



City of Prescott

City Council - Study Session

February 11, 2025 | 1:00 PM
201 N Montezuma Street
City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Goode called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Phil Goode - Mayor
Connie Cantelme - Mayor Pro Tem
Lois Fruhwirth - Councilwoman
Ted Gambogi - Councilman
Brandon Montoya - Councilman (Absent)
Eric Moore - Councilman
Cathey Rusing - Councilmember

3. DISCUSSION

- A. Presentation & Discussion Regarding West Granite Creek Park.
Deputy City Manager Michael Morris provided a presentation to the Council regarding West Granite Creek Park located behind/beside the Hilton Garden Inn on Montezuma Street.

History:

- * Prior to 1998 - manufactured gas plant and brownfield site
- * 2000 - master plan with trails, creek crossings, neighborhood garden, playground, lighting, benches, and signage
- * 2011-2017 - community garden, parking allowed but could not block Granite Street or city trails
- * 2021 - Hilton Garden Inn completed including new splash pad
- * 2022 - engineered drawings procured for possible location of farmers' market
- * 2023 - drawings amended to address organic parking issues

Three Concerns:

- * No funding has been allocated for this project or further work done since November 2023
- * Formalizing paved parking within the park diminishes the enjoyment of the park and could have negative environmental impacts including to the riparian area
- * Removing parking from the park would make splash pad less accessible to families and/or would result in parents and young children parking further away and potentially having to cross Montezuma Street
- * Reducing traffic and adding vegetation in the park could contribute to an increase in homeless activity

Possible Paths Forward:

- * Allow parking to continue as is
- * Direct staff to develop a parking plan for consideration in FY26 budget process
- * Restrict parking within West Granite Creek Park; require park users to find parking on their own in other parking areas or pursue parking agreements with APS and Sam Hill Warehouse
- * Collect more data on use, needs and options
- * Allow some parking in the westernmost portion of the park and some on APS property

Councilmember Rusing asked about zoning for the park and the hotel.

Mr. Morris responded that the park parcel is zoned as natural open space and has been since at least 2001, but the hotel is business general (BG).

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked about the difference between natural open space versus a park, and what the requirements are for ADA parking for public access. She has seen parents, cyclists and overnight campers what can be done to restrict overnight parking from occurring.

City Attorney Joseph Young responded that camping is unlawful in that area per the camping ordinance, it is not legal now.

Recreation Services Director Joe Baynes added that there is signage prohibiting that, he added that parking lots are an allowable use in open space. ADA is based on how many spaces there are, in this particular space two would be the minimum.

Councilman Moore stated that there are a lot of similarities to the Gail Gardener and Fair Street stop light and how the public is responding to this. The citizens seem to have spoken, as the Council looks at the intent of the West Granite Creek Master Plan it was designed to be a natural park so he doesn't feel that this needs a lot of discussion. The splash pad is limited use for only a portion of the year, would be better to partner with surrounding businesses to address the parking needs.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme asked staff to address the Master Plan and paragraph regarding the US Army Core of Engineers and any creek crossings being reviewed and approved by them, does parking in this area violate that.

Mr. Morris responded that if the riparian area is changed they would be involved in the permitting process, the grant was an ADOT grant for trails in the area and as long as those stay in place the city is in compliance with that.

Councilmember Rusing commented that she didn't know about the parking lot until it was brought to her attention by the public, thinks a compromise is appropriate in potentially moving parking further away.

City Manager Dallin Kimble responded that there are two properties (APS and Sam Hill Warehouse). APS has said that they will work with the city. Some of

their space is not appropriate for parking and Sam Hill Warehouse belongs to the Shumways, and they have said they would accommodate some parking but not specifically how much or how many.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth stated that there were aspects of the design submitted by the public that she really liked, the more you bring in multi-generational support to an area the less likely you are to have unsavory things happening in that area which is positive. She added that many times she has seen a mom with full hands, juggling many things crossing the street because even the current parking is inadequate for that usage. Have there been any traffic studies in the site to determine what is needed in that area.

Mr. Morris responded that staff has done counts during the peak time, 35-40 is the general and typical number during that time.

Mr. Baynes added the counts were unofficial to determine what the needs are. There is good rationale to studying that further, it isn't just 3-4 months out of the year it is trailhead parking as well.

Councilman Gambogi commented that there have been pedestrian accidents in that area, he asked for clarification on how many parking spaces are in the proposal.

Mr. Baynes confirmed 41 spaces in the conceptual plan. The other areas would allow for approximately 21, but that would have to be engineered to determine the exact number those areas are across the creek 100-150 yards from the splash pad.

Mayor Goode opened public comment for 30 minutes.

Member of the public Sue Knaup addressed the Council as VP of Prescott Alternative Transportation, she stated that there used to be locked bollards to get into the parking area. Children are in danger even now with cars backing up; there are 111 spaces identified in their plan outline and she encouraged the Council to look at the alternatives.

Member of the public Kathleen Sauer addressed the Council as an attorney for the group that is opposed to the proposal which is in opposition to the Master Plan for the park. By removing the barriers the city is already in violation of the plan. APS, City of Prescott, donors etc. have contributed to the development of the park with the intention of it remaining natural open space/car free. Three letters in support as opposed to forty-four in opposition.

Member of the public Laurel Freeman addressed the Council, she stated she was last before the Council regarding the mural on the bridge in the area. The green lands and creeks are important to this community, people come here for what is uniquely Prescott.

