

MINUTES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - YUMA CITY HALL
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA
December 16, 2025
5:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Nicholls called the Regular City Council Worksession to order at 5:32 p.m.

Councilmembers Present: Martinez, Morris, McClendon, Smith, Watts, and Mayor Nicholls

Councilmembers Absent: Morales

Staffmembers Present: Acting City Administrator, John D. Simonton
Administrative Support Manager, Jasmin Rodriguez
Police Captain, Michael Wilcher
Director of Community Development, Alyssa Linville
Various department heads or their representatives
City Attorney, Richard W. Files
Deputy City Clerk, Janet L. Pierson

I. PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Rodriguez presented the following Parks and Recreation Department (Department) update:

- Mission
 - Enriching lives through quality programs, experiences, and facilities that preserve the past, provide for the present, plan, and promote the spirit of fun.
- Department Staff
 - The leadership team currently has two key vacancies: Assistant Director and Yuma Civic Center Manager.
 - The Civic Center Manager role is being handled by the Arts and Culture Division Manager, Ana Padilla, who has introduced much-needed operational consistency and efficiency across multiple facilities, including the Civic Center, Art Center, 270 Black Box Theater, and Historic Yuma Theater.
 - The Assistant Director position will remain vacant through the fiscal year to alleviate pressure on the 2% operating fund, with plans to include it in the 2027 proposed budget.
 - Despite these vacancies, the dedicated staff continue to work collaboratively to manage the diverse functions of the Department.
- Six Divisions
 - The Department consists of six divisions responsible for programming, coordinating public use of parks and facilities, and maintaining the entire park system:
 - Parks Division
 - Arts and Culture
 - Recreation Division
 - Administration Division
 - Yuma Civic Center
 - Desert Hills Golf Course/Arroyo Dunes

- Parks, Arts, and Recreation Commission
 - The Parks, Arts, and Recreation Commission serves as a vital advisory board, acting as a community liaison and providing input on administrative policies, ordinance changes, and specialized programs like Park Patrol and Adopt-a-Park.
 - They also approve public art concepts, select winners for the City's Tribute of the Muses, and offer guidance on funding priorities and other departmental initiatives.
- Parks and Recreation Funding
 - The Department is funded through multiple sources, including the General Fund, 2% Tax Fund, Mall Maintenance Fund, grants, and revenue from fees and rentals, with recent donations supporting capital projects and aquatic programs.
 - The 2026 budget totals \$22.6 million, allocated as \$10.6 million for personnel, \$9.1 million for operations, and \$2.8 million for capital outlay.
- Parks, Arts, Recreation and Trails Master Plan
 - The Parks, Arts, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan, adopted by City Council in 2024, serves as the guiding framework for all departmental plans and initiatives.
 - Developed with extensive community input and facility assessments, it provides a 10-year strategic roadmap for the Department.
 - The Department has actively implemented key elements of the plan over the past year, ensuring it remains a living document rather than a static reference.
- Major Projects Underway
 - Kennedy Skate Park Reconstruction
 - The Kennedy Skate Park is undergoing full reconstruction after significant concrete cracking occurred soon after its grand opening.
 - The contractor, committed to delivering top-quality facilities, agreed to demolish and rebuild the park at no cost to the City.
 - Demolition is currently in progress, reconstruction will start in January, and the park is expected to reopen this spring.
 - Joe Henry Memorial Park Revitalization
 - Joe Henry Memorial Park is undergoing major improvements funded by a \$225,000 urban forestry grant, which supported extensive tree work and a new irrigation system.
 - Irrigation upgrades are complete, and plans are in place to extend irrigation to Shaw Fields, recently donated to the City by Shaw Industries.
 - The park now features a new inclusive playground, one ramada replacement with two more to be refurbished, and new concrete pathways for improved accessibility.
 - Desert Hills Golf Course Water Conservation Project
 - The Desert Hills Golf Course completed a major water conservation project funded by a grant from the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona.
 - Improvements included replacing the entire irrigation system with a computer-controlled system, bunkers designed to meet professional golf standards, removing over 30 acres of turf, and planting more than 1,000 desert-adapted plants.
 - These changes significantly reduce water use while enhancing sustainability and aesthetics, earning strong positive feedback from players.
 - Additionally, the Par 3 course has been restored to its original name, Arroyo Dunes, which has been warmly welcomed by the golfing community.

