



**PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD**  
**Minutes of the Regular Meeting**  
**July 9, 2019 6:00 P.M.**  
**Conference Room 300**  
**50 E. Civic Center Drive, Gilbert, Arizona 85296**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Les Presmyk, Chair  
Rebecca Hill  
Jennifer Jones  
Ben Kalkman  
Lindsay Shrewsbury  
Stanley (Scott) Williams

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Robert Ferron, Vice Chair  
Gilbert Honeycutt  
Mark LaPorte

**COUNCIL LIAISON PRESENT:**

Vice Mayor Eddie Cook

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Robert Carmona, Parks and Recreation Director  
Rocky Brown, Parks and Recreation Business Manager  
Denise Merdon, Special Events, Marketing & Sponsorships  
Jennika Horta, Management Analyst  
Mike Leppert, Special Events Coordinator  
JP Lacroix, Recreation Coordinator  
Brent Taysom, Special Event/Recreation Coordinator  
Stephanie McMullen, Recreation Coordinator  
Charlotte Miller, Recreation Coordinator  
Jen Lauria, Recreation Coordinator  
Jennie Rambo, Naturalist, Riparian Preserve  
Jennifer Harrison, Digital Media & Marketing

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Councilmember Scott Anderson  
Mike Evans, Desert Rivers Audubon Society  
Bill Scalzo, Parks and Recreation Foundation  
Tiffany Gates, Gilbert Softball Little League  
Everett & Natalie Giddens (Boy Scouts)

**STANDING AGENDA ITEMS**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Presmyk called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M.
- 2. ROLL CALL:** Denise Merdon called the roll and stated that a quorum was present.
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 4. COMMUNICATION FROM CITIZENS PRESENT:** Members of the public may address the Board on matters within the jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Board, but not on the agenda. The Board's response is limited to responding to criticism, asking staff to review a matter commented upon, or asking that a matter be put on a future agenda.

Tiffany Gates, Safety Director for Gilbert Softball Little League (GSSL), brought some items to the Board's attention as possible future agenda items. GSSL has over 300 girls ages 4-16. For the first time they have a waiting list. They play primarily at the old McQueen Park which the town has designated as their home field.

1. Field Needs - Ms. Gates requested that consideration be given to adding softball fields in the planning and development of future parks. GSSL has over 300 girls and a wait list, and more facilities are needed in the East Valley. She noted that kickball and baseball can also be played on softball fields.

2. Women's Restroom - The women's restroom stalls at McQueen next to the softball fields have no trash receptacles for feminine hygiene products. There is a chronic problem with plumbing there because the teens don't like to walk those items out to a public trash can. She asked that small trash receptacles be added to those restroom stalls to discretely dispose of feminine hygiene products.

3. Shade Structures - The dugouts at fields 2 and 3 have no shade structures. Other facilities at Crossroads and the new McQueen have shade structures and bleacher seating. She asked that the town consider financing shade structures at Fields 2 and 3.

4. Safety Base - None of the fields have a safety base at first base. In teaching the girls to properly cover the base, it would be helpful to have an additional base for safety reasons. GSSL will supply the bases, which require a hole to be inserted by the town in order to install the extra bases.

5. Snack Bar Maintenance - The Snack Bar is leased from the Town of Gilbert and GSSL appreciates the revenue generated. The floor needs to be redone.

6. Sponsors on Scoreboards - GSSL is in the process of obtaining sponsors to add permanent scoreboards at old McQueen. The issue is the restriction that sponsors cannot be listed on scoreboards. She noted that Gilbert American was allowed to put sponsors on their scoreboards at Crossroads. GSSL can only afford do this through sponsorships and contractors who have volunteered to do the install and electrical work. She asked that the restriction be revisited and to explore solutions.

Ms. Gates would appreciate these items being considered in future Parks Board meetings. This year, GSSL is celebrating 10 years in the Gilbert community. July 3 was recognized by the town as Arizona Gilbert Softball Little League Day. She thanked the Parks Board for their time and support.

