracts, expressing concern that the City may be approving subleases at rates that are not financially beneficial. He believes the current agreements should be re-evaluated to ensure they meet safety standards and maximize potential revenue.

4. Information and Discussion Items

Information and discussion items are for discussion only. There is no action on these items.

4a. 2026 Summer Programming- Post Season Update

Deputy Danielle Poveromo presented a report on the 2026 PHXPlays Summer Camp, highlighting that the program provided a safe, affordable, and enriching experience for approximately 3,370 children ages six to 12 across 26 community centers over an eight- to ten-week period. With several sites operating at no cost and others offering low fees, the program remained the most affordable in the Valley and saw rising demand, with some centers filling within hours of registration. Consistent programming ensured high-quality activities such as field trips, swim days, structured rotations, talent shows, and an end-of-season carnival. Deputy Poveromo also emphasized the Teen Leadership Program, which engaged older youth in leadership development, community service, and camp support roles. Strong attendance, positive family feedback, and a continued focus on safety, inclusivity, and youth development underscored the program's essential role in supporting Phoenix families during the summer.

Aquatics Coordinator Regina Iversen presented on the 2026 Aquatics Season, noting that more than 300,000 visitors attended City pools, with most locations offering free swim for youth through the Kool Kids program and additional free-admission initiatives like "Summer Swim in D8." The Department provided over 12,000 swim lessons at full capacity, supported by donations that kept rates the lowest in the region and expanded access for high-risk age groups. Staffing efforts brought on 574 aquatics employees and included ongoing lifeguard training and leadership development programs to strengthen future management. Planning for the 2027 season is underway alongside major renovation projects funded through the GO Bond process, including upgrades at Maryvale and Harmon Pools and the conversion of several older pools into splash pads.

Chairman Moya opened the floor for public comment.

Jeremy Thacker requested clarification on 12,000 participants and eight lessons per participant.

Chairman Moya requested to go to the swim lesson slide.

Aquatics Coordinator Iversen explained to Chairman Moya that there were over 12,000 participants registered and that each session is eight thirty-minute classes within a two-week period.

Board Member Jessica Fotinos asked whether, given the high demand for swim lessons and lengthy waitlists, the Department has explored offering lessons during the off-season at

heated pools to increase access.

Director Martin Whitfield explained that the regional pool at Maryvale, currently part of the GO Bond project, will include a heated component that will allow staff to offer programming, including swim lessons, during the off-season.

Aquatics Coordinator Regina Iversen explained that while demand for swim lessons remains extremely high, staff works diligently each day to move participants off the waitlist. She noted that off-season lessons were offered last November, though staffing continues to be a challenge during non-summer months. To expand access, the Department added weekend swim lessons in August, allowing more families to participate.

4b. Parks Master Plan Level of Service

Special Projects Administrator Felicita Mendoza, who oversees the Master Plan project, introduced PROS Consulting representative Mike Svetz, who presented the latest findings and Level of Service analysis for the Parks Master Plan. He explained that the update outlines how the plan will guide the long-term growth and sustainability of Phoenix's park system by strengthening existing parks, improving facilities, and thoughtfully developing remaining parklands, while emphasizing water conservation, safety, equity, and inclusivity. Early assessments show strong public satisfaction but also highlight priorities such as maintenance, shade, restrooms, and safe, functional amenities. The Level of Service mapping helps illustrate how access varies across the city and informs decisions about where reinvestment, optimization, or expansion will have the greatest impact. These strategies, which focus on protecting what works, renewing aging assets, optimizing current resources, and expanding only where need aligns with long-term capacity, will shape future recommendations. With additional analysis underway and community meetings scheduled throughout fall 2026, the update was presented for information and discussion only.

Chairman Moya opened the floor for public comment.

Michael Norton stated that despite funding the 10-year parks master plan three years ago, the City has made minimal progress in identifying and improving park assets. He questioned why the process has taken so long.

Board Member Naimark asked whether the assessment applies only to flatland parks and facilities, noting that no comparable assessment appears to have been done for preserves. He added that, while new mountains cannot be created, land acquisition or improved access could be considered and asked how those needs would be incorporated.

