

MINUTES
Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission
September 25, 2024

The Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission met in a scheduled session on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, in the Washoe County Commission Chambers, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada.

The meeting was televised live and replayed on Washoe Channel at: <https://www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff/Communications/wctv-live.php> also on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/WashoeCountyTV>

Chair Joell called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Kevin Joell, Sean Hill, Timothy Dake, Miles Gurtler, Lisa Rode (Zoom), Mark Neumann, Neal Jones, Nicholas-Martin Kearney, Mariluz Garcia

Absent: Michaelangelo Aranda

Staff Present: Brandon Roman, Colleen Wallace Barnum, Aaron Smith, Jennifer Roebuck, Jennifer Gustafson, Jennifer Conlan Thomson

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was recited.

3. Reading of Zoom Instructions

Jennifer Gustafson read the Zoom instructions.

4. Public Comment

Public comment by Lawrence McNutt. Mr. McNutt stated he is an owner of a property on Fourth Street called River Inn. Mr. McNutt appreciates the opportunity to do a quick introduction of what's been provided to Washoe County so far with an unsolicited bid to the Truckee River Access Park. Mr. Nutt stated they started working a year and a half ago with council members and found opportunities to bring the property back to the community that fits hand in hand with City and County Plans for outdoor recreation. Mr. McNutt asked Commissioners to please look through the brochure provided, so they are familiar as the project moves forward, and to please feel free to ask any questions or provide input, and they are also asking for community input.

Public comment by Dana Miller, Ms. Miller stated she is one of the owners of River Inn and that the property was built to withstand anything and is a big part of Washoe County and Reno History. Ms. Miller stated they issued a question on social media to gather public input and proceeded to share some of those responses. Ms. Miller stated that it was a problem property with vagrants and vandals, but they solved some issues, cleaned up the rooms and is in much better shape now.

In regard to Chair Joell's question about working with staff, Mr. McNutt stated they are working

with Eric Crump, and it should be circulating when he returns from vacation. Mr. McNutt also let Commissioners know they were welcome to coordinate a visit.

Public comment by Frances Tryon, Ms. Tryon stated she knows Commissioners typically get angry comments but wanted to commend the Commission on their outstanding job and the work being done at South Valleys, for not voting for the stadium, and that it has built a lot of trust in the Commissioners the South Valleys community. Ms. Tryon asked that as the planning for the park is happening to use common sense and consider the infrastructure, streets, and if it can support more growth, as well as what needs to be done to make access better for people. Ms. Tryon thanked the Commissioners for their efforts and diligence.

Public comment by Penny Brock, Ms. Brock stated that she wanted to address the design plan in Item 9 for South Valleys Regional Park, as the residents do not know what it is and don't understand why the plan was not attached to the link, and they are not assured that the plan does not include the soccer stadium. Ms. Brock stated there was a copy of 2015 master plan that was paid for by money from Reno Ice. Ms. Brock stated they want to know what the design plan is for and stated the Commission Chair stated the Soccer Stadium proposal would be sent back to Park Commission.

Chair Joell stated there were some e-mailed comments that had similar concerns, that got a response including the plan that is out to bid. Chair Joell also stated that plan is out to bid and can be accessed by anyone through Demand Star, the online bid platform. Chair Joell has been assured by staff that it does not include a soccer stadium and matches the 2015 master plan.

Public comment by Mark Neumann, Mr. Neumann stated that he drove by Davis Creek Park on the day that the Davis Fire started as a small grass fire and was amazed at how fast it expanded. Mr. Neumann wanted to give his kudos to the different agencies and fire crews from across the nation that fought the fire and fought to keep it down to under 6,000 acres.

5. Approval of the Draft Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of July 24, 2024.

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Commissioner Kearney stated there was a misplaced dollar sign in the July 24th, 2024, minutes.

Motion by Commissioner Neumann to approve the Draft Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of July 24, 2024, with the corrections. Second by Commissioner Jones. t

No public comment. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Discussion and recommendation about changing the date for the November 27 Open Space and Regional Park Commission scheduled meeting to another date in either November or December.