Chair Presmyk thanked Ms. Gates for everything she does for the young ladies in our community. She exemplifies what Gilbert stands for.

He felt items 2, 4, and 5 could be relatively easy to accomplish. He noted that more softball fields will be coming on the east side of town. He has been involved for 20 years trying to get more fields, as have Vice Mayor Cook and former Councilmember Mike Evans. As far as shade structures and scoreboards, he will defer to staff to determine whether those items need to be brought back to the Board as agenda items. He asked staff to follow up with Ms. Gates.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

**5. MARKETING / OUTREACH:** Robert Carmona advised that marketing is one of the department's top priorities this year. The marketing efforts have been spread out among the different divisions and staff is working on a marketing plan.

Jennika Horta, Management Analyst for Parks and Recreation, explained that the department's current marketing efforts are focused on parks, recreation centers, rentals, classes and events. Marketing is done through print, billboards, social media, newsletters, and others items. Facebook is the number one social media venue for impressions with just under 2 million. Some of the top posts were on the Regional Park and Riparian After Dark. Gilbert Digital creates videos and supports many of the marketing efforts. Their newest videos provide 360 degree views of all of our centers. The printed Recreation Guide will move to a digital only format. A newsletter goes out every month to 15,000 recipients. Traditional outreach includes booths at events, the Gilbert Road banner, posters, and sidewalk stickers. This year, we will utilize Next Door and Google Ads. It is important to create a marketing plan in order to receive CAPRA accreditation (Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies).

Robert Carmona noted there are about 2,500 different programs, 140 special events, 180 rentable facilities, and 30 plus parks with Cactus Yards, Gilbert Regional and Desert Sky coming online. With all of that to manage, Parks and Recreation has not been as focused on integrating everything into a central brand. He will bring this item back to the Board as the marketing plan develops.

**Board Questions:**

Ben Kalkman asked if there was a committee that will work on building a marketing plan.

Robert stated there is a marketing committee among staff and the department structure and staffing options will be analyzed to shift the focus on marketing. Currently, a lot of staff members are wearing different hats and managing the centers, programs, and special events at the same time.

Chair Presmyk stated that Parks and Recreation is one of the few governmental agencies that touches the public in many ways and we want the public to know what is available to them. In a private corporation, marketing would be the single most important thing with people dedicated to that aspect.

**6 . GRAND OPENING AND CELEBRATION EVENTS:**

**a . Gilbert Regional Park - (Co-Chairs JP Lacroix and Mike Leppert)**

The Gilbert Regional Park has a lot of great amenities to show people during its Grand Opening. The plan is to hold two separate celebrations. From 8-10 a.m. there will be a beach party kicking off with a presentation and ribbon cutting by the Mayor and Council. People will have the opportunity to go on the Mountain play area and will then move down to the Splash Pad, which will be activated by the Mayor and Council. There will be different giveaways such as towels, lip balm, t-shirts, backpacks, and beach balls. The Fire Department will provide safety tips. There will be local food vendors with some free giveaways such as hot dogs or ice cream. A bubble company will have some fun activities. Kids and adults will be able to explore the different Park amenities.

The second part of the celebration will take place from 6-9 p.m. with a laser glow party. The park amenities have unique lighting that will provide a different experience in the evening. There will be a DJ, bubble mania, local food trucks, a laser light show throughout the evening with a laser grand finale to end the celebration. Giveaways will include towels, lighted foam sticks, glow items, and t-shirts. A tentative date for the Grand Opening is September 21.

Ben Kalkman asked what kind of turnout might be expected.

Robert Carmona advised that the turn out for Cactus Yards was about 4,000 people over a three-hour span. This phase of the park would not be able to fit that many people, which is one of the reasons to split the celebration into two separate events. He anticipates a few thousand in attendance for both the morning and evening events.

