City of Scottsdale
Parks and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting
MINUTES

Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 4 p.m.
Eldorado Community Center
2311 N. Miller Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85257

PRESENT: Chair Michael Vreeland, Vice Chair Amy Arnold, Commissioners Jamie Alford, Sandy Kull, Eric Maschhaupt and Teresa Kim Quale

ABSENT: Commissioner Susan McGarry

STAFF: Deputy Directors Kevin McKee, Chris Walsh; Parks and Recreation Managers Kyu-Bin Hyun, Valerie Budnick, Stephanie Tippett, Hezekiah Allen, Chris Hawes (arrived AT 4:23); Financial Services Director Ryan Fielder; Financial Analyst Senior Zach Navarro; Parks and Recreation Ops Supervisor Chris Bolender; Principal Planner Eileen Baden; Administrative Assistant Savannah Archer; and Executive Assistant Rosalind Williams

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Vreeland called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present as listed above.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public who wished to speak, nor any written comment cards provided.

MINUTES

Approve Regular Meeting Minutes for May 20, 2026 and August 19, 2026

VICE-CHAIR ARNOLD MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 20, 2026 PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AND AUGUST 19, 2026 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER MASCHHAUPT SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR VREELAND, COMMISSIONERS ALFORD, QUALE AND KULL, VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

MEETING AGENDA

1. ELDORADO PARK DESIGN PROJECT UPDATE

Eileen Baden, Principal Planner, provided a comprehensive update on the Eldorado Park Recreation Improvements Project. Eldorado Park consists of approximately 60 acres, originally acquired in 1966, and was first planned through the 1967 Master Plan. Staff noted that the park name was selected through a school competition. Historic planning context was reviewed, including the 1975 Indian Bend Wash Master Plan approved through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The wash's development created what is now recognized as a novel and influential greenbelt system. Staff also highlighted the skate park's origin, having been constructed for the Festival of Nations event.

Eileen reported that opportunities for new restroom placement are being explored. However, any improvements must avoid impeding stormwater flow due to the park's floodway characteristics. The 2019 Indian Bend Wash Master Plan was reviewed, with particular focus on Eldorado and Vista Parks. She presented maps of the Active District and described how community input from 2019 is being incorporated into updated design concepts. Additional reviews included lakes and irrigation infrastructure, where improvements are planned to reduce water loss and assess lighting needs.

An overview of the 2024 Shape Scottsdale Parks Systemwide Master Plan was provided. Staff clarified that current project work focuses on park improvements rather than buildings. Staff also referenced the 196-page ADA Plan and Evaluation for Eldorado Park (April 2026), which outlines accessibility recommendations to be used in planning future upgrades.

Irrigation mapping was presented explaining how recreation design updates will correspond with irrigation modernization. The project includes areas subject to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 408 permitting, which is expected to extend timelines. Construction is planned to begin

in the northern portion of the park and proceed south. Eileen also discussed FEMA Floodway hydraulic constraints, emphasizing that improvements must not worsen stormwater flow conditions.

Design consultant Dig Studio is serving as the project lead, alongside multiple supporting firms. Staff is developing a phasing and implementation plan to clarify project costs and the sequence of improvements. Feedback collected from Recreation and Maintenance staff identified needs such as enhanced storage, expanded playground facilities, improved irrigation on the east side, updated aging infrastructure and utilities, additional seating along pathways, larger ramadas, improved restroom facilities, lighting upgrades, and bridge improvements.

Staff also reported ongoing coordination with internal city departments to communicate project goals, anticipate challenges, identify opportunities, and plan for long-term project success.

Key project dates were reviewed as follows:
• August 2026 – Project kickoff and staff outreach
• September 2026 – Site walks and internal department coordination
• October 2026 – Public meeting and skatepark public meeting (Public Meeting #1 scheduled for October 7 at Eldorado Community Center Gym at 5:30 p.m.)
• November 2026 – Initial high-level concepts
• December 2026 – Second public meeting
• Spring 2027 – 30% design process of the phasing and implementation plan

The Chair opened the floor for questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Maschhaupt inquired about the agenda for the October high-level public meeting and whether there would be a formal presentation. Eileen explained that the meeting will include a large, printed layout of the plan and an opportunity for the public to provide input on whether the project is moving in the right direction. Staff noted they will review the 2019 comments, refine concepts, and conduct an open-house-style session to answer questions.

