



Minutes Desert Conservation Commission December 2, 2025

Minutes of the Desert Conservation Commission meeting held on December 2, 2025, 3:30 p.m., Hybrid Meeting- Tempe Public Library, 2nd Floor Cottonwood Board Room, 3500 South Rural Road, Tempe, AZ. and virtually through Microsoft Teams

Members Present:

Laura Stewart – Chair
Jane Neuheisel
Donald Burt
Kimberly Gaffney-Loza
Ricardo Juan Leonard
Shereen Lerner
Elba Quintero

Members Absent:

Dushawn John-Armenta
Bianca Zietal

City Staff Present:

Alex Jovanovic, Staff Liaison- Deputy Community Services Director – Parks
Alex Cortese, Parks Manager
Craig Hayton, Community Services Director
Bobbi Lloyd, Administrative Analyst
Gabriel Sabori, Park Maintenance Supervisor

Upon the establishment of a quorum, meeting was called to order at 3:31 p.m. by Chair Laura Stewart.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of Meeting Minutes

September 30, 2025

Motion by Kimberly Gaffney-Loza to approve the meeting minutes of September 30, 2025, as submitted; seconded by Jane Neuheisel. Motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

Ayes: Chair Laura Stewart and commission members, Donald Burt, Kimberly Gaffney-Loza, Jane Neuheisel and Elba Quintero.

Absent: Dushawn John-Armenta, Ricardo Juan Leonard, Shereen Lerner and Bianca Zietal.

Agenda Item 3 – 2026 Calendar & Officers

Existing meeting schedule, first Tuesday of every other month starting in February with adjustment made due to Faith Based Holiday in April from 4/7/26 to 4/14/26 for 2026.

Officers:

Chair- Motion by Kimberly Gaffney-Loza to recommend Elba Quintero as Chair for 2026; seconded by Shereen Lerner. Motion passed on a 7-0 vote.

Ayes: Chair Laura Stewart, and commission members, Donald Burt, Kimberly Gaffney-Loza, Ricardo Juan Leonard, Shereen Lerner, Jane Neuheisel and Elba Quintero.

Absent: Dushawn John-Armenta and Bianca Zietal.

Vice-Chair- Motion by Shereen Lerner to recommend Jane Neuheisel as Vice-Chair for 2026; seconded by Ricardo Juan Leonard. Motion passed on a 7-0 vote.

Ayes: Chair Laura Stewart, and commission members, Donald Burt, Kimberly Gaffney-Loza, Ricardo Juan Leonard, Shereen Lerner, Jane Neuheisel and Elba Quintero.

Absent: Dushawn John-Armenta and Bianca Zietal.

Lindsay Post presented to the commission a PowerPoint presentation on the Tempe Transportation Plan 2050. Presentation included the following:

- Project team
- Project timeline
- Scope of work
- Why now
- Public involvement
 - Phase I outreach
- Existing conditions by mode
 - Active transportation- pedestrian, bike, scooter
 - Transit
 - Traffic
 - Crash data
 - What is Tempe working on now
- What's next
 - Staying involved/next steps

Agenda Item 4 – Copper Deposits at Hayden Butte

Donald Burt presented to the commission the Old Copper Prospect on Hayden Butte, Tempe, AZ. Presentation included the following:

- Various pictures detailing the history of the copper at Hayden Butte from the ASU School of Earth and Space Exploration field trips

Agenda Item 5 – Special Events and Parks Ordinance Update

Craig Hayton presented to the commission the Special Events and Parks Ordinance Update. Presentation included the following:

- Our goals
- Why the need for a change
- We are here to talk about
- Special events in Tempe
- What is the special events code
- What is the Parks & Recreation code
- Building the new ordinance
- July 2025 version updates

- Existing permit options
- July 2025 proposed additions
- What we heard this summer
- What was in the survey
- Where we are & where we're headed
- For the community, this effort is about
- Key questions
- Provide input & stay connected
- Questions

There were over 400 responses from the survey and will be posted to the website once finalized.

Agenda Item 6 – Preserve Management Plan Recommendations

- **Acceptable Uses: Amendment to the Management Plan-** Laura Stewart presented to the commission a proposed draft amendment to the Management Plan under 4.1.4 USES, ACTIVITIES, AND EVENTS. Following due discussion by the commission it was determined to not make any changes at this time and to begin working on priorities.
- **Loma del Rio Preservation & Improvements-** Tabled due to time constraints
- **Hayden Butte Preservation & Improvements-** Tabled due to time constraints

Agenda Item 7 – Future Agenda Items

None

Agenda Item 8 – Upcoming Park Public Meeting Notices & Announcements

- Staff and Commission thanked Shereen Lerner for her time on the Commission.
- New commission member appointment for Bianca Zietal, representative from a academic institution.
- Reappointments for Donald Burt, Kimberly Gaffney-Loza and Jane Neuheisel going to City Council on December 11, 2025.
- New commission member appointment for Thomas Klabunde, expert in issues of water or riparian. Going to City Council on December 11, 2025.

Meeting adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

Prepared by: Bobbi Lloyd, Administrative Analyst, (480) 350-8352

Reviewed by: Alex Jovanovic, Deputy Community Services Director – Parks, (480) 350-5811