**b . Desert Sky Park - (Co-Chairs Stephanie McMullen and Brent Taysom)**

The Desert Sky Park Grand Opening will be held on a weekday evening in early October during the school fall break. The celebration will have a sports and fitness theme to showcase the four multi-use fields. The park has a unique playground feature with a fit core extreme obstacle course. A local celebrity, three-time American Ninja Warrior finalist Adam Rayl will run some activities at the obstacle course. The Army National Guard will provide boot camp demos or classes. Some of the local youth sports leagues will provide a variety of activities. The promotor of the Gilbert Half Marathon will provide a free fun run and instead of medals they will hand out dog tags. There will be various inflatables and activities as well as food trucks. The fitness theme will encourage families to get out and be active and the celebration will showcase the four lighted multi-purpose fields. The tentative date is October 9. The Town Council and Parks and Recreation Foundation will be invited to participate in the event. Volunteers are always needed.

**c . Riparian and Southeast Regional Library 20th Anniversary - (Co-Chairs Jen Lauria and Char Miller)**

The two facilities are celebrating 20 years with the Town of Gilbert. Staff has come up with the slogan Tails to Trails - 20 Years of Exploration and Conservation. The event will be held on October 12.

Prior to the event, a Wildlife Art Contest will be held for ages 5-18 featuring art pertaining to the Riparian Preserve led by Jennie Rambo, the Preserve's Naturalist. The Art Contest winners will be announced in a ceremony during the event. From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., activities will be held inside the library including Bio Blitz, face painting, book walk, etc. At 3:30 p.m. a ceremony will be held outside on the patio. The current Mayor and Council will be invited as well as the former mayor and councilmembers who were in office when the facility was built. From 3-8 p.m. the Preserve will have vendors and food booths, various activities, the Reptile Guy and a Fishing Derby with prizes. The Observatory will be open for viewings. A Flashlight Night Hike will lead to one of the campsites for S'mores and stories.

Chair Presmyk felt this celebration would be gratifying for Mike Evans, who was on Council back when all of this started.

**7. SPECIAL EVENTS ANNUAL REPORT:** Mike Leppert reviewed the town-produced events over the past year. Fall events included the Gilbert Off the Street Festival in downtown featuring a TasteAbout Gilbert with food and beverage sampling. Gilbert Promotional Corporation provided the beverage sales and the Made with Love Market provided vendors. This year, the Gilbert Days 5K and 1-mile run was changed to a Glow Run and the event was sold out with 767 people. The Riparian After Dark event added two evenings for a total of six held on Friday and Saturday nights with a very large increase in numbers. Spring events included the all-ages Kapow Superhero Adventure Run with 1,358 runners, the highest ever. The 4th of July celebration partnering with Higley School District was a success. Fireworks were launched from Desert Sky. In terms of community support, we were a little lower on sponsors this year, but dollar-wise we were up due to an extra presenting sponsor for Riparian After Dark and increased numbers and registration fees for the Kapow Superhero Run and Glow Run. Partnerships have also increased. For Veterans Day, we partnered with the Chandler School District. Volunteers are always needed at these events.

New this year is the upcoming H2O Festival water slide event at Freestone Park on Wednesday, July 10. There will be two evening sessions and wristbands will be \$5. The first session is sold out at 400, and the second session is going fast with 150 sold. The Gilbert Symphony Orchestra held its first event in March with a great turnout of about 800 people and great feedback. Two more events are being planned at the Higley Center for Performing Arts. Another new event Truck-a-Palooza will be held in February featuring big trucks of all kinds from the Town as well as private entities for families to enjoy at Desert Sky Park.

Brent Taysom reported that there was an increase this year in private promoter events held in Gilbert. The numbers on tournaments do not include those held at Cactus Yards. Tournaments were held at Gilbert parks for soccer, flag football, softball, and the high school cross country sectional. About five different soccer organizations have inquired about holding tournaments at Desert Sky. A lot of walks and runs are held at Gilbert parks, primarily Freestone Park. This year, 77 community events were held. There was an increase in events with a state liquor license (15).

