

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD (MPRAB)

Tuesday, July 1, 2025
MEETING MINUTES

Location: In person at the Parks and Recreation Dept office: 1801 N 4th St NW and Zoom

Board Members Present: *At-Large* - Valerie Martinez (Chair); *District 2* - Julie Radoslovich; (Vice Chair); *District 4* - Jim Souter; *District 5* - John Ajie; *District 6* – Larry Lite; *District 7* - Annie Montes; *District 9* - Fredrica “Rickie” Bergquist

Board Members Absent: *District 1* - Vacant; *District 3* - Vacant; *District 8* - Vacant

City Staff Members Present: Cheryl Somerfeldt CIP Program Manager, Deputy Director David Flores;

Guests Present: Wilderness Society’s Urban to Wild Albuquerque Program Manager, Hally Bert

1. Call to Order

- a) Chair Valerie Martinez called the meeting to order at 11:52 am.
- b) Introduction of board members, new board members, staff, and guests.

2. Business Meeting (5 min)

- a) July 1 2025 Agenda was approved after stated revision.
- b) April 1 2025 Meeting Minutes approved unanimously.
- c) June 3 2025 Meeting Minutes approved unanimously after stated revision.

3. Public Comment Period #1

Hally Bert –Represents a coalition of about 10 park-focused community organizations.

Questions: Is a deferred maintenance response based on need or equity? How can community members advocate to address parks maintenance? Encourages the Parks Dept to be more transparent regarding equitable distribution of resources and to publish a strategic parks plan. Advocates for clarity on how parks funding/investments divided amongst projects, areas, and districts. Requests status update on Diamond Rock acquisition; and funding at Daniel Webster Park and Mesa Verde Park projects?

Response –Irrigation and trash are always a priority and continue to be maintained to the same standard (although there are calls immediately before regular trash pick-up day). Mowing and weeds are affected the most by shortages. Park is currently using temp staff and recruiting for 47 full time maintenance employees. Parks competes with other agencies with higher pay for similar work, and it can be difficult to find staff especially in the summer and with mandatory drug testing. There is an ongoing struggle to work within the operating budget and within union constraints.

Capital and Operating are two separate sources of funding. The operating budget is approved by the Mayor and City Council every year. Capital for new projects comes from different sources such as grants (State Capital Outlay depends on oil and gas revenues). The budget is geopolitically equitable because each councilor advocates for their district. Maintenance is distributed City-wide using three satellites around the city.

Staff will ask the Open Space Division for an update on the Diamond Rock Acquisition and will report next meeting.

Staff will provide an update on Officer Daniel Webster Park and Mesa Verde Park projects at the next meeting.

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METROPOLITAN PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD (MPRAB)

Tuesday, July 1, 2025
MEETING MINUTES

MPRAB - It is important for the board to advocate for an increase in parks operating budget. Longer discussions should be agenda items ahead of time going forward. MPRAB will add agenda item periodically regarding transparency and equity.

4. Old Business

a) Final Version: Guide to Organizing a Park Event

The final version is revised and shared. Parks leadership and marketing will review before posting on the Parks website. Refinements will continue through July, aiming for approval in August. The Parks main desk number will be included in the report. A Link to a budget template will be added. There is no current Parks grant funding for park activation.

b) Status: Park Renaming Request: Piedras Marcadas

This request was submitted last year with no recent communication from the applicant. The board will wait for the applicant to contact the board or staff.

c) Reminder: board field trip scheduled for Friday, August 22

Deputy Director Flores would like to visit underutilized and struggling parks. Ideas include Alamosa splash pad, Mesa Verde, Avalon (dilapidated tennis court), Silvertree (playground was burned), Los Tomases, and Los Altos pool (recently renovated). The board does not want to see previously visited parks except Daniel Webster. *Julie Radoslovich* is interested in visiting Esperanza and the Urban Forest. A list will be presented at next meeting.

5. New Business

a) Update: annual report In-progress

Reminder for board members to review the document and contribute any text or content.

b) Open Space Alliance

The Open Space Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that raises funds to support Open Space. Annie Montes would like to be the MPRAB member liaison to the Open Space Alliance. Annie can attend and Valerie will follow up with the group regarding past discussions. Have they completed their MOU update? Can their MOU include park activation or are there other options? This topic may be added to future meeting agendas.