Member of the public Sherrie Hanna addressed the Council, this is a very congested area. She takes her young grandchildren to the splash pad and has

everything with her when she goes, have to take that into consideration when designing this area. Need more parking and safety for families and older people. Surrounding communities have amenities for younger families and maybe it is time that is looked into here as well.

Member of the public Ellen Montgomery addressed the Council as a longtime resident of Prescott, she loves this area and would love to see the riparian area come back.

Member of the public Jo Graves addressed the Council as a resident of the neighborhood adjacent to West Granite Creek Park, in the summer time the area is very crowded and can be dangerous for families. There isn't much shade surrounding the splash pad and only two picnic tables, restoring this would be an improved experience for the area.

Member of the public Robin Green addressed the Council regarding a lack of park space in Prescott, he suggested there is a root cause to the issues at West Granite Creek Park because of that.

Member of the public Nicholas Whiteley addressed the Council and echoed Councilman Moore's comments.

Member of the public Jim Knaup addressed the Council regarding green stormwater infrastructure and other facets of the General Plan that propose retaining West Granite Creek Park as green space. He read a history of the area, including previous contamination in the area from previous uses.

Member of the public Michael Byrd addressed the Council as Exec Director of Prescott Creeks regarding their August 2023 letter on this topic. There is an existing Master Plan with intentions of returning the area to riparian setting with limited improvements, proposed parking lot is inconsistent with that plan and encouraged Council to look back to that plan.

Member of the public Nancy Turcich addressed the Council regarding nature nurturing, that is why she moved to Prescott.

Member of the public Colleen McHorney addressed the Council as a member of Parents for a Car Free Park, as it is now the park is polluted with noise and vehicle runoff. She walks from her neighborhood through the park to work most mornings and it is unsafe for pedestrians, there is an overwhelming support to keep the park as it is, some who would like an adventure garden, etc. This area is a gem.

Member of the public Gabriel McHorney Repak addressed the Council, he loves to play in the park. It has been parked in for a long time, but he thinks it shouldn't be paved because it is part of less than 2% of riparian space in Arizona.

Member of the public Colleen Sorenson addressed the Council and stated that she instigated the Community Garden as part of her thesis project, it existed for a little over seven years. At that time there was no parking but there were two

locked gates. There has been so much money and work put into that area to remediate the land there and can't imagine just paving over all of that.

Member of the public Douglas Hulmes addressed the Council regarding trails through Granite Creek Park, there are varying opinions about how to manage riparian ecosystems but they add to the quality of life in the area. This is about the future, kids and the environment.

Mayor Goode ended public comment at this time, and reminded everyone that the Council is still in session during the tour to the park and existing parking area. The meeting will be adjourned at the dais.

At 2:00 p.m. Council, staff and the public walked to West Granite Creek Park where staff overviewed potential parking locations. Everyone arrived at the park at 2:10 p.m. and Mr. Kimble reviewed the existing parking lot, ADA requirements and potential locations for parking including overflow adjacent to Sam Hill Warehouse and onto APS property. He stated that he felt it was important for the Council to have an understanding of the distance from these areas to the park and splash pad.

At 2:35 p.m. Council and public returned to Chambers, Study Session was resumed at 2:38 p.m.

Mr. Kimble stated that the staff needs direction from the Council on how they would like to proceed related to this issue.

Councilman Moore commented that perhaps there are options that haven't been explored, there is connectivity between West Granite Creek Park and Granite Creek Park which has ample parking which could be a solution as well. Feels Council should return to the Master Plan.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth stated that she is aligned with not paving, restoring as much as possible back to open space, adding a kids adventure trail but feels staff needs to look at adding in parking/dedicated spaces for drop off of items. Would prefer to spend the money on building a second splash pad in North Prescott.

Councilman Gambogi commented on a cleanup of Granite Creek early last year, there is a reality in the splash pad being there and people needing to access it. His direction is Option 2 of the suggestions from staff.

Councilmember Rusing stated that there is no need for asphalt or cutting down trees, utilizing the hybrid solutions is what she would prefer exploring. Parking by Sam Hill Warehouse and agreed that a drop off area would be good as well as a pedestrian crossing area.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme added that she is in favor of a drop off area and 2-3 ADA spots right by the grass area, parking by APS fence and near Sam Hill would be appropriate. Would like to see the park restored to what it was.

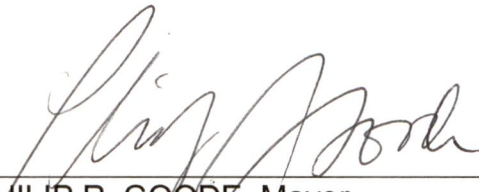
Mayor Goode stated that it should be maintained as natural as possible, adding ADA parking puts the city in such a federal involvement issue and it is expensive to do and maintain. There is plenty of parking including overflow. Location for parent drop off is a good idea and solution, but he is not in favor of any additional paving.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth stated that there were no "No Overnight Camping" signs at the site, she asked that these be added and that the public remove their WGCP political advocacy signs which were posted.

This item was for discussion only, no formal action was taken.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Goode adjourned the meeting at 2:47 p.m.



PHILIP R. GOODE, Mayor

ATTEST:



SARAH M. SIEP, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Voting Meeting of the City Council Voting Meeting of the City of Prescott, Arizona held on February 11, 2025. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.



Sarah M. Siep, City Clerk