Between the town-run and private promoter events in Gilbert this past year there was a total of 128 events with an estimated attendance of 206,476. Examples of the great positive feedback received on events was shared. A survey is done after each town-produced event which asks whether people visited Gilbert shops or restaurants on the day of an event. 64% of people ate at Gilbert restaurants and 21% shopped at Gilbert stores. Events bring people in not only for the event, but to also utilize the shopping and restaurants Gilbert has to offer, which plays a key role for economic development.

**8. RIPARIAN PRESERVE ANNUAL REPORT:** Jen Lauria reviewed the programs and services offered at the Riparian Preserve, including camps, junior ranger programs, Naturalist-led tours, scout tours and badge work. Educational field trips bring in thousands of kids each year. Two of our largest partners are the East Valley Astronomy Club which offers weekly viewing at the Observatory and Desert Rivers Audubon Society which offers monthly bird walks October through April. Naturalist Jennie Rambo teaches botanical and zoological art classes where adults can learn how to draw plants, birds, and butterflies of the Preserve with scientific accuracy. The campgrounds, ramadas, and dino dig areas are rented to host parties and events. A

financial comparison was provided for the last three years. Revenue has increased a little each year to \$18,000 and participation numbers are at 2,297, not including the Observatory or Bird Walks, which are in the tens of thousands of participants.

For fiscal year 2019, the subsidy is about \$13,000 lower, as Jen Lauria's position has changed to include oversight of the Southeast Regional Library. Expenses reflect the staffing, supplies, and operating costs for the programs and services, and a portion of Ms. Lauria's salary. There are tons of great feedback about the Riparian Preserve as one of the top attractions in Gilbert as well as the Observatory. Many people don't even know the Preserve exists.

The strategy for the coming year includes a variety of scout classes, monthly night hikes and nature walks incorporating the park rangers, movies in the park, and a haunted trail event for Halloween.

### **NATURALIST REPORT:**

Jennie Rambo is the Naturalist at the Riparian Preserve. She explained that riparian refers to the vegetation zone along rivers, lakes and streams. Indicator species were identified to evaluate the habitat quality at the Preserve. The Abert's Towhee and the Song Sparrow live in the Preserve all year and nest there. A search of the Preserve found 101 Abert's Towhees and 35 breeding territories being defended by male Song Sparrows, indicating a high-quality habitat.

The Pollinator Gardens are habitats of about 30 species of native wildflowers that attract hummingbirds, butterflies and solitary bees. The Sonoran Desert has about 1,000 species of solitary bees. Some of the wildlife seen in the Pollinator Gardens include Costa's Hummingbirds and caterpillars of the Queen Butterfly.

A new habitat feature this year is the Arizona Uplands Wildflower Habitat in between the lake and the overlook. There are currently 16 species of native wildflowers, shrubs and cacti. Jennie worked with Eagle Scouts to install a fence to protect the area. She also mentored a girl scout who was learning about native plants in order to teach others.

Chair Presmyk asked how much of the vegetation was there 20 years ago.

Jennie stated a few palo verde, creosote, and wolfberry were original to the area. The hummingbirds depend on the wolfberry in the winter. What was lacking was the understory; the wildflowers, especially the seasonal species that account for about half of the flora in the Sonoran Desert.

The Preserve serves an important ecological role as a sanctuary for migrating birds. Some birds migrate thousands of miles between their nesting territories in the northern US and Canada down to their winter habitats in Central and South America. The Preserve serves as a place for birds to rest and refuel before continuing on their journey. Some species, like the Yellow-rumped Warbler and the White-crowned Sparrow, spend the winter at the Preserve.