Pros Consultant Svetz stated that the project scope focused exclusively on flatland parks, and a separate water conservation strategy was developed in parallel and integrated into the overall plan. These two elements formed the core of the effort, and the preserves were not included in the assessment.

Board Member Naimark stated that a comprehensive study of the preserve system, including access, improvements, and maintenance, would be a worthwhile city investment unless such a study already exists. He also asked how the completion of the master plan and public feedback process will align with planning for the upcoming bond program.

Pros Consultant Mike Svetz stated that the parks master plan is designed to align with future bond priorities and reinforce the current five-year CIP. He noted that the plan will guide staff as they prepare requests for future bond and CIP projects.

Board Member Naimark is this how staff will provide input to the bond committee.

Director Whitfield stated that the previous director prioritized developing flatland parks before moving on to preserve areas. He added that staff is already preparing for the 2028 GO Bond, with project recommendations due by November 2026 and aligned with mayor, council, and city management guidance.

5. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Dana Chappell explained that he is coordinating with staff to further develop a trail heat and safety proposal, which already has support from the Assistant Fire Chief. He noted that the initial concept has been shared and he hopes to continue working with staff to prepare a full proposal.

Judy Maltz expressed concerns that the Arcadian Square development would encroach on Cross Cut Canal Park and introduce unprecedented private residential access through public parkland. She urged the City to study pedestrian impacts and emphasized that public parks must not be handed over to private interests without exceptional justification**.**

Jerry Van Gasse objected to efforts to change Echo Canyon's long-standing 4:30 a.m. opening time, noting that hikers, rangers, and media have relied on it for years. He urged the City to formally restore the 4:30 a.m. opening time.

Chairman Moya asked Director Whitfield for clarification regarding the opening hours at Echo Canyon.

Director Whitfield clarified that the 2013 agreement with the Echo Canyon HOA specifies the gate must be open from sunrise to sunset.

Thomas Kresge stated that directing a gated community's traffic through Cross Cut Canal Park would disrupt a heavily used pedestrian and cycling path and compromise public safety. He urged the City to require the development to use its established access on Indian School Road instead of routing vehicles through the park.

Tim Sierakowski questioned past agreements with the Echo Canyon HOA. He criticized the City's handling of trail maintenance and planning. He argued that the current ten-year plan is outdated.

Jeremy Thacker noted that Echo Canyon's long-standing 4:30 a.m. opening time should not be overridden by citing a sunrise-to-sunset agreement and emphasized that only the board can formally change it. He also questioned why the master plan excludes golf course impacts despite their significant land and water use.

6. BOARD PERSON'S REPORT

Chairman Moya announced the fall and Halloween events happening in October and he also

gave a farewell to Rick Naimark, since this was his last Parks and Recreation Board Meeting.

7. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

No comments or requests.

8. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Assistant Director Todd Shackelford highlighted the 25th-anniversary 9/11 ceremony at Steele Indian School Park, which featured city leaders, a ceremonial bell ringing, honor guards, the Phoenix Boys Choir, and a panel discussion with Arizona Task Force One and local youth. He also announced the start of the downtown special event season, noting that Ballet Arizona's Ballet Under the Stars will be held at Steele Indian School Park on September 26 with an expected audience of about 2,000 people.

Assistant Director Brandie I. Barrett reported that on September 14 the Monarch Month pollinator planting at City Hall drew strong participation and media attention, with Mayor Kate Gallego helping plant milkweed to support endangered monarch butterflies. She also highlighted the August 22 grand opening of upgraded sports courts and amenities at Pierce Park, thanking staff and partners for delivering a successful community event.

Director Whitfield reported that the Phoenix Suns and Phoenix Mercury Foundation honored Diana Taurasi by renovating three community basketball courts and held a ribbon-cutting at Harmon Park on August 14, 2026, with more than 60 attendees. He also highlighted South Mountain Community Center's 50th anniversary celebration, where about 200 community members gathered to honor the center's history, partnerships, and ongoing impact.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Moya adjourned the meeting at 6:24 p.m.