



## **Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes**

October 16, 2024

The Centre at University Park

**Attendance:** Ben France, James Ferstl, Samuel Ellis, Cannon Fletcher, Linda Smith, Mike Bernardo, Summer Campbell, Quinten Whiteside

**Absent:** Ron Bara, Chemia Woods, Quincy Grant, City Director-Andrea Lewis

**City Board of Director Liaison:** City Director-Capi Peck

**LRPR Staff:** Parks Director-Leland Couch, Deputy Director Administration Resources-Angela Nelson, City Attorney-Beth Carpenter, City Attorney-Simone Blagg, Susie Matheny-Recreation Facility Supervisor, Courtney Perry-Safety and Training Coordinator, Parks Marketing and Social Media Coordinator-Brittany Nichols, Administrative Assistant-Parks Director-Mahogany Burkhalter, Phyllis Muhammad-Receptionist, Kyndall Richardson-Secretary, Savannah Wells-Secretary, Mekala Miller-Office Assistant

**Welcome:** Chairman France: Welcomed everyone. Meeting called to order at 12:01 pm.

**Roll Call:** Roll call completed. Eight (8) Commissioners out of Eleven (11) Commissioners in attendance. A Quorum was established.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman France asked for a motion to approve minutes. Commissioner Campbell made a motion for the approval of the minutes. Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Smith. Motion carried.

**Citizen Communication:** No Citizen Communication

### **Staff Reports/Director's Presentation/Events:**

Chairman France asked for Introduction of New Parks Staff.

- Savannah Wells – Design Secretary
- Phyllis Muhammad – Receptionist
- Yolanda Rainey – Revenue Compliance Analyst
- Mekala Miller – Office Assistant
- Kyndall Richardson – Secretary/Front Desk

### Staff Reports:

Commissioner Smith asked about attendance at Jim Dailey Fitness since the grand opening. Parks Director Couch stated that he would get updated information from the centers and report back.



Commissioner Bernardo asked about funding being available to purchase an AED for Kanis. Parks Director Couch advised that there being no line item in the budget for Safety. Currently there is no funding available. Will have funding if Sales Tax passes. Currently we have 12 AED's.

### Events

- First Tee event
- Fall Fest-SWCC-10/26
- MacArthur Museum Big Boo-seum Bash
- MacArthur Museum - Paranormal Expo
- Volleyball Tournament – Dunbar CC
- The Day of the Dead-SWCC
- Fall Coed Softball Tournament – Interstate Park
- 40 and over Basketball Tournament – West Central CC
- Trunk or Treat – Jim Dailey
- Keep Little Rock Beautiful event - Friends of Fouché Creek Cleanup – 10/26
- Karen Sykes, the Volunteer coordinator of Parks hosted the Cleanup at Rock Trail. 14 Volunteers participated and 3 tons of trash were removed.
- Upcoming opening of Boyle Park
- Upcoming opening of Pankey Park

### Directors Report

Parks Director Leland Couch just returned from the National Parks and Recreation Conference in Atlanta, GA. They were able to visit parks in the area. Also attended the Arkansas Parks and Recreation Conference in Jonesboro, Ar.

- Items taken to the BOD and were approved.
  - ❖ West Central Ballfield Complex Project to improve one of the softball fields.
  - ❖ I-30 Crossing Project. Resolution approved. Successful hire of Sasaki and Associates. Contract is not finished. Partnered with local firms.
- Items that will be taken to the BOD for approval.
  - ❖ Reservoir Road Project in Reservoir Park to rebuild the road infrastructure.
- Re-Introduction about the New Parks employees.
- Met w/ CAW about controlled burn. Controlled burn will be on CAW property.
- Have attempted controlled burns in the past. Request by City Director Peck to coordinate. Parks Director advised that he will re-approach issue and City Director Peck stated that she would assist.



- Commissioner Smith asked about FEMA funding for repaving of Reservoir. Parks Director Couch advised that its being funded by FEMA & Insurance. Received \$800,000 dollars in Insurance. Not sure about amount of FEMA funds.
- Reservoir Road design and changes discussed.

#### Presentation:

Parks Director Couch, presented the Operations Division presentation for current projects for Deputy Director Justin Dorsey, who was out.

- Commissioner Bernardo asked question about Pickleball courts. Director Couch advised that they're working on getting the courts completed.
- Commissioner asked about the popularity of the Community centers and their attendance.
  - ❖ Brittany Nichols who is assisting with Data Coordination due to the position being vacant advised that.
    - Southwest CC 35,000 Attendees
    - Stephens CC 30,000 Attendees
    - Dunbar CC 25,000 Attendees
    - ELR CC – Seniors – 20,000 Attendees
    - West Central CC – 20,000 Attendees
    - Jim Dailey Fitness Ctr – Over 100,000 Attendees

Chairman France asked about Junior Deputy Ballfield. Director Couch advised that Parks has a lease with Junior Deputy. Episcopal Collegiate doesn't have an agreement with Parks.

#### Unfinished Business:

Chairman France asked for questions and if they can move onto New Business. There was no questions.

#### New Business:

- Subcommittee Reports
  - ❖ Masterplan - Vice Chairman Ferstl requested that the next committee meeting be held after Election Day.
  - ❖ No other Subcommittee Reports
- New Commission Ideas
  - ❖ Chairman would like to table until after Election
- Sales Tax Initiative
  - ❖ Discussion about how the Sales Tax is being received.
- Letter of Support
  - ❖ Chairman France wrote a personal Letter of Support and a Letter of Support for the Commission
    - Commissioner Smith made a motion to amend Letter of Support for the Commission. Second by Commissioner Fletcher. Motioned carried.



- ❖ Encouraged the Commissioners to write individual letters of support to be submitted to the Arkansas Democrat Gazette.
- Parks and Recreation Dashboard – Commissioner Mike Bernardo
  - ❖ Tabled to the next meeting.
- Social Media Subcommittee name change - Committee Chair - Commissioner Quinten Whiteside.
  - ❖ Sr. Deputy Atty Beth Carpenter – advised that request has to be submitted today and voted on at the next meeting.
  - ❖ Name Change Request was submitted today.

Agenda items for next meeting:

- 2025 Commission Ideas
- Parks & Recreation Dashboard – Commissioner Mike Bernardo
- Bond Funds discussion – Parks Director Leland Couch
- New Parks Newsletter – Brittany Nichols/Leland Couch
  - ❖ Please list the top three (3) things gathered at the end of each meeting.
  - ❖ Items requested to be added:
    - Getting the Data added from LR Marathon, meetings, events.
    - Subscriber database – utilize volunteer database.
    - Parks Directory with defined features of the park

**Meeting Adjourned at 1:23 pm**