

**DRAFT**  
**MINUTES**  
**MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE**  
**ON THE**  
**PRESCOTT PARK MASTER PLAN**  
**7:30 A.M. – WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2016**  
**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

1. Call to Order – Chair, Councilor Chris Dwyer

Chair Dwyer called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Members in Attendance: Councilor Chris Dwyer, Chair; Mayor Jack Blalock; Councilor Nancy Pearson; Phyllis Eldridge, Trustee of Trust Funds; Thomas Watson, Trustee of Trust Funds; Dana Levenson, Trustee of Trust Funds and Stefany Shaheen.

Staff Present: David Moore, Assistant City Manager

2. Consideration of Minutes from March 14, 2016

**Mayor Blalock moved to accept the minutes from March 14, 2016, seconded by Ms. Shaheen.**

Trustee Watson addressed a typo on page one, and Chair Dwyer corrected the statement on page 2 regarding Discussion of Four-tree Island.

**Motion passed as amended.**

3. Introduction of Weston & Sampson and Presentation

Chair Dwyer began by updating the Committee that since the last meeting the City Council had approved the contract for the consultant with half of the funding to come from UDAG and half from contingency. Also, there was a joint work session held to discuss the upcoming construction of the WWTF on Peirce Island and the impacts to the neighborhood. She explained that there will be a sidewalk built to go behind the Player's Ring and there will be a temporary change at the corner of Marcy and Mechanic Streets to allow trucks to make the corner there. She continued that there will be loss of parking but a concept for mitigating this impact was discussed such as a shuttle for large events. Finally, she stated that there have been concerns raised recently on the various committees' dealing with Prescott Park and what the functions and duties are and stated she and David Moore will serve as the spokespeople for this particular committee and understands the confusion of who is doing what.

Chair Dwyer introduced Gene Bolinger and Cheri Ruane of Weston and Sampon's Design Studio who gave a power point presentation of project phases and scope of work.

Ms. Shaheen discussed the data collection stating that the park is more than just the Prescott Parking Arts Festival and wants to ensure that the data will take into account all of the various times and activities i.e., camp drop off in the summer, neighbors walking dogs in the morning, etc.

Ms. Ruane stated that they will be collecting data during all of these time beginning now and during the high activity summer months and if the committee has other specific suggestions, they will adjust accordingly.

Chair Dwyer discussed the timeline for public input and participation stating that May has been identified for the first broad public meeting with another in September, but wondered what would occur in between.

Ms. Ruane stated the first one in May will be in a larger venue and will be a listening session to get people's concerns and also what they like about the park. She stated they do not want to create a master plan that "loves the park to death". She continued that after the initial input session they will come back based on what they heard with when and how to reach out and try to come up with diverse ways to engage people.

Mayor Blalock stated he is impressed with the variety of ways they include public participation as some people are unable or uncomfortable to speak at meetings and also likes the idea of the "clicker" which allows true expression without intimidation.

Trustee Eldridge stated she has the same concern with reaching out to people who are not only in the south end neighborhood and suggested reaching out to elementary schools to get information to parents.

Mr. Bolinger stated that part of the communications plan is to create comfortable venues to allow people to express opinions. He stated after the initial public meeting, they will articulate a plan that fits this community going forward.

Chair Dwyer stated that she hadn't thought about the idea of reimagining the park and feels this should be voiced right from the beginning and that the focus not only be about one issue i.e., noise etc. She would also like to have the examples of other parks shown at the meetings.

Ms. Shaheen stated we have an obligation to frame the opportunity and potential of the Park and because people love the park now, we need to show them the reasons and issues of why it needs to be changed. She continued that we also have an obligation to involve all of the residents and not just the south end and suggested sporting events as another way to reach out to parents.

Chair Dwyer stated that May is coming right up and wants to make sure that people understand that this is about the whole park and not just about the Arts Festival activities. She stated she would like to see this all come to fruition by the city's upcoming 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Mr. Bolinger stated he agrees that it is important to relate that the Arts Festival and summer events are just a small fraction of park use throughout the year. He stated it is important to develop the infrastructure to support the daily uses and we need to find out what else happens in the park.

Ms. Ruane stated she will work with Mr. Moore on a strategy to have people look beyond the limitations and think about what could be. She suggested having a meeting on a weekend and perhaps starting in the Park itself and moving to an indoor space for the audience participation portion which would include the use of “clickers” with the results being graphed.

Mr. Bolinger stated if there is a large crowd, they could break into smaller groups and then reconvene.

Trustee Watson stated he is gratified with the “blue sky” approach as he has thought about this for a long time. He continued that he has travelled and seen many other parks and would like to see the different ideas shown around the meeting space for people to see the other possibilities.

Ms. Ruane stated there was a documentary on PBS the previous evening entitled “10 Parks that Changed America” and suggested integrating that information as well.

