

**CITY OF PHOENIX
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
SUMMARY MINUTES
November 17, 2025**

Virtual meeting hosted on Webex.

<u>Board Members Present</u>	<u>Staff Present</u>	<u>Community Members</u>
Kelly Dalton, Chair Aubrey Barnwell (virtual) Tony Moya Sarah Porter (virtual) Emma Viera (virtual) Leon Thomas Dorina Bustamante	Cynthia Aguilar Mitch Menchaca Brandie I. Barrett Dustin Cammack Felicita Mendoza Michael Svetz Tannia Ruiz Cynthia Peiz Jana Benson Dalia Adams	Jerry Van Gasse

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. INFORMATION ONLY

No formal presentation on these items. Information only.

Board member Bustamante arrived.

2a. Impact Melanoma Program Update

3. CONSENT ITEMS

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

3a. Parks and Recreation Board Summary Minutes – October 23, 2025

Board member Moya moved to approve consent item 3a, with Board member Thomas seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0

3b. Annual Request to Vend

Board member Moya moved to approve consent item 3b, with Board member

Thomas seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0

3c. Request Authorization to Issue Small Recreation Centers Request for Proposals

Board member Viera recused herself on item 3c.

Board member Moya moved to approve consent item 3c, with Board member Thomas seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Chairperson Dalton announced that agenda item 5a would be moved out of order, stating that they would return to agenda item 4 after the presentation on item 5a.

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

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

5a. Update on the Pilot and Request for Approval to Permanently Transition Management of Arts and Cultural Facilities from Parks and Recreation to the Arts and Culture Department

The Office of Arts and Culture Director Mitch Menchaca presented a request for Board authorization to permanently transition the management of five cultural facilities from the Parks and Recreation Department to the Office of Arts and Culture. He explained that these facilities include the Phoenix Center for the Arts, the Thunderbird Arts Center, Tovrea Castle, the Shemer Art Center, and the city-operated S'edav Va'aki Museum, all of which provide important arts, education, and cultural services to the community through nonprofit partnerships or city operations.

Director Menchaca highlighted the Office of Arts and Culture's experience managing major cultural facilities, its success in securing bond funding and its recent investments in facility improvements. He stated that transferring management would improve coordination, provide dedicated property oversight, strengthen technical and grant support, and better integrate these facilities into the City's cultural network.

He concluded by recommending Board approval to authorize the permanent transition and allow staff to finalize roles, budgets, and responsibilities through a memorandum of understanding.

Chairperson Dalton opened the floor for questions.

Board member Moya asked for clarification on what it means to "permanently turn over" the facilities to Arts and Culture. He also wanted to know whether this refers

to budgets, staffing or only physical facilities.

Director Menchaca answered yes, budgets, staff and physical facilities would be permanent assets of the Office of Arts and Culture.

Board member Moya asked how success of this pilot program has been measured.

Director Menchaca emphasized the importance of having staff who understand the specialized work of museums and arts facilities. He explained that staff with museum and theater experience are better able to advocate for partners and help secure resources. He also noted that the Office of Arts and Culture supports arts nonprofits with board development and fundraising. He added that partner organizations are eager to work with Arts and Culture.

Director Aguilar added that Mitch and his team can provide a higher level of oversight because they manage a smaller portfolio of facilities compared to the larger park system. She explained that this structure allows a dedicated team to work closely with each facility liaison, which has been a significant support to the organizations.

Chairperson Dalton noted that she is aware that a MOU between Arts and Culture and Parks is pending this approval and asked whether existing long-term agreements, including those spanning ten years, would return to the Board for review and approval.

Director Aguilar clarified that once these are no longer Parks assets, they would no longer require Board review and approval.

Director Menchaca added that these items would go to City Council.

Board member Bustamante made the motion for the approval of the permanent transition of the facility management of five cultural facilities managed by the Parks and Recreation Department to the Arts and Culture Department. Board member Moya seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously 6-0.

4. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

4a. Parks Master Plan Update

Board member Porter joined the meeting via Webex.

Consultant Michael Svetz presented to the Board on the Parks Master Plan and provided an overview of its purpose, process, and key findings. He explained that the Parks Master Plan is intended to guide the long-term growth, sustainability, and equity of the City's parks system and represents the first comprehensive

update since 1988.

Mr. Svetz noted that the plan is shaped by extensive community engagement and consultant-led park assessments that gathered resident feedback on park use, existing conditions and desired amenities. He reported that while the parks system is highly valued for its diverse amenities, neighborhood character and flexible spaces, it faces challenges related to aging infrastructure, access and connectivity, safety, visibility, limited shade and supporting amenities.