Well over 1,000 ducks migrated to the Preserve this last year and spent the winter finding food in the recharge ponds. Mallards and Northern Shovelers each accounted for about 20%, the Northern Pintails were slightly less, and a third of the ducks were Green-winged Teals. These four species are all dabbling ducks which feed on zooplankton, insect larvae, and seeds floating on the surface of the pond. One species, the Ring-necked Duck, which dive under the surface to feed, accounted for about 10%. This species primarily lives out at Water Ranch Lake in the deep zones of the recharge ponds. About 7% of the ducks at the Preserve were distributed among 6 other species.

The Preserve also provides nesting habitat for many species of breeding birds from hummingbirds to woodpeckers to shore birds. The Least Bittern is a species of special concern as Arizona Game and Fish estimates only 100 nesting pairs in the entire state. There are two breeding pairs at Water Ranch Lake. Some baby ducklings were rescued from a drywell with the help of a public works employee.

Robert Carmona noted that staff is working on the official programming plan for the Preserve as well as a maintenance plan to go along with the existing conservation plan. Those items will come back to the Board for feedback.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Mike Evans, Conservation Director for Desert Rivers Audubon, was in attendance and requested an opportunity to speak. Desert Rivers Audubon was started in 2006 after splitting off from Maricopa Audubon, which is one of the oldest chapters in the nation. Desert Rivers Audubon represents the southeast Valley and holds monthly programs at the Library as well as free bird walks at the Preserve on Saturday mornings from October to April. Trips are also offered throughout the year. The Riparian Preserve in Gilbert is considered the number two place in the state of Arizona to see birds as documented by Cornell University and its Lab of Ornithology. Mr. Evans has met people visiting the Preserve from China, the Netherlands, and British Isles.

The Riparian Preserve was created on 115 acres from plans developed back in 1997 or 1998 for ground water recharge ponds that would also provide passive recreation and a wildlife preserve. Gilbert has a history of utilizing its wastewater and ground water recharge to attract wildlife. There was a sewer treatment plant off Cooper Road with no place to put the effluent, so it was put out on fields that the town bought from the Morrison family. To everyone's surprise, birds showed up. In the 1970s it was rebuilt to have basins for water. By the 1990s an entire facility was built behind the former fire station for the purpose of attracting birds. Public works has constructed wetlands all over the state of Arizona. When the Gilbert Riparian Preserve was constructed, it was the largest one on earth. It was not until Qatar built a city in the desert with a 1,000 acre groundwater recharge and wastewater facility that Gilbert's facility was surpassed.

Gilbert's Riparian Preserve is a unique facility that draws people from all over the world for bird watching, wildlife photography, research, as well as recreation. Many people had a great vision and worked long and hard to achieve what we have today at the Preserve. Councilman Scott Anderson spent many years working on the Preserve and serving as director. Mr. Evans stressed the importance of making sure the Riparian Preserve is marketed properly as well as protected so that we can continue to share this special place with everyone in the community, the state, and the world.

Councilmember Anderson told a story about someone who was bird watching while vacationing in the Midwest. When people found out they were from Arizona, they asked what are you doing here, you have the Disneyland of birds in Gilbert. The Riparian Preserve is a very well-known site and he used to get phone calls daily from all over the world from people planning vacations to come to Gilbert. As one of the top sites in the state to visit, we need to capitalize on that with a marketing plan.

Chair Presmyk knew of a hotel in Europe that only accepts birders as clients. As a marketing plan is developed, the Riparian is one place to promote through partnering with some of our hotels and other tourist businesses. In the report on Special Events, it was noted that 64% of people ate at Gilbert restaurants and 21% shopped at Gilbert stores, but no one stayed here.

Scott Williams asked about the project to redo the parking lots at the Library.

Robert Carmona stated that is still in the works. It is part of the 5-year CIP plan, although it was not in this year's budget.

Ben Kalkman asked if we track how many people utilize the Riparian facility.

Robert stated at this time we do not have a scientific way of tracking. Staff will be testing some technologies for pedestrian counts at Cactus Yards that we may be able to use in other areas like the Riparian. He felt the numbers for the Riparian would be huge as one of the most visited sites in Gilbert. The Southeast Regional Library is the most visited library in the entire county.

