



AIRPORT COMMISSION
AD HOC LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE
Monday, September 14, 2020 – 3:00 P.M.

ACTION SUMMARY MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Adams called the Committee to order at 3:00 P.M.

2. POSTING OF AGENDA: Agenda posted on September 10, 2020.

3. ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: Adams, Hedrick, Jones, Pattison, Suero.

Commissioners Absent: None

Others Present:

Ashley Metzger - Desert Water Agency

Todd Holmes - Landscape Architect consultant

Staff Present:

Ulises Aguirre, Interim Executive Airport Director

Patrick Tallarico, City Sustainability Department Manager

Nadia Seery, Airport Executive Administrative Assistant.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA:

ACTION: Accept the agenda as presented. **Moved by Commissioner Hedrick seconded by Commissioner Suero and unanimously approved.**

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the Landscape Committee Meeting held on June 10, 2019 were presented for approval.

ACTION: Approve the minutes of June 10, 2019. **Moved by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Hedrick and unanimously approved.**

7. PRESENTATION: By Sustainability Department Manager Tallarico, as it pertains to item 8.A below.

8. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:

8.A Turf Conversion Project

Mr. Tallarico introduced Ms. Ashley Metzger of the Desert Water Agency and Mr. Todd Holmes, Landscape Architect Consultant in attendance.

Mr. Tallarico explained that the first focus would be the demonstration garden in the central area in front of the terminal. How, at a previous meeting, he had indicated that he would seek grant funding from the state. He commented that Ms. Metzger submitted the grants and funding was received earlier this year. In advance of writing the contract, we would begin with a concept design phase and present it to City Council. How this concept would be presented to the full Commission on September 16 and if there are no objections, it would be presented to City Council.

How the second item would be a phased approach to the conversion of turf in various areas of the airport which the Committee had expressed interest in last year. Some initial designs were prepared.

Committee Chairman Adams inquired about budget limitations and the source of funding.

Mr. Tallarico explained that the grant received from the state is a \$60,000 matching grant, the sustainability department is putting up the money for the demonstration garden in cooperation with the Desert Water Agency, who is giving a \$3.00 per sq. ft. match for turf conversion. They hope to achieve the project for \$150,000 with \$30,000 to \$50,000 funded by the City. For the rest of the turf conversion at the airport, the funding is to be determined. The thought is to divide the area into 10,000 sq. ft. plots, and convert one at a time for an approximate cost of \$200,000 each.

Mr. Tallarico presented maps of the areas under consideration. For the demonstration garden which has to be visible to travelers, they chose the central area between the terminal and the fountain. It's also a place with a lot of turf that can be tackled. It is meant to give people a flavor of the desert as they arrive and it will showcase a variety of plants growing in the Coachella Valley. The design considerations included low plantings situated on either side of a central grassy area to maintain open views to the fountain and mountains. Two meandering paths would direct pedestrian movements towards existing sidewalks and crossways. Crushed rock would be used instead of decomposed granite and no trees would be added. Some climate adapted turf such as buffalo grass is being considered to preserve the look while being water economical and also edible plantings (herbs,) pollinator plantings, wildflower plantings and cactus and succulents. Some synthetic turf is currently shown in front of the garden but is subject to debate at the moment. Benches with shading will be included on the sidelines.

Ms. Metzger explained that they wanted to add more novel plants than those traditionally seen around town. The plants would be identified by signs which would include barcodes to be scanned on cell phones. She added that the Board of Directors had seen and appreciated the design and thanked the airport for being such a great site.

Committee Chairman Adams observed that the placement of the artificial turf is in a high trafficked area.

Commissioner Hedrick asked if this would require more or less maintenance than now and does it require less water than we currently use?

Mr. Tallarico replied that the goal is less water and less maintenance. How the airport currently has two plantings of annuals on either side of the lawn and the intent is to do away with this as well as cutting down on the regular lawn mowing.

Interim Airport Executive Director Aguirre asked if the concrete sidewalks going east and west on either side of the central area will remain unchanged.

Mr. Tallarico confirmed that they would remain and that people would only take the meandering walkways in the garden if they wished.

Airport Commission Chairman Jones asked for a recap of the costs.

Mr. Tallarico explained how the total cost in mind is \$150,000: \$60,000 from the grant received from the state, \$3.00 per sq. ft. from DWA for turf conversion, so the remaining \$90,000 would be offset by about 40 to 50% by DWA, and \$40,000 to \$50,000 would come from the office of sustainability's budget, with no direct cost to the Airport.

