

METROPOLITAN PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD (MPRAB)

Minutes

January 7, 2025

Location: In person at the Parks and Recreation Dept office: 1801 N 4th St NW, and Zoom

Members Present: *At-Large* - Valerie Martinez (Chair), Tony Johnson; *District 2:* Julie Radoslovich; *District 3* Anna N. Nelson, PhD; *District 5* - John I. Ajie; *District 9* - Fredrica “Rickie” Bergquist

Members Absent: *District 7* - Cynthia D. Serna

City Staff Present: Director, David Simon; Deputy Director, David Flores; Deputy Director, Dennis Vasquez; CIP Program Manager, Cheryl Somerfeldt

Guests Present: see table below

1. Call to Order:

- a. Chair Valerie Martinez called the meeting to order at 12:31 pm.
- b. Introduction of Board Members.

2. Business Meeting:

- a. Agenda for this January 7, 2024 meeting was approved unanimously.

3. Old Business

- a. Follow up - Presentation by Chair Martinez of MPRAB report to City Council on 12/2
Chair Martinez made a presentation to City Council on December 12, 2024 of the 2024 MPRAB Annual Report to the Mayor and City Council linked here: [Final MPRAB Annual Report - 2024](#).
She emphasized the MPRAB hard work and collaboration under board members.
The Albuquerque park system ranked #15 in the country by Trust for Public Lands in 2023, as 90% of citizens are within a 10 minute walk to a park.
MPRAB believes funding is needed to activate the existing parks, and one recommendation is for \$80,000 of funding for this purpose.
MPRAB is also trying to push City Council and the Mayor for faster board appointments as some board members waited 3 years before appointment.
Current vacancies are in District 1, 4, 6, and 8.
Julie Radoslovich met with Councilor Baca who will request a line item of \$80,000 in the new budget, and Councilor Baca will review names of those who have applied to MPRAB.
- b. Park Renaming request: Stardust Skies Park" to "Andres Arellanes Park".
To clarify the process, the board does not create a request. Anyone from the community can propose a request, and then the policy steps are required, shown here: [final-version-mprab-parks-naming-policy-february-2024.pdf](#).
Stardust Skies Park, History of the Current Name was read aloud.

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4. Public Comment, time limited to 2 minutes each:

| # | Position | Name | Summary of Comment |
|----|----------|------------------------|--|
| 1 | Oppose | Michael Maxwell (Zoom) | Stardust Skies Neighbor. Stardust Skies is a legacy name of over 50 years. Other avenues could be pursued to memorialize Andres Arellanes. |
| 2 | Support | Lawrence Roybal (Zoom) | Executive Director of ENLACE New Mexico, and faculty member at the UNM School of Medicine. Has collaborated with various partners to increase graduation rates. Andres Arellanes graduated from Sandia High School, served as one of the student mentors, and was an outstanding individual. ENLACE supports a scholarship in Andres Arellanes' name. |
| 3 | Oppose | Channing Kelly (Zoom) | After reviewing the MPRAB Park Naming Policy, believes approving would be against the policy, and a memorial tree may be more appropriate. |
| 4 | Support | Ralph Arellanes | Proud and honored father of Andres Arellanes. Andres would have turned 38 years old on Jan. 8, 2025. When he was 20 years old, he was attacked by 8 police officers and survived after suffering 20 unjust Taser burns. Andres fought against brutality, which is a threat to all of us, and he was a phenomenal person. The Our Lady of Annunciation priest wrote a letter stating that Andres died to make the world a better place. Ralph Arellanes proposes using both names such as Andres Arellanes Stardust Skies Park. |
| 5 | Support | Ivan Valdez | Stardust Skies Neighbor. Believes the current name is a remnant of when the nation was under nuclear threat. Andres Arellanes was a great kid and wrestling athlete and was severely beaten. This Park should be named in his honor. Proposes Andres Arellanes Stardust Skies Park. |
| 6 | Support | James Arellanes | Donated time to Ralph Arellanes. |
| 7 | Oppose | Greg Peake | President of Stardust Skies Neighborhood Association. Sends condolence to Arellanes family. Residents of the neighborhood are scientists and technologists who have contributed substantially to this world, many unknown due to security purposes. Willis Whitfield, a neighbor, invented the 'clean-room', which has saved millions of lives and is still used. Even so, the NA does not want to change Stardust Skies Park name to any person's name as it has been Stardust Skies for generations. He believes a tree or plaque would be more appropriate to honor Andres Arellanes. |
| 8 | Oppose | Kim Lovely Peak | Donated time to Greg Peake. |
| 9 | Support | Angelica Chell | Supporting Ralph Arellanes. Believes that people get used to a name. and that it is time for a change. Proposes Andres Arellanes Stardust Skies Park. |
| 10 | Support | Marcela Arellanes | Andres Arellanes' mother. Andres was an advocate for animal rescue, and focused on the pursuit of justice. The UN reviewed his beating and implemented stronger restrictions on hazing, and afterward the Arellanes were intimidated by police. |

