



# CITY OF LAS CRUCES

## Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

August 15, 2024

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board held a meeting on August 15, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall, Room 2007B, 700 N. Main, Las Cruces, NM.

### Members Present:

Fred Raish – At large member  
Laura Haas - District 6  
Charles Beard – District 2  
Alana Bradley - District 4  
Miley Sarah Grandjean - District 1  
Kylie Aleja Jenkins - District 5

### Members Absent:

Aracely Tellez – District 3

### Others Present:

Robert Nunez, Deputy Director, Youth Services, Parks and Recreation  
Phillip Catanach, Recreation Deputy Director, Parks & Recreation  
Hazel Nevarez, Senior Office Manager, Parks & Recreation  
Katherine Harrison-Rogers, Parks Planning and Construction Administrator  
Greg Shervanick, Public  
Leeann Jenkins

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting of August 15, 2024, at City Hall Council Chambers, 700 N. Main, Las Cruces, NM was brought to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. by Chair Raish and recognized the meeting as having a legal quorum.

### 1. Introductions:

Board Members introduced themselves and stated the district they represent. Attending staff and public introduced themselves.

### 2. Conflict of Interest:

There was no conflict of interest.

### 3. Approval of the Agenda:

1 Vice-Chair Haas moved to approve the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board  
2 Meeting Agenda for August 15, 2024, seconded by Board Member Bradley. Motion  
3 passed unanimously.  
4

5 **4. Approval of the Minutes July 18, 2024:**  
6

7 Vice-Chair Haas moved to approve the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board  
8 Meeting Minutes July 18, 2024, seconded by Board Member Beard. Motion passed  
9 unanimously.  
10

11 **5. Public Participation:**  
12

13 None.  
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15 **6. Action Items:** None.  
16

17 **7. Discussion Items:**  
18

19 **7.1 Recreation Programs Update - Phil Catanach, Recreation Services**  
20 **Deputy Director:**  
21

22 Phil Catanach stated he oversees aquatics, athletics, recreation programming,  
23 community events, and employee wellness. They provide programs and  
24 activities that build community, foster potential talent, release creativity, and  
25 improve physical wellbeing and create memorable experiences. The aquatic  
26 season for the summer goes from Memorial Day till Labor Day. Aquatics  
27 included the Regional Aquatic Center, the Natatorium, East Mesa Bataan  
28 Memorial, and Laabs outdoor pools, Mesa Verde and Unidad splash pads, and  
29 Plaza de Las Cruces interactive fountain. There are free swim days on  
30 Memorial Day, Father's Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day. They have served  
31 over 70,000 patrons since May 25 which are counted via transactions with the  
32 cashier. There are more with swim teams, and groups that come and swim  
33 with a fee. Also does not included rentals, splash pad, or interactive fountain,  
34 as those get hundreds of people each day. There were 38 lifeguards and five  
35 head-lifeguards. Provided 12 swim lesson classes with 126 participants. Have  
36 eight students to one instructor per Red Cross.  
37

38 Athletics. Provide leagues, sports sessions, open gym, and tournaments.  
39 Summer activities held at Meerscheidt Recreation Center, Ron Galla T-ball  
40 fields and Provencio/Van Dame soccer fields. Offer teen sessions Monday  
41 through Friday at Meerscheidt and each session had an average of 80 teens  
42 per day, and is very popular. Held adult basketball league, super fours sand  
43 and six by six grass volleyball tournaments, little sluggers T-ball league, youth  
44 outdoor soccer league, and indoor youth volleyball for grades 3-8. The  
45 championships are tonight and tomorrow for 6th and 7th grade. Had 8th grade  
46 this Saturday as part of the Las Cruces Public Schools and NMAA, which had

1 to be done by this Monday to participate in NMAA sports. Adult sessions for  
2 pickleball, basketball, volleyball, and fitness.  
3

4 Recreation programs. Provide athletic, fitness, recreation, wellness, social,  
5 artistic, and family programming for the community. Activities include  
6 therapeutic activities for people with cognitive or physical disabilities, art  
7 classes, community events, and community outreach with mobile recreation  
8 unit. The recreation programs oversee Frank O'Brien Community Center and  
9 East Mesa Recreation Center, and also support community events. They  
10 helped provide summer food program at East Mesa Recreation Center, held  
11 Mother and Son dance, mobile unit events throughout the community which  
12 helps people who cannot get to the centers. Also have National Night Out, Lift  
13 Up Las Cruces, Kids Expo giving out school supplies and information.  
14

15 Community events. Provide free family events for the community, encourages  
16 citizens of diverse backgrounds to socialize, network, and bond, and unites  
17 community pride and engages the community in a diverse set of events that a  
18 lot of people otherwise would not be able to participate in. Summer events  
19 were the Mayor's Jazz Fest, Music in the Park, Movies in the Park, Community  
20 Concerts, Electric Light Parade, 4th of July Concert and Fireworks. The 4th of  
21 July had about 8,000 to 10,000 on the field and reached over 25,000 with  
22 fireworks show.  
23