Chair Dwyer suggested the Library should have a showing of that documentary.

#### 4. Discussion of Master Plan Process and Committee Next Steps

Chair Dwyer asked each Committee member to submit ideas and suggestions to Mr. Bolinger and Ms. Ruane.

Mayor Blalock stated that because there are so many uses i.e., Gundalow Company, Players, Ring, concerts, festivals, Frisbee, yoga, flower beds, we need to make sure that these are all considered when reimagining the Park and enhance them and not inhibit these uses.

Ms. Ruane stated that it should be clear that these activities will still be there.

Trustee Watson stated he wants to think of ways that the uses can be incorporated but without requiring permanent infrastructure and allows for flexibility for other uses as well.

Councilor Pearson stated that the reality is that people hear Prescott Park and only think about the Arts Festival and don't remember the other uses and areas such as Four Tree Island.

Ms. Shaheen stated that Prescott Park is one of the greatest treasures and if we do our job right it will be the “Peoples Park” which is truest to the Prescott Sisters original vision. She continued that she likes the idea of the culmination coinciding with the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary and reiterated that it should be welcoming to all.

Trustee Eldridge stated that before the first community meeting she would like to make sure that the parameters are clear that this is not just about the Festival. Also, regarding Four Tree Island, she stated that it is actually used very regularly on weekends during the summer.

Trustee Levenson stated he would like to make sure that we don't pre-judge the vision or limit the uses and find out what types of activities haven't been allowed access in the past and why. He stated that there have been issues in the past with commercialization and advertising for activities.

Chair Dwyer stated that the Park is there for a reason and feels that we should include more public art and highlight the history more. She then addressed a hand-out of subjects for upcoming meetings.

Mr. Moore stated that between meetings he will continue working with the consultants to move forward with the participation plan, data gathering, etc. Trustee Levenson asked if the time-line laid out is typical for a large project such as this.

Mr. Bolinger stated he would not use typical but it is reasonable and appropriate for this project.

Trustee Watson stated it would be helpful to have an oversized drawing of the park at the meetings so people can visualize as discussions are being held.

The Committee discussed putting the information out on the web and the best format to do so with Trustee Watson suggesting PS21 as a good example of format, quick access and feedback tool.

## 5. Public Comment

Rick Becksted – stated he is very familiar with the Park and with the Charette process. He continued that it is good that the meetings are televised and it will help to reach more people and allow for immediate reactions as the process goes along. He stated that the Park holds memories for many people who have lived here a long time and stated that in the winter time, there is nothing going on as it is not plowed. He stated that the Whale needs to be incorporated into the new design as families have taken pictures there for generations. He concluded that when the data collection begins, he would like it to be differentiated visitors and residents and where the residents live.

Judy Nerbonne – stated she loves the park and has been a member of the PPAF since moving here in 1999 but has been concerned with the noise in the past few years as she is unable to enjoy her deck when events are occurring. She continued that she is one of the originators of the Fairy House Tours and stated that parking has always been a problem and this needs to be addressed and the needs of the neighbors need to be considered as well as speeding and traffic are also an issue.

Mary Krempels – stated she also is unable to enjoy her back porch because of noise during the events, but she is excited with the reimagining of the Park. She stated she was recently in Austin Texas where there are many public parks and there are many different ideas.

Beth Margeson – stated she feels it is good that the consultants are landscape architects and feels that the park is looking shabby currently and hopes that will be changed. She stated with the upcoming WWTF construction there will not be as much use so hopes that the data will be gathered prior to that beginning. She stated that part of the original park were wharfs that fill has been brought in and wonders how viable this will be during rising tides. She continued that Charettes are a great idea and having smaller group discussion which was recently part of the School Street Park renovation process. She stated she would like to see the passive and

spontaneous use of the Park retained. Finally in terms of notification of the public input meetings, she suggested putting signs similar to campaign signs in the ground in various areas.

Paul Mandle – stated he is excited about this process and also watched the PBS program which highlighted places that no one thought a park could be built and feels it is different when the Park already exists. Next he discussed the 1965 Master Plan stating that it needs to be made publicly available and recently found there is not on file in the City Clerk's Office. He stated that the legal issues also have to be resolved before going through the entire process and then having the Attorney General office say no.

Chair Dwyer stated that those meetings have been occurring and will continue throughout the process.

Mayor Blalock excused himself at 9:00 a.m.

Chair Dwyer thanked everyone for the different ideas and appreciates the idea of finding out the perspectives of residents depending on where they live.

Ms. Shaheen stated that an abutter is not just physical proximity but who is impacted by the noise, parking, traffic etc.

Mary Krempels from the audience stated she had been donating to the Park specifically for flowers but found it had gone to the PPAF so feels that needs to be clarified.

Chair Dwyer stated that as the process starts coming to a conclusion, the governance portion which have to be clarified as to who is in charge of what.

## 6. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 a.m.