Interim Airport Executive Director Aguirre inquired about the schedule.

Mr. Tallarico stated that, if there were no objections from the Airport Commission, the concept design would be presented to City Council in October. If approved, the detail of the plantings and construction would be worked on in October and November. How this will take a few months and construction could start in mid-February to March 2021.

Commissioner Hedrick brought up the issue of pets, asked if there was a pet zone, and how would we prevent the demonstration garden from being a pet zone.

Mr. Tallarico explained that the two current pet zones would remain but the area in front may be jeopardized. How Pet Area signage could be increased.

Committee Chairman Adams asked if a vote was required.

Mr. Tallarico left it up to the Committee to either take action or present no objection.

Airport Commission Chairman Jones asked that the Committee present a recommendation to the full Commission on September 16.

ACTION: Recommend to move forward with the demonstration garden as presented. **Moved by Committee Chairman Adams and seconded by Commissioner Hedrick and unanimously carried.**

Mr. Tallarico then introduced the turf conversion, and explained how some designs had been developed a few years ago but a phased approach would be easier on the budget, would include funds from the Airport and the Sustainability Department and working with DWA to provide some turf buy back rebates.

Mr. Tallarico first proposed places where people enter the airport: the Vehicle Inspection Plaza finger island area and the corner of Gene Autry and Ramon, around the Palm Springs International Airport sign. How these areas would match the desertscape north by vista Chino.

Several triangular areas covering about 10,000 sq. ft. each along El Cielo would be considered next, starting with the entrance area, and finishing with the Ramon Road area. How water conservation will be a bigger topic here.

Mr. Tallarico presented detailed landscape designs for the entrance of the airport and the corner of Ramon and Gene Autry. The designs would be in line with Tahquitz Canyon road, some of it having already been done. The project would move forward as soon as funding becomes possible.

Airport Commission Chairman Jones confirmed that Mr. Tallarico sought approval for the concept, and that there would be no attempt to move forward without some type of funding sourcing identification. How he doesn't want a commissioner to raise an objection because of a conceived cost because there is none at this point.

Committee Chair Adams confirmed that the timeline would also be based on the budget and asked if it would be possible to include the cost of maintaining the current landscape to offset the cost of the new landscape.

Mr. Tallarico agreed it is a great point. How he had asked the former Airport Director about data on water usage but the airport has no water sub-meters to make this determination. He offered to work with Mr. Aguirre to estimate those costs because these will be needed as well for the demonstration garden.

ACTION: Recommend that we move forward with the design process. **Moved by Committee Chairman Adams seconded by Airport Commission Chairman Jones, and unanimously carried.**

8.B. Painting Airport Benches

Airport Commission Chairman Jones explained how the Arts Commission received approval by City Council to paint benches around the city. One objective is to give work to artists who are paid \$1000 per bench, the other to beautify. How the Chair of the Arts Commission approached him to see if benches could be painted at the airport. They recommended painting eight benches in front of the airport and pointed out that according to the City Manager, formal approval was not required from the Airport Commission because City Council had already approved it. The Arts Commission has to submit plans to this Committee and to the City Manager, and the art has to be appropriate for the airport. Forty-two designs had been proposed for the City and sent to this Committee. Each design has a voting scale and Committee members are asked to weigh in. This in turn would be presented to the City Manager.

Committee Chairman Adams specified that this is just for awareness and input on preferences. He then asked who would be tallying the results.

Airport Commission Chairman Jones asked they be sent to him. He will then consult with Interim Executive Airport Director Aguirre.

Mr. Aguirre asked to be kept out of it and suggested that Mr. Jones review the designs with Ann Sheffer, then submit them directly to the City Manager.

Committee Chairman Adams inquired about the timeline to submit choices. He added he took the survey and it takes only five minutes.

Mr. Jones proposed one week.

9. COMMISSIONERS REPORTS AND REQUESTS: None

10. ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn. Moved by Airport Commission Chairman Jones, seconded by Commissioner Hedrick, and unanimously carried.

The Ad Hoc Airport Landscape Committee Meeting adjourned at 3:47 P.M. to an undetermined future date.

At the time of preparing these minutes a majority of new members have been appointed to the Landscape Committee. Due to a lack of quorum of members present at this meeting, these minutes will be entered into the record without approval by the Committee. A video recording of this meeting is on file with the Airport Executive Administrative Assistant.



Christina Brown
Executive Administrative Assistant