Commissioner Quale asked whether social media or other means would be used to facilitate communication with the public. Staff reiterated the intent to broaden outreach efforts and expand engagement opportunities as planning continues.

Chair Vreeland asked staff for an assessment of project focus areas, noting the operational needs of the existing buildings. Staff noted that current priorities focus on improvements along the east and west sides of the park, while preserving the core qualities that users value about Eldorado Park. Staff described the planning approach as moving from interior areas outward to peripheral features.

Chair Vreeland commented on the importance of distinguishing critical needs from temporary solutions and sought clarification regarding design elements.

Commissioner Maschhaupt stated a desire to review a map clearly showing which areas cannot be changed due to floodway restrictions.

Chris Walsh, Deputy Director, noted that Eldorado Park contains numerous components that could be impacted by infrastructure limitations and added that certain systems may experience greater effects than others.

2. MEDIANS AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS

Hezekiah Allen, Parks and Recreation Manager, presented an overview of technology enhancements being used to improve the management of City rights-of-way and median landscapes. He introduced Chris Bolender as the new Operations Supervisor overseeing this division.

Hezekiah noted that two contractors are currently providing additional irrigation-related support. It was highlighted that Parks & Recreation's oversight of Rights-of-Way and Medians is unique compared to many municipalities.

A review was provided of the City's Land Information System, including an active and live mapping example demonstrating system capabilities. Chris Bolender presented the ArchGIS-based geolocation system used for Median Maintenance Areas. He explained that the system has been active for several months and is being used as an accountability tool to monitor contractor performance. The system allows real-time tracking and documentation, with photos and location data logged by inspectors, including date stamping.

Staff referenced operational data displayed in the presentation, including acreage under contract, irrigation timers, valves, water meters, tree counts, and service workload levels throughout a 184-square-mile coverage area.

A brief overview of Survey123 was also provided as another tool being used to support data-driven field operations.

The Chair opened the floor to questions from the Commissioners.

Chair Vreeland asked what the most common EZ Ticket request tends to be. Chris Bolender responded that the most frequent issues reported are related to trees and instances of water crossing into or across the waterway.

Commissioner Kull asked for clarification regarding the system's function. Hezekiah explained that the technology is intended as a tool to better manage the response process for EZ Tickets. Bolender added that the system allows staff to identify areas where maintenance or irrigation needs are not being properly addressed and helps ensure contractors remain accountable for the work assigned to them.

3. PARKS AND PRESERVE SALES TAX MONTHLY UPDATES

Chris Walsh, Deputy Director, provided an update on current projects funded through Proposition 490 and related parks and preserve tax allocations.

Chris announced that the Rotary Playground project has been completed. Improvements include fully accessible ADA play features, a full pour-in-place safety surface, and newly added shade structures. The project aligns with the park's master plan. Additional enhancements included new decomposed granite pathways and granite added to planter areas adjacent to the parking lot.

Chris reported that resurfacing at the Thompson Peak Park pickleball courts has been completed and the courts are now open.

Updates were provided on citywide tennis court improvements. The project includes converting five courts from asphalt to post-tension concrete, along with new lighting and fencing. Locations include Thunderbird Park (2 courts), Northsight Park (2 courts), and Ironwood Park (1 court). These improvements are scheduled for completion in December

Chris discussed ongoing work at the Chaparral Dog Park. Public input is being gathered through the "Speak Up Scottsdale" online engagement platform, with more than 550 responses received to date. The public survey opened September 3 and closes September 30. A design contract will follow after review of the collected feedback.

An update was provided on the Agua Linda Park design project. An internal kickoff meeting is scheduled for next week. Dig Studio will lead the design through 100 percent construction drawings, a process anticipated to take approximately one year.

Chris also reviewed recent sod replacement efforts, including 20,000 square feet at Eldorado Park, 8,000 square feet at Chaparral Park ballfields, 12,000 square feet at Cholla Park ballfield, and 12,000 square feet at Vista del Camino Dog Park and South park entry.

The Vista Pruning Project was also highlighted, with 92 trees pruned to date while the site is under construction. Chris noted this was an ideal time for this work and an important investment in the park's legacy trees.

