

Councilor Wheaton-Smith welcomed the skateboarders and thanked them for being there. He stated the kids had been completely respectful to him; they may not have agreed with the Town's actions, but they had freely discussed the events of the past, and more importantly, ideas for the future. He commented on several points that were made to him by the public. He offered several solutions: to forget the recently proposed skate park rules ordinance because they had enough rules, including a civil state law; instead of more rules, a structured policy for safety compliance was needed; the use of progressive enforcement when compliance failed; to dialog with skateboarders and develop a peer group to self police safety; to gain agreement from skateboarders and positive adult leaders on an acceptable level of compliance, and on short and long term progressive ways of handling it; to use available donations for safety equipment and for education in the schools and elsewhere, and for other positive incentives; when a foundation was in place, to open the skatepark for a short time to see how it worked and have active dialogs with skateboarders to fine tune it; and to honor the separation of biking and skating and to protect very little skateboarders who have a right to learn. He proposed that they focus on the future and their common problem, and not on the people.

Councilor May commented that all of the input that he had received had agreed that very few skaters were involved and not all were to blame for the park closure. He stated that he had received comments that the park rules were in place to protect the users, and not to protect the Town's liability insurance, and he agreed. He asked the users of the park to protect themselves, enjoy the park, skate like crazy, but wear helmets and consider wearing protective gear. He said he received many comments that parents must play a role and insist that their kids wear helmets, and it was at home where responsibility was taught to kids and how to act. He said that he was also told that they felt that there was no excuse for anyone to interfere with law enforcement personnel that were doing their job. He said that he supported efforts of volunteer mentorship to get education and training programs started. He suggested that the Town Manager consider opening the park on Friday, February 13th at 3:00 p.m. and throughout the weekend; they could see if the kids would live up to their promise from their show of hands and wear helmets. He agreed with Councilor Wheaton-Smith to separate the skaters from the bikers, and suggested that the pre-school children have a designated time at the park so they could learn without being overwhelmed by the older people. He stated he was willing to work with everybody to try to get the park re-opened. He encouraged everyone to live by what they said when they raised their hands that they would wear their helmets. He said that the Town would continue to try to find money to buy helmets to give out to the ones that could not afford them and possibly build a helmet rack at the skate park so they would be available. He stated they were trying to meet the users of the park halfway, but asked that they do the same.

Members of the audience commented on the following: the closure of the park and how it should be re-opened as soon as possible; separation of park time allowed for skaters, bikers, and pre-school children; skate park etiquette; how the kids took turns and watched out for each other; how older individuals could mentor the younger children; law enforcement; the required use of helmets and whether people that were 18 years or older should be able to choose to wear a helmet; law suits; how the attendance at the skate park reflected the need for physical activity in the Town; how the parents and children needed to be educated about the rules and required helmet use; how the rules at the park should be enforced and by whom; how highly rated the skate park was and how it should be re-opened; creation of a committee or governing body at the skate park; how park spectators would not be wearing helmets and should not be counted; how medical expenses would be paid by tax payers if an injured person had no insurance; parental responsibility; how the time designations for bikers and skaters should be more fair; how a youth committee had already been formed and were working on solutions; how helmets could be distributed or kept at the park as equipment; how not wearing a helmet should not be criminalized; how the helmet requirement should be everywhere and not just the skate park; how the proceeds from the fines could be used to buy helmets; how the park closure would cause kids to skate in the street and get in trouble; the Council and Town were thanked for building the skate park and for ensuring the safety of the public; how privately owned skate parks were more successful in helmet use; how community outreach from law enforcement was needed; how support of taxes to compensate a skatepark guard was favorable over support of taxes to provide free medical for uninsured park users; how monetary donations could be applied for other areas of safety at the park, not just for helmets; how the Town could sponsor competitive events; the need for a beginners' area and BMX bike area; enforcement by rules not laws; levels of tolerance at the skate park; the need to educate kids on how to safely interact with the police; recent arrests at the skate park; how the park rules and police should be obeyed; and how the Town Manager could re-open the skate park. There were several members of the audience that offered to contribute funds to the skatepark: Juateo Lopez said he would contribute \$500 toward having a small children's skate area built and Bill Stites said his employer would contribute \$500 to purchase helmets for kids that needed them if the skate park stayed open.

Mayor Marshall announced that Lopez and Associates had donated \$5000, Stone and McGee had donated \$5000, and the Moose Lodge had donated \$1000. He said they definitely needed to recognize and honor the community for their support and the groups that had funding what they could commit to. Mayor Marshall asked Manager Brown if he had any comments. Manager Brown stated that he would meet with Damian Davies and Paula Rouse from the audience, and some of the members of the Parks and Recreation Board, to begin the process of reviewing the recommendations that were given during the meeting. He stated that he hoped to get the park re-opened by the end of the week. Councilor Wheaton-Smith proposed scrapping the skate park ordinance that was to be reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Board since the objective was to focus on New Mexico State law which was not criminal. He asked the Mayor if the Parks and Recreation Board should continue to review the ordinance. Mayor Marshall said the ordinance was not necessarily sent back, but the issue was sent back to the Parks and Recreation Board. He stated that a lot of good ideas were heard during the work session and the Parks and Recreation Board would also have the opportunity to contribute as well. Mayor Marshall stated that he and Manager Brown should meet with Damian Davies and the others the next morning so they could begin working on it, and have action on it as soon as possible. He asked for a motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT – Councilor Nupp made a motion to adjourn at 9:05 p.m. Councilor May seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed.

/s/

A. Judith Ward, President Pro Tempore

Attest:

/s/

Ann L. Mackie, Town Clerk