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| 11 & 12 | Oppose | Anna Allenswerth & Jim Allenswerth | Stardust Skies Neighbor. Grew up in New Mexico in Holiday Park, and was finally able to move to Stardust Skies. The tradition established by the developers donating land is important. A better option than renaming the park would be to name the Sandia High School field after Andres as a way to further educate about his life. Questions how often a park can be renamed? |
| 13 | Oppose | Merrie Roctweller | Stardust Skies Neighbor. Walks around and cleans the park every day. The neighborhood is not stuck; there are new families and children moving in who honor the park. |
| 14 | Oppose | Todd Hurt | Stardust Skies Neighbor. Built home in 1960 and grew up across the street from Stardust Skies Park when it was first developed. While the park was in the planning stage, his parents bought and planted trees, spent weekends hauling long hoses to water the trees by hand. Changing the name of the park will dishonor that legacy. The name is central to the neighborhood and its identity. His mother passed away in the home recently and was a pillar of the community. She would have been adamantly opposed to the request. |
| 15 | Oppose | Sarah Nuremburg | Stardust Skies Neighbor. Believes Stardust Skies is a legacy name and does not want it changed. |
| 16 | Oppose | Tom Besson | Lifelong resident of Albuquerque. In the Stardust Skies Stardust Skies Neighbor for 40 years. There are better options such as a tree, plaque, or bench than renaming the park. |
| 17 | Oppose | CP Davenport | Stardust Skies Neighbor. Graduated from Sandia and raised 3 kids on Hermanson Place, and loves the neighborhood and people in it. Urges finding another way to honor Andres Arellanes. |
| 18 | Oppose | Matt Channon | Stardust Skies Neighbor for 22 years. Cannot imagine what it would like to lose a son, but opposes renaming the park. |
| 19 | Oppose | Gloria Graeber | Stardust Skies Neighbor for a few years. A Vietnam Veteran homeless woman who lived in the park was brutally murdered on June 23, 2024. Ms. Graeber would want the name changed to honor this woman if it was going to change, but does not want a change at all. |
| 20 | Oppose | Alan Duhon | Stardust Skies Neighbor for 35 years. Surveyed residents and does not believe any older residents approve of the name change. |
| 21 | Oppose | Doreen Naligio | Stardust Skies Neighbor since 1976. The park was named by the people who built it. Stardust Skies is a wonderful neighborhood which why they were able to petition so many signatures. |
| 22 | Oppose | Shirley Medina | Stardust Skies Neighbor. Ms. Medina has always loved the name as she loves to watch the stars. |
| 23 | Oppose | Britney Treadaway | Stardust Skies Neighbor for 10 years, and has two children at Sandia High School. Undergraduate degree from UNM and two graduate degrees from Grand Canyon University, in health and business. In the course of her job duties, was attacked. Ms. Treadaway then worked to change the way people can report harassment and battery, so that others do not need to continually re-tell their story. Believes parks should not be named after individuals as there will always someone who experienced worse or did |

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| | | | more, and leveraging a bad situation to make the world better is a human endeavor. |
| 24 | Oppose | Lee Ann Smith | Stardust Skies Neighbor for 32 years. Had no prior knowledge of Andres Arellanes, and believes there are other options to honor him. |
| 25 | Oppose | Jo Cito | Stardust Skies Neighbor on Harwood. |
| 26 | Oppose | CJ Valerio | Stardust Skies Neighbor for 50 years. |
| 27 | Oppose | Kevin Stephen | Stardust Skies Neighbor for 1 year. Backyard overlooks the park. Picks up the trash. Believes those who have died should be honored with plaques and trees. |
| 28 | Oppose | Leslie Stephen | Did not speak further. |
| 29 | Oppose | Elaine Wade | Stardust Skies Neighbor with backyard facing the park. Her house was built by her father, who worked on the atomic bomb delivery, and she inherited the house, then sold it to her daughter. When her parents bought house, they chose it because of the name. She suggests a foundation for Andres Arellanes where the family can grow and work for children to inspire change as part of his legacy. |
| 30 | Oppose | Diane McDonald | Stardust Skies Neighbor since 1963. One of the first people to build a Mossman house. She spoke with the daughter of Gladden who also did not want the name changed. |
| 31 | Oppose | Joey Wells | Stardust Skies Neighbor since 1963, and watched the trees planted in 1968. Would like to have a sidewalk around the park with parts of it designated as memorials. |
| 32 | Oppose | Mark De Vesty | Stardust Skies Neighbor since 1963. Part of Stardust Skies historic neighborhood. Does not want to change the name to honor any person from the neighborhood. |
| 33 | Oppose | Tim Hovda | Stardust Skies Neighbor. The existing name is traditional such as the names: 'Albuquerque', 'Sandia Mountains', and 'Rio Grande River'. Mr. Hovda believes in the tradition of having a name for a long time. |
| 34 | Oppose | Janice Johnson | Stardust Skies Neighbor for 53 years, built home in 1979. |
| 35 | Oppose | Gary Johnson | Did not speak further. |
| 36 | Oppose | Jennifer Street | Stardust Skies Neighbor for 25 years. Many individuals have made important contributions. Per the MPRAB Policy, renaming a park after an individual should not be standard, and overwhelming public support is needed. |
| 37 | Oppose | Robert Coffey | Stardust Skies Neighbor since 1992. Saddened by Andres Arellanes' story, but suggests other ways to remember him. |
| 38 | Oppose | Karne Randall | President of Stardust Skies North Neighborhood Association. Stardust Skies is a legacy name with no current controversies; when a park is named after an individual, it could be controversial. Believes others in the neighborhood are also deserving, and some who support the name change do not live in the neighborhood. Believes it is a good idea for the Arellanes family to work with Sandia High School, and possibly offer a scholarship to educate students about Andres' attack. |