4. STAFF UPDATES

Kevin McKee, Deputy Director, provided several departmental updates, beginning with recognition received at the 2026 APRA State Conference. Scottsdale Parks & Recreation received two statewide honors: Park Professional of the Year, awarded to Deputy Director Chris Walsh, and the Outstanding Facility Award for the Roundhouse Project at McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park.

Kevin shared that APRA is exploring opportunities for commission-specific programming at the 2027 APRA Conference in Phoenix. Commissioners were informed that a one-day session may be offered specifically for commission members, and several Commissioners expressed interest in attending.

An update was provided on the rollout of the City's Youth Sports Policy. Kevin explained that user fees collected through the program will be directed into a special revenue fund designated for improving the sports fields that we utilize. He emphasized the importance of prioritizing spectator shade and reaffirmed the department's commitment to equitable partnerships with youth sports organizations.

Kevin reviewed upcoming fall events, as outlined in the presentation. Events include citywide fall programs, festivals, and seasonal activities. Highlights included the annual aquatics event "Dunkin' for Pumpkins," scheduled for September 25 from 1:00 to 5:30 p.m.

Deputy Director Chris Walsh provided an update on the Indian Bend Wash Lakes and Irrigation Project. He noted that sod installation and related improvements are progressing, with completion anticipated in November.

The Chair opened the floor to questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Kull asked how award recipients are selected for APRA recognition. Staff, including Hezekiah, explained that each award category is divided into subsections and scored, with approximately 10 to 20 statewide parks and recreation professionals participating in the voting process.

Vice-Chair Arnold asked what topics were included in the conference's educational sessions. Kevin responded that instruction covered several areas, including the use of technology and data, the AMA program, strategies for communication with elected officials, sustainability principles in facility and site design, and sports field maintenance practices applicable across parks.

Commissioner Maschhaupt asked about the rollout of the Youth Sports Policy and whether any issues had emerged. Staff confirmed that the rollout has proceeded smoothly with no reported problems.

5. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Chair Vreeland reported that he presented the Commission's Annual Report to the City Council.

Vice-Chair Arnold shared that she attended the ribbon-cutting events at Thompson Peak Dog Park and Rotary Park.

Commissioner Quale expressed her positive impression of Buffalo Park, remarking on its adjacency to the Arizona Trail and the number of visitors observed at Mountain View Park with their dogs. She noted that the area could benefit from additional opportunities to cross between sections of the park, such as through the addition of a bridge.

Commissioner Alford reported attending the recent ribbon-cutting events at Thompson Peak Dog Park and Rotary Park.

Commissioner Kull also attended the ribbon-cutting event at Thompson Peak Dog Park and commented on the extreme heat. She relayed a compliment about the quality of the grass.

Commissioner Maschhaupt shared that he has received compliments about the dog park and stated he is looking forward to the upcoming fall events.

6. POSSIBLE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Kevin McKee, Deputy Director, presented an overview of tentative future agenda items and noted that the working list is subject to change. He also stated that some items identified during the Commission retreat have not yet been scheduled and that additional time will be incorporated for Commissioners to request agenda topics.

Kevin reviewed the list of proposed agenda topics for upcoming meetings, including McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park updates, Indian Bend Wash Lakes and Irrigation Project updates, Parks and Preserve Sales Tax updates, staff updates, and discussion of future agenda planning. Future meeting dates through the spring were also outlined, covering topics such as Gold Medal Award process discussions, capital budget planning, fee adjustments, equitable park access, Human Services overview, Park Ranger updates, and Urban Forestry.

Commissioner Vreeland asked whether there were any items the Commission wished to agendize.

Commissioner Kull inquired about items tied to the General Plan that the Commission voted on a year prior and whether these should be included in the monthly update structure. Chair Vreeland stated that December may be a reasonable time to discuss such items.

Commissioner Quale asked about the Cactus Park feasibility study. Staff Kevin responded that continued work is expected through the end of the calendar year and that the item will return to the Commission as an update when appropriate.

7. ADJOURNMENT

COMMISSIONER QUALE MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER ALFORD SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0), BY ROLL CALL VOTE, WITH CHAIR VREELAND, VICE CHAIR ARNOLD, AND COMMISSIONERS KULL, MASCHHAUPT, VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:39 p.m.