Motion by Commissioner Dake to move the meeting to November 20th, 2024. Commissioners and staff confirmed there were no objections to that date and that the date was available. Second by Commissioner Neumann.

No public comment. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Presentation, discussion, and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve and adopt the Regional Trails Plan. This comprehensive plan focuses on the existing and proposed trail network, user experiences, awareness of resources, and coordination of trail planning efforts. The goal of the plan is improving the trail network and creating a better level of connectivity and access throughout the region. Presentation by Truckee Meadows Trails Coordinator Jay Howard.

Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent, stated this has been a work in progress since 2017 and is a collaborative effort between land managers, non-profits and the public. Colleen stated Christina Thayer, Washoe County Trails Coordinator, is heavily involved. The plan provides goals and is a working and action-oriented document. Washoe County will still be moving forward with their own trails work and efforts due to recent natural disasters will be prioritized. Colleen introduced Jay Howard.

Jay Howard, Truckee Meadows Trails Coordinator, Jay Howard gave a presentation.

In regard to Commission Hill's question about Truckee Meadows Trails, Mr. Howard stated that Truckee Meadows Trails is not a non-profit but is a non-profit based program out of the Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation. At this time, additional steps have not been taken to become a non-profit.

In regard to Commissioner Hill's question about financial implications for Washoe County if adopted, Mr. Howard stated there is not, and the plan is put together as a non-profit effort through grants, there would be no requirements of Washoe County, City of Reno or City of Sparks. Commissioner Gurtler stated he expects the plan to have a positive impact for trail efforts.

In response to Commissioner Hill's question about who is included in the working group, Mr. Howard stated that the working group is made up of local governments, regional planning, TMRPA, RTC, and the trails community, including Tahoe Pyramid Trail groups, Biggest Little Trail Stewardship, Historic Virginia and Truckee Trail groups. The goal is to reach out to a wide variety of different communities including low income, people of color, and to have the trails accessible and equal to all.

In response to Commissioner Neumann's question about Chair Joell's presentation on trail standards at the Joint Commission Meeting on May 16th, 2024, being included in the plan, Mr. Howard said it will be and includes goals to improve trail net worth, which requires sustainable trails. Chair Joell stated one of the goals in the plan is to continue to work to develop trail standards, and the intent of his presentation was to get the standards into the required constructions standards that are jointly adopted by local governments. Mr. Howard stated that there most likely be a future grant written that will put money into the efforts.

In response to Commissioner Kearney's question about Truckee Meadows Trails interacting with the All-Trails app. Mr. Howard stated they have met with All Trails, and they have edit access to make changes and have been working on some edits and changes. All-Trails is not perfectly accurate and the alignment with phones is not always correct. Chair Joell added that NV Trail Finder is the app that most agencies are referring trail users to, as it vetted, ensures trails are adopted by agencies, and does not encourage trespassing on private property.

In response to Commissioner Garcia's question on whether the plan includes economic impacts, Mr. Howard stated that information is already included in the Trail Plan and report, but the working

group will determine when it is necessary to make updates and include that updated information in future annual reports.

In response to Commissioner Jone's concerns about pedestrians, bicycles and e-bikes, Mr. Howard stated this plan supports the implementation of trails and pathways and does take perspective of the quality for the basic user groups, which are hikers, cyclists and equestrian users. There is some information in the plan about how important it is to reach out to groups and make sure everyone is getting along and making accommodations for all groups. The issues with e-bikes are the purview of land managers and agencies and how they'd like to implement the rules of the roads on trails. The plan is largely about education and how to accommodate different users on trails.

In response to Chair Joell's question about the approval of the City of Reno and City of Sparks, Mr. Howard stated that it has been approved by the City of Reno Park commission and is on the calendar for City Council for October 23rd, 2024. Mr. Howard is in the process of reaching out to the City of Sparks to hopefully get the plan on their agenda for the October meeting.

