

**CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT**  
**METROPOLITAN PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Minutes for June 4, 2024 Meeting**

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

**Members Present:** *At-Large* - Valerie Martinez (Chair), Tony Johnson; *District 2:* Julie Radoslovich  
*District 3* - Anna N. Nelson, PhD; *District 5* - John I. Ajie; *District 7* - Cynthia D. Serna; *District 8* - Fredrica  
"Rickie" Bergquist

**Members Absent:** *District 6:* David Duhigg

**SUBCOMMITTEES:** **Board Development** - Valerie Martinez (lead); **Park Activation:** Julie Radoslovich  
(lead), Valerie Martinez, Cynthia Serna, Anna N. Nelson, PhD, Tony Johnson; **Park Promotion:** Valerie  
Martinez (lead), Julie Radoslovich, Cynthia Serna

**Guests Present:** Wes Duplantier; Christopher Ramirez (Together for Brothers)

**1. Call to Order:**

- a. Chair Valerie Martinez called the meeting to order at 12:31 pm.
- b. Introduction of Guests: Wes Duplantier, applicant for District 8 Board Member
- c. Introduction of all board members and staff. Two new board members were introduced:  
*District 5* - John I. Ajie; *District 8* - Fredrica "Rickie" Bergquist

**2. Business Meeting:**

- a. June 4 2024 Agenda approved. April and May Minutes approved.

**3. Public Comment:**

- a. Christopher Ramirez with Together for Brothers expressed concern regarding community engagement for the Phil Chacon Park renovation. There is a 3-year-old construction fence and he noted that there has not been a community update since 2018.  
Together for Brothers is working with Groundworks on park maps focusing on three neighborhoods in the Central corridor: Westgate, Downtown, and the International District. They are looking at 10-minute and 20-minute walk radii, and noticed that Westgate neighborhood has less park properties/green spaces.  
This summer, Together for Brothers will be conducting storytelling and activation of outdoor space for neighbors who live, work, play, and learn in the Central corridor to focus on equity and quality. Park activation grants are highly encouraged such as their pickleball project with Latino Outdoors at Pat Hurley Park.
- b. Director Simon responded that there was extensive public input for the Phill Chacon Park renovation. The project is now in the implementation phase with demolition in-house, requiring the fencing. The project went to bid during the pandemic, and bids came in 70% higher than expected. The mayor contributed an additional \$4 million (total \$9 million) to complete the project, expected early to mid-2025. The Parks Department maps 10-minute walk and is looking for ways to fill real gaps. Gated community parks are not counted in the 10-minute walk analysis, so this must be considered. The back-bone of the City's trail system uses the arroyo system, which is why more off-street trails occur in the newer areas north of I-40. There is no dedicated funding stream for land to address historic inequities.

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- c. Cynthia Serna mentioned Bernalillo County's alley-way project as a potential resolution.
- d. Valerie Martinez mentioned that the board has a new focus on under-utilized parks and improved community engagement process and will meet with neighborhood associations to focus on smaller parks and to see what is preventing activity. The board will add a public update to a future meeting's agenda to address community questions.
- e. Wes Duplantier attended the 8th District Constructive Conversations meeting with Dan Champine. It seemed that the public are happy with parks but support more restrooms in parks. Spoke with Council staff regarding additional board members.

**4. Old Business:**

- a. The board sent a letter regarding board membership to the mayor's office and City Council. Responses were received from the mayor's office, Councilor Bassan, and Councilor Champine who acknowledged the efforts. Some councilors have not responded, possibly due to existing representation on the board. The mayor's office is aware of similar concerns from other boards, and that it is crucial to have all 11 board members to move forward. John Agie stated that the board should be notified if there is an applicant, and that waiting with no response is especially difficult. Cynthia Serna stated that the board should emphasize that furthering applications is the board's top priority.
- b. A field trip is scheduled for June 21, from 10 am to 1 pm to visit underutilized City parks (to include Phil Chacon Park, Wells Park, and Lavaland Park). The board will contact the relevant neighborhood associations and ask them to notify constituents. Anna will not be attending.
- c. The annual report is expected to be released by the end of June.
- d. Dennis Vasquez previously presented an overview of the Parks Department and introduced the new board members. Valerie Martinez would like to invite the public to a similar presentation as an annual department update meeting, which will be added to a future agenda and advertised by the board.

**5. New Business:**

- a. New board members are encouraged to join at least one of the subcommittees: board development, park activation, or park promotion. These subcommittees meet monthly or bimonthly.
- b. The past mandala event was discussed. The board would like to develop a *park activation guide* based on best practices for neighborhood associations, residents, and others to encourage continuous improvement and to include resources for underutilized parks.

**6. Reports:**

- a. Parks and Recreation Department Director, David Simon
  - o City Council approved the 2025 fiscal year budget. The fiscal year starting in July will be challenging. Higher costs for pay raises (3-5%) and healthcare, mean that operational funds are effectively reduced by up to 20%. No maintenance funds were allocated for new projects such as the \$15 million renovation of Los Altos Park, Wells Park, and 6-7 acres of new parks, which all will require maintenance going forward.
  - o The 2025 GO bond cycle, which is the primary source of capital funding for city departments every 2 years, has started. The Parks Department's cap is \$17.5 million, and they are determining allocations for various parks. The administration will finalize

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funding decisions by January 2025 with *public input encouraged*. Public requests often include restrooms, which are costly and complex to maintain. The Department is currently at capacity for restrooms.

- City Council passed a new Sustainability Ordinance, which includes a 10-Minute Walk standard for park access, tree planting, and water conservation including reduction of non-functional turf due to the Colorado River Compact and state requirements. Rio Grande river surface level is expected to decrease 24-30% in the next 50 years.
  - The North Domingo Baca Aquatics Center’s proposed large pool project is estimated at \$70 million. A contractor has been selected to reduce costs and address the funding gap needed to complete this project.
  - Parks has a proposal for an ‘indoor sports facility’, which will include 12 basketball courts and other amenities like cheer, wrestling, and volleyball with an \$11 million budget that may need to be phased due to funding constraints (estimated at \$50 million total). Currently, looking for appropriate location.
  - City Council voted to declare Coronado Dog Park a surplus property, potentially converting it to an ABQ Fire Rescue facility. The sale proceeds will fund local parks and tree planting. This decision aims to address neighborhood concerns about vacancy. The money will stay in the area to improve local parks, including a large tree planting effort.
  - the Trust for Public Land’s has increased Albuquerque’s ParkServe Score (please review their webpage). 90% of residents live within 10 minutes of a park.
  - Albuquerque is identified as a leading City in tree planting initiatives and received \$5 million recently in grant funds for trees in equitable areas.
  - A video was shown about the new Outerspatial App, which geo-locates users in parks and trails, and board members are encouraged to download and use it.
- b. Board Members Roundtable:
- Tony Johnson will be leaving the board in the near future and mentioned the annual family day at Wilson Pool on July 14th and discussed the possibility of hosting similar events in other districts.
  - Valerie Martinez reported that her acquaintance, Scott Habermehl, was involved in a bicycling accident, and safety is important work to pursue.

**7. Public Comment:**

- a. Wes Duplantier praised the TPL ranking especially 10-minute walk to a park for its positive impact on community mental and physical health. Wes also commended on the program that opens high school lap pools in the mornings, noting information is available on the parks and rec website. People are very excited about the North Domingo Baca pool.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 6, 2024.

This meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm.