

PRESCOTT CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL WORKSHOP
JULY 10, 2007
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA

A WORKSHOP OF THE PRESCOTT CITY COUNCIL WAS HELD ON TUESDAY, JULY 10, 2007, in the Prescott Municipal Building, 201 S. Cortez Street, Prescott, Arizona.

Mayor Simmons opened the meeting at 1:00 P.M. and asked City Clerk Elizabeth Burke to call the roll, which was as follows:

Present:

Mayor Simmons
Councilman Bell
Councilman Lamerson
Councilman Luzius
Councilman Roecker
Councilwoman Suttles

Absent:

Councilman Blair (excused)

A. Presentation of Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Recreation Services Director Jim McCasland introduced Diane Simpson-Colbank of Logan Simpson Consultants who were preparing the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the City and she would explain the process thus far and said before proceeding any further direction was needed from the Council.

Ms. Simpson-Colbank explained the process of holding public meetings to get the input of citizens and focus groups, such as Little League and Open Space and the Parks, Recreation and Library Advisory Committee; the benchmarking process being conducted by ESI Corp. on the needs and averages of the community; a random survey of the community was conducted; an inventory and analysis of current facilities had been conducted; land use planning and future planning was involved, as well as looking at drainage, habitat, and cultural resources. Today they were seeking direction from Council on what their focus would be and a new recreation master plan would be prepared and brought back to Council for approval and the final master plan would include the identification of proposed facilities and a Capital Improvement Program for budgeting purposes.

Ms. Simpson-Colbank explained they looked at Prescott's existing facilities and then looked at the facilities offered by Chino Valley and Prescott Valley; they looked at trails connectivity between the communities and looked at areas suitable for future recreation facilities and found within

Prescott City limits there was very little suitable land and annexation was one opportunity to allow for the expansion of park land.

Mayor Simmons asked what the relation of responses was to other surveys they had done and Ms. Scalise replied the 10% response rate was very good and added 40% had lived in Prescott 16 years or more, 24% had moved to Prescott within the past 5 years, 58% of the respondents were 55 years of age or older, with a third over the age of 65 and nearly 28% were less than 45 years of age.

Other facts -- parks and facilities contributed to the quality of life, were important to economic development efforts, drew tourists to Prescott and were safe places to be. Prescott had done a good job of putting parks in place over the years and that needed to continue. Open space and indoor facilities did not meet the needs of the community while athletic fields, trails, parks and playgrounds did meet the needs according to the survey. The benchmark showed Prescott was doing all right with respect to open space but the community desired more. Standard reasons given for not using recreation facilities were they were not well maintained, there wasn't a good program, they were too far away, the hours of operation were not convenient, and the programs were full and they couldn't participate. She said that the top two reasons given in Prescott for not using the parks were people were too busy and they didn't have enough information.

A recent impact fee study recommended raising parks and recreation fees but Council had chosen to not raise them at this time. Increased rates would help pay for new recreational facilities; other funding mechanisms were special fundraising campaigns, user fees and a bond issue.

Councilwoman Suttles asked if the revenues from half the bed tax was included in estimates and Ms. Scalise replied the survey provided information on what the public was willing to pay for and their suggested funding mechanisms.

Ms. Scalise continued Prescott was benchmarked (compared) to other cities in the same situation, such as distance from large cities, and not by population. The benchmarks looked at existing facilities and what would be required by 2020 to serve the community population. The following information was presented:

Number of Parks – Benchmark 30.60, Prescott had 21 parks
Park Acres – Benchmark 6.85, Prescott 55.29 acres
Indoor facilities - Benchmark 0.12, Prescott 0.10
Number of recreation programs – Benchmark 15.16, Prescott 5.05
Outdoor Recreation Facilities – Benchmark 1.56, Prescott 2.49
Number of Athletic Fields – Benchmark 0.02, Prescott 0.05
Miles of Trails – Benchmark 1.13, Prescott 2.54 miles

Taking the number of parks and park acres and further breaking it down resulted in the following information:

Mini Park Acres – Benchmark 0.07, Prescott 0.05
Neighborhood Park Acres – Benchmark 1.35, Prescott 0.28
Community Park Acres – Benchmark 3.94, Prescott 3.74
Passive regional Park Acres - Benchmark 1.31, Prescott 30.27
Joint Use Park Acres – Benchmark 0.17, Prescott 4.20
Recreational Lake Acres – Benchmark 0.02, Prescott 16.76

By 2020, Prescott would need 66 acres for 7 more neighborhood parks; 72 acres for 1 more community park; 3 more baseball fields; 2 outdoor aquatic pools; 1 more recreation center; 1 more gymnasium and 1 more racquetball court. Prescott was already above the average with trails, the benchmark showed 11 miles would be needed by 2020, Prescott already had 28 miles and 9 sports fields were the average with 12 needed by 2020, Prescott already had 13 in place.

The five areas the consultant and staff were looking for direction on was whether Council wanted to look at having an aquatic facility, indoor recreation facilities, neighborhood park facilities, multi-use facilities and trails and sports fields.

Mr. McCasland asked Council for direction on an aquatic facility. He asked if the Council wished to keep it on the list. He said it would be costly but it was a desire of the community to have one. The type of facility would be decided later with alternative types of facilities and costs presented to Council.

Mr. Norwood commented staff needed to know if this was a priority and further study should be done; costs and types of facilities were not to be decided today.

Councilman Roecker asked what growth percentage was used to decide the needs in 2020 and Mr. McCasland said 2-1/2% was used.

Mr. McCasland asked about Council's thoughts on sports fields. He asked if there were enough, and if Prescott wanted to be average or above average. He asked if the Council was interested in luring outside tournaments to Prescott or allowing the Softball Capital of the U.S. to diminish.

Councilman Lamerson commented he was concerned about turf for the ball fields; the City told residents not to water grass and ball fields took a lot of water to maintain. Roads needed to be fixed as well as other things; he wanted to be shown where the money would come from for these

projects and in regard to the aquatic center specifically, he hadn't seen a proposal or a suggested site. He asked where the money would come from to build it, how would it be maintained and where they would get the water from.

Mr. McCasland reiterated today was for the presentation of the survey results and benchmarking and Council direction was needed. This information had been brought to the consultants and staff through the public and focus group meetings and the survey; now the Council needed to let the consultants and staff know how they wanted to proceed. No details were available at this time, and if there was no support for any of the five items on the list they would not be pursued.

Councilman Luzius commented he would like to see an aquatic facility and Eric Smith of Parks and Recreation had showed him a website that showed different aquatic designs and could estimate the cost; Ken Lain had addressed the Council several weeks ago regarding the need for a competitive pool for the high school swim team.

Councilman Roecker asked which activity provided the biggest economic bang and would be a good investment and Mr. McCasland said each had the potential to attract tourists, tournaments, and swim meets. A question to consider was whether the focus should be on serving the local residents or attract residents from outside the City who didn't pay impact fees but worked and shopped in Prescott.

Mr. Norwood added he would think Prescott would want to keep ahead of the curve and recreation was an economic benefit. He had talked with Prescott Unified School District Superintendent Kevin Kapp about using the elementary school fields after 3:00 P.M. and on weekends and in return the City would make improvements to them. Staff could bring more information to Council if they didn't want to make a decision today.

Councilman Roecker wanted to keep open space acquisition going and had reservations about an aquatic facility. He preferred to create public/private partnership and maybe the YMCA or a public partner like Yavapai College would split the costs. He said to build a stand-alone pool would be a huge cost and they would have to give up other things. Sports fields brought in tourists from outside the area and helped fill hotel/motel rooms which in turn funded other activities through bed tax revenues. He wanted to see first-class facilities built.

Mr. Norwood suggested keeping the aquatic facility on the list and putting language in the master plan that a public/private partnership was desirable.

Councilman Lamerson commented he wanted to proceed with caution regarding sports fields and other than potable water would have to be used.

Councilman Simmons commented he didn't think anything should be knocked off the list and all five issues should be left on, with the idea that if it was at or near the benchmark maybe they would do less quantity; the aquatic facility should stay at the top of the list.

Councilwoman Suttles asked how long the study had been on-going and Mr. McCasland replied eight months. Councilwoman Suttles said a parks study hadn't been updated for ten years and Council had approved the update and Council shouldn't be backpedaling and asking how these items could be afforded; there were methods to fund them.

Councilman Roecker remarked he wanted to see more open space purchased and Mayor Simmons reminded him there was a funding mechanism already in place for open space and the City was working on buying more. There wasn't any funding mechanism in place for the aquatic facilities and that was a stand-alone issue as the City already had existing ball fields, trails and park facilities.

Mr. McCasland reiterated they just wanted direction that Council liked the list of items and wanted to pursue them. Some would go into the Capital Improvement Program. The consultants didn't want to consider more sports facilities if Council didn't want them. The City had a lot of trails and they were heavily used and once trails were in place they were not expensive to maintain.

Mayor Simmons suggested the Councilmembers express their opinions about the list and asked Councilman Bell to begin.

- Councilman Bell commented a segment of the community was excited about each one of the issues on the list; the issues could/should go to the voters to decide, not the City Council. The aquatic facility had been at the top of the list and both Prescott Valley and Chino Valley already had one. He was in favor of keeping all the items on the list.
- Councilman Luzius said he agreed that all five items should be explored.
- Councilman Roecker said he was not willing to get rid of any of the items.
- Councilwoman Suttles wanted to keep all of the items on the list and it may come back that the cost would be too much and the item would have to be dropped.
- Councilman Lamerson wanted to keep all the items on the list.

McCasland thanked the Council for their responses.

Ms. Simpson-Colbank explained they would develop conceptual parks and trails alternatives; develop a final plan and the approval process would include approval by the Parks, Recreation and Library Advisory Committee, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council.

Mayor Simmons concluded saying the quality of life was the issue and he appreciated the job the consultants and staff had done.

Councilwoman Suttles said the Manager mentioned partnering with grade schools and asked if that would be looked at and Ms. Simpson-Colbank said it would along with improvements to the existing facilities or areas where there were no schools.

Councilman Lamerson commented he liked everything in the plan, he just didn't know how the City would get there and Ms. Simpson-Colbank responded the City could stay at their current service levels or move forward and plan for more and that was a Council decision.

The Workshop was ADJOURNED at 2:10 p.m.

ROWLE P. SIMMONS, Mayor

ATTEST:

ELIZABETH A. BURKE, City Clerk