24 Employee wellness. Provide recreational, fitness, sports opportunities, and  
25 help promote a balanced work life structure. Goal of the program is to  
26 decrease health costs including insurance cost, sick leave use, and  
27 unproductive work time. Also provide incentive and rewards for participation.  
28 Promote healthy life choices and support encouragement. Now part of the  
29 benefit package as an employee. Ziggy challenge was tracking stats on  
30 walking distance with prizes and started a new one in July. They have  
31 challenges of eight weeks for transform to lose body fat or gain muscle or stick  
32 to a challenge. Had water polo with inner tubes. Sat volleyball tournament  
33 next week. Basketball season for employees in September. Families can also  
34 participate, not just the employee.  
35

36 The various programs are advertised on social media, along with radio and  
37 TV. Also the City just redid their webpage. Board Member Beard asked if  
38 putting info for Parks & Rec in the water bill. That is very expensive and not  
39 cost effective. They have tried to get information in all the backpacks of the  
40 students.  
41

42 Board Member Beard asked about expanding the employee wellness to  
43 others, general public, but it is geared to employees. Aside from employee  
44 wellness Parks and Rec offers 21 different fitness classes which is 48 classes  
45 every week. And then senior programs offers another ten classes. Board  
46 Member Beard also mentioned a lack of pickleball courts. There are eight on

1 the East Mesa Sports Complex, eight at Apodaca Park, rehabbing Frenger  
2 tennis courts which will be additional four courts making that up to eight courts,  
3 and Meerscheidt Recreation Center have pickleball sessions every day, which  
4 are indoor. Board Member Beard mentioned other communities have courts  
5 that can do tennis and pickleball on the same court. Katherine Harrison-  
6 Rogers mentioned that they are looking for a site to have pickleball  
7 tournaments (24-32 courts average), which does take time and money.  
8

9 **7.2 Youth Services Program Update - Robert Nunez, Youth Services Deputy**  
10 **Director:**

11 Robert Nunez stated the have out of school time programs including Keep Las  
12 Cruces Beautiful, Youth Development and Divergent Program. The summer  
13 recreation program include four sites in the City in conjunction with the public  
14 schools. This program is approximately five weeks. There were 240  
15 participants signed up. There were approximately 52 children per site. They  
16 have field trips, presenters come to the facilities, all providing a safe and  
17 constructive environment, kindergarten through fifth grade. They use City  
18 vans, public transportation, and Las Cruces Public School bus system to  
19 transport the children. Another program is A. Fielder Memorial Safe Haven  
20 the Weed and Seed program from a grant that started 23 years ago, weed out  
21 the bad, seed the good in the historic district at 906 N. Tornillo Street. This  
22 program moved to Parks and Rec in 2014. Average about 60 children per day.  
23 National Guard come to all their locations and do presentations, bring the  
24 climbing wall, obstacle courses. Teen connection, ages 12-18 offer  
25 programming which starts later in the day. Kinder through sixth children  
26 programs go from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., are provided breakfast and lunch  
27 during the day. The teenagers 10:00/11:00 a.m. given lunch and snacks.  
28 Teens do a lot of activities in the community. Partner with Friends of Organ  
29 Mountain and other biking organizations that assist. Teen programs are free.  
30 Kinder through fifth are \$100 for the summer or semester. They do community  
31 service throughout the City, all ages. Teen connection is housed at Frank  
32 O'Brien Papen Community Center. They go to approximately nine to ten  
33 schools to pick up youth, middle schools and high schools. During the summer  
34 average about 45 teens a day. This program goes 52 weeks of the year. Open  
35 majority of no school days.  
36

37  
38 Summer food program. Provided just over 19,000 meals this summer. The  
39 original nonprofit that they were doing this with declined this year and so had  
40 a bit of a late start. Partnered with Boys and Girls Club, NMSU, and other  
41 organizations that needed some meals and strategically placed them around  
42 the City. Las Cruces Public Schools also offered sites at their summer school/  
43 summer activity locations. The City does get reimbursed for a majority of the  
44 meals from ECECD through State of New Mexico at \$70,000 which was just  
45 almost fully reimbursed. They offered 12 locations and the public schools  
46 offered eight locations, anyone age one to 18 could get a free meal. Program

1 ended July 12th, and school started 22nd. The meals are prepped and Las  
2 Cruces High School, packaged in containers, and then coordinate to get the  
3 meals out. The City did this for 35 years, and then the nonprofit took it over in  
4 2010, and now back to the City. They do nutritional educational programs for  
5 the youth in this program.  
6

7 The Youth Development and Divergent program, the City just met with Las  
8 Cruces Public Schools and working closely to make sure seeing the formal  
9 referrals, informal referrals of youth ages 12-17 that need some assistance  
10 with making the right choices and not have stigma of juvenile. Recently  
11 notified, awarded and going through the process of getting signatures, from  
12 \$300,000 over the last four years to now at \$578,000 awarded from CYFD.  
13