- East Mesa Community Park
 - The East Mesa Community Park, a long-requested project reaffirmed in the 2024 Master Plan, is under active development near 32nd Street and Avenue 6E.
 - Key features are taking shape: the lake is nearly complete and will be filled in January, retaining walls and sidewalks are poured, and shade structures and play equipment are being installed.
 - Thanks to revenue bonds and donations, additional play structures and splash pad options have been added.
 - While significant progress has been made, the park's grand opening is still about a year away.
- Art Projects Underway
 - Several new art projects have brightened Yuma this year, including a colorful mural behind the skate park created through the summer mural program and a newly unveiled art fence downtown on Second Street. Both were funded primarily by grants and donations.
 - Looking ahead, 2026 is set to be “the year of the arts,” with about 17 new installations planned, ranging from functional art pieces to murals, so expect numerous artist calls and unveiling announcements soon.
- Revenue Bond
 - The splash pad at Friendship Park, which has reached the end of its useful life, will be replaced with a modern splash zone this fiscal year, funded by the recent revenue bond initiative.

Discussion

- Recent efforts have increased the tree canopy at the golf course and Joe Henry Memorial Park, with ongoing restoration work continuing throughout the park system. (**Watts/Rodriguez**)
- The contractor that constructed Kennedy Skate Park used an incorrect concrete mix lacking sufficient aggregate, which led to cracking. The contractor has taken responsibility and will use a mix specifically designed for local conditions during reconstruction. (**Watts/Simonton**)
- The splash pad at Friendship Park operates seasonally, typically from late spring through early fall, and is available for school events and public use. It does not run constantly; instead, it uses a push-button activation system, allowing visitors to start the water flow as needed. (**McClendon/Rodriguez**)
- Replacement of the Carver Park splash pad is included in the Capital Improvement Program and was identified in the master plan as needing replacement in the near future, though the exact year is not yet determined. (**McClendon/Rodriguez**)
- The golf courses look beautiful and are an important part of the golf community, with the restored Arroyo Dunes name receiving positive feedback. (**Smith/Rodriguez**)
- Art installations continue to appear throughout the City, showcasing incredible local talent and enriching the community. These projects benefit from strong community support, which helps bring them to life. (**Smith/Rodriguez**)
- The art fence installation is creative and offers an interactive experience that feels like discovering a hidden gem or “easter egg” in the community, going beyond a simple painted wall. (**Mayor Nicholls/Rodriguez**)

II. REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA OF DECEMBER 17, 2025

Motion Consent Agenda Item C.3 – Bid Award: Handguns with Red Dot Sights (purchase and delivery of handguns in the amount of \$117,920.00 from Proforce Law Enforcement, Prescott, Arizona) (RFB-26-139) (YPD)

Discussion

- The bid award for handguns with red dot sights involves replacing all 176 handguns rather than just adding sights. Surplus handguns are managed through a buyback program, where the vendor provides compensation in exchange for the old weapons. (**Smith/Wilcher**)
- Training on the red dot optic has already been completed, and ongoing training will continue throughout the year. Officers must qualify on the new system before deploying the upgraded handguns in the field. (**McClelland/Wilcher**)

Ordinance O2025-051 – Text Amendment: Design Review (transfers design review authority in the Aesthetic Overlay District from the Design and Historic Review Commission to the Zoning Administrator as required by House Bill 2447) (ZONE-44497-2025) (Comm Dev/Comm Plng)

Discussion

- This text amendment stems from House Bill 2447, which removes the Design and Historic Review Commission's authority to review design applications for aesthetic overlay cases. This primarily eliminates the public hearing requirement for those cases. (**Mayor Nicholls/Linville**)

Ordinance O2025-052 – Text Amendment: Subdivision Code (transfers review authority for preliminary plats, final plats, and plat amendments from the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council to the Department of Community Development as required by House Bill 2447) (ZONE-44496-2025) (Comm Dev/Comm Plng)

Discussion

- The preliminary plat phase remains a required step under state law and will continue as part of the process, which has been updated to ensure efficiency moving forward. However, having the Mayor sign the plat is no longer necessary. (**Mayor Nicholls/Linville**)

EXECUTIVE SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, **Mayor Nicholls** adjourned the meeting at 5:52 p.m. No Executive Session was held

APPROVED:

Lynda L. Bushong, City Clerk

Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor

Approved at the City Council Meeting of:

City Clerk: _____