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| 39 | Oppose | Allison Duffus | Stardust Skies Neighbor for 4 years. Believes the park name is clearly woven into each neighbor’s lives. There is a difference between ‘stuck in ways’ and history, tradition, and legacy. Feels it is important to be part of and maintain what Stardust Skies stands for. Suggests a dog park or courts could be named after Andres Arellanes. |
| 40 | Oppose | Matt Cleary | Stardust Skies Neighbor. To honor Andres Arellanes, an avid wrestler, his name should be on a gymnasium to educate young men. |
| 41 | Oppose | Bridgette Ortero | Stardust Skies Neighbor. Applauds the bravery of the applicant, but opposes the change. She is a realtor and sees how much people love the neighborhood. Read her husband’s letter, which stated: while sympathizing with the Arellanes family, he believes this change would disrupt the unity of a timeless neighborhood. To honor one individual would be to prioritize one. Rather than replacing a beloved name, he suggests a bench, which would provide a lasting tribute while preserving the park’s identity; he encourages a meaningful way to honor Andres. |
| 42 | Support | Pablo Janice | Supports Ralph Arellanes and admires their son’s efforts. |
| 43 | Support | Janice | Andres was a hero and what he accomplished means a lot to younger people regarding police brutality. |
| 44 | Oppose | Maddie Loveland (Zoom) | Stardust Skies Neighbor for 16 years. The Stardust Skies Park name is iconic and a part of history. |

Zoom Chat Question: was this the same family at Snow Park? Answer: yes, and Andres Arellanes actively withdrew.

Count of Positions:

- *Opposition:*
 - Public Speakers in Opposition: 36
 - Emails in Opposition: 56 emails in the first batch, 36 in the second batch = 92
 - Petition in opposition: almost 500
 - Total: 628
- *Support:*
 - Public Speakers in Support: 8
 - Emails in Support: 15 emails in the first batch, 3 in the second batch = 18
 - Total: 26

The MPRAB members voted unanimously to oppose the requested renaming of Stardust Skies Park due to overwhelming public opposition.

Stardust Skies Park will keep its name.

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Out of concern for time, the board re-ordered agenda items below.

5. Reports

- *Parks and Recreation Department, Director*

Director Simon appreciated the diligence and respectfulness the way the board conducted the issue and the way Chair Martinez conducted the meeting.

Regarding the State Legislature. There is a list of all capital outlay requests that will be distributed. Please use LCS (Legislative Council Services) number when referring to a request. Parks has a large number of projects into the system and it will depend on public advocacy to receive that money. Most legislators are having to make decisions sooner rather than later and some have clear priorities; actual decisions are made first week of March, therefore advocacy should start now. PRD did not know what would be the final result of entering projects into the system until December 13, 2024.

6. New Business

- a. Appointments to the board

Updated earlier in the meeting under Old Business.

- b. New request for park renaming

A new request to rename High Desert Park to Dorothy Jensen Blanchard Park (located at 13100 academy Rd NE 87111 on the southeast side of Tramway and Academy) will be submitted from Councilor Champine's office. Additional details will be sent via emails.

The board agreed that the MPRAB Park Naming Policy should be edited or amended to require an applicant to seek support from the neighborhood in advance of a request. One suggestion would be to require attendance of the NA meeting in advance.

It appears the current MPRAB Park Naming Policy is not known by the City Councilors, which should be remedied.

Adjourned at 2:36pm.