Ben noted it would be especially important for marketing to know how many people visit for bird watching and other activities and how we can grow those numbers.

Councilmember Anderson did a non-scientific count a few years ago with an average of close to 200,000 visitors a year, not including local groups.

## **AGENDA ITEMS**

- 9. 2019-2020 MEETING CALENDAR & WORK PLAN:** Denise Merdon reviewed the Board Annual Planning Calendar with the changes that were suggested last month. Both the October and March meetings will be held at offsite locations, Cactus Yards and Southeast Regional Library, with the opportunity to tour the facilities. The October and March meetings were moved to the third Tuesday of the month due to fall and spring breaks occurring on the second week of the month.

The Board agreed to the Annual Planning Calendar as written.

- 10. MEMBER / LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS:** Chair Presmyk reviewed two opportunities for Board members to serve as liaisons with the Sports Coalition Subcommittee and the Parks and Recreation Foundation.

- a. **Sports Coalition Sub-committee** - The town has a long-standing private-public partnership with sports organizations that was formed decades ago to program fields and provide private capital and improvements to the fields. Some of the Sports Coalition partners include Gilbert American Little League, Gilbert National Little League, and Gilbert Youth Soccer Association (GYSA). A number of the amenities at Crossroads, McQueen, and the Soccer Complex were paid for and built by those organizations. GYSA spent out of pocket cash \$250,000 to light the fields, in addition to all the work Cindy Barnes-Pharr had her father do with his farming equipment. The snack bar, dugouts, and shade structures at Crossroads and McQueen were funded with private money. The Sports Coalition is the group that oversees these activities and monitors and maintains the structure that we have in place. It is a great opportunity to interact with folks in the sports community. Mike Evans and Les Presmyk spent a lot of time with the Sports Coalition. Bob Ferron has served as liaison in the past. Chair Presmyk asked for any interest from the Board to serve as liaison to that subcommittee.

Lindsay Shrewsbury was interested in serving as liaison as her boys participate in all the sports.

- b. **Parks and Recreation Foundation** - Bill Scalzo, President of the Gilbert Parks and Recreation Foundation, advised that the Foundation has been in existence just over three years and has raised \$45,000 for the GAP program (Gilbert Assistance Program) as well as \$15,000 for drowning prevention and swim classes. The Foundation also paid for the Agents of Discovery app at the Riparian Preserve for the last two years. Gilbert started the app after seeing it in Chandler. The big annual fundraising event is a Hawaiian style Dinner in the Park with Hawaiian dancers, food, and activities. Haydon Construction has been the major sponsor, and the Foundation is working to identify additional corporate partners. This year to date the Foundation has raised \$14,000 and needs to raise an additional \$20,000. At the Annual Dinner a raffle is held with about 75 donated items such as quilts, Cardinals tickets, jewelry, and other items. The Foundation works with Rocky Brown on grants through SRP and the Gila River Indian Community. All of the funds raised goes back to Gilbert Parks and Recreation. The Foundation is looking to expand its base membership and Board. Each board member pays a fee so that there is no cost to the Town. They are always looking for new Board members, especially someone with marketing skills or a lawyer. The Foundation Board meets monthly on a Tuesday at 4:30 p.m., and the week of the month varies to accommodate schedules. It is a great way to give back to the community. The Foundation is also working with staff on scholarships of up to \$2,500 to help develop new programs.

Robert Carmona appreciates the partnership with the Foundation and noted that 100% of the money raised comes back to Parks and Recreation. Raising \$60,000 in three years is an amazing accomplishment. Staff is working with the Foundation to identify additional revenue development opportunities. The GAP scholarship helps people afford swim lessons. There is a misconception that there is not a need in Gilbert. There are families that reach out for help all the time.

Mr. Scalzo remembered when the library facility was built 20 years ago through a wonderful joint project between the County government and the Town of Gilbert. Having been a former county employee, he noted there has always been a great relationship with Gilbert.