14 Board Member Bradley asked if the programs or athletics can be used on  
15 college applications as extracurricular activities. There are volunteer  
16 programs which they would be allowed to put in volunteer hours, and also  
17 working on near-peer program.  
18

19 **7.3 Metro Verde Twin Parks and Safe Haven Improvements - Katherine**  
20 **Harrison-Rogers, Parks Planning and Construction Administrator:**  
21

22 Katherine Harrison-Rogers stated there are a couple of projects completed.  
23 Safe Haven is one and also Twin Parks and recommended for renaming by  
24 PRAB to Ocotillo Park. It has not gone to Council for naming. Safe Haven  
25 has new playground and shade structures, and then also includes basketball  
26 courts, and other play areas. Play area is 2,300 square feet, and overall site  
27 is 6,000 square feet total. Play equipment includes slides, climbing features,  
28 and balance beam. This came from the general fund to replace the play  
29 equipment and shade structures, at about \$309,000.  
30

31 Next Ocotillo Park. About an acre on each side of Stant Minerva in Metro  
32 Verde, Metro Central Phase 2. Nice grass areas, as requested by residents  
33 in the area. When created, rock surfacing, turf grass, a lot of perimeter trees,  
34 ADA walkways, bike rack, shade structures, pickup stations for pets, picnic  
35 tables, benches, and play equipment with engineered wood fiber surfacing,  
36 instead of rubber surfacing. Cornhole are concrete fixed structures the  
37 developer installed, minigolf course, and great chalk wall. The developer built  
38 this and was reimbursed via park impact fees, but generally the reimbursement  
39 is not the full spent on the build. In this case about \$350,000.  
40

41 There are a lot of active projects now. She will be bringing a couple of every  
42 months of the newly completed ones. Highland Park is currently under  
43 construction. Veterans Park, expanding the parking lot and redoing the  
44 existing parking lot. Pioneer Park, replacing gazebo, improving walkways.  
45 Klein Park, some improvements, new mural, and replaced the roofing on the  
46 amphitheater and some painting and concrete improvements. Skate park is in

1 the middle of construction. East Mesa is a continuing project that is phased  
2 and will go on for several years. Just looked at 60% drawings of phase 2,  
3 which includes another skate park, sand volleyball courts, basketball courts,  
4 et al. The pickleball is open at the East Meas. It will have the grand opening  
5 on September 13th.  
6

7 Board Member Bradley noted a lot of work and upgrades, but it does not seem  
8 there is a plan to shade all of the parks. Is there a reason not shading all the  
9 parks, particularly to save the equipment and better utilize the parks? Also no  
10 water, no bathrooms. Parks and Rec are trying to do a better job of addressing  
11 this. They are trying to do some of that with the replacements and  
12 improvements. The East Mesa in the early stages of playground design and  
13 will include ample shade. Chair Raish mentioned the pickleball and the shade.  
14 Katherine Harrison-Rogers mentioned the shade structures are on back order  
15 due in September. Not all parks are designed to have bathrooms. The larger  
16 parks, yes, the smaller neighborhood parks, in theory people live close enough  
17 nearby to use restrooms at home. Provencio/Van Dame is having bathrooms  
18 designed. Replacing the ones at Valley View and also Apodaca. Unidad park  
19 has one that "shows feet" and that seems to be well received overall, and was  
20 designed that way. Board Member Haas asked about the longevity of the  
21 shade materials. It is about 10 years, but Katherine will return with more  
22 information.  
23

24 **8. Staff Member Comments:**  
25

26 Katherine Harrison-Rogers stated she has an inquiry of the board if they would like  
27 to have park tours. Possibly East Mesa, segments of the City park tours. As this  
28 could entail a board quorum it would have to be coordinated and posted with the  
29 City Clerk.  
30

31 Phil Catanach mentioned splash pads, Unidad, Metro Verde starting the 26th will be  
32 open Friday, Saturday, Sunday only as school has started and not getting as much  
33 use. Plaza Fountain will go until early October. This Sunday there is Music in the  
34 Park to celebrate Kool and Gang tribute band, and Lush and Lean Quartet. Tonight  
35 a concert at the Plaza.  
36

37 Greg Shervanick stated in the Bulletin and some fliers stated Parks and Recreation  
38 is the controller of all the trails, bicycle paths. The county is promoting a large safety  
39 issue, county roads, City roads. Open house tomorrow at the county. Mentioned  
40 that the MPO put out a new bicycle map.  
41

42 **9. Board Member Comments:**  
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44 Board Member Beard asked about getting things on the agenda, which would be  
45 the Tuesday before the board meeting. Send information to the Chair who will does  
46 the agenda setting with staff.

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Vice-Chair Haas thanked for the presentations and the PowerPoints.

Board Member Grandjean stated she teamed up with her City Councilor, and will be doing so quarterly. Inviting the community in the district to come and give small tidbits, as the PRAB meeting might feel scary. Location will be various within the district.

**10. Adjournment:**

Vice-Chair Haas moved to adjourn, seconded by Board Member Bradley. Motion passed unanimously.

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Chairperson

