

Speech for Recreation and Parks Commission - 4/16/2021

Hello, my name is Sara Meilandt. First, I would like to thank the Recreation and Parks Commission for taking the time to consider my application to become a voting member. Reno has always been home. I was born here, attended Galena High School, and graduated from UNR with a degree in Engineering. After college, I did live in two other US cities working to grow and maintain infrastructure critical to city operations, but in 2016, I felt the need to return home. My husband and I wanted to start a family, to work for our community, and live close to the mountains I hold near and dear to my heart.

Now, as a mother of two young boys, we spend a lot of time enjoying the recreation facilities all around Reno, and I hope to bring some of my passion and experience to this commission to help shape a bright future for our growing city. As a teenager growing up in Reno, my first job was actually working with Recreation and Parks. I was a lifeguard at both the Northwest and Moana Pools. I have always enjoyed the facilities this city offers, and I cherish the ability to raise my children in the same places.

Since finishing my engineering degree, I have worked almost exclusively in public works. The majority of my professional experience includes construction management for the City of Seattle and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. In Los Angeles, I was in charge of facility reconstruction and maintenance projects across the city's sprawling network of rail and bus lines. At the City of Seattle, my scope of projects included capital projects and master plans for safe

school routes and managing work costs and benefits to fulfill applicable grants. Today, I manage a team of engineering specialists within the Environmental Division of the Nevada Department of Transportation. Like my previous work, much of my day to day at NDOT deals with the regulations, scope, schedules, and budgets for the environmental work helping to shape and maintain over 5,000 miles of roadway projects covering the State of Nevada.

Living near Manzanita Park here in Reno, I am especially interested in the development of the Moana Springs Park and Aquatic Center, as well as discussing the cost saving and community health benefits that result from the installation of open spaces within our city framework. With so many new people moving here in search of Nevada's open space, we must rededicate ourselves to striking a balance between responsible development and maintaining recreation areas that make our city a place everyone can enjoy.

While my work experience shows that I possess the competency and understanding for the work this commission is charged with, my desire to make Reno's parks and recreation facilities the best they can be for my family and our community is the real reason I am here today. Like each of you commission members, I believe that the best way to be an active member in the community is to get involved, do the work, volunteer, and utilize my professional skill set for the greater good.

Thank you.