



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
McDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING – MINUTES**

Thursday, October 10, 2024
Granite Reef Senior Center - Room 1
1700 N. Granite Reef Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

PRESENT: Chairperson Steve Coluccio, Vice-chair Kerry Olsson, Commissioners Robert Hallagan, Susan Hirshman, and Ryan Rybarczyk

ABSENT: Commissioners Savannah Engelking and Mark Hackbarth

STAFF: Kroy Ekblaw, Preserve Director; Scott Hamilton, Preserve Manager; Tim Connor, Environmental Policy Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Coluccio called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present as listed above.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the Regular Meeting minutes of September 5, 2024.

COMMISSIONER HALLAGAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 5, 2024 MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. VICE-CHAIR OLSSON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR COLUCCIO, VICE-CHAIR OLSSON, COMMISSIONERS HALLAGAN, HIRSHMAN, AND RYBARCZYK VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

5. McDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY UPDATE

Melanie Tluczek, Conservancy Director, gave an update on McDowell Sonoran Conservancy activities. She reminded everyone that the Brown's Ranch Interpretive Trail opening is

scheduled for October 18, 2024. Her presentation included brief updates on, Steward, Trailhead Ambassadors, Patrol, hike and bike, and construction and maintenance activities; new Steward class scheduled for Saturday, November 9; public education outside the Preserve; school programs; and Parson's Field Institute and City of Scottsdale burn area restoration efforts, in both the Diamond Fire area and the Gate Fire area.

6. CITY OF SCOTTSDALE SHADE AND TREE PLAN

Justin Azevedo with the Design Laboratory provided a brief presentation of the progress to date in developing a Shade and Tree plan for the city. His presentation included an overview of existing conditions, which is being documented through field documentation; iTree Canopy, which is a U.S. Forest Service system to determine coverage of large areas; and Tree Score Analyzer (TESA), which is remote documentation utilizing LiDAR data from the city and county, developed with the U.S. Forest Service. Mr. Azevedo said that the plan will identify practical solutions to enhance shade and cooling strategies; will be a user-friendly guide for residents, businesses, city staff, and policymakers; optimize water usage on trees; share integrate practices for longevity and will enhance community resilience.

The primary deliverable of the plan will be The Tool Kit, which will include definition of trees, structures, and water harvesting techniques that can be implemented, and precise locations where they are the most viable and useful. The tree plan will go into detail about types of trees, pros and cons of each tree, and what type to use in certain locations, and will include an appendix including detailed information about each tree species. The shade structure plan will include recommendations about type of structures and the most appropriate locations. The water harvesting plan will provide information on developing on-site water harvesting tools to support trees.

Mr. Azevedo reviewed next steps, noting that they are currently in the "Cultivate" portion of the schedule and producing the final graphics for the document. He encouraged everyone to attend open houses and public events, and to take the online survey. Information regarding the plan can be found on social media sites and at [Scottsdaleaz.gov](https://scottsdaleaz.gov), search "Shade and Tree Plan."

Commissioners asked clarifying questions throughout the presentation. Mr. Azevedo said that they are currently working through what the final goal is for the project. A lot of the elements they are working through are what are the shade coverages that should be looked at on both a zoning level and at a land use level. Mr. Azevedo talked about shade structures and the way heat is radiated, noting that high levels of reflectivity is important on shade structures. He noted that shade structure materials are not the primary focus of the document, but there is approximately one page of information regarding materials.

Tim Connor, Environmental Policy Manager, said that currently the Green IGCC Code is mandatory for all commercial construction, and one piece of that regulation requires a certain percentage of outdoor surfaces be shaded. Mr. Azevedo briefly talked about how education can help cut a lot of costs of adding trees, tree maintenance, and tree salvage.

7. ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES PLAN PROCESS UPDATE

Scott Hamilton, Preserve Manager, reviewed the timeline of development of the Ecological Resource Plan (ERP), noting that the updated draft document was forwarded to Commissioners

for review. The Commission's recommendation is tentatively scheduled as a consent agenda item on City Council's December 5th meeting agenda.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to provide input on the document. Mr. Hamilton explained the process that City Council would take to adopt a resolution approving acceptance of the ERP. City Council's packet will include all public comments, Preserve Commission comments and meeting minutes. Staff will be prepared to provide a presentation if Council members have any questions. Once approved by City Council, the ERP will serve as a road map during the annual budget process.

VICE-CHAIR OLSSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES PLAN (ERP) UPDATE. COMMISSIONER HIRSHMAN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR COLUCCIO, VICE-CHAIR OLSSON, COMMISSIONERS HALLAGAN, HIRSHMAN, AND RYBARCZYK VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

8. UPCOMING 2025-26 BUDGET PROCESS UPDATE

Mr. Ekblaw provided an overview of the upcoming process for the Preserve 2025/26 Budget. As part of his presentation, he reviewed the history of the budget process over the past year and highlighted the draft projections and recommended funding amounts. He reviewed budget projections for desert awareness; desert preservation; habitat restoration; habitat monitoring, cultural resource protection; wildland habitat protection; vegetation management/wildland fuel reduction; mapping and assessments; awareness/public education; and proposed allocation of estimated tax revenues. He explained that the first year of projections is low, because there is a financial policy requiring a 20 percent stabilization fund be withheld in the first year.

In addition, the proposal includes a 10 percent emergency contingency, to be used in the event that something happens in the Preserve and additional funds are needed. Brief discussion ensued regarding examples of how the contingency fund might be used. The concept with both the stabilization fund and the contingency fund is that funds are withheld the first year and carry over each subsequent year.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions throughout the presentation. Further discussion will be agendized on the November MSPC agenda.

9. STAFF REPORTS

- Brown's Ranch Interpretive Trail

Mr. Hamilton announced that during Tuesday night's City Council meeting, Mayor Ortega read the proclamation for McDowell Sonoran Preserve Month. As part of the program, it was highlighted that October 3rd was the 30th anniversary of the City Council meeting at Brett's Barn, where they declared that the Preserve exists and put land that the City already owned into the Preserve, and it was mentioned that the Browns Ranch interpretive trail grand opening is scheduled for October 18th. Mr. Hamilton gave an update on progress at Brown's Ranch Interpretive Trail. He distributed the Brown's Ranch Interpretive Trail brochure and stickers to the Commission. He reminded everyone that the grand opening ceremony will be held at the trailhead on October 18, 2024, starting at 10:00 a.m. Brown family members will be attending the event and will be offered an

opportunity to visit the ranch prior to the ceremony. He anticipates that five generations of Brown's will be in attendance, including a daughter of E.E. Brown. One of the grandchildren will speak during the ceremony, along with Chair Coluccio and Scottsdale historian Joan Fudalla.

- Protect the Parks and Preserve Process Update

There was no update regarding the Protect the Parks and Preserve Process.

10. UPCOMING MEETING DATES, LOCATIONS AND AGENDA ITEMS

All Dates listed are Tentative and subject to amendment:

- ☒ Fall Regular Meetings
- ☐ November 7

11. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Hallagan requested an update from the fire department with a focus on the recent fires in the Preserve.

Mr. Ekblaw noted that a budget update will be included on the November meeting agenda. Following the election, a special meeting to talk about the budget could be scheduled if needed.

12. ADJOURNMENT

COMMISSIONER HIRSHMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER HALLAGAN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR COLUCCIO, VICE-CHAIR OLSSON, COMMISSIONERS HALLAGAN, HIRSHMAN, AND RYBARCZYK VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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