Chair Presmyk advised that a liaison from the Foundation Board comes to the Parks Board meetings. We would like someone from this Board to attend the Foundation meetings to be part of the discussion, answer questions, and bring information back to the Board. If anyone is interested, let him or staff know.

**MOTION:** Scott Williams moved to appoint Lindsay Shrewsbury as Board Liaison to the Sports Coalition Subcommittee; seconded by Ben Kalkman. Motion passed 6-0.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

### **11 . MINUTES-Consider Approval of the Parks and Recreation Board minutes of June 11, 2019:**

**MOTION:** Scott Williams moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 11, 2019; seconded by Rebecca Hill. The Motion passed 6-0.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

**12 . REPORT FROM CHAIR:** Chair Presmyk spent the 4th of July in Prescott Valley as 7 of his 9 siblings live in that area. The weather was nice, but there were a lot of bugs. He understood the 4th of July celebration in Gilbert was an excellent event and well attended. The 4th of July event used to be held at Mesquite and he used to sit in his backyard and watch the fireworks.

**13 . REPORT FROM BOARD / FOUNDATION MEMBERS:** None.

**14 . REPORT FROM COUNCIL LIAISON:** Vice Mayor Cook reported that the Town of Gilbert was named the Best City or Town to have a business by the Arizona Chamber of Commerce. We beat out all the bigger players in the state. He also advised that the Town of Gilbert has received its third AAA credit rating from S&P, the last of the three big institutions for credit ratings. Gilbert is one of less than 50 municipalities (out of 19,000) in the US to receive a AAA rating from all 3 agencies. It is a great achievement.

**15 . REPORT FROM STAFF LIAISONS:** Rocky Brown advised that the last Dive-In Movie will be held on July 19 at Williams Field Pool featuring Coco. The event is free and the pool opens at 7 p.m. The prior two Dive-In Movies each had about 700 attendees.

**16 . UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:** Denise Merdon reported on a new event the H2O Fest on July 10 at Freestone Park with several slip-n-slides and inflatable water slides, music and food trucks. There will be two sessions: 5:30-7 p.m. and 7:30-9 p.m. Cost is \$5 per person.

## **CONCLUSION**

Chair Presmyk noted the positive reports heard this evening including the AAA credit rating and the Riparian Preserve, which was bare dirt that was turned into wildlife habitats and a tourist destination for birders and families. He has heard over the years, as have former Councilmember Evans and Vice Mayor Cook, that parks are not a proper role of government. Nothing could be further from the truth. Some people truly believe that no municipal government should be building, maintaining and running parks. Think about what this community would be and what its reputation would be if we did not have a single park. The work this Board and staff does is a very significant part of what makes the Town of Gilbert so special. Our programs, the support of families, the Sports Coalition all factor into this credit rating significantly as it is about the impressions of what the Town of Gilbert is across the country. You are all here because we want your ideas and input. If a private promoter is

looking to bring an event to the East Valley, with our existing facilities and our new parks coming online we can support almost any event. The Regional Park will be able to host a full marathon at some point. The sky is the limit. He encouraged members to bring ideas back to the Board or bring a person in for a presentation. We will always find time on the agenda for those types of opportunities. We are the ambassadors for the Town of Gilbert in that regard. Your roles on this advisory board are what you are willing to put into it.

Invitations for the celebration events will go out in the next few weeks. Volunteers are always needed. Chair Presmyk had a great time handing out baseballs to kids at the Cactus Yards Grand Opening. With three large events, staff can definitely use the extra help.

The Board will not meet in August. Chair Presmyk wished everyone a safe and happy summer. Stay out of the sun and keep kids safe around water.

**17 . MOTION TO ADJOURN:** Chair Les Presmyk adjourned the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

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Les Presmyk, Chair

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Denise Merdon, Staff Liaison

(TE: 14082507)