



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**
Thursday, October 6, 2022
Community Design Studio – Nave
7506 E. Indian School Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

PRESENT: Chairperson Laurie LaPat-Polasko, Vice-chair Marsha Lipps, Commissioners Steve Coluccio, Mark Hackbarth, Kerry Olsson, Jeffrey Smith

ABSENT: Commissioner Savannah Engelking

STAFF: Kroy Ekblaw, Preserve Director; Scott Hamilton, Senior Trails Planner

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair LaPat-Polasko called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present as noted 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 1, 2022

COMMISSIONER HACKBARTH MOVED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 1, 2022 MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. VICE-CHAIR LIPPS SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR LAPAT-POLASKO, VICE-CHAIR LIPPS, COMMISSIONERS COLUCCIO, HACKBARTH, OLSSON, AND SMITH VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSIDENTING VOTES.

5. MCDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY UPDATE

Melanie Tluczek gave an update on Conservancy programs. Her presentation included information about the Conservancy and City efforts to develop a restoration plan; bike and

walking tours; new steward workshops; the tortoise telemetry project; the trail camera project; the steward herbicide certification; the Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) grant; regional restoration and invasive species efforts; Expedition Days, scheduled for November 1st through the 5th and February 28th through March 4th; and Living labs high school program. Upcoming events include the Summit Society Breakfast on October 26, 2022.

6. PROTECT THE PRESERVE PROCESS UPDATE

Mr. Ekblaw reviewed the list of strategic objectives and Council direction related to the 2021/22 strategic plan. He noted that the Commission will review the objectives over the next few months and make any refinements if needed. Council direction from their FY 2021/22 organizational strategic plan was for the Commission to look at future costs to protect the Preserve. The 1995 land acquisition tax will expire in 2025 and the 2004 tax will expire in 2034. Neither of these taxes can be applied to maintenance or operational costs. The projected annual costs are currently \$2.1 to \$2.8 million yearly, and a one-time cost of \$27 million. Public safety costs are separate. City Council is setting up a task force to look at future tax option potentials. Citizen applications are currently being accepted and the task force is expected to begin meeting in early 2023. Commissioners asked clarifying questions throughout his presentation.

Mr. Ekblaw said that the Trailhead Working Group will hold its first meeting in October. The Land Working Group will likely start meeting in November or December and should be ready to report to the Commission during the first meeting in February. The Land Working Group is expected to begin by the end of 2022.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Ekblaw said that the Trails Working Group will be working on the remaining outstanding trails, one-time cost of trail improvements, trail maintenance, and analyzing social trails. Mr. Hamilton explained that the \$47,000 grant for trail maintenance recently accepted by City Council will go towards the Gateway Loop, Bell Pass, Wingate Pass, Windmill, and East End. The grant is good for three years. Mr. Ekblaw said that more information on the ERP, including early cost projections, will be presented at future meetings.

Vice-Chair Lipps stressed the importance of educating the public about what the city is doing in the Preserve. She mentioned seeing negative comments recently on social media regarding the belief that the City is only interested in purchasing more land.

7. STAFF REPORTS

- ERP Process Update

Mr. Ekblaw gave a brief update on the ERP process as part of item 6.

- Invasive plant and wildland fire mitigation work

Mr. Hamilton gave an update on invasive plant mitigation. Efforts are currently underway to prepare for the projects that are being funded by the DFFM grant. He noted that the RFP for trails, trail signs, gates and fences, and vegetation that went out last week has resulted in ten applications, seven of which are interested in vegetation management. Staff is currently

reviewing scoring the proposals. He expects that contracts will be ready to go to Council for approval by the end of December.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Hamilton explained that of the ten unique companies that responded, four checked the trail category, two checked the sign category, three checked metal gates and fences, and seven checked vegetation categories. At least two companies will be chosen to work in each category area.

8. UPCOMING MEETING DATES, LOCATIONS, AND AGENDA ITEMS

- Field Tour options – possibly January
- Fall meeting dates – November 3, February 2, March 2, April 6
 - Tourism update
 - Cultural Plan activity
 - Community Risk Reduction Process
 - Trailhead working group
 - Daily Preserve maintenance costs
 - Presentation by the Conservancy on restoration efforts

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

There were no additional comments made by Commissioners.

11. ADJOURNMENT

VICE-CHAIR LIPPS MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER COLUCCIO SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL VOTE. CHAIR LAPAT-POLASKO, VICE-CHAIR LIPPS, COMMISSIONERS COLUCCIO, HACKBARTH, OLSSON, AND SMITH VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

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