In response to Commissioner Kearney's question on whether he should recuse himself from a vote as he is a volunteer for the Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation, but not with the Trails Program, Jennifer Gustafson, Deputy District Attorney, stated that he would not have to. Ms. Gustafson stated volunteer capacity would not be a legal reason to recuse but should recuse if there was a financial benefit to gain or one's personal business may be enhanced.

Chair Joell wanted to acknowledge the work that Jay Howard, Mark Kimbrough and Mike Kazmierski put into making the plan happen and was honored to be involved in the process. Chair Joell stated he is happy to see the plan coming before the Park Commission but fees he should recuse as he does do business with the foundation as well as providing estimates for some trail planning work in the future.

In response to Jennifer Gustafson's question on Chair Joell's business and how it is connected, Chair Joell stated that he owns Sierra Trail Works, and does professional trail consulting, design, planning, construction and maintenance, and has done work for Truckee Meadows Trails Foundation as well as provided estimates to Mr. Howard for future trail planning, however he is not currently under contract for any jobs with Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation, but believes there could be a perception of conflict if he were to vote for the plan. Chair Joell recused himself from the vote and left the room for the vote.

Commissioner Gurtler stated he has worked with Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation in an advisory role and works for the Bureau of Land Management. Agencies have approval power over some projects, but do not vote in any plans, only help understand federal process and what steps may need to be taken to get approval for projects.

Motion by Commissioner Neumann to recommend to Board of County Commissioners to approve and adopt the Regional Trails Plan.

Public comment by Mark Kimbrough. Mr. Kimbrough stated that the plan has been worked on for many years and wanted the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency to be involved. Mr. Kimbrough stated that it was all volunteers doing surveys and workshops, with Washoe County heavily involved but had been delayed due to Covid. Mr. Kimbrough is glad Mr. Howard was hired.

Public comment by Curtis Johnson. Mr. Johnson stated that they are non-profit in the Reno area, and they advocate, build and maintain local trails, as well as being members of the International Bicycle Association. They have built trails on Peavine, Sierra Vista Park, Sierra Front Trails, Tamarack Trails and work with the City of Reno and Washoe County on building recreation trails. Mr. Johnson is glad to see the plan coming together and would like to see the plan adopted by the agencies to become part of the required standards to have sustainable, good quality trails in the Truckee Meadows that are interconnected. Mr. Johnson urged the Commissioners to support the plan and move it forward.

Public comment by Tom Albright. Mr. Albright stated he is representing the Truckee Meadows Bicycle Alliance and would like to voice his support for the effort. Mr. Albright stated that trails are huge amenities for the health, wellbeing, and economy of the community. Mr. Albright emphasized that he likes the connectivity of the trails with surface transportation and making trails accessible to all. Mr. Albright urged Commissioners to support the plan and thanked those involved in working on it.

Second by Commissioner Gurtler. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Joell rejoined the meeting.

8. Park/Program of the month – Turf Renovations in Regional Parks by Jen Conlan Thomson

Jen Conlan Thomson, Parks Maintenance Supervisor, gave a presentation.

Chair Joell commended Jen on the job that she does and stated he has had the pleasure of working with her over the years.

In response to Commissioner Hill's question about dealing several yards of clay, Jen stated that Torres Construction worked with parks to get it back to the Roads Department.

9. Parks Reports

Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent, gave the Parks Reports. Colleen stated that it has been challenging. Programming is still happening in the parks amidst other challenges. The Galena Campfire Program and Lazy 5 Music Series has wrapped up for the season.

On July 21st, Hidden Valley had a 200-year event, what was considered a debris laden flood, meaning regardless of the infrastructure that was in the park to move stormwater would not move the debris. The decision was made to close the park immediately due to safety concerns. Roads and Parks crews worked simultaneously with different contractors and helped the community and Park.

The Mia Vista entrance was opened on Friday, August 15th. The park has been reopening with a phased approach, focusing on major drainages to ensure that if there was another rain event, the park would not take another hit, focusing on roadways that were obstructed with debris. Colleen stated there were several community groups and members that offered to volunteer, and the community support was appreciated. The tennis court, pavilion, parking areas were cleared to reestablish all parking for the recreational amenities and the park was reopened to the public on Tuesday, September 3rd, but is still a work in progress.