6. Reports (20 min)

a) Directors Report

- Focused on Federal tree grants and spending funds in a federally compliant way.
- Maintenance is keeping grass longer at parks to help with irrigation.
- The new Mesa Verde project (\$2 million) will continue focus on the International District.
- *Balloon Fiesta Park*: there were 8000 people at Balloon Fiesta Park recently for Taco Fest and concerts. The grass is struggling. Other events include a senior softball tournament and cricket. Recreation has a new Asst Rec Manager.
- *Aquatics*: Swim lessons were sold out this year, so Parks is using contractor for instructors. Pools are very busy but experiencing staff shortages.
- *Construction*: Thadd Vargas is the new construction manager.

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD (MPRAB)

Tuesday, July 1, 2025
MEETING MINUTES

- Jack and Jill Park just opened again after a refresh, and is unfortunately inundated again with camping.
- Doggie Paddle is at Montgomery Pool August 9th and at Rio Grande Pool September 6th.
- National Night Out is August 5th.
- b) Staff Report
 - A public meeting for the Buena Vista Bike Blvd is on July 9. Parks is designing a new project between Buena Vista and University called Geneva's Arroyo/greenway with \$1 million allocated for Phase 1, which will include a paved trail. 95% design is nearly complete.
 - After the public meeting, the Harwood Lateral project/greenway is proceeding with a trail.
 - Dorothy Jensen Blanchard will be honored with an exhibit at the Nuclear Museum next year.
- c) Subcommittee Reports

None
- d) Board Members Roundtable
 - *Julie Radoslovich* –Lights have been added and there has been resurfacing at Wells Park. She would like to know who to contact regarding park issues? Requests flood control assessment for upper level of Pat Hurley Park especially since there were recent rains.
Response: primary options are to call the office's mail number 505-768-5353 or call 311 which enters requests into the system and are then required to be answered. Deputy Director Flores is currently looking into erosion control at Pat Hurley Park.
 - *John Ajie* - asked for a list of NM State Capital Outlay grant projects? Asks if the park name change request can be removed from the stories of us webpage?
Response: staff will send the list of governor's approved state grants to MPRAB after this meeting. The stories of us webpage is not under the control of the Parks & Rec Department, and therefore still under discussion.
 - *Jim Souter* - would like an update on the Rail Trail progress and objective? And more clarity on the previously proposed quality of life ordinance? Would like MPRAB to meet with City Councilors to further discuss a potential sales tax to improve quality of life projects. Jim would ask Council members: What enhancements in your district would benefit everyone in our City? What enhancements would you like to see in your district? Jim Souter will host National Night Out for his neighborhood on August 5th.
 - *Julie Radoslovich* - since it was a tax increase proposal, Council expressed reluctance to increase taxes given what families are facing.
 - *Larry Lite* - Do MPRAB members typically meet with their Councilors?
 - *Julie Radoslovich* meets with her City Councilor once a year.
 - *Annie Montes* - July 8th is the grand opening of the Tijeras Biozone from 9:30 to 11:45am. It is the only space in the city with active green stormwater infrastructure (GSI). Workers Memorial Park is planned to be the first park with GSI showing there is traction for GSI in the City. GSI creates a sediment bowl using natural parts of the landscape.
 - *Chair Martinez* - MPRAB would advocate in favor of the quality of life enhancement fund, and if passed, funding toward parks and/or park activation. Perhaps ask Councilors if parks would be a top priority if this ordinance is approved? And invite Councilor Baca to an MPRAB meeting to discuss. August 5th is National Night Out, which is a community night for cities and towns; a place for people to be out safely. Police officers are often invited. It is

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METROPOLITAN PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD (MPRAB)

Tuesday, July 1, 2025
MEETING MINUTES

an evening event on the same date around the country where the community is encouraged to attend their local park.

7. Public comment Period # 2

None

8. Review Action Items

- New Mexico State Capital Outlay Grant funding list will be distributed by staff to MPRAB after this meeting.
- Deputy Director Flores will work on list of parks for August 22 field trip
- Annual Report
- Guide to Organizing a Park Event
- Check with Open Space Alliance on fundraising
- Will have guest from City Forestry at next meeting

9. Public Comment Period #2

None

10. Next Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 5, 2025, 11:30 am, and Adjourn

Adjourned at 1:42pm