Mr. Svetz explained that community feedback clearly showed a desire to take care of existing park assets, improve cleanliness, lighting, restrooms, and shade, and support parks that are easy to use for everyday and family activities. He also noted that residents prioritized investment in aquatics, dog parks, and sports courts. He concluded by stating that this feedback will guide the next phase of work as the Department continues developing the Parks Master Plan.

Chairperson Dalton opened the discussion by asking whether any demographic information was collected from individuals who responded to the survey.

Mr. Svetz stated that demographic data is available and can be used to filter survey responses. He also noted that the survey must be demographically and geographically representative of all communities in order to be statistically valid.

Chairperson Dalton asked if anything stood out in the assessment findings.

Mr. Svetz responded that nothing was unexpected, noting that his team had recently completed a similar Master Plan assessment in Clark County, Nevada, which shares a desert environment and comparable themes.

Chairperson Dalton asked if the response rate of 22 percent is typical?

Mr. Svetz replied yes that anything between 20 and 25 percent is normal.

Board Member Moya commented that the new expansion is positive, but that expansion and ongoing maintenance may be competing priorities. He asked how many years it will take for the plan to become a reality and how that timeline could affect the growth that is already underway.

Director Aguilar explained that once all data is collected, the department will be able to better prioritize existing funding. Most of this funding comes from the voter approved Phoenix Parks and Preserves Initiative sales tax, which runs through 2038 and generally produces 30 to 40 million dollars each year. She noted that the new data will support stronger funding decisions and grant applications, especially since the City has not completed a system wide master plan since 1988. She added that the department will need to rank community needs, balance growth with reinvestment in current assets, and work within the restrictions tied to

PPPI funds and impact fees. She emphasized that this information will greatly improve the department's ability to advocate for resources during the City budget process and in discussions with the Mayor and Council.

Board Member Moya shared that he attended two recent events, a new park opening and the reopening of the renovated pool at Eastlake. He noted the strong community excitement at both events and agreed that investing in improvements to existing parks is very important.

Board Member Thomas asked whether improvements to existing parks are closely related to the asset management plan.

Director Aguilar replied yes, explaining that the department already uses a system to develop its five year capital improvement plan. This plan covers larger projects, and there is also separate funding for light improvements and playground replacements.

Board Member Thomas asked if there is anything from Clark County's approach that could be used to support the City's parks asset management plan.

Mr. Svetz, responded that Clark County used an equitable funding approach, ensuring every area received the same level of investment, whether for expansion or reinvestment which made positive strides within their master plan process.

Board member Bustamante asked when the master plan would be completed.

Director Aguilar responded that staff expects draft report to review by summer 2026.

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

5b. Parks and Recreation Board Chair Nominations

Chairperson Dalton made a motion for Moya to become the new Chairperson, which Board members Bustamante seconded, Motion passed unanimously with a vote of 7-0.

6. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Jerry Van Gasse expressed his concerns about the closure of the trail at Echo Canyon, noting a lack of updates from both staff and the website.

7. BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson Dalton announced the farewell of Board member Bustamante, noting this would be her last meeting. She expressed gratitude for her 10.5 years of

service, acknowledging the tremendous insight and knowledge she brought to the board. Chairperson Dalton encouraged fellow board members to share their praises during the next agenda item.

8. BOARD COMMENTS/REQUEST

Board members expressed their gratitude towards Board Member Bustamante for her contributions and affirmed that she has been a wonderful asset to the team. They wished her well in her future endeavors, recognizing the positive impact she made during her tenure.

Board member Bustamante expresses gratitude to the team, reflecting on the pride and nostalgia of their shared achievements. She highlighted the importance of the personal connections formed through collaboration, making this message a touching farewell that celebrates teamwork and their collective experiences.

9. DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING

Assistant Director Barrett shared information about the recent annual Nature Fest Phoenix at Rio Salado. Attendance this year reached approximately 900, doubling that of last year. Additionally, 115 participants took part in a pre-event river cleanup, collecting around 130 bags of trash and invasive species.

Director Aguilar provided updates on recent City leadership changes, welcoming former City Manager Ed Zuercher and noting that she will temporarily report to Deputy City Manager David Matthews. She also announced the grand opening of Eastlake pool, highlighted the Noche en Blanco event, and shared updates on fall tree planting initiatives at Maryvale, Mountain View II, and Cactus parks.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Dalton adjourned the meeting at 6:07 p.m.