Shannon Windle of Hidden Valley Wild Horse Protection Fund and Corenna Vance with Wild Horse Connection helped to put up temporary fencing to keep horses out of the parks.

Trail assessments were done, and the trails are reopened, however there are sections of the Highland Loop Trail that can be used at your own risk, and appropriately signed due to drainages that were washed out.

Summergate, SNC & Torres Construction companies have been doing a lot of work in the park and appreciated.

Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent, gave an overview of the Davis Fire that started on September 7th, 2024, at Davis Creek Park.

Five structures were lost, including the residence, garage, fee booth, which was not in use, the old park office and a storage shed, in addition to fencing, signage, tools and equipment.

A rapid assessment was done, but the full assessment is still being worked on. All water and power infrastructure were connected in the old park office and will have to be reestablished, impacted areas will need to be demolished and made safe. The park may be able to partially reopen in the near future but will not be reopened until it is completely safe to do so.

Colleen shared a map of the affected areas from the fire and an overview of the loss.

The BARE Team (Burn Area Emergency Response Team) led by the United States Forest Service is looking at natural resources and potential archeological and historical resources that may have been affected by the fire and will do a full assessment of the affected areas. The plan does not include funding, but Joanne Lowden and the Emergency Management Team are looking for resources for re-seeding and re-vegetation efforts.

Will keep the park closed until the utilities are reestablished and it is completely safe for the public. Colleen stated the Browns Creek Trail and Davis Creek Park are the only Washoe County closures, but the USFS has its own closures, and she shared the current Forest Order for closures and a map.

In response to Commissioner Gurtler's question on funding, Colleen stated that they do plan to rebuild the residence but is unsure if the old office will be rebuilt, and that they may plan a new structure for all the water and power infrastructure needed. Any available funding will be looked at.

In regard to Commissioner Neumann's question regarding insurance, Colleen stated that Washoe County is self-insured and currently all expenses are being coded to the Davis Fire itself. Colleen assured commissioners that she can provide updates at all future Park Commission meetings.

Colleen stated that it has been a difficult couple of months for parks, and there is no extra funding in Parks, so the work is dependent on the existing team. There have been several people who have volunteered to help at Davis Creek and will coordinate efforts with them in the future. Colleen stated that if there are other things that may not get done in the parks, it is because the major events are being managed.

Dragon Lights Reno is starting on Friday, September 27th, 2024, and will be open to the public every day until November 30th, 2024. A portion of the proceeds do support the May Arboretum.

The Museum and Arboretum annual report was issued to the Commissioners, and Colleen stated that they will meet with the May Foundation on Monday, October 14th, 2024.

In response to Chair Joell's question about the Park Planning Report, Colleen stated Aaron Smith will give that update.

Chair Joell thanked Colleen and her staff for their efforts in handling the recent natural disasters. Chair Joell stated that he would be happy to recommend or suggest anything to the Board of County Commissioners that would help with emergency funding, and that the re-vegetation being done in a timely manner is critical to the park. Colleen stated that Parks would tap into any available resources.

Colleen thanked Truckee Meadows Fire Rescue and their team that did a phenomenal job handling the fire and keeping it at bay. County Manager Brown declared a state of emergency to get crews brought in, the concern is now managing resources post fire.

In response to Commissioner Gurtler's question regarding donations and solicitation of donations, Colleen stated Parks has and is always accepting donations, and donations can be ear tagged for Davis Fire restoration efforts but is unsure if donations can be solicited.

Aaron Smith, Division of Direction of Operations, gave the planning report.

Phase 1 of South Valleys Regional Park design work has been completed and is currently out to bid. The scope of the bidding includes grading, asphalt, concrete, roadways, parking lots, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, traffic control, and the infrastructure that supports phase 2 and 3 of the buildouts.

Chair Joell stated that bid documents are open to the public via Demand Star.

Mr. Smith stated that a soccer stadium is not in the design plan, and there are no current plans to bring the unsolicited proposal to the Board of County Commissioners. The information received regarding deed restrictions changed the opinions of the preliminary assessment that was made. The Board of County Commissioners does ultimately hold the authority to move forward.

Once the bids close, plan sets and designs will be available and are planned to go to the Board of County Commissioners on November 12th, 2024.

In response to Commissioner Neumann's question about phase 1 and the parking lots and spaces, Aaron stated that he is unsure of the number, but likely however many would be required for 3 flat fields and 4 softball fields. Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintended, added that Phase 1 needs to be completed, or the ARPA funds can be lost. It is critical to get the design done and to move forward with bidding to utilize the \$2 million in ARPA funding. Parks are actively engaged with private funders and other sources that may be an option, but those will be separate bids.

Jennifer Gustafson stated that the request for proposal is not confidential, but the bids coming in would not be published.

In response to Commissioner Neumann's question about South Virginia Street access, Aaron stated that there is not currently any permitting to access South Virginia, and the access for Reno

Ice Way was declined by the City of Reno. All access goes through the main entrance next to South Valleys Library. Aaron stated he believes that there are future plans for a road to go into South Virginia street but that is not planned out yet to confirm.

Colleen Wallace Barnum stated Whites Creek flows through the property and then northern parcel is part of the park but is in the City of Reno's sphere of influence, and all permitting has to go through the City of Reno, and there are a lot of questions that may not be able to be answered until design is further along.

Chair Joell confirmed that phase 1 is to use the ARPA allocation before it expires for curbs, gutters, asphalt and paving. Aaron stated that it is only Phase 1 going to bid and future phases have a preliminary design, and the orientation may change.

In response to Chair Joell's question about the denial of access through Reno Ice Way, Aaron stated engineers have been working on it but have been unsuccessful as the community in the apartment complexes through the north side do not want additional traffic. Aaron stated he can have the engineer speak about the issue in more detail at a future meeting, and the Commissioners stated they would like to hear from them.

Aaron Smith confirmed the plans are in alignment with the master plan update from 2015, and include baseball and soccer fields, and no soccer stadium.

In response to Chair Joell's question on the deed restrictions for the donated parcels for South Valleys Regional Park, Aaron stated that the process of the unsolicited proposal policy a preliminary assessment by staff to see if it conforms with the policy, if it provides more value to the community than it would cost, and based on that preliminary assessment it would be brought to the Board of County Commissioners through the Park Commission in order to find out if it is worth staff time to fully vet the project. In the preliminary assessment, the staff is not getting documentation from the deedholders, it is not ready to fund and does not go through the due diligence of sale, lease or transfers, unless the Board of County Commissioners is ready to support. Washoe County was led to believe that the party holding the deed restriction was not opposed to the soccer stadium and when new information was revealed, Washoe County updated the stance on the project. With that information initially, the project would not have made it out of the preliminary assessment, therefore, will not go forward and no more time will be spent on the proposal.

The Sun Valley Bike Park project is going through the design process, and bids are being solicited through October 9th, 2024, the project award proposal is expected on November 12th, 2024. Construction is expected to start the first week of December and delivery of the project is expected in late spring or early summer. Due to the specialized nature of the park amenity, the work was broken down into two categories, general/civil construction and specialized trail building/bike park construction. The scope of work for the general/civil construction includes grading, emergency access, kiosk signs, water irrigation lines, and the specialized trail building/bike park construction includes beginner, intermediate and advanced bike pump tracks, flow trails, and jump zone per plans and specifications in the bid documents.

Rancho San Rafael Regional Park Master Plan efforts are underway and close to a final draft with a record number of public input. The final draft will likely be on the agenda for the November Park Commission Meeting. Design plans for the all-inclusive playground project were completed, and construction bids close on September 17th. Work is expected to begin on November 4th, if approved in the October 22nd Board of County Commissioners meeting.

Galena Creek School House Restoration Project Phase 1 has been allowed to move forward by the Commission for Cultural Center and Historic Preservations Fund with removal of non-historic interior finishing, restoring existing plumbing, finishing carpentry, and restoration of the historic amenity.

The new Galena connector trail at Galena Creek Regional Park has been started, which connected USFS land to parking on Mt Rose Highway. It was completed in 5 volunteer days with a total of 73 participants. The connector will decrease conflict between vehicles and bike riders at Galena Creek Regional Park.

In response to Commissioner Kearney's question regarding oral histories during the Rancho San Rafael renovations project, Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent, stated that there are existing oral histories from when the park was a ranch, but is unsure if there was an oral history component in the new Master Plan, staff would look into it and get back to the Commission.

Rancho has oral histories, when park was a ranch, has histories doesn't know that I was in master plan, would have to look and get back to find out if there is an oral history component to master plan update.

10. Director's Report

Aaron Smith, Division of Direction of Operations, gave the report.

Aaron stated Washoe County has posted the position for the Park Operations Superintendent, and to please spread the word as to cast a wide net of applicants. Aaron stated that Colleen has served the community with passion, and it will be difficult to find someone as well rounded and dedicated as Colleen, but he is optimistic.

The Board of County Commissioners approved the new trailhead for Riverbend Open Space which grant funding helped to move forward.

Hidden Valley Regional Park used emergency procurement in order to repair stormwater infrastructure that posed life safety component to citizens that live around the area, reestablished drainage ditches. Issues that can be postponed were and went through the procurement process.

The Board of County Commissioners accepted a grant from Nevada Conservation and Recreation Program for another trailhead to provide access to public lands. The scope of work includes design, construction, plans, permitting access, paved roads, ADA compliant paved lots, fencing, access gates, a new loop, two stall ADA restrooms, and landscaping.

Washoe county received an unsolicited proposal from the owners of River Inn. The current status of the proposal is in the early stages of being evaluated to determine if the project aligns with policy guidelines. If it moves forward, the next steps would be to go to the Park Commission and Board of County Commissioners.

The Board of County Commissioners accepted an easement and maintenance agreement with Caughlin Ranch HOA for trail access to the Sierra Front Open Space Trail Network.

11. Commissioner Request for future agenda items

No requests or announcements from Commissioners.

12. Public Comments

Public comment by Penny Brock. Ms. Brock stated she is attending, regarding South Valleys Regional Park. South Valleys Regional Park became a park in 1990, thanks to the gift of Dr. Dorostkar, whose family holds the deed mentioned with certain parameters that must be met. The first Master Plan was done in 1993, which said it would take \$15 million to develop the park in full, the last master plan was in 2015 and does not understand why the park is still undeveloped and has now become a target of developers who consider it prime, raw land. Ms. Brock stated the taxpayers and residents in the South Valleys area want the park fully developed for retirees, dogs, and children's sports. Ms. Brock stated that the South Valleys residents have paid taxes but cannot get the info on where the money is going. Ms. Brock stated she'd like to know where the \$3 million given by Senator Rose 2-3 years ago went. She stated that the Washoe County Fiscal Year 2025 budget is \$1.2 billion, but residents are told there is no money to develop the park, and to please find the money to develop the park.

In response to Ms. Brock's comment, Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent, stated there was a grant proposal submitted by Washoe County to Senator Cortez Masto's office that was initially accepted and then denied in 2023, and no funding was received from the Senator's office.

Public comment by Marc Radow, Mr. Radow stated that he is the recipient of many e-mails from concerned community members and that it is important for Commissioners to understand that grading does not define the trajectory of the park and doesn't mean that the fields and portions talked about does not limit the project that has been proposed since the 2015 master plan. Mr. Radow stated that saying there are no current plans for a stadium is saying nothing and puts a layer of distrust on investors as they have no confidence in what South Valleys may be in the future. Mr. Radow stated he and a large number of people want to work with the Parks team and Commissioners to come up with the necessary funds to develop the park, but they cannot tell what the future vision is, and they do not want to invest in a stadium. Mr. Radow is asking for more clarity so money can be raised to develop the park.

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at **3:57pm**.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Roebuck, Office Specialist



11/22/24

Kevin Joell, Chair